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EDWARD CHANNING AND THE GREAT WORK

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D. D. J.

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Who faulteth not, liveth not; who mendeth faults is commended: The Printer hath faulted a little: it may be the author oversighted more. Thy pain (Reader) is the least; then err not thou most by misconstruing or sharp censuring; lest thou be more uncharitable, than either of them hath been heedless: God amend and guide us all.--Foulkes Robartes, quoted in Edward Channing's preface to A History of the United States, Volume I: The Planting of a Nation in the New World, 1000-1660 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. vii.

PREFACE

Twenty years after Edward Channing's death in 1931, historians differed rather widely in their evaluation of his work. A British author, surveying American historiography since 1890, was quite critical of Channing's major contribution, the six-volume History of the United States, contending that it "won only a contemporary reputation which is not wearing well."[1] Referring specifically to the second volume of the History, this writer stated his feeling that it "added little of substance to what was to be found in earlier works," and that it "was so partisan as sometimes to be quite misleading."[2]

Quite a different view was expressed by an American historian writing in the same year. He felt that Channing seemed "assured of a niche in the historians' Hall of Fame as one of the giants of American historiography."[3] Many of Channing's findings were new, this writer emphasized, and had been useful to other historians. He concluded that Channing's

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[1]H. Hale Bellott, American History and American Historians: A Review of Recent Contributions to the Interpretation of the History of the United States (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 7-8.

[2]Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[3]John A. DeNovo, "Edward Channing's 'Great Work' Twenty Years After," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIX (September, 1952), p. 257.

History "wears well twenty years after his death," and, indeed, "remains one of the major accomplishments in the field of American historical writing."[4]

Some support is given to the latter interpretation by a poll of historians, once again dated 1952, to determine preferred works in American history published between 1920 and 1935. Channing's History finished eighth, following only the works of Parrington, Turner, Webb, Beard, Andrews, Becker, and Phillips.[5]

There seems to be no doubt, at least, that Edward Channing is an important figure in the history of American historical writing, and that his career and contributions deserve fuller examination than they have thus far received.

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[4] Ibid., p. 274.

[5] John Walton Caughey, "Historians' Choice: Results of a Poll on Recently Published American History and Biography," Ibid., p. 299.

PART I

THE GREAT CHANNING

The man of action, the statesman, the soldier, the interpretative artist whose achievement passes in a moment, the musician, the great actor--such men need biographers to set down what they have done. But an annotated history needs no history, double record, as it is, of past events and of the process by which the truth about them has been found. And an historian's biography is not likely to make interesting reading, for his external life is not dramatic and one who watched him at his desk turning yellowed sheets of manuscript and printed record and then scribbling notes, relieved from time to time by little journeys to the book-shelf, would soon grow tired of a spectacle so drearily monotonous. The excitement of discovery, the pride of well-considered judgment, the baffling search for logical connection in the evidence, the pain of composition, cannot easily be made the subjects of a narrative; fortunately the reader may surmise them as he follows through the history.

Yet this reader's curiosity may not all be slaked by inference; he is likely to desire that the picture of the author which he forms in his mind's eye be filled in by a few external facts, so that he may see more clearly the man with whom he has to deal. Such is the purpose of these pages.--Dixon Ryan Fox, Herbert Levi Osgood, An American Scholar (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), pp. 13-15.

EDWARD CHANNING AND THE GREAT WOFK

CHAPTER I

EDWARD CHANNING: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

...I am related more or less to all the "Highnesses"...[1]

> Somewhere in print I have proclaimed that the recollections of old men have long been under the ban of the scientific researcher. Nevertheless, "Recollections" stands as the first word on the title page of the present volume. For one must find something to do in his old age, as there is a saying that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. To go back even further, behind any possible recollection of a man who was born in 1856, it appears that among my earliest ancestors were invaders or immigrants to England....[2]

Thus Edward Channing began his autobiography when he sat down to write in 1929, two years before his death. This opening passage says a great deal about the man. His original remark about the validity of old men's reminiscences is indicative of his questioning approach to all historical sources--though the fact that he went ahead and wrote such a work anyway

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[1]Edward Channing, "Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man," p. 2. This is an incomplete, unpublished autobiography written by Channing in 1929-1930. It consists of forty single-spaced typewritten pages, and is in the possession of Channing's daughter, Mrs. Willard P. Fuller (Elizabeth Channing Fuller), of Chatham, Massachusetts. Her son, Willard P. Fuller, Jr., of San Andreas, California, has recently (1967) edited and privately printed a limited number of copies of this work. The author wishes to thank these members of the Channing family for permission to use both versions of the work. All footnotes herein are to Mrs. Fuller's copy, referred to as "Recollections," unless otherwise noted.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 1.

perhaps indicates that he was softening on this as he did on many other things. His dry sense of humor and tongue in cheek approach are also evident--as, indeed, they are even in the title of this work, "Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man." And finally, his comments as to his "earliest ancestors" can be taken as indicative of his determination to work out in as much depth as possible any historical problem.

Channing seemed proud of this country's history and of his family's role in it, and yet he was more than willing to be critical of either when he felt that truth demanded it. One of the best stories illustrative of this trait was related by Channing himself. As a junior at Harvard, he once gave a classroom report on one of his ancestors, Francis Higginson, in a course taught by Henry Cabot Lodge. Channing, "believing," as he said, "truth to be the basis of history," was quite critical of Higginson, referring "somewhat strenuously to the hypocrisy of a man who could be a Church of Englander on one side of the Atlantic and a Congregationalist on the other, at the end of a voyage of three months or so." As he passed Lodge's desk after class, Lodge stopped him and asked if he were aware that Higginson was one of his ancestors. When Channing replied affirmatively, Lodge asked, "Do you think it well to speak thus of your ancestors?" Typically, Channing's conclusion to the story was: "But he gave me 92% at the close of the course, the second highest grade in the class, so I felt that, after all, the truth ought not to be despised."[3]

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Channing's myth-destroying inclinations were doubtless greatly increased by just such episodes as this.

There were many "greats" in Edward Channing's ancestry--as he said, he was "related more or less to all the 'Highnesses'." Among his prominent forebears, in addition to Francis Higginson, were Thomas Dudley and Simon Bradstreet, both governors of colonial Massachusetts, and William Ellery, signer of the Declaration of Independence.[4] Channings were also related to Cabots, Lowells, and Emersons. The famous William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), founder of the American Unitarian Association, was Edward Channing's great-uncle. But the member of the Channing family who received the greatest praise from Edward Channing's pen was his grandfather, Dr. Walter Channing (1786-1876), brother of William Ellery Channing. And with good reason, for Dr. Channing was the nearest thing to a father Edward ever had.

Edward was born on June 15, 1856, in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Just three months later, his mother died of consumption. She was Ellen Kilshaw Fuller (1820-1856), the sister of the famous journalist, critic, and social reformer, Margaret Fuller, Countess d'Ossoli. Ellen must have been a woman of great fortitude to "bring up four children with a casual poet for a husband."[5]

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[4]Willard P. Fuller, Jr., has a very helpful Edward Channing "Ancestor Wheel" in a pocket inside the back cover of his edition of the "Recollections."

[5]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV

The "casual poet," Edward Channing's father, was William Ellery Channing (1818-1901). Upon Ellen's death, he "completely washed his hands of all responsibility for the five children, and went his own way during the remaining forty-five years of his life."[6] Indeed, he does not seem to have had a great deal of responsibility for them even before her death. Ellery, as he is usually called to distinguish him from his uncle William Ellery Channing for whom he was named, was "a thorn in the side of the Channing clan,"[7] "a black sheep in

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(October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 251. This account, written shortly after Channing's death, is still the best brief evaluation of Channing available.

The other four children of Ellery and Ellen were Margaret Fuller, Caroline Sturgis, Walter, and Eugene. (Channing, "Recollections," p. 7.)

According to Morison, Channing was initially named Henry, possibly after Thoreau, and was only christened Edward Perkins Channing after he moved in with his grandfather Walter Channing at age four. The Edward was for his great-uncle Edward Tyrrel Channing, the Perkins for his paternal grandmother's family. Morison says Channing liked his first name but detested his middle name because boys called him "Perky" and the Perkins family patronized him. Thus he dropped the Perkins after college days. (Morison, "Edward Channing," pp. 252-253.) Channing's grandson argues that the story about being named Henry was simply something Channing made up because "he delighted to stretch a point to make a good story when on the subject of family matters." (Fuller edition of the Channing "Recollections," p. 42.) As a matter of fact, Channing did not say that his grandfather named him Henry, but simply that he considered doing so. Channing complained that people would not accept his lack of a middle name after he dropped the Perkins, saying "I think every letter in the alphbet has been bestowed on me in lieu of a middle name." (Ibid., p. 11.)

[6]Morison, "Edward Chaning," p. 250.

[7]Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865 [(New York:] E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated, 1936), p. 284.

an otherwise normal family."[8] Even an obvious attempt at a whitewash of his career did not succeed, for its author had to conclude that "the worldly failure was out of proportion to the worldly success."[9] The kindest evaluation of his poetry stated that it was "among the best of the Concord school"; more typical was Henry David Thoreau's comment that it was "in the sublimo-slipshod style."[10]

Edward remembered seeing his father only once, and he certainly seems not to have regarded him very highly. One of his acquaintances felt that he was proud of being a Channing, but ashamed that his father was a "weak" Channing.[11] He hardly mentioned his father in his autobiography, and summarized his parents' marriage by saying, "The pair lived together, and separated, and lived together again, and again separated."[12] One of Edward's own daughters later remembered that Ellery's children did not like him. She also recalled that one particular day when she was a little girl her father walked away from

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[8]John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), p. 7. The author of this work is another of Channing's grandsons. The present author wishes to thank him for permission to use it, and the library at Williams College for making it available.

[9]Ellery Channing, Poems of Sixty-Five Years, edited by F. B. Sanborn (Philadelphia: James H. Bentley, 1902), p. xxxvii.

[10]Brooks, The Flowering of New England, p. 283; Townsend Scudder, Concord: American Town (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), p. 176.

[11]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[12]Channing, "Recollections," p. 7.

the house without speaking to her as usual. Upon asking her mother where he was going, she was told that it was to his father's funeral. The little girl's innocent comment was, "He doesn't have a father."[13] Apparently, Ellery Channing was seldom mentioned in the Edward Channing household.

Left alone by his mother's death and his father's desertion, it seemed likely that the puny little baby Edward would follow his mother to the grave. He was a seven-months baby anyway, and had been turned over to a wet nurse just after birth. Her sustenance proving inadequate, because she had a baby of her own, he was then entrusted to the wife of a shoemaker in South Abington, Massachusetts. He spent approximately the next four years of his life in this home. Channing's few memories of these years were fond ones, but one incident occurred which perhaps played a role in his leaving:

> My older brothers and sisters took great delight in retelling to visitors how once going to Abington I had been found alone in the house, the shoemaker and his wife having "gone to meeting" and having deposited me for safe-keeping in a deep shoe drawer, half open, where I was discovered sucking a lobster claw....[14]

Sometime in the year 1860 Edward was taken over by his grandfather, Dr. Walter Channing.

Dr. Channing was, as his grandson said, "a remarkable man." Though dismissed from Harvard College as a junior in 1807 for his role in a student rebellion over bad food, he

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[13]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[14]Channing, "Recollections," p. 7.

later achieved great distinction as a physician, and was for thirty-three years Dean of the Harvard Medical School.[15] One of his major contributions to medicine was introducing the use of ether in childbirth.[16]

With Dr. Channing lived his daughter, Edward's aunt, Barbara. She was "one of those forthright New England spinsters who always did as 'she'd a mind to,' with a lovable character and a warm heart which went out to the motherless little boy committed to her charge."[17] Aunt Barbara was a mother to Edward for many years; he loved her, and she him.[18]

Between 1860 and 1876, Edward lived with his grandfather and aunt in various places in and around Boston. He was a rail, sickly child, and one who had "a passionate love for companionship which was never satisfied."[19] A description of the boy in 1861 by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a relative with whom Channing was later to collaborate in the writing of a book, tells much of his appearance and personality at that time:

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[15] Ibid., p. 4.

[16] Henry R. Viets, "Walter Channing," Dictionary of American Biography, IV, p. 4.

[17] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 154.

[18] Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[19] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 154.

> ...Edward...is becoming one of the most fascinating little creatures who ever lived; a sort of male fairy; blue eyes, long soft hair and the most plaintive little expression, with a low tender voice like a nursing angel and all the character and individuality of a Channing and a Fuller combined. He is not shy or piteous now, but healthy and gay, only on a low gentle scale, his loudest warwhoop a sort of meditative soliloquy. His one chosen companion is the imaginary Mr. Dowdy, whose individuality is hopelessly intertwined with his own, he is Dowdy, but Dowdy is not he;--in fact, as he confidentially whispered to me "There's a great many of them"; he peoples the world with Dowdies. All his small rebellions, not very frequent, are conducted with reference to novel first principles. "Don't you want to be good" remarks Auntie solemnly; "No" says the seraph very gently, shaking his tresses, as if he saw no force in that aspect of the case--"I don't want to be good." "Don't you want to please your friends?" "No," answers the little saint sweetly, "I don't want to peese my fends"; and thus the ordinary grounds of domestic discipline prove hopeless. What to do with a disputant whose tones only become more soft and celestial amid sin and retribution?[20]

As Samuel Eliot Morison said, "Truly, this boy was father to the man! Edward Channing never did 'want to be good,' nor was he ever much concerned with pleasing his friends or anyone else."[21]

Channing's own memories of this period are interesting and sometimes revealing. He recalled very little of the Civil War years--just seeing soldiers march off to war, being employed in the making of bandages, and hearing the cry in the streets, "Lincoln is murdered!" It was on the day that he heard that

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[20]Quoted in Ibid., pp. 254-255. For more Mr. Dowdy stories, see Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Part of a Man's Life (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1905), pp. 36-38.

[21]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 255.

tragic news that young Edward was allowed to venture out of the house alone for the first time--to buy a newspaper. Later he bought a large wooden star from the carpenter, which was covered with black cloth and placed above the front door of the house.[22]

Except for his frailty, Edward was a normal child. He was "put out to grass in the country," as he put it, in the summers beginning in 1865, living with a farm family named Hewes in Weston. He remembered being thrown into a poison ivy patch by the country boys on his first visit there (he was immune) and then joining his former tormentors in the harassment of an old woman they considered to be "the town witch." "Whenever we threw stones at her front door," he recounted, "she would come out with a broom preparatory to riding through the air, as we thought, but no doubt more desirous of banging her persecutors."[23]

Channing's upbringing had a religious nature which made a lasting impression on him. "The Sabbath," he recalled, "was then the Sabbath."

> It was not a day of rejoicing and of tearing around the country on pleasure bent. On the contrary, it was the day to reckon up one's misdeeds of the past week and make resolves for better doing in the future. On Saturday night, the gate leading into the front yard was closed at sundown, the horses given a day of rest, and feeding them and the pigs, and driving the cows to and from pasture and milking them was the

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[22]Channing, "Recollections," p. 8.

[23]<u>Ibid</u>.

> only work that was done on the farm....Everyone put on his or her best attire to go to meeting. On one occasion, Albert, the grown-up son, pulling on his Sunday boots with great difficulty, ejaculated, "By George, that hurts!" Whereupon his mother told him to stop swearing, which he did immediately. We walked to meeting in the morning, and the small ones stayed after to attend Sabbath School. We had a cold dinner and went back to meeting for the afternoon. After supper, we boys gathered in the road in front of the house, and gazed hopefully into the sky for the sight of the first star, for then Sunday was over and one could play; for in those days the Sabbath began at sundown on Saturday and ended with the coming of the first star on Sunday.[24]

Channing later referred to himself as "an evil disposed youngster," but he actually seems to have been just a normally independent and mischievous young boy. He detested the attempt of his Aunt Barbara to have him taught piano and dancing, and managed to get out of the latter by kicking his lady teacher on the shins.[25] Keeping hens was one of his favorite hobbies, and proved to be a profitable occupation when he began to sell eggs to the neighbors;[26] he was always fond of animals

As a student, Edward left much to be desired. His frail physical condition often kept him out of school, and he was a rather dull scholar when he was present. At least part of the reason seems to have been his eyes; he had constant headaches from this problem, and it was not until he was grown and married that a doctor finally discovered his astigmatic

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[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

condition and prescribed the glasses which helped correct it.[27] Even at that, his eyes troubled him in later life.

Channing prepared for college at William M. Eayres' private school in Boston, and took his Harvard entrance examinations in September of 1873. He was admitted, but with six "conditions," the largest number allowed, and he remembered President Charles W. Eliot greeting him as an incoming student in the fall of 1874 with the comment, "A good many conditions, Mr. Channing." In view of all his handicaps--"conditions," bad headaches, and required studies which he detested--Channing was rather proud of his record. "I got two more conditions in my Freshman year," he reported, and then went on proudly,

> and in due course graduated Magna Cum Laude with Honors in History, and two years later attained the Ph.D. degree in History. Surely if the elective system ever needed justification, it would be found in my case, for the moment I got away from mathematics and the dead languages, I went ahead.[28]

In another place, Channing summarized his college years by saying, "My first two years were spent in idleness, but my grandfather's death brought me to my senses, and since then I have tried to do my duty."[29] Walter Channing died in

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[27] Ibid., p. 21; and Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 256.

[28] Channing, "Recollections," pp. 12-14.

[29] This is from Channing's brief, self-written notice in the Harvard "Class Book, 1878," in the Harvard University Archives.

1876, and Edward, who of course had already shown a marked tendency to be independent, was now of necessity completely on his own, except for the three hundred dollars he received from his grandfather's estate.

During his two years of "idleness" at Harvard, Edward was involved in some interesting capers. He resented being required to attend morning prayers at 7:15. Here is the way he remembered it:

> Before long, I was confined to my bed...with a sore throat. Scenting possible advantage, I made up a good story as to the dampness of the chapel and the hazards of sitting in it before breakfast, unfortified by food. The physician fell in with my scheme, and gave me a certificate of "tendency toward sore throat," which relieved me from attendance at prayers from the first of November to the first of May. And, as I carried my allowance of "cuts" over into the prayer-going period, I managed to attend prayers for only about six weeks in the year.[30]

Channing was also called before the dean once for sleeping in class, and he kept both pets and boats in his room in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of university regulations.[31]

Once he came to his "senses," however, Channing showed great ability and initiative in his Harvard career. Though these were, in his own words, "years of financial disaster and gloom," he managed to pull through. He did so by such devices as lecturing to large groups of students, "charging a dollar a

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[30] Channing, "Recollections," p. 15.

[31] Ibid., pp. 15 and 22.

head"; becoming the partner of a student who bought books directly from the publisher and sold them to students under the bookstore price, but at considerable profit to himself; and by buying up several hundred dollars worth of stock in the Old Colony Railroad and selling it a few days later "at the top of a rather sharp ascent," clearing about three hundred dollars--the beginning of a life-long habit of speculation in stocks.[32]

Academically, also, Channing made marked improvements after the first two years. Typical was the way in which he worked off his "condition" in mathematics in his senior year. It was a subject which he hated, but, realizing the necessity of fulfilling the requirement, he simply shut himself in his room and studied until he was able to pass it.[33]

Encouraged both financially and academically, Channing was able "to look with greater calmness on the prospect of two or three years of post graduate study and the attainment of a couple more degrees, an A.M. and a Ph.D."[34] The financial encouragement was the result of a two hundred and fifty dollar scholarship awarded to Channing in his senior year and increased benefits from his grandfather's estate. Academically, the uplift was provided positively by Henry Adams and

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[32] Ibid., pp. 16-17. Channing's description of his own financial situation applied to the country as a whole, of course, after the Panic of 1873.

[33] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 13.

[34] Channing, "Recollections," p. 16.

negatively by Henry Cabot Lodge. Channing never lost the high regard he gained for Adams, writing of him in his "Recollections:"

> I cannot express--no words of mine could--the debt that I owe to Henry Adams. He was the greatest teacher that I ever encountered. He could draw out from a man the very best that was in him....There was never any other man like Henry Adams.[35]

Channing attributed his entrance into the field of history to Adams. He took Adams' course, Advanced Medieval Institutions, in his junior year, and his research topic was a comparison of the marriage institutions of the Germans in the time of Tacitus with those of the North American Indians. Recalled Channing:

> ...I labored and produced an essay which I no longer possess but on which he kindly placed the mark of one hundred percent. That essay was my undoing. I had been designed by my grandfather for the law, but I abandoned it for history.[36]

If Channing's evaluation of Adams was filled with praise, his few comments on Henry Cabot Lodge were filled with criticism. We have already seen the difference in their attitude toward ancestors. Channing used to say of Lodge that after the size of his classes dropped from fifty to three,

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[35] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[36] Ibid., p. 20. It certainly must not have been easy grading on Adams' part which appealed to Channing, for according to one source Channing finished fourth out of eight in one of Adams' classes, with a grade of only 70 when the high was a 90-12/15.--Stewart Mitchell, "Henry Adams and Some of His Students," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXVI (October, 1936-May, 1941) p. 298.

Lodge decided to give up teaching for politics.[37] It might be said, then, that Adams' example and Lodge's dogmatism--along with, as well, the bias of the current text, Richard Hildreth--first caused Channing to enter the field of history. Specifically, he conceived a plan to write an objective United States history from the sources, and began to accumulate notes even before receiving his bachelor's degree.[38]

Once he made the decision to go on to the Ph.D., Channing wasted no time. Since he graduated with honors in history in the class of 1878, he was not required to take the general examination as a part of the Ph.D. program. This enabled him to concentrate on his dissertation on the Louisiana Purchase, a project completed by February of 1880. His memory served him well when he later recalled that "it must have been appalling reading."[39] This was true, however, more as a result of mechanical matters than because of content. The work consisted of seventy-eight hand-written folio-size pages--and, as Channing realized, his "chirography was rather blind."[40] Also, he must have taken seriously the continual dictum of the

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[37]Paul H. Buck, ed. Social Sciences at Harvard, 1860-1920: From Inculcation to the Open Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 148.

[38]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 260.

[39]Channing, "Recollections," p. 18.

[40]Ibid. The dissertation is available in the Harvard University Archives. As for Channing's coverage of the subject, it was quite adequate; much of what he said there later found its way into the appropriate volume of his major History.

Harvard College Catalog around the turn of the century that "Knowledge of German will be of advantage in any of the courses in History and Political Science; and ability to make use of French text-books will be assumed,"[41] for he "swept up everything in French and English in the Harvard library,"[42] and used quotations from the French sources rather extensively. In general, it is no wonder that the committee stalled for time before holding his examination over the work, and that he had to read it aloud to some of them to get their approval!

Finally, weeks after he had submitted the dissertation to the committee and still had heard no word from them, Channing applied pressure and the examination was held. The committee consisted of Henry W. Torrey, Chairman, James Barr Ames, Ephraim W. Gurney, Henry Adams, and Henry Cabot Lodge. It must have been a strange session indeed. Channing suffered from a throbbing toothache, which put him "in good fighting trim and prepared for eventualities, many of them." All the committee members declined to question him, so Chairman Torrey was forced to carry the burden himself, "and he found it pretty hard sledding." He was able to keep it up for only about half an hour. Channing was then told to leave the room for five minutes.

> I went out, and lay at full length on the grass in front of the steps of Harvard Hall, and by reason of

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[41]Harvard College Catalog, 1897-1898, p. 341.

[42]Channing, "Recollections," p. 18.

> the pain in my head, cursed the committee and all its works....At the end of five minutes, I mounted the steps and reëntered the room and was informed by the chairman that I had passed and would receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the next commencement. I exhibited all the gratitude that I could....[43]

By the time he received the Ph.D., Channing knew definitely what he wanted to do--teach United States history at Harvard. But his application to President Charles William Eliot for such a position received the reply that there was none, along with a comment that well described the academic status of the field at that time:

> Your desire to teach American history is a laudable one; but you of course recognize the practical necessity of having other strings to your bow. There are only two colleges in this country within my knowledge where much is made of American history, and you know how elementary the teaching on that subject is in American schools. History is generally taught by a master who has several other subjects on his hands.[44]

Channing did not give up his goal, but because of increased benefits from his grandfather's estate, he was able to postpone it. "Two years after my graduation," he wrote later in the 50th anniversary report of the Class of 1878, "I received my Doctorate in History at Harvard University and at once sailed for Europe."

Channing landed at Havre, and in the course of his travels went as far north as East Friesland and Lubeck, as far

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[43] Ibid., p. 19.

[44] Quoted in Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 263.

east as the Black Sea, and as far south as Tunis. "After nine months I sailed for home," he recalled, "having gained a new outlook on the world, which has been of great service to me ever since as a teacher and writer on history and geography."[45]

Morison felt that the tour "opened new vistas for Channing, enriched his knowledge, and kindled his imagination."[46] However, Channing included nothing in his "Recollections" to indicate that he took it anywhere near that seriously. "The Grand Tour," as he called the chapter on that subject, was a light-hearted account of fleeting affairs with young members of the fairer sex and of such incidents as the one in which he and an acquaintance tried "some rare Greek wine":

> It had all the appearance of water. We poured some into two tumblers, drank it off and soon our heads began to spin. When we came to, we cast the remainder overboard, and from that time on we were able to understand why the Greeks were so rambunctious at Troy and elsewhere.[47]

The unemployed young Ph.D. returned to Cambridge in June, 1881. Said he, "The next two years were spent in writing book notices and fugitive pieces."[48] The book reviews were very few in number; the "fugitive pieces" were primarily geographical articles for Science--on such diverse topics as "The

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[45] Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. VIII, Fiftieth Anniversary Report, 1928, pp. 48-49.

[46] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 264.

[47] Channing, "Recollections," p. 26.

[48] Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. II, 1884, p. 26.

Sudan," "Roads from India to Central Asia," and "Geography-Teaching in Germany."[49] It was in the course of his geographical work that Channing first met the great historian-cartographer-librarian Justin Winsor, whom Channing referred to as "one of the remarkable men of that time."[50] Channing later wrote two chapters for Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America.

While he was thus occupied, Channing kept his eyes open for possibilities in the Harvard history department. He was aided in doing so by his close association with his dissertation director, Professor Torrey, who was about ready to retire.[51] Channing received an appointment at the instructor level in 1883, his first assignment aiding Torrey in a course on the history of treaties.[52]

Channing's historical writing began the same year as his teaching career. He won the Robert N. Toppan Prize of

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[49]George W. Robinson, Bibliography of Edward Channing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), pp. 5-7. This little volume lists most of Channing's writing, excluding only "Numerous short articles and reviews, editorials, notes, syllabi, and the like." (p. 5).

[50]Channing, "Recollections," p. 32. Channing also spoke very highly of Winsor in an article written just after Winsor's death in the American Historical Review, III (January, 1898), pp. 197-202.

[51]For some reason, Channing stated in the "Recollections" that he "then had no thought of teaching." (p. 33) But why else would he have applied for the position in 1880, and why would he have jumped at the first opportunity to teach something even he was not particularly interested in?

[52]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 265.

two hundred and fifty dollars for an essay entitled "Town and County Government in the English Colonies." Published the following year as a volume in the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, this little work also helped him get elected to the elite Massachusetts Historical Society, and was presented in briefer form by Channing as the first paper at the first meeting of the American Historical Association at Saratoga, New York, in 1884.[53]

Another major move for Channing came three years after the Harvard appointment. At the home of Thomas Wentworth Higginson he had met Alice Thacher, Higginson's sister-in-law. Married July 22, 1886, they had two children. Alice was born on May 12, 1888, Elizabeth Torrey--named for a sister of Professor Torrey--on January 9, 1892.

Instructor Channing advanced steadily through the academic ranks. He became Assistant Professor in 1887, Professor in 1897, McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History in 1912, and McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History, Emeritus, in 1929.[54]

Channing's publications came out rather rapidly also, and doubtless helped account for some of his promotions. His first really major work was the Guide to the Study of American History, done in association with Albert Bushnell Hart and

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[53] Ibid., p. 267.

[54] Harvard University Gazette, January 10, 1931. (In Channing's folder of the "Quinquennial File" of Clippings on Harvard Men, in the Harvard University Archives.)

published in 1897. In that same year The United States of America, 1765-1865, a little volume in the Cambridge Historical Series, came out. By this time, Channing had already published another volume in the Johns Hopkins Studies, an English history text in association with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and numerous articles; he had also begun with Hart, in 1892, the editing of the series of documents they called American History Leaflets: Colonial and Constitutional. Professor Channing's major textbook, A Students' History of the United States, was first published in 1898 and went through four more editions by 1924. Later texts for various levels were: A Short History of the United States for School Use (1900); First Lessons in United States History (1902); and Elements of United States History, with Susan J. Ginn (1910). The Jeffersonian System, 1801-1811 (1906) was Channing's contribution to Hart's famous American Nation Series. Channing also co-authored The Story of the Great Lakes with Marion Florence Lansing in 1909; and Frederick Jackson Turner's name was added to those of Channing and Hart for a new edition of the Guide in 1912.

Once he began to work on his major undertaking, the six-volume History of the United States, Channing took little time for anything else. After the first installment in 1905, The Planting of a Nation in the New World, 1000-1660, the volumes appeared at approximately four-year intervals until the Pulitzer Prize-winning volume VI on the Civil War era was

published in 1925. After that, it became obvious that Channing's age was slowing him down considerably. He still had not finished volume VII when he died of a cerebral hemorrhage on January 7, 1931--only the night before he had still been working on the History!

"The most eminent of contemporary American writers of United States history is gone," said the Boston Herald the next day. This was typical of the newspaper comments on Channing's death, and the funeral service was a fitting one for a historian of such distinction. Held at noon on January 10 in Harvard's Appleton Chapel, over three hundred people were in attendance. "During the hour of the funeral all classes were suspended, a tribute accorded no one else during my connection with Harvard," recalled Arthur M. Schlesinger.[55] President A. Lawrence Lowell was among those present at the service, conducted by Reverend James Hardy Ropes of the Harvard Theological School. The ushers were fellow historians Roger B. Merriman, Henry A. Yeomans, James P. Baxter, Lawrence S. Mayo, A. C. Potter, George P. Winship, Arthur M. Schlesinger, and Samuel Eliot Morison.[56] The latter's tribute, written shortly after Channing's death, is a fitting one:

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[55]Arthur M. Schlesinger, In Retrospect: The History of a Historian (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1963), p. 86.

[56]This account is based on clippings in the Channing "Quinquennial File" folder.

Channing accomplished what no man had done before, and what is not likely to be done again. Between his fortieth and his seventieth year, with his own hand, and from his own research, he wrote a great history of the United States from the beginning of colonization to the close of the Civil War. In the meantime, he trained scores of men to carry on the work in his own spirit of thorough and fearless inquiry; and to thousands more he imparted a love of our country's history, based on knowledge. For this he sacrificed much that men hold dear; but gained what was more dear to him: recognition, and affection. The little motherless boy, who for want of a companion created an imaginary "Mr. Dowdy," died a ripe scholar of seventy-four, the head of his profession.[57]

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[57] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 284.

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT CHANNING

> "My father wished me to inquire what relation you were to the great Channing?" once inquired a shy student of our Edward. "I am the great Channing!" was the characteristic reply, delivered with a thump on the breast bone.[1]

Those who knew Edward Channing always describe him in vivid terms, and usually do not differ appreciably in their comments. Arthur M. Schlesinger, who met Channing the first time in the summer of 1913, remembered him as "Short and rotund with protuberant blue eyes and ruddy cheeks,...not at all the imposing figure I had imagined." To Schlesinger's widow, Channing seemed like "a little pouter pigeon," with his red cheeks, white hair, etc. Her comments are similar to those of another acquaintance who described Channing as a "poppy" man with pop-eyes, pop-cheeks, and a pop-stomach. The Charles Hopkinson portrait of Channing in the Union Catalog room of Harvard's Widener Library bears out all these remarks. Samuel Eliot Morison felt that this "admirable" painting expressed Channing's "unique combination of sauvagerie

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[1]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 252.

and friendliness."[2] It shows a stout, white-haired, baldish man, with a round, red face. It also depicts an erect, proud, dignified individual. And one really can see both a gruffness and a kindness; though perhaps one would see that in the portrait as a result of having heard comments about Channing's personality from those who knew him.

Some have tried to explain Channing's personality in terms of differences between him and his father. Morison, for example, said, "He was in almost every respect the opposite to his father."[3] Certainly, in some ways, this was true. If, as Thoreau said, Ellery Channing were a man of "all genius and no talent," Edward Channing was, as Morison said, a man of "all talent, talent carried to a high degree by hard, unremitting industry."[4] If Ellery Channing were "a man who wanted things but would never pay the price,"[5] Edward Channing was a man who paid a high price all his life to accomplish his one great goal. And, of course, Edward Channing apparently did not think very highly of his father--indeed, was perhaps even ashamed of him. Still, in more ways than Edward Channing himself would have realized or admitted, he was very much like his father.

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[2]Arthur M. Schlesinger, In Retrospect: The History of a Historian (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 51; Interview with Mrs. Arthur M. Schlesinger, August 30, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 283.

[3]Ibid., p. 251

[4]Ibid.

[5]Townsend Scudder, Concord: American Town (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), p. 176.

First of all, their early lives were quite similar--Ellery's mother too died early, and he was raised by a great aunt; both developed an early and lasting love for animals; Ellery too resented the required chapel attendance in his Harvard days. Here are some phrases that were used to describe the personality of Ellery Channing: "a lively and humorous turn of mind," "superficial petulance and impatience," "typical Boston eccentric," a "social outlaw" who "loved solitude."[6] All are basically applicable to Edward Channing as well. And finally, Morison, in spite of his emphasis on differences between father and son, could have been talking about either when he said of Edward Channing that he "never did 'want to be good,' nor was he ever much concerned with pleasing his friends or any one else."[7]

Indeed, this last statement hints at the most important trait which Channing had in common with his father--his intensely independent, individualistic spirit. Once again in Morison's words, "Edward Channing was Edward Channing, and nothing else. He followed his own bent and formed his own opinions, independent of fashion, example, and influence."[8]

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[6]The first two are from F. B. Sanborn's introduction to Ellery Channing's Poems of Sixty-Five Years (Philadelphia: James H. Bentley, 1902), p. xxx and p. xxxvii; the last two from Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865 ([New York]: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated, 1936), p. 284 and p. 297.

[7]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 255.

[8]Ibid.

Just so Ellery Channing! True enough, this independent spirit led father and son different ways. Ellery, for example, reacted to his poor family background by being a poor and irresponsible family man himself, while Edward compensated for his by being very devoted to his own family. Still, none can deny that both father and son were intensely individualistic.

Anyone who attempts to describe Edward Channing's personality feels compelled to mention his gruffness. But all agree also that this was just a front for the real Channing. The gruffness showed itself in many ways, but was most frequently evident in association with Channing's cockiness, or, in the eyes of some, snobbishness. In addition to the oft-told story quoted at the head of this chapter,[9] there is one about Channing's comment to a young lady clerk at the Harvard "Co-op" who made the mistake of asking him his name. He puffed up, apparently shocked and insulted, and directed her emphatically to "Ask anybody!"[10]

Arthur M. Schlesinger became Channing's colleague in 1924 and had an office near his in Widener Library. He recalled that Channing, "under his gruff exterior regarded me with a paternal eye. Once, indeed, when he thought my desk poorly lighted, he installed his own floor lamp until I

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[9]Merle Curti thought he remembered that he was the one who asked Channing this question. (Letter to the author, August 2, 1966.) And he may have been, though something similar to the incident quite possibly could have happened many times.

[10]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

purchased one like it." "I discovered that his bark was always worse than his bite," added Schlesinger. Mrs. Schlesinger recalled that the Channings had almost no social life, and that she thought Channing had "a little vanity," but she also emphasized that he was a very kind person, and that even his little "tartness" was quite attractive: "Not really stinging --sort of lively and satiric, it gave life to the conversation."[11]

Mr. Robert H. Haynes, who worked in the Harvard library system for many years and came to know Channing quite well, used "exuberance" as a key word in his description of the "interesting, enigmatic" personality. He also spoke of Channing's individualism, dry sense of humor, the fact that he was "unapproachable" only in appearance, and of how kind and considerate he was with the library staff. But he remembered several incidents indicative of what Channing's critics would call his conceit and snobbishness, too. For example, one day, shortly before closing time in the library, Channing was checking out a rather large number of books, perhaps six or eight. He commented casually to Haynes that he would return them the following morning.

"Professor Channing," said Haynes, "you don't mean to tell me you're going to read <u>all</u> of those books <u>tonight</u>?"

"Why not?"

"That's a lot of reading."

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[11]Schlesinger, <u>In Retrospect</u>, p. 85; and Interview with Mrs. Arthur M. Schlesinger, August 30, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Not the way I read. Have I ever shown you the way I read?" He proceeded to do so, thumbing through one of the books with little more than a glance at each page, and commenting in essence as he did so, "When you look at a tree, you look at the entire tree. You don't say 'I'm looking at that leaf, I'm looking at that branch, I'm looking at that twig,' etc.--you look at the whole tree. There have only been two people I know of in the history of the world who could read that way--Macauley and Channing."[12]

Those who would consider Channing a snob do have some things to which they can point, including, of course, some of the little anecdotes already related. Even more specifically, there is the recollection of a former assistant of Channing that he was made to walk a step behind the professor when carrying his book bag for him across Harvard Yard on the way to class,[13] and the question he reportedly once asked when he came across the name Shaw in looking over class admission cards--"Is this Shaw a Shaw from Watertown or just a Shaw?"[14] Still, those who knew Channing best should be most qualified to

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[12]Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Frederick Merk also recalled Channing's pride in his reading speed. Interview with Frederick Merk, August 22, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[13]Letter to the author from Herbert W. Hill, September 16, 1966.

[14]A. K. Christian, "Great Historians: Edward Channing," p. 5. (This is a 6-page unpublished manuscript of a radio address given by Christian on January 10, 1950, and in his possession.)

judge, and they consistently contend that such incidents do not show the "real" Channing, that he was not even conceited,[15] much less a snob.[16] Perhaps the words of A. Lawrence Lowell, student and long-time friend and associate of Channing, best summarize briefly the essence of "The Great Channing" personality:

> ...Channing had a shell about him, and many people saw little else. They thought it hard and prickly, and so it was superficially; but some of those who came nearest to him thought it largely a protective envelope to shield a shy and sensitive nature...he seemed to shrink from contact with the outer world and with other people; so he appeared to be encased in reticence and even gruffness. Yet he was very affectionate and indeed devoted to his friends.[17]

Mention has been made of Channing's almost complete lack of social life. His only recreation--aside from travel, of which he did a great deal, primarily in connection with his research--was sailing. This love he first acquired during his Harvard student days, and he never lost it. "It was typical of Channing," wrote Morison, "that his first boat should be the ideal one for a lone hand, a Rob Roy sailing canoe." One acquaintance of Channing remembered how he "would paddle the canoe several miles out to sea and lie there basking, drinking in the beauty of sky and ocean, absorbing the strength

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[15]Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[16]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Morison stated emphatically that Channing was not a snob; he said that if people were serious, regardless of who they were, Channing respected them.

[17]A. Lawrence Lowell, "Edward Channing," Academy Publication No. 77 of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, 1932, pp. 81-82.

that comes with sunlight and clean air."[18] It was also typical of Channing that, as he said,

> One of the first things that I accomplished with the 'Rob Roy' canoe was to disprove to my own satisfaction, but greatly to the discomfort of the sundry descendants of the Pilgrims, the story of the landing of the Pilgrims as given in the textbooks and romances of the time.[19]

His love of the sea Channing passed on to his family. "Sailing was his joy," recalled one of his daughters, both of whom were taught sailing by their father. It is still in the family.[20]

In Channing's family life still more can be learned of his personality. His younger daughter recalled many things that help lead to an understanding of the man. She, too, recalled the lack of social life, saying her parents almost never went out at night. Channing was rather slow in adjusting to technological innovations: the family never owned an

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[18]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 258. Morison feels that Channing's sailing experience made him "an excellent amateur seaman, deepened his love of the sea, taught him self-control, and proved most useful in his historical work." (p. 258).

[19]Edward Channing, "Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man," p. 17. "And it is well again to state that the Mayflower on the 'day we celebrate' was swinging to her anchor in what is now Provincetown Harbor, some thirty miles from Plymouth Rock," he concluded. (pp. 17-18). This was Channing's first contribution in the area of what historians today call "debunking." His name appeared in print several times in connection with the Plymouth Rock "myth," but his statements about it in the History are relatively moderate.

[20]Interviews with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts, and with Alice Channing, August 18, 1966, North Chatham, Massachusetts. When the author met one of Channing's grandsons and his children in the summer of 1966, they were on their way to the ocean for sailing.

automobile, a machine which he abhorred--he contended it was cheaper to hire one when necessary than to buy one and hire a chauffeur; they also never had a radio; and they got their first telephone about 1900. Channing always walked to work, but he never wore an overcoat or rubbers. Indeed, he took issue with his wife about the children wearing them, holding that their feet would get wet anyway, and they would dry much more quickly without rubbers. This daughter had nothing but praise for Edward Channing as a father. She spoke of their "lovely family life" and how he "adored the family." "His own poor family background," she concluded, "perhaps caused him to treat us even better--he did everything for us."[21] Channing must have allowed his gruff exterior to show at home sometimes also, however, for when a grandson recalled his boyhood image of the old man, he said, "I was scared of him," and his mother, Channing's daughter, responded, "I was scared of him, too."[22]

Much of what Edward Channing became seems to have been in reaction against something in his background: Henry Cabot

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[21]Interviews with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18 and 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts. The other daughter, Alice, placed more emphasis upon Channing being so busy and having little time for anything other than his work. (Interview, August 19, 1966, North Chatham, Massachusetts.) The present author ventures no explanation for this difference.

[22]The grandson was Willard P. Fuller, Jr., who was present at the author's interview with his mother, Elizabeth Channing Fuller, on August 18, 1966. Another grandson remembered Channing as "a stout, baldish, red-faced old man, who was somewhat gruff and sharp, but who was one to be revered and respected."--John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), p. 25.

Lodge's dogmatism helps explain both his entrance into the historical profession and his open-mindedness as a historian; his poor family background helps explain his own family's basically good life together. Just so with his religious views--the lasting impression made on him by the religious environment of his youth did not make him a "religious man" in the normal sense of that phrase. A grandson analyzed this rather well when he said of Channing:

> When he was young, in the family of his grandfather, he was obliged to attend the Unitarian Church. This enforcement had the same effect as his required piano and dancing lessons--he became antagonistic to formal religion. Consequently in his maturity he kept his church attendance to the barest minimum.[23]

The last sentence is something of an exaggeration, however. Though Channing's daughter agreed that he was "not a very religious person," she did recall that "he made us go to church and always went with us." The Channings, in the tradition of the time, had their own paid-for pew in the church, and their own hymnal with their name on it. "Father always got furious when someone else got in our pew," said the daughter. The sort of thing he commented on after the service was the minister's habit of blinking and the fact that President Eliot's wife had to poke him constantly to keep him awake.[24]

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[23]Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 26.

[24]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

Of Channing's religious beliefs little can be said with certainty. His only comment was a typically humorous one in the "Recollections," where, after commenting on his ancestor, Thomas Dudley, whom he considered "a man of God," he said:

> I sometimes wonder what he would have thought of his descendant, William Ellery Channing, Unitarian clergyman, or of the present writer who is even worse, theologically, than his great-uncle, if that be possible.[25]

The grandson speculated as to whether Channing had a "personal credo," and concluded that it was

> ...logical to conjecture that he had a working set of beliefs, probably of the simplest sort, for his need was not great. The significant part is that his individuality was the main cause of this lack of formal religion. In his own eyes he was sufficient unto himself.[26]

A daughter was "sure that he gave up going to church after we grew up."[27] According to Morison, it was about 1905 when Channing stopped going to church because he needed Sundays to work.[28]

If stating that Channing was a Unitarian says little about his religious philosophy, it is also true that recording that he was a Republican says little about his

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[25]Channing, "Recollections," p. 2.

[26]Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 27.

[27]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[28]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 281.

political philosophy. Indeed, still less can be said with certainty of Channing's political views than of his religious ones. According to his daughter, he was not active politically; he always voted, but he was too busy to go beyond that.[29] Morison stated that Channing became a "Jeffersonian liberal" by reaction against Lodge's teaching, and also recalled that Channing once told him, "I'm one of those who will vote for the Democrats when the Democrats will let me."[30]

Only a few isolated incidents can be given to clarify further whatever political credo Channing may have had. He strongly disliked Woodrow Wilson, referring to him on at least two different occasions as "congenitally dishonest." Once this was in connection with Wilson's support of the income tax, "which Channing abhorred." The other time was the morning after Wilson's re-election to the Presidency in 1916, in connection with his five-volume History of the American People, which, according to Channing, he had written "without having the proper knowledge or research in the field."[31] According to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Channing reproached him for supporting the Democratic candidate, Alfred E. Smith, for president

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[29]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[30]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[31]Letters to the author from Arthur P. Whitaker, July 21, 1966; and Richard L. Morton, July 7, 1966.

in 1928, so Channing doubtless supported the Republican candidate Herbert Hoover in that contest.[32] To his credit, Channing allowed virtually nothing of whatever partisan views he may have had to show in his historical writing--he praised or condemned individuals and parties on their merits or demerits, as he saw them.

The same is true of his teaching. In seeing what Channing was like as a teacher, one can discern still more of what he was as a man. Channing's own account of his first formal lecture at Harvard is interesting, and important as well, for it tells a great deal of what his teaching methods were to become:

> ...stuffed with knowledge and dates, I proceeded to the lecture room, walked majestically to the platform, slammed my notes down on the reading desk, turned around,...steeled myself, advanced to the side of the desk so that the class could see that I took no look at my notes, and went ahead, at full speed, for fifty minutes. It was an ordeal, but it gave me a feeling of confidence which never deserted me in the nearly half century of my pedagogical efforts in Harvard University.[33]

From that time on, one of Channing's distinguishing characteristics as a teacher was that he used either no notes, or only as many as he could get onto one small card. Other than that first lecture, Channing, himself, said little about his teaching. He did write in 1917, half seriously:

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[32]Schlesinger, <u>In Retrospect</u>, p. 85.

[33]Channing, "Recollections," p. 34.

> The humdrum life of a professor is much the same from year to year. Boys look alike to Alma Mater, although to their own maters they seem very different. They are splendid fellows that we have and appreciative of the efforts of yours truly. I give them American history by the decade. They take it in, give some of it to their fathers, remember a little, and forget the rest; but some of them have learned how to read and some have learned a little something as to how to use their brains. Otherwise they have made pleasant and useful acquaintances and have developed their bodies. These are the undergraduates. I have also had a constant stream of graduates, mostly from other pedagogical institutions. I am ambitious to turn out a few literary historians, but these graduates persist, for the most part, in wanting to be fitted for teaching jobs in colleges and universities throughout the country.[34]

To learn more of what Channing was really like as a teacher, one must turn to the more serious comments of those who observed first-hand. A. Lawrence Lowell felt that Henry Adams' influence on Channing's teaching was evident in three specific ways: waking students up by shocking their prejudices, giving them topics to study and report upon, and delving into their background to find topics in which they would be likely to have a special interest.[35]

The "shocking" usually took the form of "debunking." "In the college comic paper of that day Channing always appears wearing a top hat, and generally bearing a hatchet or some such implement of destruction, aimed at the Washington Elm,

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[34] Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. VII, 1917, p. 12.

[35] Lowell, "Edward Channing," pp. 74-75.

or Plymouth Rock, or other popular fetish."[36] Even Channing's daughter recalled that her father was known as "the Channing Mouse, because he gnawed at everything."[37] This trait is beautifully and humorously satirized in a little volume entitled Alice's Adventures in Cambridge, by R. C. Evarts, in which the Black Knight shows Alice the sights of the city. The Black Knight tells Alice he is going to show her an iconoclast; they find him in Cambridge Common, working with hammer and chisel to carve the word "not" between the words "did" and "take" on a tablet which reads "UNDER THIS TREE GENERAL WASHINGTON DID TAKE COMMAND OF THE AMERICAN ARMY JULY 3, 1775." "That's the Channing Mouse," the Black Knight informs Alice. "He never believes anything he's told." Before leaving, they are informed that the American army and George Washington are both, indeed, myths. As they walk away, Alice asks the Black Knight, "Doesn't he believe in anything?" He replies, "Nothing but himself."[38]

According to Lowell, "The practice of assigning to both graduates and undergraduates topics to be worked up in the library and made the subject of a report began...with Henry Adams and was brought to a high state of perfection by

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[36] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 269.

[37] Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[38] R. C. Evarts, Alice's Adventures in Cambridge (Cambridge: The Harvard Lampoon, 1913), pp. 36-39.

Channing."[39] Lowell said that Channing as a lecturer was "highly successful, and at times very impressive....Yet these lectures were delivered in a quiet, discursive tone, without the slightest attempt at oratory."[40]

Morison described Channing's lecturing technique briefly by saying that he "sat down at the podium and conducted a one-sided conversation with his students;"[41] and spoke of him more fully:

> ...his lectures were charged with irony and wit, delivered from notes so meagre that a single writing card sufficed to hold them; a terror... to undergraduates; ever a foe to tradition, myth, and historical humbug....[42]

He also recalled that Channing "slapped down the dull, stupid student without mercy," but was encouraging and helpful to the good student; that he was much more accessible than most professors, never brushing a student off because he was too busy; and concluded that he was an "excellent" teacher.[43]

Almost without exception, Channing's students have spoken highly of him. Typical are these comments: "very fine

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[39] Lowell, "Edward Channing," pp. 75-76.

[40] Ibid., p. 77.

[41] Samuel Eliot Morison, By Land and By Sea: Essays and Addresses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 299.

[42] Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., The Development of Harvard University Since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1929 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 168-169.

[43] Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

lecturer," "very well organized," "great teacher," "one of the best," "a natural-born teacher," "the great enthusiasm which he aroused in his students," "a remarkable undergraduate teacher," and "a very fine teacher. His lectures were interesting and full of remarks that made you think."[44]

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[44]Interview with E. E. Dale, May 27, 1966, Norman, Oklahoma; Interview with Hugh O. Davis, September 22, 1966, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Letter to the author from J. C. Russell, April 17, 1967 (Russell himself was not a student of Channing, but was at Harvard from 1922 to 1926.); Letter to the author from Edward C. Kirkland, July 18, 1966; Letter to the author from Herbert W. Hill, September 26, 1966.

Merle Curti was the only one of Channing's former students whose comments in evaluation of his teaching were basically critical. He felt, among other things, that "the lectures were very thin on the substantive side." (Letter to the author, August 2, 1966.)

Several sets of notes taken by students in Channing-taught courses are available in the Harvard University Archives. However, except for those of Lawrence Shaw Mayo, these are of little value in determining anything about Channing's methodology or the content of his courses. The handwritten Mayo notes fill five volumes, and include, in addition to lecture notes, such things as reading assignments, examinations, and class rolls. The two courses covered were general ones in American history. Several things can be implied from them. In spite of the comments that his lectures were well organized, Channing's habit of not using notes seems to have caused him to wander rather freely at times. In a lecture on November 28, 1913, for example, he made bibliographical references to Osgood, Andrews, and Greene, discussed whether severity of punishment is a deterrent to crime, benefit of clergy, etc.--with no indication in Mayo's notes as to what the subject really was at the time. His lectures were much more personal than the History, apparently, and his dry humor came through more often. "The Salem witches were probably guilty," he once commented. "Isn't anybody guilty if he knows that it is wrong to bewitch, and then goes right about it?" The reading assignments show that he did not hesitate to require his own works. And the examinations show that he was inclined to give essay questions requiring some thought on the student's part which used his History as a take-off point. For example, he would frequently quote an interpretive sentence from it and ask the students to support it or refute it--It must have taken a brave soul to answer in the negative!--and

Channing in the seminar should be distinguished from Channing on the rostrum. Though his seminar system evolved through the years from emphasis on research to stress on the training of teachers,[45] the method did not really vary a great deal. The subject matter, however, moved forward as Channing's work on the History advanced. Indeed, one of the few complaints of students about the Channing seminar was the lack of freedom in the selection of a topic.[46] Still, he was careful to acknowledge by footnote in the History the work of any student who had made a real contribution, and thus to confer upon them the honorary degree of E.I.C.--"Embalmed in Channing."[47] Most who came out of the seminar felt that it was here, with greater opportunity for individual contact with the student, that Channing was at his best. One of the most valuable things about this experience was the way he required them to give their report to the group from a minimum of notes--just as he gave lectures. As Morison said, "[Albert Bushnell] Hart would cull the promising young men and encourage them, and send them to Channing's famous seminary...to be discouraged;

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he once asked them to "Compare Channing's analysis of the causes of the American Revolution with that of Lecky, or Trevelyan, or Fisher."

[45]Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 55.

[46]Letter to the author from Arthur P. Whitaker, July 21, 1966.

[47]Letters to the author from Merle Curti, August 2, 1966; and Richard L. Morton, July 7, 1966.

if they survived that they might do."[48] Among the better known of those who "survived" and went on to the Ph.D. in history in the years while Channing was active at Harvard, 1883-1929, were: E. B. Greene, Carl Russell Fish, Samuel Eliot Morison, Dexter Perkins, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Frederick Merk, Howard K. Beale, Merle Curti, Clement Eaton, W. E. B. DuBois, Frederick Austin Ogg, Solon J. Buck, C. H. McIlwain, E. E. Dale, Marcus Lee Hansen, Edward C. Kirkland, Arthur P. Whitaker, and Fulmer Mood.

A list of such "greats" leads one to attempt an overall assessment of Channing's teaching career. Channing himself hinted at the importance of his years at Harvard when he said:

> The life of a professor is not interesting reading, as a rule, but in my case my activities have been so commingled with the everlasting reformation of Harvard University, including the upsetting of the old administrative systems and the making of an entirely new one, that it has not been so pokey as most lawyers would think.[49]

It was more specifically and emphatically stated by Morison when he credited Channing and Hart with being

> largely responsible for the high reputation that Harvard enjoys in that [the American] branch of history....At the retirements of Hart and Channing, in 1926 and 1929 respectively, it was impossible to take a step in American history without stubbing one's toe on their works, or those of their pupils and their pupils' pupils.[50]

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[48] Morison, The Development of Harvard University, p. 169.

[49] Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. VIII, Fiftieth Anniversary Report, 1928, p. 49.

[50] Morison, The Development of Harvard University, p. 168.

The words of A. Lawrence Lowell in tribute to Channing as a teacher are a fitting conclusion:

> It was a kind of work that may leave a permanent impression and may develop--as in Channing's case--scholars who become iminent in the next generation, but which is often forgotten. Its effects are written in the minds of men, not on pages that are carefully preserved...he made scholars but not a school.[51]

Channing served as chairman of the Department of History and Government in the years 1899 to 1902. His relations with President Charles W. Eliot in that period were apparently quite cordial. A. Lawrence Lowell was chairman of the department for the next academic year after Channing's occupation of that position; in 1909, this life-long friend of Channing became President of the university. According to Morison, Channing "was on very friendly terms with Pres. Lowell and Dean [Charles H.] Haskins." In general, Morison continued, the department and the college "looked on Channing in those years [after 1910] as a valuable but rather irascible scholar and teacher whom they had best not annoy."[52]

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[51]Lowell, "Edward Channing," pp. 77-79.

[52]Letter to the author from Samuel Eliot Morison, September 13, 1967.

Folder 40 in Box 104 of the Charles W. Eliot Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts, contains several letters from Channing to Eliot, mostly concerned with departmental and/or administrative matters.

Kimball C. Elkins, Senior Assistant in the Harvard University Archives, kindly provided the author with a list of departmental chairmen during Channing's years at Harvard. Prior to 1891, the faculty was not organized into departments. After that date, chairmen of the Department of History and Roman Law were Ephraim Emerton (1891-1894) and Charles Gross (1894-1895). Chairmen of the Department of History and

Apparently Channing mixed with other members of the faculty rather extensively in the early years, including lunching with them regularly, but he gradually cut this from his schedule, as he did so many other things, to allow him to concentrate on his writing. Especially interesting, revealing, and important were his relations with Albert Bushnell Hart, Arthur M. Schlesinger, and Frederick Jackson Turner.

The Channing-Hart relationship is by far the most controversial. On the basis of some evidence, it seems that they got along very badly. A notation in unidentified hand-writing on the back of a program for a dinner which a number of former Channing students gave in his honor at the Cosmos Club in Washington in 1920 referred to Hart as a man "whom Channing hated considerably worse [more?] than all the devils."[53] At the other extreme is some evidence to indicate that their relationship was a very close one. Upon hearing of Channing's forthcoming retirement, Hart wrote him: "In half a century of parallel interests and work I have found you fair minded, generous, friendly as colleague and an honorable rival in

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Government were: Charles Gross (1895-1899), Channing (1899-1902), Lowell (1902-1903), Gross (1903-1907), and Archibald Cary Coolidge (1907-1910). From 1910 on, the department was a Department of History and the chairmen through 1929 were: Roger B. Merriman (1910-1914), William Scott Ferguson (1914-1924), Robert Howard Lord (1924-1926), Ferguson (1926-1928), and Arthur M. Schlesinger (1928-1929). (Letter to the author from Elkins, October 4, 1967).

[53]The notation is on the copy in the Channing "Quinquennial" folder in the Harvard University Archives.

some fields. You have added to the zest of life, you have been a good friend."[54] Hart was doubtless exaggerating, carried away by the importance of the occasion. The truth, in other words, must lie somewhere in between.

Perhaps the problem was simply that they were completely different personalities--Channing the staid New Englander, Hart the flamboyant Midwesterner. More specifically, however, Channing apparently was never able to forget that Hart got the job he wanted in 1883. Both men were hired by Harvard that year, but Hart got the American history courses, while Channing had to be the departmental handy-man for many years, moving into the courses he wanted only as Hart gave them up and moved into the field of government. Also, Channing probably became "a little jealous of Hart's fame,"[55] which was mostly in the earlier period, and took a little too much pride in surpassing Hart as he rose to prominence himself.[56] Both of Channing's

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[54]A. B. Hart to Edward Channing, April 14, 1929. This is from a folder of miscellaneous material labeled "Resignation" in the possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[55]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[56]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Hart was doubtless helped in getting the job by the fact that President Eliot looked favorably upon his German education (Ph.D. from Freiburg under von Holst, 1883). Both Morison and Buck agree that the occasion of the hiring was the original source of conflict between Channing and Hart.

Disillusioned, Channing became an applicant for a position at Ohio State University in 1885, but the appointment went to George W. Knight, a Michigan Ph.D., and Channing stayed on at Harvard. (Buck interview; and Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 266.)

daughters, though vague as to its exact nature, definitely implied that there was some ill feeling between their father and Hart.[57]

With some evidence pointing in the direction of hatred and other toward close friendship, it is impossible to say with certainty exactly what the nature of the Channing-Hart relationship was. Most of the facts indicate a middle ground. One can make note of the fact that they cooperated for many years in the conduct of joint seminars, yet should also be aware that the whole purpose of this was to meet Henry Adams' ideal of a seminar conducted by two completely opposite professors.[58] There is no doubt that Channing delighted in his own seminars in taking little pokes at his colleague. Of Hart's voluminous writings he once said, "Hart loves the smell of printer's ink"; "Hart is still unreconstructed," he commented to a student who had spoken of Hart's undue bias against the south;[59] and he reportedly once told a seminar group that "People from Ohio [Hart's home state] have muddy brains."[60] One might feel that Channing and Hart had to get along fairly well to be able to produce their cooperative Guide to the Study of American History

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[57]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts; and Interview with Alice Channing, August 18, 1966, North Chatham, Massachusetts.

[58]Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (New York: The Modern Library, 1931), pp. 303-304.

[59]Both these incidents are recounted in a letter to the author from Richard L. Morton, July 7, 1966.

[60]Christian, "Great Historians: Edward Channing," p. 5.

in 1897; but one also should be aware that they squabbled about such minor things as whose name should come first on the title-page.[61] Also, on the bottom of a letter from Hart to Channing in 1921, proposing a new edition of the Guide, either Channing or his secretary scribbled a note which read, "EC on no acct to have anything further to do with guide."[62] One might contend that Hart must have regarded Channing highly to have chosen him to do the volume on Jefferson for his American Nation series; but it should be known that Channing considered the volume a "pot-boiler," secondary to his History. He undertook it for only two reasons--the money and the fact that he and Hart "must work together."[63] He greatly resented Hart's "blue-penciling" of his manuscript,[64] and he wrote to his publisher that he would "never get into a thing of the kind again."[65]

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[61]Channing to Hart, February 22 and March 5, 1893, quoted in Lester J. Cappon, "Channing and Hart: Partners in Bibliography," New England Quarterly, XXXIX (September, 1956), p. 328.

Channing did not even want Hart's name to appear as co-author of the Guide in a list of his other publications on the title-page of his Students' History of the United States! (Channing to George P. Brett [President, Macmillan Company], July 7, 1897. This is from the Edward Channing File of the Macmillan Authors Collection in the New York Public Library.

[62]"Resignation" folder in possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller.

[63]Channing to Brett, January 21, 1902, Macmillan Collection.

[64]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[65]Channing to Brett, May 2, 1905, Macmillan Collection.

And finally, one might emphasize such incidents as when Hart sent Channing a clipping about the two of them with the following note:

> Dear Channing:--
> Fame, bilateral, adjunct, distributive, reciprocal, joint and several! Please return (the cutting, not the fame)
> Yours
> "And Hart"

Channing's reply was, "Dear Brother Hart, Your letter goes right to my heart."[66] Or one might stress such incidents as when a Ph.D. candidate, tired of waiting in the hall while the committee supposedly deliberated on his passage or failure of the oral examination, approached the door only to hear "the loud voices of Channing and Hart, arguing over something which had nothing to do with his examination."[67] In conclusion, probably all that can be said safely about the relationship between Channing and Hart is that "They learned to rub along together fairly well"--[68] no more, no less.

Channing's relationship with Schlesinger was not controversial, but is still interesting and revealing. Though the Channings and the Schlesingers never became intimate after Schlesinger came to Harvard in 1924, because of the age difference and Channing's isolation to work on his History, the

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[66]This exchange is found in the "Resignation" folder also. The reply by Channing is actually in the form of a note by Channing's secretary at the bottom of Hart's letter.

[67]Letter to the author from J. C. Russell, April 17, 1967. The candidate was Howard K. Beale.

[68]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 226.

two men did have a basically pleasant association. Schlesinger used to help Channing get set for the summer at his place at Cotuit by hauling carloads of books down for him. "He seemed to be very fond of my husband," recalled Mrs. Schlesinger. And she struck perhaps the dominant note of their relationship when she said that they were constantly engaged in "a good-humored repartee about sections."[69] Schlesinger wrote thus of Channing:

> Though delighting to deride the "crude" Middle West, he expected retorts in kind, which he never failed to get. When he (rightly, of ccurse) jeered at the demagoguery of Mayor Thompson of Chicago, I blandly observed he had evidently forgotten that "Big Bill" was a native of Boston....Again, when he reproached me for supporting the New Yorker Al Smith for President in 1928, it was, I explained, because he had at last convinced me of the superiority of any Easterner over any Westerner, only now to find him backing Herbert Hoover, a Californian born in Iowa.[70]

Schlesinger recalled that Frederick Jackson Turner helped him make up his mind in 1924 to go to Harvard rather than to Columbia, where he also received an offer, by emphatically denying the rampant rumors that "his testy Yankee colleague Channing had made life so miserable for this son of a newer and rawer part of the United States that he had ever since regretted leaving Wisconsin."[71] Channing was supposed

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[69]Interview with Mrs. Arthur M. Schlesinger, August 30, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[70]Schlesinger, <u>In Retrospect</u>, p. 85.

[71]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 79.

to have irritated Turner by his attitude toward the West. Maybe the rumors were not true, but their persistence should be noted; there was another one which held that Turner left Harvard to retire in 1924 because he was "so tired of Channing's teasing."[72]

If the teasing did not bother Turner, he must have been virtually immune. The stories illustrative of it are almost endless, and some of them are so strong as to verge on something beyond banter. Morison said that Channing was "a little snippety about Turner."[73] Channing did not have a very high opinion of Turner's frontier thesis; he once remarked to a student that "Turner is a dear fellow but he has no idea of the value of time. He has never written any big books."[74] Probably the best-known of the Channing-Turner stories is the one in which Channing was supposed to have habitually begun his seminars by removing a mysterious pamphlet from a drawer and brandishing it in front of his students, proclaiming "Here,

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[72]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Morison seemed to doubt this story also.

[73]Ibid. It is interesting to note that Channing's own grandson decided, after investigating the inter-relationship between Channing, Hart, and Turner, that, "In the last analysis it was probably Edward Channing himself who was the more difficult of the three." (Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 71.)

[74]Interview with E. E. Dale, May 27, 1966, Norman, Oklahoma; and E. E. Dale, "Turner--The Man and Teacher," The University of Kansas City Review, (Autumn, 1951), p. 27.

gentlemen, is where Turner got his ideas from," and returning it just as mysteriously to the drawer.[75]

Still, there is no surviving evidence to indicate that the relationship between Channing and Turner was nearly so strained as that between Channing and Hart. There is a great deal more evidence--good evidence--to indicate that they were quite close. One of Channing's daughters recalled that the two men were "very good friends," and that even the two families were friendly and used to visit frequently. The other daughter agreed that Channing and Turner were friends, and added that she knew of no conflict at all. A former student of both thought they were "good friends." Still another source spoke of Channing's "high personal regard" for Turner. And finally, Paul H. Buck felt that any stories hinting at ill feeling between the two men were "pure embroidery." They "got along very well," he said, and simply enjoyed taking digs at each other. According to Buck, Turner once brought something up in a conversation with Channing about the problems of note-taking. Channing told him, "You ought to do as I do--hire a secretary!" Turner retorted, "I can't; I never wrote a text-book!"[76]

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[75] The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938), p. 3.

[76] Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts; Interview with Alice Channing, August 18, 1966, North Chatham, Massachusetts; Interview with E. E. Dale, May 27, 1966, Norman, Oklahoma; Glenn Weaver, "Edward Channing: A Literary Biography," Social Studies, LIV (March, 1963), p. 85; Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

It was, indeed, important for Edward Channing in many ways that he "wrote a textbook." Financially, the Students' History of the United States allowed him not only to hire a secretary, but to support himself and his family while he concentrated on his multi-volume History. And the reputation which the text and other of his publications began to make for him after the turn of the century enabled him to cut down on the amount of his teaching at Harvard and to concentrate only on those areas which would be of specific utility in his writing. He had taught everything from Medieval and Modern European History to American Colonial History, from the History of England during the Tudor and Stuart Periods to the History of American Institutions, and from European History during the 17th Century and the First Half of the 18th to seminars in United States history since 1865. But he regularly had off half the year after 1919,[77] and probably his two best-known courses were American Colonial History and his seminars.

Channing's comment to Turner about hiring a secretary hints at something else of importance--the role which his secretary played in his research and writing. The secretary was Miss Eva G. Moore, and her role was an important one indeed. Channing "inherited" her from Thomas Wentworth Higginson. As Higginson grew old, he did not use her so often, so she began to work part-time for Channing; when Higginson died in 1911,

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[77]Harvard College Catalogs, 1883-1913; Harvard University Catalogs, 1913-1929.

Channing employed her full-time, and she was with him the rest of his life. She was very devoted to him, and apparently he to her; he always called her simply "Eva G."[78] A small folder of letters which he wrote to her still survives, and shows that their relationship was a very close one. He commented to her about his family, about her own tonsilectomy, and about her problems with the dentist. The last few years of his life he relied on her increasingly, not only for substantive help in his research and writing, but for miscellaneous personal favors as well, usually financial in nature--paying a bill, checking on an insurance policy, etc.[79] She frequently came to Cotuit to aid him in his work in the summer, and even went abroad with the family on one occasion.

As already indicated, Miss Moore played an important part in Channing's research and writing. Much of his research was done in the extensive materials available in the Harvard Library. Indeed, some critics have said an exorbitant amount of it was. And apparently much of the research that was done there involved Channing simply taking down a reference to something he had found, often on unused pages which he tore from students' examination books, and having "Eva G." go get

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[78]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[79]Channing Correspondence, 1884-1930, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This folder contains twenty-nine hand-written letters from Channing to Miss Moore spanning the years 1904 to 1930, as well as a few other miscellaneous items.

it for him when he came to the point in his writing that he needed it.[80]

Miss Moore was perhaps even more important a part of Channing's writing method than of his research technique. All the writing Channing did in long-hand while working on his Students' History gave him a permanent case of writer's cramp; and he could not compose at the typewriter. Thus, his method, according to Miss Moore herself, was to put his notes aside and simply walk about the room for two or three hours at a time dictating to her at the typewriter, where she typed the narrative triple-spaced. They then re-read and re-wrote the manuscript several times, inserted citations, verified all facts and quotations, and finally, read it aloud "to get the swing and rhythm of the words and sentences."[81]

A discussion of Channing as a writer would not be complete without some indication as to the nature of the relationship between him and his publisher. With the exception of the two editions of the Guide, the Jefferson volume in Hart's series, and the little 1765-1865 volume in the Cambridge series,

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[80] Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[81] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 274; and Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 309.

Channing and Miss Moore apparently improved their ability to work together as the years went by. Channing wrote to Brett in 1922 that he and Miss Moore had "worked together for twenty years. When I dictate to her at the typewriter three-quarters of what she puts down goes on to the printed page." (Channing to Brett, September 16, 1922, Macmillan Collection.)

all of Channing's major works were published by the Macmillan Company. In general, his relations with the company were conducted through its president, George P. Brett, and were very cordial. Channing, in a letter to Brett in 1921, spoke of "the long and pleasant relations--and profitable--that one author has had with his publisher."[82] On one occasion when Channing's correspondence made it evident he was upset with the company--he complained rather strongly about some minor mistakes in advertising his books--he very shortly thereafter wrote:

> I have been--and am--very sorry that I wrote you in so ferocious a strain....I was "peeved" and have regretted ever since that I must have caused you annoyance and added to your altogether too great troubles in these days of unrest.[83]

Channing and Brett even became rather close friends, apparently, as the years went on. They wrote to each other of their families, and in their later years, of their mutual interest in trees. "I, too, have some pines," wrote Channing; "I understand the 'tree desire' is one of the marks of approaching <u>middle life</u>."[84] Each nearly always found time for a brief

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[82]Channing to George P. Brett, February 1, 1921, Macmillan Collection. An excellent brief sketch of Brett is Frederic G. Melcher, "George P. Brett," <u>Dictionary of American Biography</u>, XXII, pp. 59-60.

[83]<u>Ibid</u>., December 19, 1919. The "unrest" must have referred to the problems of the company in the First World War.

[84]<u>Ibid</u>., July 6, 1923.

visit when in the other's city. Brett usually sent Channing a gift of books on special occasions, such as Christmas and when Channing was preparing for one of his frequent research trips abroad. And they even exchanged pictures.

This, then, is something of what the man Edward Channing--"The Great Channing"--was like. His reputation, of course, rests, and will always rest, on his "Great Work"--the six-volume History of the United States.

PART II

THE GREAT WORK

I have undertaken a new study of the history of the United States from the discovery of America to the close of the nineteenth century. In treating the subject, the word "history" is understood in its larger sense as denoting not merely the annals of the past, but as describing the development of the American people from the inception of the colonizing enterprises which resulted in the founding of the thirteen original states and the formation of the Federal Union. The growth of the nation will, therefore, be treated as one continuous development from the political, military, institutional, industrial, and social points of view.--Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume I: The Planting of a Nation in the New World, 1000-1660 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), pp. v-vii.

CHAPTER III

THE PLANTING OF A NATION IN THE NEW WORLD

> The appearance of a history by a master hand ought to be regarded as a great event in the life of a nation. Scholars have long anticipated the appearance of Mr. Channing's work. His special studies appearing in various scientific publications and his academic work in Harvard University have given assurance that the ripe product of his historical work would be a worthy contribution. The first volume fulfils [sic] every expectation. The scholarship easily surpasses that in any other undertaking of the kind, and the clear, pleasing and simple style makes the book eminently readable. If the literary flavor found in some popular histories is lacking, there is ample compensation in the depth of knowledge and the plain-spoken truth.[1]

Once Edward Channing made a definite decision to write an extended history of the United States, his whole life was built around that project. During the teaching year at Harvard, he ordinarily spent mornings teaching, afternoons on the History, and evenings in preparation for the next day's classes.[2] During the summer, the Great Work normally occupied both mornings and afternoons, but the evenings were spent in the reading of novels and light literature for relaxation.

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[1]Review of volume I of Channing's History in Independent, LVIII (June 19, 1905), p. 1479.

[2]John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: "Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), pp. 43-45. As already noted, the teaching was normally restricted to a half-year after the First World War to allow full time for research and writing.

After 1900, these summers were spent at the Channing summer home on Grand Island, just off Cotuit on the south shore of Cape Cod. Before that, the Channings had owned a cottage at Nantucket, but had left it because of the increasing number of tourists there, and purchased the six or seven isolated acres at Cotuit.[3] The acquisition was partially financed by a $1,000 royalty advance on volume I from Channing's publisher, Macmillan. He was very proud of the place, writing shortly after acquiring it to Macmillan's president, George P. Brett, "This is about the best place that I have yet discovered," and asking him to come there for a visit.[4] It provided him a quiet place to work and an opportunity to engage in his one pastime, sailing.[5]

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[3]Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[4]Channing to Brett, May 23 and 25, 1904, and no date, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library. (The undated letter seems to have been written in July, 1905, and is thus placed chronologically in the collection.)

[5]Channing called his place Noisy Point. An explanation of that, and a humorous anecdote as well, is related by the biographer of Harvard President (1909-1933) A. Lawrence Lowell. Having commented on Channing's debunking inclination, this author went on: "Strangely enough, Channing was very insistent that his house stood on 'Noisy Point,' where, the story ran, Hannah Screechum had been killed by Captain Kidd and buried with pirate treasure to guard it by her cries. Lowell delighted in persuading a visitor to ask Channing for the location of Noisy Point and to add over the historian's loud protest that he had always supposed it was up the narrows." Henry Aaron Yeomans, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, 1856-1943 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 390. Lowell and Channing had been boyhood friends. Their houses at Cotuit were near each other, and their families visited

It has been stated that Channing decided even as early as his undergraduate days at Harvard to write an extensive United States history based on original sources. But the earliest evidence that such a project had taken on definite shape in his mind dates to 1899. At that time he wrote to James Ford Rhodes thanking him for the gift of a copy of his latest volume, then went on:

> I wish that I had something to send you in return. Six years from now I may have a small offering in the shape of the first two volumes of my History of the United States. This great (?) work will ultimately--if I live--consist of from six to eight volumes and will be a continuous narrative of our history from the voyage of Leif Ericson [sic] in the year 1000 to the year 1900. But the first five hundred years will not give me much trouble.[6]

He went on to describe the work in more detail, giving special emphasis to his plans for maps and bibliography. The accuracy of his proposals at that early date are rather surprising. Except for the fact that he apparently intended to have the first two volumes ready at once, even his date of publication was correct--volume I came out in 1905.

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and sailed together. (Interview with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.) According to Morison, Channing, James Hardy Ropes, and others in the area in the summer, were sometimes referred to as the "Cotuit Cabinet." The story was that they could get President Lowell out on the water and get him to agree to anything. (Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[6]Channing to Rhodes, October 18, 1899, James Ford Rhodes Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Channing had mentioned the project to Brett at least as early as February of that year. He recalled in his autobiography that as of 1896 he had already "long wished to undertake a large and formal work" on United States history. (Edward Channing, "Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man," p. 38.)

It is interesting to trace Channing's progress on the work in his correspondence with Brett. He first outlined his plan to the company in a letter of February, 1899; the reception was favorable--"I am glad that you like the plan," wrote Channing--for the agreement was signed later that very month.[7]

In the letter to Rhodes, Channing was not quite confident enough to refer to his proposed study as "the Great Work"; by 1902, he was, for he wrote to Brett that he was working for awhile on the Jefferson volume for the Hart series and his beginner's history since he was "tired of the Great Work".[8] From that point on, he almost always referred to the History in that manner, and so did his students.[9] Indeed, Channing's confidence in the fate of his volume is one of the strongest impressions one gets from his correspondence with Brett. In the summer of 1903 he wrote from Cotuit that he would be in Cambridge the following winter, "hard at work on that great and glorious work from which I really and truly expect some reputation and reward," and concluded that "if it turns out to be what it gives promise of being it will bring in to you some pennies--at least that is the way the thing looks to me."

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[7]Channing to Brett, February 4, 9, and 17, 1899, Macmillan Collection.

[8]Ibid., May 9, 1902.

[9]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 273.

By October he was at work on his final draft. By September of 1904 it was "almost ready," and two months later he had decided on the title, "The Planting of a Nation in the New World." Shortly before publication he enthusiastically stated that the volume was "likely to supply a part of a 'long-felt want' so far as serious students and teachers of Colonial history in the colleges and Normal schools are concerned." And just after publication he expressed pleasure with at least the appearance of the book, thanking Brett for its "attractive form," and referring to it as "one of the handsomest pieces of book-making which I have seen."[10]

Though the review quoted at the head of this chapter was a bit more unqualified in its praise than most, the work did not receive a single review generally critical in tone. This first volume covered the years 1000-1660. It included, therefore, those first five hundred years which Channing predicted would not give him much trouble. And he was right--it took him only about forty pages of the 537 in the volume to get into the sixteenth century. There is virtually nothing of the "European background" one ordinarily gets in the beginning of any study of American history. Channing must have felt he had nothing to contribute here, for this was often what determined his apportionment of space. There is some

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[10]Channing to Brett, July 5 and October 22, 1903; September 16, November 21, and December 3, 1904; and April 14, 1905, Macmillan Collection.

specifically English background, but this is spread throughout the volume in connection with its appropriate New World subject--for example, the discussion of local institutions in England in the final chapter.

Typically, once he had the preface out of the way,[11] Channing began his narrative in a serious, business-like manner. His first sentence does not really sound like a first sentence: "Religious enthusiasm, human affection, the pursuit of gain--these three motives account for the peopling of America by men of European stock and Christian faith."[12]

It was also typical of Channing that he was deeply involved in an attempt to work out a historical problem before he had finished the first page of the narrative. This was the discovery of the New World by Leif Ericsson. Channing's conclusion, after sifting all the evidence available to him at the time, was that Ericsson had indeed made the discovery, but that it had little significance:

> The whole matter of the Vinland voyages is one of those curious academic puzzles which are chiefly interesting on account of the absurd theories that have clustered around them. The history of America would have been precisely what it has been if Leif Ericsson had never been born and if no Northman had ever steered his knorr west of Iceland.[13]

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[11]Portions of the preface are reproduced on the title-page of this second part; it will be discussed in Chapter XI.

[12]Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume I: The Planting of a Nation in the New World, 1000-1660 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 1. Hereinafter referred to simply as History, followed by volume number and page.

[13]Ibid., pp. 1-6.

In the early pages of this opening volume of the Great Work, Channing developed still other habits which were to become outstanding characteristics of the set as a whole. The interest in naval history, which is evident throughout, shows up for the first time on page six, in a footnote discussing the types of ships used by the Northmen. The delight in destroying myths comes out in a small way in Channing's treatment of the relationship between Christopher Columbus and Martin Behaim. Referring to the possibility that Columbus may have been influenced by Behaim and his globe, Channing states that the globe was not completed until after Columbus had already left on his voyage, and concludes:

> Of course Columbus could not have seen this globe before he left Palos in August, 1492, nor is there the slightest reason to suppose that he ever saw it. Indeed, there is no evidence to show that Columbus and Behaim ever met. It is pleasant to think of them as making globes and charts together and talking about the various routes to India, but these thoughts are conjectures, pure and simple.[14]

Channing's geographical interest and knowledge is apparent throughout his coverage of the age of exploration and discovery. It does seem a bit strange, however, that he included nothing in the way of a "geographic setting for American history"--even in his Students' History he did that much.

The footnotes and end-of-chapter bibliographical comments, simply entitled "Notes," came to be looked upon as one

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[14] Ibid., p. 12.

of the most valuable features of Channing's work. In the latter, he ordimarily concentrated on controversial subjects, evaluated the sources, and sometimes made suggestions for further research.

The Channing literary style, for which he was so widely criticized, also is apparent from the very beginning. It certainly lacks polish all the way through; and yet it is completely clear and readable. Two specific problems, both perhaps minor, and yet irritating, which continually occur, are bad paragraphing and use of the phrase "It fell out...." Though his paragraphing seems to have become worse rather than better as the Great Work proceeded--in the sixth volume one sometimes gets the impression that Channing must have considered paragraphs a necessary evil, to be started and ended without consideration of what was being said--it was bad enough even in volume I. An example of a paragraph which obviously should have been divided is on page 465. Involved in the commercial problems of New Netherland, the reader is suddenly shocked to find the statement that "Adriaen van der Donck was one of the most interesting of the Dutch emigrants to New Netherland." and from that point on the paragraph is about Mr. van der Donck! An example of a paragraph which is obviously too long is the one which extends from page 467 to 470. The phrase, "It fell out," is used for the first time in the preface, though there it takes the present tense. In volume I it is used at least sixteen times. Channing repeated it where he

could have said "resulted," "developed," "happened," "occured," or a dozen other things; surely it would have been better if he had utilized some of these part of the time.[15]

The last of those Channing characteristics which come into play early in the History--and this one much more pleasant to comment upon--is the remarkable dry sense of humor. Three examples will suffice--all from the first chapter! Noting that Bartholomew Diaz had originally named the southern tip of Africa the Cape of Storms because of his encounter with a "furious northerly gale" in the region in 1486, Channing continued: "King John of Portugal, with a truer insight--and less personal recollection--renamed it the Cape of Good Hope." Evaluating Queen Isabella of Spain, he said: "It is impossible to study Isabella's career at all carefully and not be impressed with her great capacity as a ruler of men--including Ferdinand." After covering thoroughly the problem of deciding which island it was that Columbus named San Salvador, Channing speculated: "Our difficulty in identifying San Salvador with any known island, however, is small when compared with Columbus' difficulty in identifying it with any land described by Marco Polo and the other narrators of the wonders of the East."[16]

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[15]The phrase is used on the following pages, Ibid.: pp. vii, 49, 77, 128, 257, 268, 367, 380, 407, 421, 473, 494, 519, 521, and 534. (These are the ones noted by the present author; there may be others.)

[16]Ibid., pp. 11, 19, and 23.

Thus far anything of the content of The Planting of a Nation in the New World which has come forth has been merely illustrative of characteristics of Edward Channing as a historical writer. At this point it should prove useful to give a brief summary of the volume. This will be followed by touching upon several additional highlights, and, finally, by a survey of the way it was received by reviewers.

After his coverage of the age of exploration and discovery, Channing moved into the background of English settlement. His treatment of the founding and early development of the British North American colonies emphasized, of course, Virginia and Massachusetts. French, Spanish, Dutch, and Swedish colonial enterprises all received their due. The final two chapters covered "The Period of the Puritan Supremacy, 1650-1660," and what the colonies were like at the time of the Stuart Restoration of 1660.

Relatively few historical figures received praise from the pen of Edward Channing. Among those who did, in the period of American history before actual colonization, were Columbus ("...since the day when Alaric showed the road to the spoil of imperial Rome, no man has done more to change the course of human history...."), De Soto ("the most dramatic figure in the story of Florida") and his men ("surely one must award to these men, cruel and merciless though they were, a meed of praise for their constancy, courage, and devotion"), Champlain ("Of the earlier French explorers, fur traders, and colonists

none showed more indomitable perserverance....."), and Hawkins and Drake (respectively "one of the greatest of seamen of his day" and "the greatest sea fighter and plunderer of his day").[17]

Interestingly, it was with Channing's treatment of the age of exploration, and particularly Spanish activities that more reviewers found fault than with any other single thing in this first volume. Edward Gaylord Bourne, an authority on Spanish activities in the New World, might have been expected to concentrate his review on that topic, and indeed he did. He spent two pages in the American Historical Review discussing "errata or debatable points" in Channing's coverage of the subject. Two other reviewers considered Channing's treatment of Spain and its explorers too "severe" or at least unsympathetic.[18]

Channing's account of the Armada is both interesting and important. It proves that he could write very well at times; it indicates once again his interest in and skill in dealing with naval affairs; and it reveals what he considered to be the causes and significance of the Spanish-British conflict. Commercial factors were most important in the rivalry, according to Channing: "The religious difference between the

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[17] Ibid., pp. 25, 67, 72, 100, and 116.

[18] Reviews: E. G. Bourne, American Historical Review, XI (January, 1906), pp. 392-393; Independent, LVIII (June 19, 1905), p. 1479; and C. H. Van Tyne, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXVI (September, 1905), p. 422.

two peoples was entirely secondary." Secondary also was Philip II's pretension to the English throne. Here is Channing's description of the climax of this rivalry:

> Fortunately for England, in this last half century of growing estrangement and hatred, the Spaniards had not progressed in the art of maritime warfare, while Englishmen had broken loose from the traditions of the past and had evolved a new art of war applicable in the rough waters which washed the coasts of the British Isles. They invented a broadside fighting ship, placed on board of her the heaviest and best ordnance then known, and supplied her with crews drawn almost entirely from the seafaring population of the coast. A fleet of fifty ships of this kind encountered a fleet of sixty-two Spanish vessels built on the lines of the Mediterranean sea fighter and designed for hand-to-hand conflict in still water. There could be only one result, and the failure of the Spanish Armada was scarcely doubtful after the fleets had been one day in contact. Led by Drake in the Revenge, the English line of battle swept to windward by the end of the Armada, sending broadsides into the windwardmost Spanish ships, to which no effective reply could be made. So went on the merry dance up Channel until the neighboring shore of France prevented the English from keeping the weather gauge. Fire ships, heavy winds, and strong currents drove the Spaniards through the Straits of Dover in grave disorder. Then came the seaman's opportunity. Round and round the disordered fleet the English vessels sailed, pouring broadside after broadside into the helpless Armada until the gunners on the Spanish ships fled from their pieces and groveled on the decks. Only a sudden squall prevented Gravelines from being an earlier Santiago. Northward, the Invincible Armada fled and returned to Spain by way of Scotland and Ireland, every now and then dropping a vessel in the hungry sea or on the desolate shore.[19]

And here are his ideas of the significance thereof:

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[19] History, I, pp. 132-133.

> The year 1588...was one of the most memorable years in the history of the English race. For the United States it was more than memorable, it was vital. The defeat of the Spanish Armada accomplished the destruction of the morale of Spanish seamen; and that made possible the founding of Virginia, New England, New Netherland, and New Sweden on the Atlantic seashore of North America; from these in course of time developed the American nation.[20]

When he described the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I, Channing waxed eloquent, and also said a great deal of importance about English history and the background for colonial history:

> The reigns of Elizabeth Tudor [1558-1603] and James Stuart [1603-1625] ...mark in English history the transition from medieval to modern times.... The Tudor monarchy was essentially feudal, while the England of Charles I [1625-1649] was as essentially modern. The world was rapidly changing; this silent revolution took place in England earlier than elsewhere. The causes were many: the keen religious excitement of the preceding half century, the wave of imperialism which swept over the English race, and the reorganization of domestic economy which the religious disturbances and the intercourse with Eastern countries brought about. To this revolution Elizabeth and James powerfully contributed through the defects of their qualities: Elizabeth by her strength prevented reform; James by his foolish cunning made certain that the process of reorganization which was inevitable would, nevertheless, not be easy.[21]

Continuing still further with Elizabeth, Channing said she doubtless possessed "unerring political foresight and indomitable will," but lacked "the finer qualities of humanity."

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

The English people only bore with her and her opposition to reform "because, in the first place, they respected her, and in the second place, it was quite certain that she could not live forever. After her would come the deluge." Of the sovereign who inherited that deluge, James I, Channing concluded that he "lacked personal dignity and political wisdom," and, most devastating of all, that he "turned out to be one of those curiosities whom the laws of inheritance occasionally bring to the notice of mankind."

> Without thought, he involved himself in dispute after dispute with the various religious and civil elements which were pressing forward for changes in Church and State...he solidified against his son the most active and aggressive elements in the English population.[22]

Among those elements were, of course, some of the individuals who became involved in the first successful attempts at English colonization in North America.

After an excellent description of the disrupted economic conditions in England which also helped lead to an interest in the establishment of colonies, Channing began his narrative of the history of the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown--a thoroughly economically-motivated venture, in his view.[23] Channing hailed these earliest settlers of Virginia as "the first heroes of American history,"[24]

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[22] Ibid., pp. 138-140.

[23] Ibid., pp. 146-149, 155.

[24] Ibid., p. 170.

and he recognized the importance of the charter which made the colony possible. However, he felt compelled to be critical wherever possible. He devoted a lengthy footnote to an attack on the South's favorite myth of the colonial period: that the settlers of Virginia and New England were markedly different in motivation and make-up, that the former were "Cavaliers" and thus superior to the "Puritans." "No such characterization is possible," he concluded.[25] Channing could think of no praise for Virginia's traditional hero Captain John Smith, and emphasized "the utter unreliability of Smith's account [of Jamestown's early history] entirely apart from the Pocahontas story."[26]

Trying too hard to emphasize the significance of the Virginia Charter, Channing made contradictory statements about it. In one place he said the "most extraordinary thing" about it was "the bold and barefaced claim which James Stuart made to a large part of the New World only two years after the signing of the treaty of London," and only three pages later he contended that it was "even more memorable for its constitutional declarations than it was for its assertion of England's claim to a share of the New World." What he referred to in this latter statement was the so-called "rights of Englishmen" clause, which stated that the colonists and their posterity

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[25] Ibid., pp. 145-146.

[26] Ibid., p. 174.

should "have and enjoy all liberties, franchises, and immunities within any of our other dominions, to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within this our realm of England or any other of our said dominions." Though Channing pointed out that this was really of slight significance in maintaining the rights of English subjects, since these rights were "not subject to the king's fancy" and any Englishman had them anyway "so long as he settled on land claimed by England and acknowledged allegiance to the English crown," he did acknowledge that this clause nevertheless "marked an epoch in colonization":

> Permanent settlements, which in time were to grow into a great nation, were to be made under its guarantees. The success of the new movement was to depend largely on the proposition that colonists had the same rights as home-dwellers--a fact that marks off English colonization from all other colonization, ancient and modern.[27]

Channing's account of the history of the colony that developed under this charter is actually quite good--despite his grandson's complaint that one of the "drawbacks" of the volume was the "great complexity in the unfolding of the political organization of the Virginia colony."[28] Perhaps his

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[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 158-162.

[28] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 111. The other "drawback" noted by the grandson was not too logical either; he doubted "the relevancy to United States history of such a chapter as 'The English Seaman'." (The chapter was actually entitled "The English Seamen.")

visit to the site of Jamestown[29] added to his description of the settlement and its environs--though it could not have helped his vivid account of the 1609-1610 "Starving Time:"

> The starving settlers, like men on a wreck at sea, dogged the steps of the dying that they might fill their hungry bellies with the flesh of their dead comrades--some of them dug up the bodies of dead Indians and fed on the putrid flesh.[30]

The story of tobacco and its significance in the history of Virginia comes out well here. Channing "doubted if the James River colony would have long continued had it not been for the discovery of how to grow tobacco with profit." When, in 1616, a consignment of tobacco from John Rolfe's plantation was sold at a good price in London, "the permanence of English colonization in America was assured."[31]

Channing freely acknowledged the first Virginia assembly in 1619 as being "of first importance in our annals; it was, indeed, the 'mother' of the American representative legislature."[32]

The dissolution of the Virginia Company in 1624 Channing viewed as "beneficial to all concerned";

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[29]Edward Channing, "Remarks on a recent visit to Jamestown and other historical places in Virginia," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series, XIV (1900-1901), p. 175.

[30]History, I, pp. 180-181.

[31]Ibid., pp. 187-188.

[32]Ibid., p. 202.

> for that corporation was insolvent in 1624 and whatever further exertions it might have made would have been in the nature of recouping its members for past expenditures. James died in 1625, and his son, Charles I, immediately became involved in those financial and religious controversies which led to the Petition of Right, the martyrdom of Sir John Eliot, the meeting of the Long Parliament, the battle of Naseby, and the scaffold in front of Whitehall. Virginia and the other colonies were left to develop in their own way, with slight interferences from the king and the royal officials.[33]

Channing pointed out that the population of Virginia increased five-fold in the ten years after 1624, from 1,000 to 5,000, and concluded that the story of the colony in the fifteen years following the dissolution was "one of slowly growing contentment and prosperity."[34] In the later years of Virginia's history in this period, Sir William Berkeley, governor from 1641 to 1653 and again from 1658 to 1677, was, of course, singled out by Channing for extensive treatment. Channing considered him "a masterful man," and emphasized the absoluteness of his power, especially in his later years.[35]

Mention of Channing's sweeping generalizations as to the significance of the Virginia Charter leads to a discussion of a few of the other characteristics and threads which he developed in this first volume. For one of those characteristics was, beyond a doubt, overstatement. This is rather

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[33] _Ibid._, p. 225.

[34] _Ibid._, pp. 226-227.

[35] _Ibid._, pp. 230 and 234.

paradoxical, for most of Channing's narrative is just narrative, with a minimal amount of interpretation and/or evaluation. But when he did decide to evaluate, he did it strongly. Surely it was not true, even in 1905, that "Probably no single event in our history has aroused sharper controversy than the voyage of Verrazano in 1524." And was it really completely accurate to speak of the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in North America as "the series of wars and massacres which form the most dreary and heartrending tale of woe in our annals"? This tendency got Channing into trouble in a way other than contradicting himself, too, and that was the making of such a sweeping statement which was neither preceded nor followed by adequate facts to support it. The first sentence of the book, already once quoted, is a good example: "Religious enthusiasm, human affection, the pursuit of gain--these three motives account for the peopling of America by men of European stock and Christian faith." Did those three really cover all the motives for colonization? And, whether they did or not, did they not at least deserve a little clarification and justification before plunging into an account of the activities of Leif Ericsson? And finally, a similar example is found in this statement: "Fish and furs, and the hope of silks and spices, drew men to the barren shores of North America."[36] Not only is this another example of a statement

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[36]The four quotations are from Ibid., pp. 91, 108, 1, 90.

which is not followed by adequate explanation, but it and the opening sentence, when compared, provide still another case of Channing falling into the trap of self-contradiction because of his tendency to be too broad. One is hesitant to be overly critical of Channing for this habit, for he was often at his best when making such generalizations. But one can also wish he had been more careful.

Another trait of Channing as a historian, this one deserving of nothing but praise, was his constant warning of students of history to beware the pitfall of projecting one's own standards onto the historical period being studied. Examples are numerous, but let this one suffice:

> Of all the contradictions of history one that impresses the student is the constant and sincere religious fervor of the men with whom he comes into contact whose actions otherwise are often not commendable according to present day rules of conduct. The Spanish Menendez honestly believed that when he slaughtered fettered captives it was "for the glory of God." The English Hawkins was equally pious; on his second slave-trading voyage his flagship was The Jesus. He ordered his crews "to serve God daily" and "to love one another." ...The standards of those days were not the standards of our day, and the standards of three hundred years hence will doubtless be unlike those of our time.[37]

Closely related to Channing's debunking inclinations was his method of convincing the reader of something new and/or controversial without allowing him to get the impression of argument. An excellent example, appropriately enough, is his

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[37] Ibid., pp. 116-117. Other examples in the narrative are on pp. 19 and 77.

treatment of the Pilgrim landing. "Landing on the shore of what is now Provincetown harbor, the Pilgrims first set foot on American soil,"[38] he said matter-of-factly, and then proceeded with the narration of events. The controversial aspects of the case he relegated to the end-of-chapter bibliographical notes.

There are a few threads of interpretation obvious more or less throughout this first volume of the Great Work which should receive mention before a continuation of the chronological coverage. One of these is Channing's treatment of the Indian. He showed great insight in a simple way in some of his comments:

> The student of early American history can make one generalization with some degree of confidence: so long as the white invaders were fur traders and missionaries, there was peace on the frontier; but when the newcomers were farmers or planters, Indian war broke out before very long. In other words, while their hunting grounds were preserved to the Indians, they looked upon the whites as the benevolent dispeners of useful utensils, pots of iron, articles of personal adornment, fire water, and sometimes firearms; but when the whites began to plow the soil and to build houses, they seriously interfered with the Indians' food supply and with the only article of barter for which the white traders would give the Indian those things which he desired.[39]

But the dominant note in Channing's treatment of white relations with the Indian is one of irony. Speaking of French

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 454.

Jesuit activities among the Indians of North America, he concluded that "Conversion saved the aboriginal soul in the next world; it weakened mind and body in this." Of Spanish activities on the southeastern coast, he said, "Near at hand was a large river, which the explorers piously named St. John the Baptist, and then set to work capturing Indians." Channing actually said more of the later United States attitude toward the Indian than about the Spanish when he wrote:

> The Spanish conquest of America had in it certain of the elements of the crusades, the Spaniards sincerely desiring to convert the natives to Christianity. Such of them as became converted were treated with a consideration which was somewhat foreign to the Indian policy of later settlers of the United States.[40]

Channing made a distinction, however, between treatment of the Indians by the Spanish and French and their treatment by the British, especially in New England. Here, he said, the colonists tried to deal with the Indians fairly, recognized their claim to the land, took concern with their education and salvation, etc.[41]

Finally, a paradox appears in Channing's attitude toward the Indian. For, after all the apparent concern throughout for the Indian's welfare, he concluded that it was inevitable that Indian contact with the white should prove

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[40]The three statements are from Ibid., pp. 108, 61, and 40. Note that Channing, especially in the second quotation, was not quite so careful as he wished the historical student to be to judge by the standards of the time under consideration.

[41]Ibid., pp. 337-340.

disastrous to the Indian, for he was, after all, "the weaker race".[42]

The other two threads of interpretation are religious in nature. One is Channing's attitude toward religious toleration, or lack thereof; the other is the fact that he sometimes saw God intervening in the history of man. Channing was careful, as usual, in his remarks on religious toleration, to try to judge by standards of the day being considered. "It is well for the student once in a while to look the facts squarely in the face and to remember that while to-day religious freedom is a corner stone of American polity, in 1632 uniformity in religion was the keynote of the policy of England," he said. And in another place, still more forcefully: "It is as reasonable to think of the Union soldier with arms in his hands tolerating an armed Confederate clothed in his garb of grey as it is to think of William Laud tolerating John Winthrop or of John Winthrop tolerating William Laud. In times of stern religious enthusiasm toleration has no place." But Channing also showed a marked inclination to be sympathetic to the victims of religious intolerance and to praise those who supported toleration. Discussing a Roman Catholic priest in England who was scheduled to be executed but whose final fate is unknown, Channing said, "Let us hope that James interfered in time to save him." And speaking of a proclamation by a group of men

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

of New Netherland supporting religious toleration even to the extent of tolerating Quakers, he said, "This remarkable remonstrance was signed by thirty-one men, whose names are worthy of remembrance," and then proceeded to list them.[43]

Perhaps Channing did not see the hand of God intervening in human events often enough to justify considering it a "thread of interpretation." But it seems rather strange that a person as little religiously inclined as he apparently was, and as desirous of considering himself a scientific historian, should have relied upon such an idea at all. Noting that the French settled in "the cold and barren country of the North" and the Spanish in the subtropical land of Florida," he concluded of the vast area in between and of the people who were to occupy it:

> Nowhere on the surface of the earth was there a region better fitted for European colonization. ...A higher power reserved it for the slower, more patient Englishman and his kinsfolk from Northern Europe....Their mission was to plant a nation in the New World.[44]

In another place, Channing agreed with an earlier writer that "the hand of God was heavy" on the Virginia enterprise in 1609-1610.[45] Such comments were also to appear at several points in later volumes of the History. But the temptation

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[43] Ibid., pp. 249-250, 324, 249, and 474.

[44] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[45] Ibid., p. 180.

cannot be resisted to state that it seems more like Edward Channing to comment, after noting that Drake and his men had once gotten their ship stuck on a reef and decided to commend their case to the hand of God and had a sermon, that "The ship thereupon slid from her rocky perch, assisted by a sudden change of wind."[46]

After carrying the story of Virginia down to about 1641, Channing continued his narrative by devoting a chapter to the founding of Maryland. Both George and Cecil Calvert came off rather well in this account, the former as "the most respectable and honest of the mediocre statesmen whom James, Charles, and Buckingham gathered about them," and the latter even better as "an astute, capable man," also "tactful and courageously liberal." Channing delineated the reasons for the early lack of prosperity of the Maryland settlement: toleration of Catholics there tended to make Protestants go elsewhere, the land system was illiberal compared to other colonies, the proprietor kept a firm grasp on the government, and above all, "the constitutional arrangements of early Maryland were not altogether to the liking of the colonists" because of the "conflicting and ambiguous" provisions of the charter. He then concluded by emphasizing that it did not compare at all favorably in this period with Virginia.[47]

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[46] _Ibid._, p. 122.

[47] _Ibid._, pp. 241, 250, 264-265, and 267-268.

Edward Channing's grandson felt that there were two "highly impressive and fresh interpretations" in this first volume of the History. One was his definition of Puritanism; the other, his upgrading of the governors of New Netherland.[48] Channing's definition of Puritanism opened an excellent chapter entitled "The Beginnings of New England," in which he traced the English background for "The Coming of the Pilgrims" and "The Great Migration," the next two chapters. It was a simple but useful definition. "Seventeenth-Century Puritanism," he said, "was an attitude of mind rather than a system of theology,--it was idealism applied to the solution of contemporary problems."[49] He then elaborated:

> In religion it took the form of a demand for preaching ministers and for carrying to its logical ending the reformation in the ecclesiastical fabric which Elizabeth had begun and had stopped halfway. In society it assumed the shape of a desire to elevate private morals, which were shockingly low. In politics it stood for a new movement in national life which required the extirpation of the relics of feudalism and the recognition of the people as a power in the State. In short, Puritanism marked the beginning of

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[48] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 112.

[49] History, I, p. 271. Some of Channing's comments in the end-of-chapter note illustrate further his thoughts on the subject: "There is no good account of the rise of seventeenth-century Puritanism. The movement was largely social in its character; but hitherto all treatment of it has been mainly religious with more or less of politics thrown in. Gardiner's History of England is by long odds the best thing that has yet been done; but he so studiously avoids social and economic factors that some of his readers find it difficult to discover why there should have been any Puritan movement at all. The older accounts are almost entirely religious and regard seventeenth-century nonconformity as the child of Elizabethan separation--which is plainly impossible." (p. 292).

> the rising tide of human aspiration for something better than the world had yet known.[50]

"If this definition is vague," he concluded, "Puritanism itself was vague."[51]

Channing's comments on Puritanism compare rather well with those of the great American authority on the subject, Perry Miller. The latter emphasized that Puritanism was more easily described than defined. He described it as "that point of view, that philosophy of life, that code of values, which was carried to New England by the first settlers in the early seventeenth century." And Miller came very close to Channing's definition when he wrote: "Puritanism was not only a religious creed, it was a philosophy and a metaphysic; it was an organization of man's whole life...."[52]

Noting the rejection by Parliament of a series of reform proposals drawn up by Sir Edwin Sandys in 1604, Channing concluded that it was "not for us to regret their action, for their refusal of needed reform led directly to the settlement of New England." The year 1625, which saw the death of James, Channing felt opened "a new page" in English history, for the Commons voted to grant to Charles for only one year the subsidy of tonnage and poundage traditionally granted the monarch for life. The Lords voted against this, and Charles

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[50] _Ibid._, p. 271.

[51] _Ibid._

[52] Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, _The Puritans_ (New York: American Book Company, 1938), pp. 1 and 4.

proceeded to collect it anyway, without Parliament's approval, "until the final catastrophe placed the ports of the kingdom and the collection of the customs in the hands of the Long Parliament [1640-1660]."[53]

The Harvard Lampoon doubtless over-emphasized Channing's bias in favor of New England when it described his course in American Colonial History as one "in the history of Massachusetts with incidental references to the other colonies."[54] Certainly such a statement would not be accurate as to his apportionment of space in this volume; he was careful to give the middle and southern colonies their due. Still, those who approached it looking for evidence of prejudice could find some. Channing did, after all, devote an entire chapter to Massachusetts backgrounds, certainly more than he devoted to background for Virginia. He also had some of the strongest praise he ever had for any individual for William Bradford: a "most remarkable man," "a scholar," and "a born leader of men,"

> he had great common sense and an extraordinary capacity for bringing difficult business transactions to prosperous endings. The key to his success lay in the fact that in his own character he realized the sense of his declaration that "all great undertakings must be both enterprised and overcome by answerable courages."[55]

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[53] Ibid., pp. 180 and 185-186.

[54] Quoted in Glenn Weaver, "Edward Channing: A Literary Biography," Social Studies, LIV (March, 1963), p. 88.

[55] History, I, p. 295.

And he spoke fondly of the Pilgrims as a group:

> It is the heroism of this pathetic tragedy that gives the Pilgrim story...its place in our annals; for, truthfully, it may be said that the Mayflower brought to American shores that undefinable moral quality which is sometimes called the "New England conscience."[56]

In another place, he said, "Probably the world has never seen a more disinterested and law-abiding set of men than those who followed Bradford in the summer of 1621."[57]

After noting these statements, however, one should also take notice of what one critic considered Channing's excessive playing down of the Mayflower Compact.[58] Here is what Channing said about the famous document:

> The Mayflower Compact...was in the general form of a Separatist church covenant.... [It] was not in any way the constitution of an independent state, as has sometimes been said. It was, indeed, precisely the opposite,--an agreement made by Englishmen who, finding themselves on English soil without any specified powers of government, agreed to govern themselves until the king's pleasure should be signified. There was not the slightest thought of independence, and the government thus instituted was legal as between the signers under the Common Law.[59]

In the same vein was his already-mentioned treatment of the Pilgrim landing at Plymouth Rock. This is doubtless

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[56] Ibid., p. 308.

[57] Ibid., p. 312.

[58] Review, Robert Livingston Schuyler, The New York Times, July 15, 1905, p. 464.

[59] History, I, pp. 308-309.

the one myth which Channing went to the greatest length to destroy. It is beautifully satirized in a little poem:

> Oh, Channing gets awfully sore,
> And talks a half-hour or more,
> To show that a band of Pilgrims can't land
> On a rock a half-mile from the shore.[60]

His comments on the subject in the History were guarded, but still made their point.[61] And his name appeared in print in at least two other places in connection with the landing.[62]

And finally, though Channing conceded that "Seldom in history has a more able representative body had so long a

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[60]Clipping in "Quinquennial" folder from the Boston Herald, January 8, 1931.

[61]Most of them come in an end-of-chapter note, History, I, pp. 320-321. Here are the significant portions: "It is difficult to treat a subject like this historically, because the matter is one of sentiment rather than of fact. We rightly celebrate the coming to America of the ideals typified in some of the Pilgrims. Harking back to the characteristics of our remote ancestors, like them we associate events with trees and with stones. It is to be hoped that Plymouth Rock may long continue to form the theme of annual after-dinner discourses, and of more formidable set orations. From the historian's workshop, however, the outlook is necessarily somewhat different. He sees that there never was a "landing" on Plymouth Rock or elsewhere, as described in oration or shown in painting and engraving. Pilgrim foot first pressed the soil of the New World on the shore of Provincetown harbor....On the day (December 12-22, 1620) we commemorate as "forefathers' day," we have absolutely no knowledge of the doings of the forefathers. The mistake as to date arose in transferring old-style dates to those of modern times and is entirely excusable. The tradition of Plymouth Rock being used as a landing place goes back to Elder Faunce who, in 1741, at the age of ninety-one, undertook to repeat what he had heard years before from the original settlers."

[62]"Did the Fathers Land on Plymouth Rock on Forefather's Day?" Magazine of American History, XIII (January, 1885), p. 103; and "Remarks on the course and landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, XVII (1903), pp. 381-382.

measure of life as the Massachusetts General Court," he emphasized that "John Winthrop was in no sense a popular man or one who had any confidence in what would nowadays be regarded as liberal government" and that "the government of the Bay Colony was...an aristocratic republic, that is to say a republic in which the franchise was strictly limited to the upper classes."[63] In other words, the government of colonial Massachusetts was not a democracy.[64]

Other highlights in Channing's coverage of the history of New England in this period are his comments on the Great Migration, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the New England Confederation. Here is his summary paragraph on the Great Migration and its significance:

> The Great Emigration was in many respects singularly like that earlier fleeing of the Israelites into the wilderness. In both cases the religious motive was at the bottom, and the exiles forsook the fleshpots of their earlier home, which was, to use Winthrop's words, "some pinch to them at first." As the Israelites clave to their God and to the religion which he gave to them, so the Massachusetts leaders left the land of their birth to establish a "particular church" in the American wilderness and to nourish and watch over it in its infancy. They had not the remotest thought of founding in New England an asylum for the religiously persecuted of the earth. What they came here to do was to secure the freedom of their own consciences. They departed from their

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[63] History, I, p. 348.

[64] It is interesting, in view of this, that Channing once wrote to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., that he believed it was to the Puritans of New England "that the foundation of legal and political equality is due." (January 30, 1892, Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.)

> country, kindred, and fathers' houses that they might enjoy divine worship without offense either to God, man, or their own consciences; or, as Winthrop expressed it, "to live under a due form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical." They came to establish a Bible commonwealth in which they should play the principal parts and bend others to their will.[65]

Channing gave Rhode Island's founder, Roger Williams, favorable treatment,[66] and had nothing but praise for Rhode Island itself:

> In Rhode Island, individualism has always had its highest development; in colonial days there was no capital in which the people of all the settlements were on a footing of equality. The General Assembly had no fixed place of meeting, but convened successively in different parts of the colony. There were no rules in Rhode Island by which affairs should be carried on; what one found on the island of Aquidneck he might be reasonably certain he would not find in Provincetown or in Warwick. There was one great exception to this general statement: everywhere in the colony men held strong opinions, and everywhere there was extreme toleration for the ideas of others. In such a community, men of power and independence were likely to arise who would profoundly influence the thoughts, lives, souls, and doings of others; and such men have been Rhode Island's chiefest contribution to American nationality.[67]

Two things especially strike the reader in Channing's account of the early years of Connecticut's history. One is his emphasis on the fact the dominant motivation in its settlement was "that incessant search for cheaply acquired fertile lands which has been one of the mainsprings of the growth of

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[65] History, I, pp. 328-329.

[66] Ibid., pp. 362-368.

[67] Ibid., p. 398.

the United States." The other is his evaluation of the famous constitution known as the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut of 1639. He did grant it "the distinction of being the first written political consitution in which the functions of government are formulated in detail," but he also pointed out that it "did little more than to formulate on paper the existing government of Massachusetts Bay."[68]

Channing considered the New England Confederation of great significance:

> Considering the lack of experience which the framers of this federal pact necessarily had in the drawing up of a constitution, this document is a remarkable production. It did not put a final ending to disputes between the four colonies, and it sometimes proved to be unsuited to the exigencies of the time. Nevertheless, the articles continued without amendment for forty years; they carried New England successfully through the fiercest Indian war of the seventeenth century. Had the Confederation been in existence in the next century, it is very possible that the northern colonies might have been saved much of the misery of the French and Indian Wars.[69]

Channing's upgrading of the governors of New Netherland, which his grandson considered an important interpretation in this volume, obviously did not include the best known of those governors, Peter Stuyvestant, for the chapter which dealt with him was called "The Misrule of Peter Stuyvestant," and characterized him as a "crusty, hot-tempered official"

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[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 399, 404-407.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

and a "despot."[70] Channing did attempt to alter favorably the reputations of Wouter Van Twiller and William Kieft.[71]

"The early Stuarts and the Puritan rulers of England were so fully occupied with English politics that they had no time to interfere" with the development of the colonies along lines "radically unlike those which prevailed in England," noted Channing as he neared the end of the first volume of his magnum opus. "From the beginning the English colonies in America had enjoyed a large measure of freedom from the control of the mother country; since the accession of Charles I they had exercised practical self-government." Channing made it clear that this helped explain colonial opposition to later British measures, specifically the Navigation Act of 1651. He explained this latter measure, incidentally, as primarily "one step in a series of acts all having for their aim the restricting of English and colonial trade to English and colonial vessels" going all the way back to the time of Richard II and not as a result of the commercial rivalry with the Dutch as many others had done.[72]

It was only in the closing pages that Channing saw fit to return to what he saw, according to his preface, as "the most important single fact in our development:"

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[70] Ibid., pp. 461-462.

[71] Ibid., pp. 450-459.

[72] Ibid., pp. 421, 485, 490-491.

> In studying institutional topics, it is necessary to note both similarities and dissimilarities. This is especially true when investigating the history of the communities which later developed into the United States. The greatest fact of American history has been the union in one federal state of peoples living in widely separated regions under very different conditions of society and industry. This union was made possible by the fact that the institutions and the political ideals of these communities had in them so much that was akin. Institutional and social peculiarities strike the student's attention with much greater force than do those things which are common to all; it is therefore necessary to be especially careful not to be unduly affected by that which is quaint or abnormal. The most marked political characteristic of the English race has always been its conservatism in adhering to that which is old for no other reason than because it is that which exists. It was this quality that made republican and democratic institutions possible in English communities. It was this spirit of conservatism that preserved in the English colonies the political and constitutional ideas which made the forces of union always more powerful than those that operated toward particularism.[73]

Finally, though he did not point out that the colonies were essentially left alone and allowed to develop along their own lines in the period from 1607 to 1660, Channing concluded by emphasizing that the colonists at the end of that period were still Englishmen:

> Human nature, in short, was much the same in Virginia and Massachusetts, in Maryland and Rhode Island, that it was in contemporary England.... The colonists were still Englishmen in their feelings and prejudices, in their virtues and in their vices. Contact with the wilderness and freedom from the constitutional restraints which held down Englishmen in England had not yet brought to the surface the latent elasticity of the Germanic race, had not yet resulted in making the colonists

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[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 511-512.

> Americans. A century of exposure to colonial conditions was required to force the English in America away from the traditions and ideals of those who continued to live in the old land. The year 1660 marks an epoch in the history of the English race because the Restoration denoted the breaking down of the desire for reform in England and the intensifying of those forces which the Puritans had striven to overthrow. In colonial history it ended the first period in our annals. It saw a nation definitely planted in the New World.[74]

That this first volume of the Great Work did not receive one generally critical review has already been noted; so have two of the minor criticisms which were made--Channing's treatment of Spanish exploration and his excessive playing down of the Mayflower Compact. Channing's grandson probably summarized the reviews as well as possible when he said, "The reviewers of this first volume received it with moderate praise."[75]

Channing responded perceptively to the reviews of volume I, and book reviews in general, in a letter to Brett dated September 2, 1905:

> The notices of vol. 1 have been generally favorable - but American book reviews are poor things. When I was young and had not got my footing in Harvard University I used to write book notices + know just how it is done. I gave them a nice preface to my vol. 1 + they have made full use of it. I presume that book notices pay the publishers or review copies would not be sent.[76]

Channing did not regard too highly the review in the Nation. "I thought that the 'Nation' notice meant well," he

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[74] Ibid., pp. 536-537.

[75] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 113.

[76] Channing to Brett, September 2, 1905, Macmillan Collection.

wrote to Brett, "but that the writer was incompetent and had not read much of the book."[77] And he was right. The anonymous reviewer could find virtually nothing to criticize about the volume, but his comments were at times simply unfathomable--as, for example, when he stated that "the political institutions of the colonies are dismissed with a brief, though often a discriminating, treatment," then went on to justify the brevity of treatment by concluding that it was "unhistorical to ascribe to them [the colonies] a political quality which was apparent only after the event." Some have said of Channing's History that it was entirely too political; and, as for the last statement, what does it mean? The reviewer had praise for Channing's style, considered his realization of his dual goal of seeing the colonies as a part of the English Empire and of viewing the subject as the record of an evolution as "the distinguishing characteristic" of the volume, and concluded that "to do justice to the book it is necessary to read it, and that is undoubtedly what all students of American history will do while awaiting the subsequent volumes."[78]

The comments of William Roscoe Thayer in a review article in the Atlantic Monthly Channing considered "flattering." Thayer made some valid points, but he did wax rather eloquent when he said that, from Channing's beginning, "it is

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[77] Channing to Brett; undated but apparently written in July, 1905, Macmillan Collection.

[78] Nation, LXXXI (July 13, 1905), p. 40.

evident that this will be a standard history":

> He writes with perfect independence, after weighing all the testimony. He is very sober-minded, with a preference for moderate statement, and for reducing legends to their lowest terms....As there is in America no historian more careful and thorough than he, and none more loyal to the scientific method, so it is noteworthy that he has given great attention to the literary form of his history. From the promise of his first volume one may predict that he will hold for years to come a position similar to that held by Bancroft in an earlier generation.[79]

C. H. Van Tyne, of the University of Michigan, praised Channing's work highly in a review in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. He felt that "in scholarship the work easily leads any other attempt of the kind," and considered the style "clear, pleasing, and admirably simple." Other than the already-mentioned unsympathetic treatment of the Spanish explorers, the only criticism Van Tyne could come up with was that there could have been more European background placed before exploration and discovery in the narrative, and this he did not consider particularly important. He praised the bibliography ("Nothing more valuable exists for the use of the advanced student of American history"), noted Channing's ability to differ with tradition without leading the reader to question him, and concluded that the volume stood "in the forefront of scholarly efforts to tell the history of this country."[80]

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[79] Channing to Brett, undated but apparently written in July, 1905, Macmillan Collection; William Roscoe Thayer, "The Outlook in History," Atlantic Monthly, XCVI (July, 1905), p. 77.

[80] Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXVI (September, 1905), pp. 422-423.

Interestingly, The Planting of a Nation in the New World was well-received by the reviewer for the English Historical Review. He emphasized Channing's moderation, especially in dealing with the relations of the colonies to the mother country:

> Between the mother country and the colonies he holds the scales fair, doing justice to Great Britain without falling into the exaggerated imperialism of some recent American authors. Though his heart is with the colonists he does not fail to point out their weaknesses, and though tracing in detail the record of English mismanagement he rarely exaggerates.[81]

Edward Gaylord Bourne made it clear in the American Historical Review that his only criticisms of the volume dealt with "smaller details connected with the period of discoveries." His over-all evaluation was filled with praise.[82] So were those in Dial and Public Opinion.[83] The comments of Theodore C. Smith, a former Channing student, in the Atlantic Monthly, are typical of the "moderate praise" this initial installment of the Great Work received, and serve as a fitting conclusion here. After noting that the quality which made the book "stimulating" and "noteworthy" was "the impression of

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[81]William L. Grant, English Historical Review, XXIV (January, 1909), pp. 145-146. This was actually a review of both volumes I and II; there was not really much on relations between mother country and colonies in volume I, but the good reception of the work seems significant at this stage.

[82]Edward Gaylord Bourne, American Historical Review, XI (January, 1906), pp. 390-393.

[83]St. George L. Sioussat, Dial, XXXIX (August 16, 1905), pp. 83-84; and Public Opinion, XXXIX (August 5, 1905), p. 188.

personality and individual authority," he concluded:

> Beginning without introduction or flourish, the author narrates the course of events, emphasizing important points, calmly ignoring minor ones, never theorizing, never arguing, but evincing a steady clearness of judgment which appeals to the reader with growing power. The sense of balanced judgment is reinforced by the shrewd, occasionally ironical or humorous style which reflects the personality of the author. The book is not universal, it is not even broad; it is just the utterance of the personal opinions of Edward Channing, who has devoted his life to this particular field. It is alive all through.[84]

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[84]Theodore Clarke Smith, Atlantic Monthly, XCVIII (November, 1906), pp. 702-711.

The comments of two reviews are relegated to footnote status because of their inaccurate, though interesting, comments. Robert Livingston Schuyler, in the New York Times, July 15, 1905, noted wrongly that Channing steered clear of the numerous controversies centering around Columbus, then went on to the shockingly false conclusion that "Channing follows the safe plan of always agreeing with the majority and is wise in doing so, for he has none of that special ability, of making the worse appear the better cause, which charms while it warns us to caution, in such a writer as John Fiske." (p. 474) Henry Russell Spencer missed the point just as badly, and in perhaps an even more important way, when he decided that Channing's work was "evidently designed and probably destined" to be a popular work for reading by the layman! He apparently came to this conclusion because he could not find any "distinctive unifying principle" to justify re-telling the story to scholars--one cannot help but wonder if he read the preface and final chapter--and because he considered Channing's use of the sources "to have been such as would be dictated by his writing to the general reader." This last idea the reviewer could not even reconcile with his own criticism of Channing for taking up too much space by quoting from the sources, much less with the justifiable praise accorded Channing by Morison and others for his wide search of the sources.--Political Science Quarterly, XXI (June, 1906), pp. 346-348.

CHAPTER IV

A CENTURY OF COLONIAL HISTORY

> The volume will not be readable except in spots; but it will please the profession and will give the set a good position.[1]

One Saturday morning Edward Channing was seen in the Harvard Library by an acquaintance who asked him if he were going to the football game that afternoon. "No!" Channing replied, almost indignantly, and continued, "Do you know what I am going to do this afternoon? I shall work in the library until it closes, then I shall go home and work."[2] This became more and more typical of his habits as the Great Work proceeded.

Channing was at work on volume II while volume I was still in progress, for he wrote to Brett in September, 1904, that the first was almost ready and the second about half done. He first ventured an estimate as to when he could have volume II completed in June, 1906--he thought he could make it by March of the following year. But he was over-optimistic, for about a month after that proposed deadline he was assuring Brett that dropping the Radcliffe portion of his teaching "means extra speed on Vol. II." In August, 1907, he thought

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[1]Edward Channing to George P. Brett, [President, Macmillan Company] , April 26, 1908, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

[2]Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

it was about ready.[3] A Century of Colonial History was finally published in August of 1908.

Perhaps part of the reason Channing could not meet his time-table lay in the peculiar difficulties with which this volume presented him. "There is no good secondary work on the period between 1660 and 1760," he lamented in his bibliographical comments at the end of the first chapter.[4] At the time he was writing, it was certainly true that this was a generally neglected period; that it was true showed in Channing's work. For, though it is an exaggeration to say, as some have, that Channing simply strung together a bunch of monographs, it is true that when he did not have the works of others to rely upon, the quality of his own work suffered somewhat. He seems to have realized this himself, if we can accept the letter quoted at the head of this chapter as any indication. Paul H. Buck considered volume II the weakest of the six.[5]

Reviewers were kind, but they too noted the problem. The Dial felt that, "If any unfavorable criticism be deserved," it was that the coverage was better to 1688 than after; the explanation for this was that Channing had richer monographic

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[3]Channing to Brett, September 16, 1904, June 11, 1906, undated but apparently written in April of 1907, and August 7, 1907, Macmillan Collection.

[4]Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume II: A Century of Colonial History, 1660-1761 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), p. 26.

[5]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

literature to rely on for the earlier period, whereas the later years had been largely neglected.[6] The more able review in the American Historical Review clarified the situation further, and drew some interesting conclusions. Noting that the years 1689 to 1750 had been the most neglected of this generally unworked period, and that scholars had thus awaited with particular expectancy Channing's account of those years, he went on:

> If, after a perusal of the volume, we find it measuring up to a higher standard than that attained by its predecessors, we may deem the praise well earned; if, on the other hand, we find it falling short of the ideal, we may discount our criticism by noting that the day has not come when the history of this troublesome eighteenth century can be written adequately....That Professor Channing should have grappled with the task single-handed with half his source material beyond his reach, bears witness to his courage; that he should have produced a book destined for some years to stand alone as the only competent history of the period is a certain proof of his ability and understanding.[7]

After delineating what he considered to be some of the major specific weaknesses and strengths of the book, the reviewer concluded:

> We may not agree with all that Professor Channing has said or be entirely satisfied with his way of treating the history of this period, but we do acknowledge that he has produced a book of first importance for the study of the neglected period and in so doing has removed a reproach hitherto cast upon historical scholarship in America.[8]

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[6] St. George Leakin Sioussat, Dial, XLVI (May 16, 1909), p. 328.

[7] American Historical Review, XIV (January, 1909), p. 364. This review was unsigned, but J. Franklin Jameson, who was the editor at the time, apparently wrote it himself.

[8] Ibid., p. 366.

In general terms, volume II covered four main subjects. One of these was certain aspects of the social and cultural history of the period, such as labor, immigration, religion, and education. Second was the history of individual colonies. The Anglo-French struggle for control of North America, culminating in the French and Indian War, constituted a third distinct topic. And finally there was the all-important theme of relations between the mother country and the colonies, with particular attention, of course, to such commercial aspects of colonial policy as the Navigation Acts.

Reviewers differed widely in their evaluation of Channing's treatment of the first of these subjects, i.e. the social and cultural material. One felt the most obvious shortcoming of the book was the inadequate attention given to these topics, and that only religion received adequate attention. Another, however, referred to these chapters on labor, education, industry, and the like, as "brilliant little essays." And still another thought they were "excellent."[9] Probably the most important thing to note is that Channing was departing somewhat from tradition even in giving such material the coverage he did. It is true, however, that the five chapters near the end of the volume which were devoted to this type of subject matter left something to be desired.

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[9]Emory R. Johnson, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXXIII (March, 1909), p. 245; St. George Leakin Sioussat, Dial, XLVI (May 16, 1909), p. 328; Nation, LXXXVII (November 5, 1908), p. 440.

The chapter entitled "Systems of Labor" is extremely interesting reading, but it actually deals only with indentured servitude (briefly) and slavery (extensively); there is nothing on free labor in the colonies. Perhaps the dominant impression in the reader's mind upon completion of this chapter is the problem which Channing seems to have had in remaining objective when dealing with slavery. He suppressed extreme statements, but his feelings came through. He hailed as "Some of the more farsighted" those Virginia planters who lamented the increase of slavery; he treated favorably the earliest American protesters against human slavery; and he concluded the chapter thus:

> The English government was unalterably opposed to the limitation of labor in the plantations. By the exercise of the veto power and by instructions to the governors, it forced negroes and convicts upon an unwilling people and fully justified Jefferson's indignant phrase in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence: "He has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce."[10]

A hint of prejudice showed in another way when Channing emphasized certain (admittedly true) statements about how different slavery was in Massachusetts, particularly the smallness of number and the generosity of treatment.[11] Still, in all fairness, Channing's constant attempt to avoid superimposing his

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[10] History, II, pp. 377, 395-398, 398.

[11] Ibid., pp. 383-385.

own day's set of values upon the period being considered should be noted. After discussing at some length the modes of punishment of slaves, he emphasized that these "were rather a mark of the time than the infliction of cruel and unusual punishments on any one particular portion of the community," and concluded:

> These punishments appear ferocious to the modern reader. It may well be asked, however, whether in the less nervous condition of human beings in those days and the different standards of shame which prevailed they were not actually much less severe than they would be at the present time, when the human body and mind are more highly strung?[12]

"The Coming of the Foreigners" dealt primarily, of course, with non-English immigrants to the colonies, the French Huguenots and the Germans receiving special attention. The former Channing praised as an "industrious, intelligent, and upright race." The latter he credited with being "a martial race" which had always given its service "in defense of freedom and of right" whenever required.[13] Some brief coverage of such reforms as poor laws, hospitals, and prisons also made its way into this chapter. Here Channing hailed Pennsylvania for its reform leadership, and concluded that the colonies had advanced beyond Europe in these areas by 1760.[14]

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 392-394. Even this pitfall Channing did not completely avoid in this chapter, for, after noting the minimal fines assessed on a man and a woman for kidnapping a young girl in London and sending her into servitude in the colonies, he stated that, "had they stolen goods to the value of a few shillings, they would have been sentenced to death as felons," and then berated the judges for their "callousness to human suffering." (p. 369)

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 403, 411.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 416-420.

Channing's sympathetic attitude toward victims of religious intolerance, which became evident in his first volume, continues in the chapter entitled "Religion and Toleration, 1689-1760." More important, however, are his accounts of the conflict over the appointment of a separate Anglican bishop for the colonies and of the Great Awakening. The former can be dismissed briefly, for the interesting thing is the rather strange conclusion which Channing drew after briefly tracing the conflict: "The episode is important, not only in itself, but as showing how careful the English government was of the feelings and desires of the colonists."[15] He certainly did not feel that the English government was careful of the feelings and desires of the colonists in other areas!

The great religious revival of the eighteenth century known as the Great Awakening in the American colonies received rather extensive coverage from the pen of Channing. "Earthquake and pestilence had something to do with preparing the minds of the people for emotional excitation," he noted, "but that it came when it did was due to the presence and exhortations of two remarkable men, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield." Edwards, Channing considered "a mental prodigy," with "wonderful skill in the use of language and remarkable power of expression." Whitefield was a person whose "remarkable power of stirring human souls" was eloquently testified to by the fact that Benjamin Franklin once began listening to

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

one of his sermons determined not to give a penny when the collection was taken and ended by giving all the money he had in his pockets. Channing refused to cast any doubt on the sincerity of Edwards, Whitefield, and other Great Awakening preachers, but he was perfectly willing to emphasize the detrimental effects of their work. The "manifestations" or "bodily effects" which the sermons frequently produced on their hearers "were the least evil part of the results which accompanied the revivals," he noted, and went on:

> Many strongly religious men in New England and elsewhere doubted the goodness of the work which the revivalists were doing. Later Edwards himself seems to have come to a realizing sense of the insufficiency of the work and to have admitted that bodily pain and excitation were not true religion. In point of fact, the Great Awakening resulted in the formation of two groups of Congregationalists in Connecticut and in the lessening of the hold which religion had on the people throughout the colonies. So far as the breaking down of the barriers between denominations denoted a diminution of the influence of religion, these results are to be deplored; for it must be remembered that religious liberalism has ever gone hand in hand with religious indifference; the religious enthusiast is always intolerant.[16]

At the end of each of the series of chapters under consideration, Channing made an attempt to relate his topic for the chapter to the general colonial situation in 1760. The attempt as regarding religion is quite thought-provoking:

> The sternness of religious belief, which had strongly marked the period of early colonization, in 1760 had given way to mental excitation over

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 443.

> questions of the political rights of the colonists and of the connection between those rights and constitutional limitations. It is not until the time of the Stamp Act that these considerations come out prominently; but the breaking down of religious beliefs, or the lack of interest in religion, which plainly appears in the reaction from strictness in religious observances, may be regarded as leaving the colonial mind open to new impressions, to that new train of thought which was so sedulously cultivated by the political writers of the ten years before 1775. It is for this reason that the religious condition of the colonies in 1760 has been so fully treated at this place. Philosophy, which up to the middle of the century had concerned itself mainly with religion, from this time has to do chiefly with politics. To this the ever widening opportunities of intellectual improvement powerfully contributed.[17]

The first thing to note about "The March of Education, 1690-1760," though by no means the most important, is its diversity. Education is covered, true enough, but so are witchcraft, inter-colonial communication, the postal service, and, finally, printing, with particular emphasis on newspapers and freedom of the press. Channing must have felt, quite simply, that he did not have enough material on these other subjects to justify an entire chapter.

It must be admitted, however, that Channing made a rather good case for connecting witchcraft with education. "The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the lowest stage of colonial culture," he said. "The witchcraft persecutions of its last decade closed this epoch of progress downward." He made a major point out of maintaining proper

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[17] _Ibid._, p. 454.

perspective, as usual, making an off-the-cuff reference to an averred witchcraft episode in 1901. Still, his comments, especially on the 1692 Salem episode, were highly critical. Cotton Mather was said to have "had great influence in preparing the minds of the people of New England for the appearance of witches in their midst" by his writings on that subject. Governor Sir William Phips was "an ignorant, superstitious, well-meaning person, who was extremely ill fitted to cope with such a crisis." And of the episode as a whole he concluded: "There can be little doubt that in the course of these persecutions the charge of witchcraft was used for purposes of private revenge and also to get rid of unpopular persons."[18]

In the really quite brief comments on education, New England in general and Harvard in particular came off very

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[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 456-462. Channing elaborated as follows on the causes of the Salem delusion: "With the knowledge that is at present available as to the structure and working of the human brain, it is not difficult to account for episodes like the witchcraft delusion in Massachusetts and the religious revival of fifty years later throughout the colonies. History is rich in reproductions of the characteristics of remote progenitors; thus, after the manner of the ancient Druids, men and women, even at the present time, delight to venerate trees and stones, and occasionally to return to the thoughts of those early peoples who believed in the reality of ghostlike apparitions that nowadays are regarded as childish. By long dwelling on things super-natural, the mind compels itself to believe in them, and one human brain by concentration affects another without the medium of ordinary physical action. When the results are beneficient or are not harmful, they are denominated spiritualism, hypnotism, telepathy, mental suggestion; when, in times past, they were malevolent, manifestations of unknown forces were termed witchcraft." (p. 456)

well. Channing set the scene in a general way for his educational comments in this fashion:

> With the opening of the eighteenth century new forces came into play, not only to enlarge the settler's material outlook, but to liberalize his mind. Among these were the constant discussion in political gatherings, the establishment and spread of newspapers and magazines, and the great enlargement of the means for literary and scientific education. Schools and colleges were everywhere founded and improved, but perhaps the most potent influences were the assemblings of professional men, merchants, and agriculturists in the colonial legislative bodies, the town meetings, and the open elections which were the rule in the colonies to the south of the Hudson.[19]

His mention of newspapers here helped him make the transition to his coverage of the John Peter Zenger libel trial.

Channing emphatically stated that "the outcome of the Zenger case was of the utmost significance" for America. In his concluding remarks, he made it eminently clear why this was true:

> After 1735 there were unjust libel suits, and the example of the jury in the Zenger case was not always followed; but Gouverneur Morris was nevertheless correct when he said that the trial of Zenger was "the morning star of that liberty which subsequently revolutionized America."
>
> The importance of this decision lay in the fact that the newspapers which were printed in the colonies after that time came to be the vehicle of instruction on the constitutional status of the American colonists and on the rights of the Americans as men in the light of the law of nature and of theory. These articles were written by the ablest politicians and literary men of the day in America. The discussions which constantly took place in assemblies, town meetings, and committees were also published in the newspapers. They kept alive and directed the forces of liberty and finally brought

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 462.

> about the inevitable separation from the mother country sooner than it would otherwise have occurred. Had the newspaper press been muzzled, it is possible that the Declaration of Independence might have been written, but it certainly would not have been adopted by a Continental Congress in the year 1776, or, in all probability, for many years thereafter.[20]

The last of the five non-political chapters, "Colonial Industry and Commerce," included good brief discussions of agriculture, industry, commerce, and the currency problem. Most of the material therein relates better, however, to the topic of relations between England and her colonies.

Doubtless the least satisfactory part of this weakest volume of the Great Work was Channing's account of the history of individual colonies during the years 1660 to 1760. This must have been the material uppermost in his own mind when he expressed concern about the readability of the work. Though he tried hard, the five chapters which logically fall into such a categorization make for pretty drab reading. He waxed eloquent now and then, as when he referred to Dyer's Rebellion in New York in 1680 as "the first colonial rebellion against taxation from England," then went on to say that it carried one "backward to the times of the Puritan Rebellion in England and forward to the days of Otis, Henry, and Dickinson in America." But one wonders here whether he really meant it, or was simply trying to make something sound dramatic.[21]

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[20] Ibid., pp. 488-489.

[21] Ibid., p. 60. The five chapters referred to are numbers II, III, IV, XI, and XII, entitled respectively "New

There are some highlights in these chapters. One is Channing's brief account of King Philip's War, 1675-1676. Though he repeated here his belief that "The policy of the New England colonists toward the aboriginal inhabitants of that region had been enlightened and humane from the beginning," Channing did recognize the problem of the Indians being pushed off their lands. Thus he saw the conflict as "one desperate attempt to regain their lost hunting grounds." The effort failed, of course, but the major significance to him was the extent to which it weakened New England militarily, financially, etc.[22]

Channing's account of Bacon's Rebellion is relatively dispassionate, though he did feel that "Bacon and those who abetted him represented the democratic elements in Virginia society as opposed to the aristocratic desires of Berkeley and his followers," and concluded the chapter with a sentence which seems to imply more than it really says: "From this picture of royal oppression it is pleasant to turn to the attempts of humbler men to right the ills of humanity by governing through love instead of through fear."[23]

York and New Jersey, 1664-1680," "Virginia and New England, 1660-1680," "The Founding of Pennsylvania, 1681-1690," "Seventy Years of Pennsylvania Politics, 1690-1760," and "Carolina in Commotion, 1689-1750."

[22] _Ibid._, pp. 76-79.

[23] _Ibid._, pp. 88, 91.

The group which Channing credited with attempting to govern through love was the Quakers. He praised them in other ways, too:

> The Quakers were "a peculiar people," so far as religion and social institutions were concerned; but as to politics, they were ordinary, everyday Englishmen. They had that distrust of parental and theoretical government which has ever been the mainstay of the Anglo-Saxon race....[24]

The Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges of 1701 Channing also regarded very highly. "It is the most famous of all colonial constitutions," he said, "because it contained in its provisions many of the most important features of all workable written constitutions."[25] And finally he lauded the pacifistic Quaker legislators who voluntarily resigned in the French and Indian War crisis of 1755: "Retirement from public life under such circumstances and for such reasons is an act of public spirit and political disinterestedness that seldom has been paralleled in the history of legislative bodies."[26] But Channing could not brook what he considered the "interferences with personal freedom" in connection with the discipline enforced on members of the Society of Friends.[27] And he had only moderate praise for the founder of Pennsylvania, William Penn. He seemed to regret that Penn had been so "fiercely assailed" by American

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

colonial historians, but he agreed that there was much in Penn's career which was "hard to reconcile with the uprightness of character and scrupulousness of dealing which one has a right to expect in a leader of a religous sect." "In point of fact," however, he concluded, "Penn should not be judged as a man of affairs. He was an idealist whom chance placed at the head of a great business enterprise, and he experienced the fate that befalls the dreamer when he has to do with actualities."[28]

Most would agree that Benjamin Franklin was Pennsylvania's greatest product of the colonial period. Channing once spoke rather critically of him in a personal letter:

> He certainly was a man of many sides, some of them not so creditable as one could wish. I suppose we must always regard him as one of the three greatest scientists America has given to the world. And yet I am always disappointed in the somewhat sordid turn which Franklin always gave to his observations.[29]

This letter was written in 1894. Channing must have changed his mind by 1908 for here he referred to Franklin as "the greatest mental prodigy ever produced in America." Here are important excerpts from his more extensive comments:

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103. Channing could not resist a bit of humor in his evaluation of one of Penn's religious pamphlets: "Possibly Penn had no distinct idea as to what he meant to convey in the theses which made up his pamphlet; certainly one modern reader has not acquired definiteness of impression from its perusal." (p. 104)

[29] Channing to Samuel A. Green, January 3, 1894, Samuel A. Green Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

> Foremost of the leaders in Pennsylvania politics was Benjamin Franklin, the first great American....He was always a leader, whether as a journeyman in a printing office, member of a literary club, or of an assembly; always, until age lessened his vigor, wherever he might be, he was the first among equals. Facility in the use of his fingers was joined with an inventive faculty that amounted almost to genius. As a man of science, he was among the foremost of his time, and received the extraordinary honor of an election to the Royal Academy without his knowledge and without any fee. It is, however, to his literary gift that he owed the greatest part of his success. When he established a newspaper, he could easily write better than his competitors; when he wished to make clear a scientific experiment, he could describe it in print better than any of his contemporaries. The desire for money is the spur to success; it was eminently so in the case of Franklin: he labored, he starved, he contrived, for money. Above all and beyond all, his distinguishing characteristic was the complete adaptation of the means for the accomplishment of the end to which he had set himself; to use a New England country phrase, so long as Franklin was "law honest," he did not trouble himself as to the precise moral significance of a proposed line of action. "When you come to a low place, stoop," was a saying of "Poor Richard" and a rule of Benjamin Franklin.[30]

Only in the last part of these comments is there any criticism even implied. And judging from his laudatory comments, Channing must not have considered this too serious a flaw in "the first great American."

Channing relied rather heavily on Francis Parkman's works in his account of the Anglo-French rivalry in North America, as all historians have done since that author wrote his memorable series.[31] The title of the first of Channing's

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[30] History, II, pp. 332-333.

[31] Joe Patterson Smith, "Francis Parkman," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 56, noted that in one of Channing's three chapters on this

three chapters on this struggle is revealing--"The Gallic Peril, 1664-1689." His point, made clear in this first paragraph, was that the threat was real:

> In the spring of 1689 the opponents of the Stuart government in Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland raised the cry of danger from French invasion, danger from the alliance between the French and the Indians, and danger from the Roman Catholics. It has been the habit of historical writers to make light of these alarms and to regard them as party shibboleths which were used by colonial agitators to further their evil designs or to hide their infamous doings. A careful consideration of all the facts leads irrestibly to the conclusion that the Gallic peril was more real than has generally been thought to have been the case.[32]

One critic thought that Channing's treatment of the Anglo-French conflict was one of the few points in the History where he could be charged with "bias of the obvious, positive type." He called it Channing's "Anglo-Saxon mindedness";[33] he had a point. The chapter title and paragraph just quoted are hardly free from a hint of bias; that Channing considered the area from Florida to Canada to have been reserved by God for the English and their kinsmen has already been noted. Here he continued the trend by referring to "the ineptitude of the Frenchman for colonial enterprise," by praising the French

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subject he footnoted Parkman seven times and seven other secondary works a total of only eleven times. Interestingly, Channing commented of Parkman's Montcalm and Wolfe that it "must now be regarded as partially obsolete." (History, II, p. 600)

[32] History, II, p. 131.

[33] Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," Jernegan Essays, pp. 298-299.

Jesuits as individuals but emphasizing "the dangers of their doings" so far as the fate of the English colonies was concerned, by noting once again the "providential events" involved in the struggle, and by deeming it fortunate that French strength was "distinctly on the wane" by the time the showdown came.[34]

Channing, of course, did not write the history of the great struggle with the color of Parkman, but his account is competent and readable. He justifiably attached great importance to the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, though he was perhaps carried away when he said it "may well be regarded as the beginning of the diplomatic history of the United States." Noting the major changes the treaty made--particularly British acquisition of Acadia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson Bay region, and acknowledgement of the Iroquois as English subjects--Channing concluded that it "left the French nearly prostrate in Europe and America. They had almost reached the determination of abandoning their American colonies." But the French recovered very quickly, and by 1720 "were once more embarking on the path of colonial expansion." The major sign of this new vigor was the fortification of Louisburg on Cape Breton Island. British conquest of that stronghold, however, was the

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[34] History, II, pp. 131, 140, 142, 585. Still, he could praise an individual Frenchman: "Few figures stand forth in history in truer heroic proportions than does that of Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle." (p. 133)

highlight of the 1744-1748 struggle known in the colonies as King George's War. The person responsible for that feat, Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts, received high praise from Channing as "one of the few remarkable Englishmen who occupied high office in America in that century." Of that feat itself, Channing said: "Few disasters in the eighteenth century so overwhelmed the French with shame as did this catastrophe." But the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle restored Louisbourg to France.[35] The showdown was still to come.

The showdown, of course, was the French and Indian War, 1754-1763. In Channing's account of that epochal conflict, which expelled France from North America, two individuals stand out. One is George Washington. To Channing his "distinguishing characteristics" were his "fair-mindedness and military capacity," and he surpassed his praise for anyone thus far in the History when he said:

> Of all men in history, not one so answers our expectations as Washington. Into whatever part of his life the historian puts his probe, the result is always satisfactory. Washington was a strong, vigorous human being, with a strong, vigorous mind, and an amount of will power which was always equal to the task of compelling his mind and body to perform the part to which Providence set them.[36]

The other person who stands out in Channing's coverage of the war is William Pitt. With his coming to power in 1757, "a new chapter opened in the history of England and America."

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[35] Ibid., pp. 543-549.

[36] Ibid., p. 559. Notice also "Providence" entering in again.

He was a "remarkable man," who "possessed the imaginative enthusiasm which marks the great statesman."

> He was also fearless of criticism when he felt that what he was doing was for the benefit of king and country, which is one of the attributes of the man of power. He now infused some of his own faith and energy into military and naval commanders. Acting on the initiative of others, he completely changed the policy of the empire as to America. Up to this time the idea had been simply to hold back the French; now, the plan was to expel them from the continent, and the difference was great. In carrying out this policy, Pitt also departed from tradition. He sought out the best men in military and naval life, regardless of their years, and gave them responsibility and stood behind them. He concentrated English military and naval forces in America upon one field of activity at a time, abandoning for the moment the conquest of the West India Islands for the occupation of Canada. He recognized that the colonists could supply men and food, but could not unaided withdraw much labor and what was equivalent to capital from ordinary occupations. He provided, therefore, that the colonists should pay the wages of the soldiers raised by them and supply them with arms and with clothing, but that all other expenses should be borne by the crown. In later campaigns the home government also provided arms, ammunition, tents, and part of the other expenses. The first result of the new policy was the capture of Louisbourg in 1758.[37]

The final result was British victory as spelled out in the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

The same writer who berated Channing for his Anglo-Saxon mindedness said this: "The element of outright prejudice is most apparent where Channing had occasion to deal with the relations of the colonies to England."[38] This certainly

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[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 577-578.

[38] Fahrney, "Edward Channing," *Jernegan Essays*, p. 297.

contrasts with the already once-quoted reviewer for the English Historical Review:

> Between the mother country and the colonies he holds the scales fair, doing justice to Great Britain without falling into the exaggerated imperialism of some recent American authors. Though his heart is with the colonists he does not fail to point out their weaknesses, and though tracing in detail the record of English mismanagement he rarely exaggerates.[39]

Interestingly, one could lift material out of context from A Century of Colonial History which would support either of their views. However, the English historian was closer to the truth. In general, Channing treated the colonies as simply a part of the English imperial system and thus aligned himself with the Imperial School of colonial historians. Herbert L. Osgood and George Louis Beer, the two leading exponents of this approach, were both contemporaries of Channing. Indeed, the first volume of Osgood's major work appeared in 1904, the year before the opening installment of the Great Work. In only one way did Channing differ notably from these writers: he did find more opportunities to be sympathetic to the American colonists.

Channing's opening comments in this volume were also his introduction to the topic of relations between England and her colonies:

> The restoration of the second Charles to the English throne on the 29th of May, 1660, marks a turning-point in the history of the American colonies, as well as in that of England itself. King and courtiers returned from exile poorer in purse even than they were in morals; their financial needs

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[39] W. L. Grant, English Historical Review, XXIV (January, 1909), p. 146.

> determined the course of events in the next few years....
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> The king and his advisors at once seized upon colonial enterprise as one means of providing the necessary funds. They built upon the foundations of the Puritan time, and by a series of navigation acts monopolized colonial commerce in the interests of English subjects and the royal exchequer. They seized Dutch New Netherland, and founded the colonies of Carolina and New Jersey. They interested themselves in the foundation of the Royal African Company, and in the company for the exploitation of the fur trade of Hudson Bay.[40]

"The history of England and America in the next thirty years," he stated more emphatically, "was determined by the necessities of these men, rather than by their avarice and moral turpitude."[41]

One of the most important results of the "necessities of these men" was, of course, the Navigation Acts. Channing made it clear that pressure from the mercantile and industrial classes was also involved in their passage, but his comments continued to sound like a justification of the system:

> In those days, merchants, land owners, and men of education were united in believing that the exploitation of colonists for the benefit of the people of the mother country was right and proper. Such a policy does not indicate that they were actuated by a spirit of despotism or disregard of colonial interests, but simply that they were living in the days when the existence of colonies could only be defended on business grounds. Moreover, the system that comes to be outlined in the navigation laws and acts of trade was a system of intra-imperial free trade and preference for English products, which reminds one of the policy of the United States two hundred and fifty years later.

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[40] History, II, pp. 1-2.

[41] Ibid., p. 5.

> The underlying idea of the navigation system was to make the empire self-supporting and to confine the carrying trade of English lands to ships built within the empire, owned by the people thereof, and navigated by officers and crews who were subjects of the English king. Furthermore, trade in colonial products was to pass through England.[42]

The Navigation Act of 1696 he justified specifically, saying that "colonial commercial and governmental systems were sadly in need of reorganization in the decade following the 'Glorious Revolution.'"[43]

Though he noted that "the meaning, even the phraseology of the navigation laws, was obscure," Channing felt they would have been "sufficient for the carrying out of the policy of upbuilding English prosperity, could they have been enforced."[44] But, "the colonists, despite the efforts of royal officials and admiralty judges, and often in collusion with them, continued to carry on their commerce, greatly to their profit and in contravention of the navigation laws and other acts of the imperial Parliament." In another place he spoke of "illicit trading on a large scale"; but he also acknowledged that, "Notwithstanding the recorded infractions of the trade laws, colonial commerce was much more restricted to the channels designed for it by Parliament than it had been in the earlier time."[45]

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[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 278, 262, 258.

With the Sugar Act of 1733, referred to now by most historians as the Molasses Act, Channing was not quite so kind. "The English statue book does not contain a more unjustifiable law relating to the colonies before the famous legislation which is associated with the name of George Grenville."[46] It too, however, was constantly disregarded.

Channing wrapped up his coverage of the colonial commercial situation, and related it to the general situation in 1760, in these words:

> Notwithstanding the attempts to regulate colonial commerce,...the trade of the Northern Colonies was exceptionally prosperous in the years 1720 to 1760. Colonial vessels visited all parts of the Atlantic seashore, but did not as yet pass the capes at the southern extremities of Africa and South America. In reading the commercial papers of the American merchants of that time, one is impressed with the dangers constantly to be expected from pirates, privateers, and rapacious officials; but one is equally struck by the absence of fear of the regular customs officers who were supposed to be enforcing the navigation laws and the Sugar Act. Before Pitt's famous letter of 1760 it may even be doubted if merchants and tide-waiters were actually conscious of their duties and obligations; when they at length realized what was expected of them, rebellion on the part of the colonists was not far off.[47]

On the English commercial legislation specifically, then, Channing's comments were usually quite moderate. On other aspects of the mother country-colonies relationship, this was not always true.

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 519.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 521.

The year 1688 was, of course, a highlight in both the history of England and of her relationship to her North American colonies. The events of that year and those around it were accorded extensive coverage by Channing in this volume. The major thing in the colonies themselves to receive his attention at that time was the Dominion of New England. He made clear the importance of both commercial interests and the French threat in bringing about this forced union. He emphasized that "English mercantile interests were constantly putting pressure upon the English government to enforce the commercial laws, and it was impossible to do this so long as the plantations were not directly under the control of the crown." And "The imminence of danger from the side of New France," he stated in another place, "was the one thing needed to induce James to take the final step of consolidating all the colonies north of Pennsylvania into one government...."[48]

Of the Dominion itself, and its governor, Edmund Andros, Channing was very critical. "It is difficult to see how Andros' administration can be viewed in any other light than as an illegal despotism," he said, "especially when one remembers that the commission itself was contrary to the laws of England, according to the opinion of the law officers of the crown."[49] Andros "possessed fair abilities, but these were

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[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 151.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

coupled with an old-fashioned temper and an absence of tact which unfitted him for the performance of the delicate tasks to which he was assigned." He "exceeded his instructions," and he and his followers "used their power in a most unjust and irritating manner."[50] "The bane of English colonial management," he concluded, "has always been the tendency to apply principles of law and methods of legal procedure which had been developed in England to its colonies, with a sublime disregard of the wishes of the colonists and of conditions which necessarily prevail in frontier settlements."[51] Finally,

> When tact and patience were needed, there was threatening and loss of temper; when quiet, strong action was required, there was vacillation and weakness. It was when the people were aroused to high indignation that news came to Massachusetts of the landing of William of Orange on the coast of England on the anniversary of Guy Fawkes Day, November 5, 1688.[52]

The immediate result of that "high indignation" was the overthrow of Andros.

Here is Channing's summary evaluation of the Glorious Revolution and its effects on the colonies:

> The Revolution of 1688-89 was a Whig-Dutch conquest of the English empire carefully concealed under constitutional contrivances. It confirmed to Englishmen rights and liberties for which the Puritans had struggled in vain. For the colonists the Revolution meant nothing of the kind. Their consent to the change of dynasty was not asked, their

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[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 183.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

> interests were not considered; they were simply ordered to proclaim the new monarchs. The effect of the Revolution was to hand them over to the English land-owning oligarchy to be exploited for the benefit of English industry. The remedial statutes which made the movement memorable in English constitutional history did not extend to the colonies. Moreover, the new government exhibited an energy in colonial administration which the Stuarts had never shown. After 1689 the colonists were in a worse plight than they had been in the reigns of Charles and James.[53]

Though Channing noted the "energy" of colonial policy after the Glorious Revolution, he also stated that William and his advisors came up with nothing new:

> The new rulers of England might well have recognized their partisans in the plantations and have rewarded their faithfulness to "Revolution principles" by continuing them in the possession of those governments which they had wrenched from James's adherents. Instead of so doing, William and his advisors proceeded on the assumption that colonists followed the condition of the mother country and were as amenable to misrule after the overturn in England as they had been before it. In place of inaugurating a new policy, they merely reorganized the colonial administration on the lines of the old system.[54]

Rather strange, if William did nothing more than restore the old colonial system, that Channing would condemn his policies so strongly. "By a wise use of the opportunities which events had placed in his hands," Channing wrote, "William might have laid the foundations for lasting concord between the two great portions of the English people; but the outcome was quite different." Noting the inclination of historians

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[53] _Ibid._, pp. 189-190.

[54] _Ibid._, p. 213.

to condemn George III and "the stupid, ignorant politicians" in control during his reign for causing the American Revolution, Channing concluded that "the causes of that cataclysm lie farther back and may be largely found in the settlement of the imperial constitution in the years immediately following William's accession to power."[55]

Channing seemed to condemn English colonial policy for failing to realize that "ever since the Restoration, colonial institutions had been developing in a direction contrary to those of England." He wrote:

> All the English settlements along the coast were rapidly growing in population and in wealth. The words "colonies" and "plantations" hardly describe their circumstances. Nevertheless, Englishmen in England still regarded them as settlers and as subjects of England; Englishmen in the colonies looked upon themselves as possessing the rights of Englishmen, which had been guaranteed by Magna Charta and a long succession of memorable statutes. The former regarded the colonial governments as public service corporations; the latter looked upon them as having the same attributes as the government of England. The former regarded the colonial assemblies as similar to the council of an English city; the latter looked upon them as possessing powers similar to those which were exercised by the English House of Commons.[56]

Channing gave a critical interpretation of colonial governors which has been greatly modified by more recent historians. "Had the governors been persons of force, independent means, and character," he said, "they would have exercised an

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

important influence upon colonial life and constitutional development. Fortunately, they were usually persons of quite opposite qualities...." Lord Cornbury, governor of New York, came in for the strongest condemnation. "Of all the governors who brought English authority into contempt in the colonies, none was more thoroughly disreputable" than he, thought Channing. "He was a spendthrift, utterly dishonest, and without morals."[57]

The chapter entitled "Beginnings of Constitutional Controversy" is primarily a recital of the conflicts between governors and legislatures in the colonies; it makes for some of the most drab reading anywhere in the Great Work. Channing wrote to Brett in 1906 that he was at work on both volumes II and III and that he was putting into the latter "as much constitutional matter as possible in order to lighten the second volume of this somewhat heavy reading."[58] So far as readability is concerned, one can only wish he had lightened this volume of that type material still further. Let this brief summary statement on the colonial executive-legislative clash suffice:

> John Locke lays down the general proposition that in any government the legislative is supreme. The actions of executive authority frequently attract attention by reason of their brilliancy; but the slower-moving legislative in the end accomplishes its purposes and usually at the expense of its more spectacular partner. The history of the eighteenth century in the colonies is peculiarly illustrative of this proposition. The assemblies represented colonial desires in opposition to English control.

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[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 247, 308.

[58] Channing to Brett, May 7, 1906, Macmillan Collection.

> They constantly gained power from the executive by the good old English method of tightening the grip on the strings of the purse, being greatly assisted thereto by successive French and Indian Wars, which placed the governors in constant need of money and compelled them to accede to demands in defiance of orders of king and proprietor.[59]

In the final paragraph of A Century of Colonial History, Channing related the acquisitions of territory through the Treaty of Paris in 1763 to the general colonial situation, and concluded:

> With this great accession of colonial interests a new chapter opened in the history of the British colonial empire. Would the rulers of Britain continue to permit the people of the continental colonies to develop their industries and their institutions with the minimum of control, or would they establish effective governments in them and strive to make them directly contributory to the imperial treasury? Upon the answer to this question depended

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[59] History, II, p. 282. In another place, Channing stated it slightly differently, and also hinted at the predominance of commercial factors in the English-colonial rivalry, of which he was to make a major point in volume III: "From the English Revolution in 1688-89 to the American Revolution in 1775-83, the constitutional development in all the royal and the proprietary provinces was substantially the same. Everywhere the Assembly claimed for itself the powers and privileges of the House of Commons, and everywhere it denied that the Council bore any resemblance to the House of Lords. Everywhere the Assembly used its control of the purse to compel the representatives of English authority to disobey his instructions, or, at all events, to pay no regard to them. The mode of compulsion varied slightly in the several colonies, owing to the different constitutional arrangements that prevailed in them: in Massachusetts the salary of the governor was the matter about which the contest was waged; in New York the levying of taxes in general; in Pennsylvania the paying tribute to the proprietary. It made little difference whether the governor represented king or proprietor; everywhere the colonists demanded greater control of their affairs than the governor's instructions permitted. How strenuously the authorities in England would have insisted on their constitutional rights may well be doubted had not the enforcement of the imperial commercial system been more or less involved in the control of the colonial government." (pp. 248-249)

> the future of the British empire....Community of race, language, religion, institutions must be present in the make-up of a nation. The people must be of one racial stock; they must have a common mode of speech; their religious aspirations must find expression in common lines; their institutions for government and for the protection of person and property must be substantially similar. In 1660 the people of England and of the English colonies in North America may be said to have formed parts of one nation; in 1760, this was no longer true. The absorption of Dutch New Netherland, the great flowing in of immigrants from Germany and from France and the importation of thousands of negroes from Africa had given to the colonies racial elements that were not present in England. Moreover, although there was as yet no considerable amalgamation of the white elements in the colonial population, it may be said that changed climatic conditions and environments had already begun to alter the racial characteristics of the descendants of the first comers from England. In religion in England, the church establishment had bound itself more firmly to the State; while in America, dissent had thriven under radical conditions of living--not one colonist in forty owed fealty to the colonial representative of the Established Church of England. Above all, colonial institutional ideas had developed on lines which were opposed to those prevailing in the home lands. Finally, the commercial interests of the two great divisions of the British empire were now distinctly different. In all that constitutes nationality, two nations now owed allegiance to the British crown. The colonists were patient and long-suffering; only prolonged misgovernment on the part of the rulers of Britain compelled them to declare themselves independent of that empire from which they had sprung.[60]

In that final statement, Channing cast all caution to the winds. Even the reviewer for the English Historical Review who praised Channing for his moderation was offended. This was an opinion, he said--more moderately than Channing--which "cannot be fully justified."[61]

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[60] Ibid., pp. 598-599.

[61] Grant, English Historical Review, XXIV (January, 1909), p. 146.

By far the most perceptive and useful review of this volume was the one in the American Historical Review. Though the reviewer's reaction to the volume was basically favorable, he felt that there were four major criticisms. First, Channing was "not free from prejudice." Second, there were some major omissions which were difficult to justify. Third, Channing betrayed "a certain insularity in his frequent insistence on the impotence of the home-government and the futility of the system established for the control of the colonies." And finally, he felt that Channing had "failed to give his treatment either unity, purpose, or depth." Each of these was well-supported with specific examples. Minor flaws noted were the fact that Channing seemed pleased if he could tilt everything in favor of the colonies, and several minor errors of fact.[62]

Even Channing's grandson admitted that it was "a fair and exact evaluation" to say that this volume did not possess unity, purpose, or depth. Though he correctly considered it

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[62] American Historical Review, XIV (January, 1909), pp. 364-366. Perhaps it would be appropriate here to give one example of each of these four points. Channing's attitude toward the colonial governors was cited to show his prejudice. The fact that he said "practically nothing" of "the details of British control from 1660 to 1696" was considered a serious error of omission. The chapter on "The Reconstructed Colonial System" illustrated the third criticism. And finally, the reviewer elaborated thus on the lack of "unity, purpose or depth": "We cannot see that his narrative moves forward to any culmination. We should naturally expect to find ourselves at the end of the work ready to understand better the causes of the Revolution, but we cannot see that anywhere Professor Channing has sought to meet this expectation or has made any attempt to search for causes. Progress is noted here and there, but that general movement which marks the development of all the colonies taken together seems to lie altogether outside the author's interest."

"one of his most perfect volumes on the basis of scientific scholarship," he believed its inclusion of "so much petty detail" an "outstanding negative quality." "Failure to integrate the governmental with the social, industrial and religious aspects," he continued, "leaves this book in a condition from which only a research scholar on colonial government can glean the real value." He thought Channing was at his best in this volume when he dealt with the industrial, social, and religious history of the colonies.[63]

Once again, however, no review was generally critical in tone. Essentially favorable reviews appeared in the Nation, Dial, the Outlook, the American Review of Reviews, the American Library Association Booklist, the Independent, and the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. The latter said that the first two volumes together established for the work "a secure place among the histories of the United States." To the Independent, Channing's work gave promise of being "the most important history of the United States since George Bancroft's."[64]

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[63]Fuller, "Edward Channing," pp. 114-116.

[64]Nation, LXXXVII (November 5, 1908), pp. 440-441; St. George Leakin Sioussat, Dial, XLVI (May 16, 1909), pp. 327-329; H. Addington Bruce, Outlook, XCI (March 27, 1909), pp. 753-754; American Review of Reviews, XXXIX (February, 1909), p. 251; A. L. A. Booklist, V (February, 1909), p. 36; Independent, LXV (November 12, 1908), pp. 1122-1123; and Emory R. Johnson, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXXIII (March, 1909), pp. 245-246.

CHAPTER V

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

> I have been reading for Vol. III the last few weeks. The writing that will be a pleasure and I ought to be able to do a humming good piece of work especially if I can get freshened up a bit.[1]

Edward Channing spent the summer of 1908 in research and relaxation in Europe. He wrote to George P. Brett on September 2 that he was back after "a very enjoyable trip." Though he showed a disinclination to begin concentrated work on volume III of the Great Work, saying that he was "feeling very poor just now," he had done so by January, 1909, for that month he went to New York for research. And, as usual, once he had begun to concentrate on a project, he was loathe to be interrupted. He responded to Carl Russell Fish's suggestion that he come to the University of Wisconsin to deliver a series of lectures by listing the reasons why he could not do so. He had no time except the mid-year period, he said, which did not correspond with the dates open at Madison. The second reason was "a rooted dislike on my part to the American Pullman sleeper which almost invariably means a bad cold, at least, to me. I can stand a day's travel well enough," Channing continued, "even in the super-heated parlor cars; but the sleeper is one

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[1]Edward Channing to George P. Brett [President, Macmillan Company] , April 26, 1908, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

too many for me." And finally, most important of all, "there is a great desire on my part to push the work on volume III of my history...." With such single-mindedness as this, Channing was able to write his publisher on June 15, 1912, that the volume was written.[2] It was published in September.

Channing established the key-note of this third volume on the very first page. "Commercialism," he said, "the desire for advantage and profit in trade and industry, was at the bottom of the struggle between England and America; the immutable principles of human association were brought forward to justify colonial resistance to British selfishness." He continued: "The governing classes of the old country wished to exploit the American colonists for their own use and behoof; the Americans desired to work their lands and carry on their trade for themselves."[3]

Several of the ideas illustrative of the concept that two nations had developed within the British Empire by 1760 were repeated here by Channing. Racial, political, religious, social, economic, and educational differences between England and America were all mentioned, then Channing emphatically concluded of the colonists:

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[2] Ibid., September 2, 1908, and January 26, 1909; Channing to Carl Russell Fish, June 13, 1910, xerox copy from Carl Russell Fish Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; and Channing to Brett, June 25, 1912, Macmillan Collection.

[3] Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume III: The American Revolution, 1761-1789 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), pp. 1-2.

> They already had a large measure of self-government and were determined not to part with one jot or tittle of it. At the close of the French and Indian War there were no more loyal subjects than the Americans; but they felt their own importance and strength. They resented the constantly reiterated assertions of despotic power on the part of unreformed parliamentarians and an unreformable king. They dreaded the ever tightening grasp of the custom-house upon their trade and their means of livelihood. They felt that the government was careless of their rights and unfriendly to their further growth toward the west.[4]

James Otis and the writs of assistance controversy and Patrick Henry and the parson's cause episode received some emphasis from Channing in his opening pages. Channing quoted Otis' famous saying, that "Government is a conditional compact between king and people....A violation of the covenant by either party discharges the other from its obligation," and Henry's more famous words, that "An Act [of Parliament] against the Constitution is void," then concluded:

> In these thirty words Patrick Henry and James Otis denied the divine origin of the British kingship and the legislative supremacy of the British Parliament, and substituted therefor the Common Law and other eternal rights of man. Moreover, these phrases shadow forth the reason for the secession of the old English North American colonies from the British Empire and the principles which underlie our own system of government to this day.[5]

Channing realized, however, that these ideas were by no means new. John Locke had made the most important statement of this philosophy before Americans adopted it. In the second

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

of his "Two Treatises of Government," said Channing, he "set forth the glittering generalities that became the political gospel of the American revolutionists." American statesmen, he said, simply "combined these ideas with the practical knowledge which they had gained in their political careers," and then proceeded to enunciate "a theory that was incompatible with the ideas of empire as they were then held by Englishmen."[6]

Channing was mildly critical of the British government's Proclamation of 1763, noting that "The fact that the reserved territory for the most part lay within the chartered limits of the older colonies does not seem to have occurred to those who drew up this proclamation." He concluded his first chapter by emphasizing that "the years 1760-1763 were epochal, for in them may be discovered the beginnings of the movement which was to make the next ten years so memorable."[7]

In the general bibliographical comments at the end of the first chapter, Channing made interesting brief evaluations of some important historians. W. E. H. Lecky's History of England in the Eighteenth Century and Sir George Otto Trevelyn's American Revolution, Channing considered to "stand preeminent for their point of view, their general fairness toward America, and the historical insight of their authors; but," he rather paradoxically continued, "both are unfair to the men who mismanaged British affairs in that epoch in requiring of

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[6] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[7] Ibid., pp. 22, 24.

them standards of our day and not of their own time." John Fiske, C. H. Van Tyne, and Sydney George Fisher all received moderate praise from Channing, but George Bancroft was rather soundly condemned. His volumes were "so clouded by the author's democratic prejudices that one hesitates to accept his judgments," said Channing. "He did a vast amount of work in collecting manuscripts and correlating them; but oftentimes seemed unable to understand the lessons which they should have taught."[8]

Despite Channing's criticisms of Bancroft, one would be hard-pressed to come up with a more incautious comment from that great nineteenth century historian than Channing himself occasionally made. Only a few pages after deriding Bancroft so, Channing was writing thus of King George III: "The modern American student sees in the third George no mere tyrant, no misguided monarch, but an instrument of a benign providence bringing, through pain and misery, benefit to the human race." Hardly a statement one would expect from a purely scientific twentieth century historian! Some of his other comments on that sovereign were only a little less harsh:

> He was a politician, shrewd and unpitying, whose whole ambition was to place the kingship back where it had been in the days of the early Stuarts.... Permanent mental incapacity found him still firm in

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[8] Ibid., p. 26. Channing had also written of Bancroft in a similar vein in volume II. Bancroft's works, he said, were written from the sources, "but the author was so prejudiced in favor of theoretical democracy that his comments upon the facts must be received with caution."--Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume II: A Century of Colonial History, 1660-1760 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), p. 27.

> the belief that he was right and always had been, and all the rest of the world was wrong....He permitted his ministers to establish a new colonial policy that could have but one termination. Looking backward, it is clear that the interests of Great Britain would have been best served by the abandonment of all petty restrictions in colonial government and trade and by building up American commerce and industry.[9]

Channing alleviated the severity of the condemnation implied in the latter part of these comments, however, when he continued:

> Seldom is a nation endowed with rulers of such certain judgment, of so prophetic imaginations, and courages commensurate to the inauguration and prosecution of so broad a policy as this. Meeting the demands of the hour as they arise is the ordinary life of a nation, nor ought the historian to expect otherwise.[10]

In addition to treating George III rather severely, Channing came to the defense of the colonists quite frequently. "The Americans felt that they were already overburdened with taxations" in 1764, he noted, and went on to make it clear that he agreed that they were. After the passage of the Revenue Act of 1764, now ordinarily known as the Sugar Act, colonial trade and navigation were "in a straight-jacket," according to Channing, and "the American radicals were quite justified in their outcry." He said of the Quartering Act of 1764 that, even granting that it was necessary to keep British troops in the colonies and require the colonists to support them, "the

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[9] History, III, pp. 30-31.

[10] Ibid., p. 31.

working of this particular law was unjust." He referred here specifically to the disproportionate burden New York was forced to bear. "To ask them [the colonists] to submit to new levies imposed upon them in what they regarded as an illegal manner at the precise moment when their trade was being restrained," said Channing in building up to the Stamp Act of 1765, "was altogether too much."[11] The person responsible for much of the legislation of this period Channing soundly condemned:

> George Grenville's name is one of the blackest in American history;...He possessed fair abilities, but was unable to see far beyond the letter of the law books...the responsibility for taking the first steps in carrying out the policy that led to American resistance and separation must rest on his shoulders.[12]

Channing did not really evaluate the Stamp Act, but his attitude was already quite clear by that point. He did attach great significance to the Stamp Act Congress as "the first general assembly to be held by concerted colonial action without any prompting from royal officials. It pointed the mode for combined extra-legal resistance"; he continued, "it proved to be the forerunner of other continental congresses, and thus fully justified the declaration of the Lords of Trade that it was a precedent of 'dangerous tendency.'" Channing also made the Virginia Resolves of 1765, introduced by Patrick

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 42, 44, 45, 47.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Henry in opposition to the Stamp Act, sound more important than historians ordinarily have done. "They were, indeed," he said, "the 'alarm Bell to the disaffected,' the spark that was needed to light the fire of discontent throughout the land."[13]

Channing emphasized that the Stamp Act was almost never enforced. He said that "the number of instances in which the act was obeyed was so small that to all intents and purposes it was a dead letter from the beginning." He made the radical associations known as "Sons of Liberty" sound important in the opposition movement, and noted that the movement was so effective that British manufacturers and merchants began to pressure Parliament to repeal the objectionable measures. This was done, of course, but, according to Channing, the "arrangements for extracting funds from colonial consumers" made at the same time, together with the Declaratory Act, stating that Parliament had the right to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever," "more than did away with whatever of concession there may have been in the repeal of the Stamp Act."[14] He continued:

> With an ignorance of English conditions that is comparable only to Englishmen's lack of knowledge of American affairs, the colonists rejoiced greatly over the repeal of the Stamp Act. In their eyes, George III and William Pitt were deliverers from bondage. The New Yorkers voted statues to both. Pitt, in a toga, was carved in stone; George, on horseback, was

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[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58, 55-56.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-65, 78.

> cast in lead and brass and richly gilded. Really, the repeal of the Stamp Act settled nothing. Unconsciously, the American people had come to the determination to pay no more money levied by parliamentary grant. Many a stupider man than George Grenville and many a lighter headed man than Charles Townshend might well have been put on their guard by Franklin's answer to the inquiry whether the colonists, by the same line of reasoning which they had advanced against the Stamp Act, might not likewise object to external taxes levied by parliamentary law. "They never have hitherto," the philosophic statesman replied, and continued, "Many arguments have been lately used here to shew them that there is no difference,....At present they do not reason so, but in time they may possibly be convinced by these arguments."[15]

Once again, with the year 1765, Channing stepped aside from the narration of events to generalize on the relationship between England and the colonies. He began by discussing a few of the great deluge of tracts written at the time and wound up admitting it was technically correct that, "under the British form of government, Parliament was supreme in the empire. Nevertheless," he continued, "the unrepresentative character of the Commons, using that word in its ordinary sense and not in its technical constitutional meaning, was patent to the colonists and to many good people in England as well." He was quite willing to acknowledge the impracticality of the colonial position on "taxation without representation." "In point of fact," he wrote, "under the broad colonial declaration that no one could be taxed who was not personally represented, no legislative assembly that ever existed could rightfully levy

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[15] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

a tax."[16] Channing was also careful to note the different understandings of "taxation without representation" which prevailed in mother country and colonies:

> The phrase "no taxation without representation" in England simply meant that the executive authority could levy no money without the previous consent of Parliament, more especially of the House of Commons; in the colonies, it meant that taxes could be voted only by those bodies in which the voters were present in person or were represented by those in whose election they had actually taken part.[17]

He then reiterated his idea that, "In this respect, as in some others, colonial institutions had drifted so far away from those of the home land and had become so uniform in their principal characteristics that the colonies may well be considered as already forming an embryonic nation."[18]

Charles Townshend and his colonial policy received critical treatment from Channing's pen. Channing referred to the "obloquy" which Townshend's actions had attached to his name, and concluded of the policies inaugurated by him:

> The new system was successful in that it enabled a swarm of officeholders to live on the fruits of colonial labor and industry. It was disastrous because it led to riot, rebellion and revolution.[19]

Channing thought the Massachusetts Circular Letter episode, which ended in dissolution of that colony's

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[16] Ibid., pp. 66-73.

[17] Ibid., p. 76.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 91.

representative assembly, was "another example of the ignorance of the English government as to colonial conditions which goes far to justify the contention of the colonists that they could not be properly governed from London and must therefore rule themselves."[20] He saw the Boston Massacre as the last straw:

> On March 5, 1770, the very day on which Lord North moved the repeal of the duties on English manufactures, an affray occurred in the streets of that town which clearly showed that nothing less than a radical change in policy could avert the impending conflict between Great Britain and her thirteen colonies on the continent of North America,--no halfway measures of "conciliation" would suffice.[21]

Channing had a sure touch when dealing with the commerce of the colonies in the revolutionary era, and he contributed much that was new. He knew this, and was proud of it. He wrote to Brett in 1909 that he was "poring over some old custom house accounts which I came upon by chance and which are unknown to every other writer and will give...my third volume a unique position in narratives of the American Revolution."[22]

One interesting episode shows how Channing came up with some of this information, and sheds light on his research methods and personality as well. He received the income from the Woodbury Lowery Fund for a two-year period beginning in

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[20] Ibid., p. 99.

[21] Ibid., p. 113.

[22] Channing to Brett, February 8, 1909, Macmillan Collection.

1910. This amounted to approximately $2,040, and was used "to assist him in prosecuting researches into the trade relations of Spain with the British Colonies, before the Revolutionary War."[23] Lowery's sister, the Duchess de Arcos, was the administrator of the fund. Channing wished to thank her for the gift, but was doubtful as to the proper approach. "I am somewhat at a loss how to address such a lady and should be obliged to you if you would state how an envelope should be addressed and also how I should begin my note," he wrote to President A. Lawrence Lowell, who had helped secure the money for him, "all this because I am not in the habit of writing to duchesses."[24]

Archibald Cary Coolidge, another member of the Harvard history department, indicated in a letter to Lowell that there was a possibility of resentment over Channing's receipt of the money, and seemed to show a little himself. He thought the graduate school should profit from the money, but indicated the matter should at least go before the department as an "open question." "Channing has not the reputation of being altruistic," he explained, "and if it were to appear that he had profited by inside information to secure this fine windfall for his own exclusive benefit...there might be a good deal of bad feeling."[25] Channing apparently used the money to hire someone

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[23]A. Lawrence Lowell to the Duchess de Arcos, December 9, 1910, in the Edward Channing folder of the A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[24]Channing to Lowell, November 7, 1910, Ibid.

[25]Archibald Cary Coolidge to Lowell, June 24, [1910?] Ibid.

to look up the information he desired, a method which he frequently employed.[26]

Continuing his narrative of events leading to revolution, Channing noted that the years 1770 to 1773, from the Boston Massacre to the Tea Act, were a relatively calm period in the relationship between Britain and her restless colonies. At least one man, however, worked continually to keep it from being so. Samuel Adams, said Channing, "was distinctly a man of the people, gifted with incomparable tact in banding together the discontented, and endowed with consummate ability in setting forth in written page the aspirations for liberty that impelled the masses." He had "an almost unparalleled cogency of style." But Channing recognized that Adams alone could not have done the job:

> Viewing the chain of incidents leading up to the separation from England, it is evident that Samuel Adams was unalterably opposed to any tightening of the imperial bond, and wished for increased colonial self-government and probably for separation from the mother country. It is also perfectly clear that he could not have forced the issue, no matter how much he might have wished to. That was the work of selfish placemen in England, whose horizon was bounded by the narrow seas of their own island, and of over-zealous and stubborn officials in America, whose thoughts were ever intent upon places and pensions,--Townshend, Hillsborough, and Lord North in England; Hutchinson, Dudingston, and Tyron in America. Without their aid, not even the superhuman powers that have been attributed to

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[26]Another example of a similar procedure was his hiring of a person to copy some information relating to commerce in St. Augustine, Pensacola, and New Orleans. (Channing to J. Franklin Jameson, November 23, 1912, John Franklin Jameson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.)

> Samuel Adams by his enemies and his biographers could have brought about the crisis of April 19, 1775.[27]

Specifically, Adams was aided by the Gaspee affair, and then, most of all, by the Tea Act, by which "the public mind was excited to a greater degree than at any time since the Stamp Act irritation." Channing felt that colonial resentment against British measures reached a peak with the passage of the Boston Port Act in 1774 to punish Bostoners for the Tea Party. "Never before in American history," he stated, "and possibly never before in any history had the waves of sympathetic enthusiasm mounted so high as those which now rolled from South to North and from North to South." Channing did not apply the now-accepted name "Coercive Acts" to the series of measures passed by Parliament in 1774, but he recognized their importance, and the significance of the Quebec Act being associated with them in colonial thinking. "Already irritated by the Gaspee inquiry and by the laws for punishing the New Englanders, the colonists were annoyed and excited by this attempt to curb their further growth," he said of the Quebec Act. The culmination of this excitement was the First Continental Congress. Channing emphasized the basically conservative nature of this body, and said its most important work was the adoption of the non-importation, non-exportation, non-consumption agreement known as the "Association."[28]

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[27] History, III, pp. 122-123.

[28] Ibid., pp. 130, 136, 142, 145-147.

If this seems like an over-brief summary of the crucial years 1770 and 1775, it is because Channing's own account of this period was so compact. Indeed, much of this volume up to the outbreak of the Revolution is indicative of Channing's inclination to skim rapidly over material, regardless of how important, when he felt he had nothing new on it, and, concomitantly, to go into detail on lesser-known things where he did have a contribution.

Channing's chapter on "The Crisis, 1775" impresses the reader with its calm, dispassionate tone, and with the author's ability to make military history understandable to the general reader. One historian, comparing Channing's account of the confrontation at Lexington with George Bancroft's, concluded that the former's was "in conformity with the known facts," while the latter's was not.[29] Channing's simple description bears repeating:

> In the early morning light, as they [the British] approached the green at Lexington, they saw some fifty armed men standing in military array. Suddenly a shot rang out; it was followed by a volley, and before the militiamen could escape, eight of them were killed and ten others were wounded. The British then passed on to Concord....[30]

Note that Channing did not even venture to speculate as to who fired that famous "shot heard 'round the world"!

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[29]Watt Stewart, "George Bancroft," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 19.

[30]History, III, pp. 157-158.

Channing also showed an ability to distill the essence of a battle into a single sentence. "The stand made by the colonists at Bunker Hill," he said, "aroused a spirit of exultation throughout the continent, which was not at all lessened by the fact that, in the end, their troops had been obliged to retreat." Of the first three armed encounters, he said: "Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill decided the matter; there could be no going back."[31]

"The determination to coerce the colonists was the more readily reached because no stiff resistance was expected," Channing noted. "The Americans were looked upon as cowards by those high in office." From this observation, he went on to make an important point about the Revolution as a whole:

> These opinions reflected the contempt of military men for citizen soldiery in the day when tactics demanded that opposing armies march slowly toward one another and fire into each other's faces. The colonists had learned a different mode of warfare, more suited to a broken and forested country. Whenever possible they got behind trees or logs or sheltered themselves in a hole in the ground and shot down the first enemy who came within range. In Europe, war was a profession; in America it was only waged for life and family. Before the conflict ended there was something plaintive in the complaints of Englishmen and Germans that the Americans fought like savages,--the frontier had taught them a more modern method of warfare.[32]

In Channing's chapter on the Declaration of Independence, he was at his best. He noted that up to 1775

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[31] Ibid., pp. 172, 170.

[32] Ibid., p. 172.

"independence was outside of practical American politics." "The colonists were not at all opposed to monarchical institutions, nor were they hostile to the British kingship," he continued. "They had outgrown the colonial condition and desired to be permitted to govern themselves or to be given a share in the imperial councils on an equal footing with the dwellers in the parent state." Political leaders in the mother country had no thought of independence either; they were "united in proclaiming the colonists to be subjects of Great Britain and absolutely dependent on the legislation of its Parliament." Thus, though they did not yet recognize it, "Both sides had reached the point where neither could give way without abandoning its whole case."[33]

The tide turned quickly in 1775. The king helped; he "made measures palatable [to the colonists] which hitherto had seemed quite out of the question," by his crass negative response to the "Olive Branch Petition." But Thomas Paine helped even more; he was "one of those literary spirits whose birthright is the faculty of influencing their fellow men in writing and in print," and his pamphlet entitled "Common Sense" "unquestionably converted thousands to the necessity of separation."[34] The sentiment for independence then spread, through the army, the states, and the Continental Congress itself. The

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[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 189-190.

final result was the Declaration of Independence:

> Never in the whole range of the writings of political theorists has the basis of government been stated so succinctly. The ideas are drawn directly from Locke, the words are generally his, sometimes whole phrases are taken from the "Second Essay of Government," but the reader will go to Locke in vain for so lucid a statement of his ideas. Jefferson possessed the faculty of combining words in phrases that remain in one's memory throughout life. He stated ideas that were well known, that were common, that were hackneyed; but they are ideas which the American people have not yet grown tired of reading and hearing.[35]

"Everywhere," said Channing, "the document was well received, and gave new life to the cause of revolution."[36]

Channing's ability to write understandably of military matters becomes abundantly evident after his narrative passes the Declaration of Independence. It applies both to individual battles and generalizations about the conflict:

> The military annals of the Revolution are devoid of the spectacular; they are lacking in useful lessons on the progress of the art of war. No remarkable soldier emerges from the conflict, for Washington was a moral force rather than a general; and of second-rate characters Nathanael Greene, alone, shines conspicuous. On the British side, Howe, Clinton, Burgoyne, and the rest were mediocre men. No great siege stimulates one's emotions almost to the breaking point. The brilliant feat of arms at Trenton, the hurrying flight of Greene across North Carolina, and the sudden stroke at Stony Point stand almost alone in exciting the imagination. The task of the British was to conquer territory; that of the Americans to prevent their accomplishing this object. In war the enemy's army is the main objective. So it was

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[35] _Ibid._, p. 202.

[36] _Ibid._, p. 205.

> in this conflict; but the American army was not the force that actually stood in arms from year to year; it was the potential power of the farmers and planters of the continent. They formed an army, not actually in being, but capable of rapid mobilization for brief periods. It was the certainty of opposition by masses of poorly trained but determined men that kept the British confined to small districts on the seaboard and prevented their possessing territory which was essential to the reconquest of the continent.[37]

The Americans could not prevent British capture of any town on the coast, said Channing, nor could they eject the British from any important position. But they could prevent prolonged inland excursions, and they could also keep the British from effectively occupying any large extent of territory. "The two armies were stalemated," he concluded, "until time gave the weight of numbers and wealth to the opposers of Britain and her world-wide imperial aspirations."[38]

The decisive event which time brought about to end the stalemate was the battle of Saratoga, fought in October, 1777. To Channing this was a "great victory," a "glorious catastrophe"; it "brought Britain face to face with the trading nations of western Europe. From being a local conflict between two sections of the British empire, the war took on the form of a world-wide contest for domination."[39]

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[37] _Ibid._, pp. 224-225.

[38] _Ibid._, p. 210.

[39] _Ibid._, pp. 241, 273.

Several already-noted Channing characteristics become prominent again in this volume. One of these is his naval interest. "PROF. CHANNING CLEVER SKIPPER," headlined the Boston Herald on June 19, 1913; it was one of the few times Channing came before the public eye in connection with anything other than his History. He was "reputed to be the most clever amateur skipper of small yachts on the south side of Cape Cod."[40] Samuel Eliot Morison stated that "Channing had a sure touch when dealing with matters of naval warfare and maritime commerce."[41] This was especially obvious in his treatment of the naval aspects of the Revolution. Though he had to admit that most of the naval action "had little effect on the war as a whole," he still thought John Paul Jones the "prince of sea-fighters."[42] And, even more significantly, Channing was the first to point to the fact that the French naval victory of the Capes of the Chesapeake was the determining factor in the Yorktown campaign; one of his aphorisms was, "The American Revolution was won in the dockyards of Brest and Toulon."[43]

Channing's enjoyment and ability in working out historical "mysteries" is well illustrated by his extensive note

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[40] Boston Herald, June 19, 1913, clipping in the Edward Channing Quinquennial folder, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[41] Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 258.

[42] History, III, pp. 310, 308.

[43] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 258.

note on Gates and Arnold at Saratoga.[44] Finally, his reliance on God, or "Providence," in explaining events at times, comes into play at several points in his treatment of the Revolution.[45]

Channing gave scant attention to the role of the West in the revolutionary conflict, his grandson's avowal to the contrary notwithstanding. Migration, settlement, and the activities of George Rogers Clark, all together, received little more than a page; Frederick Jackson Turner was relegated to two footnotes.[46]

The role of other nations in colonial victory over Britain was by no means neglected by Channing. He felt that "the task to which King George and his ministers addressed themselves in the summer of 1775 was wellnigh hopeless from the beginning," and he was certain that it was "absolutely futile after France, Spain, and the other trading nations of Europe joined the insurgents." Foreign individuals who came to America to enlist in the cause of independence also received their due from Channing. "Some of them gave help of inestimable value to the cause of America," he said. "Of these Lafayette was the exemplar." John Kalb and the Chevalier Du Portail were among the others "whose memories should always be

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[44] History, III, pp. 276-278.

[45] Ibid., pp. 226, 230, 266, 325.

[46] Ibid., pp. 302-303, 32. Channing's grandson made a very weak case for his contention that neglect of the West was not a flaw of this volume. John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), pp. 118-119.

gratefully revered," but "Of them all Steuben stands first in services performed."[47]

Channing's account of the peace negotiations was detailed and dispassionate. He did feel compelled to exonerate the action of the American diplomats in signing a separate treaty with Britain.[48] But he seemed to be straining too hard to be different when he questioned whether the treaty was really the great success for the United States which it was ordinarily assumed to be.[49]

Channing once again showed his ability to generalize meaningfully when he wrote thus of the years 1783 to 1789:

> The years between the cessation of hostilities with Great Britain and the inauguration of President Washington were memorable over all others in American annals for readjustments in politics, society, commerce and industry. In politics, the governmental systems of the states were worked over and developed,

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[47] History, III, pp. 279, 291-292.

[48] "The commissioners had broken their instructions;" he said, "but was their action equivalent to pledging the United States to a breach of the treaty of 1778 with France, which obliged the contracting parties to fight on until a general peace should be made? Technically, the United States had observed this requirement. Negotiations for a general peace were being carried on. All the treaties could not be concluded at one given moment, and the American commissioners had been careful to insert in the instrument that what had been agreed to were merely preliminary articles which should constitute a treaty eventually, 'but which treaty is not to be concluded until terms of a peace shall be agreed upon between Great Britain and France, and His Britannic Majesty shall be ready to conclude such treaty accordingly.' Nor can it be called a desertion of America's allies, for the preliminary articles between France and Great Britain were agreed to two weeks later, although they were not signed until another month had passed away." (Ibid., pp. 368-369.)

[49] Ibid., pp. 369-370.

> and the weak Articles of Confederation were replaced by the Constitution. In society, distinct advances were made toward the realization of religious freedom; educational facilities were improved and enlarged and were placed within the reach of many more people; and a beginning was made in the reorganization of the labor system. Side by side with these changes, commerce and industry were readjusted to suit the needs of a nation which was emerging from the colonial condition.[50]

The amount of suffering and privation in the colonies in the war years was minimal, according to Channing, and that that did exist was due primarily to transportation problems.[51] At the end of the conflict, then, prospects for the future seemed bright. "With free trade with all the world, with liberty to exploit their great domain free from quitrents and parliamentary protection, with their political well-being absolutely in their own hands, what doubt could the American people have of their successful pursuit of happiness!" But the optimism was misplaced. Commerce did not prosper, because the new United States found itself faced with the commercial barriers of both England and former allies, and from this ensued a period of general hard times. Recovery had begun by 1786, but was not recognized by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia in 1787, and the process was not completed until 1789.[52]

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[50] Ibid., p. 388.

[51] Ibid., pp. 392, 395.

[52] Ibid., pp. 408-409, 481, 414. Michael Kraus, in The Writing of American History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 235-236, noted that Channing differed

As a prelude to his discussion of the Articles of Confederation, Channing returned to the thesis stated in his preface, i. e., that the most significant fact of American history had been the victory of the forces of union over those of particularism. He felt that the dwellers in each of the original thirteen colonies had regarded themselves as forming a distinct administrative unit, that each was an absolutely sovereign entity when the tie with Britain was broken, and that the constitutions which each state drew up continued the particularistic tendency. But Channing also contended that a sense of unity had developed side by side with these particularistic ideas:

> The political institutions of all the colonies were bottomed on those of England. The settlers had grown to power in conflict against imperial control. The colonists of the continents in their own eyes and in those of the dwellers in the other sections of the British empire formed a group by themselves....The "Thirteen" opposed the new imperial policy in union. They associated themselves together to enforce their rights by a boycott as extensive as their independence, and had it acknowledged by Great Britain and the powers of the civilized world. Friendly union was prior in point of time; in the eye of law and legal sanction the state organizations were first. The earliest legal obligation that any continentalist owed, after the severance of his allegiance to the British crown, was to his State. On the other hand, the mere fact that all the state governments were republican in form and that not one of them reproduced the monarchial institutions of the motherland evinces more strongly than anything else the unity of political thought that prevailed among the people throughout continental America.[53]

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differed with historians who had painted a gloomy economic picture at the time of the Constitution.

[53] History, III, pp. 431-432. Channing included a very interesting end-of-chapter note on state constitutions, the

Channing foreshadowed very early in this volume what his attitude toward the Articles of Confederation would be. He referred to its "inadequacy," and noted that finally "the baleful effects of a weak central government became apparent and extorted the federal constitution from the necessities of the country."[54] This was the general tone throughout; one chapter was entitled "Four Years of Confusion, 1783-1787." Channing even derided the committee which drew up the Articles; it consisted, he said, of "second-rate characters."[55] The following words show the sweeping nature of his indictment:

> The framing of the Articles of Confederation had taken much time and their ratification by the State legislatures had occupied more. They were obsolete when signed by members of Congress and antiquated when the Maryland delegates gave the consent of that State to their ratification. The ideal federative system led to the continued poverty of the general government, to failure to adopt and enforce any effective commercial measures against hostile outsiders, to dangerous disagreements between several States, and to internal disorders in New England, Virginia, North Carolina, and elsewhere. All these led to reaction which found expression in the Constitution of 1787.[56]

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major portion of which was a comparative table entitled "Conspectus of the Constitutions." (pp. 458-462) In the Harvard University Archives there is a "Catalog of Constitutional conventions in the Library, made for Dr. Channing, and checked by the Law School in 1914." These things taken together indicate a rather extensive interest on Channing's part in constitutional history, even down to the state level.

[54] _Ibid._, p. 206.

[55] _Ibid._, p. 448.

[56] _Ibid._, p. 463.

"Helplessness," concluded Channing, was the keynote of government in the Confederation period.[57]

Most of Channing's comments on the Articles of Confederation fit rather well with John Fiske's idea that this was the "critical period" in American history. However, Merrill Jensen, the revisionist on the Confederation period, credited Channing with being ahead of his time in discerning the improving American commercial situation after 1783.[58]

Channing, like so many other historians, saw the movement which eventually led to the overthrow of the Articles of Confederation as the most significant thing about the entire Confederation period. He gave a brief account of the build-up to the Philadelphia Convention through the Alexandria (or Mt. Vernon) and Annapolis conventions; he thought there was a "public consciousness" that the meeting at Philadelphia was "on a very different footing" from these. "The consciousness of imminent public danger and the sudden willingness of the States and of the people to meet it was due to three principal causes," according to Channing. One of these was the great amount of internal disorder in different parts of the country; here Channing gave particular attention to Shays' Rebellion. The second was the threatened secession of the southwestern settlements. The third was the inability of the government to

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[57] Ibid., III, p. 491.

[58] Merrill Jensen, The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation, 1781-1789 (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), p. 218.

provide for the colonization of the area northwest of the Ohio River. This last problem, of course, was met by the passage of the Northwest Ordinance by the Confederation Congress at the very time the Constitutional Convention was in session.[59]

"The Federal Convention and Its Work" was in many ways one of Channing's weakest chapters. Several reasons for this can be given. Once again, Channing seemed to feel that he did not have a great deal to say that was new, for thirty pages is not really much to devote to the Constitutional Convention, the Constitution itself, and the ratification thereof, in a work of this length. This is especially true in view of the fact that almost ten of the pages were taken up with precedents for judicial review. Indeed, those ten pages posed a problem in another way also, i. e., organizationally; perhaps it could have been more appropriately included in volume IV in connection with Marbury vs. Madison. In spite of these problems, Channing did have some interesting comments on the Convention, the Constituion, and ratification.

He noted that many delegates were late in arriving at Philadelphia and that those present had already talked among themselves and arrived at general agreement on several important points. "Otherwise," he continued,

> it is difficult to account for the rapidity with which the delegates decided to propose a plan that contemplated the destruction of the existing federal organization and the establishment of a consolidated

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[59] Ibid., pp. 479-481.

> government that would be national in aim and supreme in operation. In the future, should this scheme be adopted, the existing state organizations would become secondary; the individual citizen would be directly responsible to the general government; and the acts of the new legislative body would be supreme throughout the land. It is safe to say that had this outcome been anticipated, had the state legislatures foreseen that the movement, in which they were asked to take part, would end in the loss of state sovereignty and the establishment of a government, federal only in name, not one State would have accepted the invitation of Congress and appointed delegates. The scheme formulated at Philadelphia was so wise in itself and so masterfully advocated by its friends, that, once before the voters, its ratification could not be prevented and the last stage in the American Revolution was peacefully accomplished. The delegates came together intent on remedying the defects of the Articles of Confederation and did it by replacing the existing framework from foundation up by a form of government that was new to America and to the world.[60]

Several specific provisions of the Constitution were praised by Channing. In a rare allegorical outburst, he wrote of the Supreme Court: "Always the court has gone on its way performing its gyroscopic function of keeping the ship of state steadily on her course." He thought the makers of the Constitution achieved "phenomenal success" in the distribution of checks and balances. And he noted that the famous "necessary and proper" clause "has been expounded in the most liberal manner possible, and has given the Constitution a fluidity that one would hardly expect it to have from the mere perusal of its phraseology."[61]

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[60] Ibid., pp. 494-495.

[61] Ibid., pp. 508, 509-510, 516.

Channing thought the method of ratification provided for in the Constitution "a most revolutionary scheme," because it proposed, as he said, "that nine of the existing thirteen States agreeing to it should secede from the existing federal union, establish a new government for themselves, and leave the other States to shift for themselves as well as they might." In his brief account of the ratification struggle, Channing singled out "The Federalist" papers as forming still "the best commentary on the principles of government that underlie the American commonwealth." Generalizing about opinion on the Constitution, Channing noted that if a line had been drawn parallel to the seacoast, fifty miles inland, it would have pretty well separated the opponents of ratification from the proponents thereof. "The favorers of the plan were the commercial classes," he said, "those who lived on settled incomes and the men of education; these for the most part resided to the eastward of this line."[62]

Channing expressed himself much more interestingly and forcefully on the Constitutional Convention in two letters to Max Farrand than he did in the Great Work. In 1909 he wrote explaining the present status of his views as follows:

> When the delegates reached Philadelphia, the mass of them, or most of them, had in mind remedying the defects of the Articles of Confederation: but, after they had settled down to work they undertook to, in a positive manner, prepare a Constitution which would go far beyond the Articles of Confederation. That was the Constitution of a federation;

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[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 516, 521, 522-523.

> they evolved a constitution for a consolidated government in which the federal principle was distinctly subordinate. It is obvious, therefore, that they went far beyond the remedying of defects, although they did not by any means produce an a priori thorough-going, perfect constitution.[63]

The stronger statement came in a letter of 1913. Channing thanked Farrand for sending him a copy of his new book, The Framing of the Constituion, but continued by saying that "evidently you do not agree with me that it was a 'frame-up' on the part of the reactionaries to give the control of the government to the well born and rich."[64] Shades of Charles Beard!

Channing's independence of most "schools" of historical thought is well-evidenced by his treatment of some major topics in this third volume. He broke sharply with Bancroft's patriotic-nationalistic view of the Revolution as a struggle between liberty and tyranny. And, even though Channing's approach to colonial history up to the Revolution corresponded basically with his contemporaries of the Imperial School, this was no longer true when he reached the causes of that conflict. Whereas Beer, for example, maintained that political and constitutional issues brought on the Revolution, Channing contended that "commercialism," i. e., economic factors, was at

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[63] Channing to Max Farrand, June 2, 1909, Channing Correspondence, 1897-1929, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This awesome name actually describes one small folder of seventeen letters, sixteen to Farrand and one to Marcus W. Jernegan.

[64] Ibid., April 9, 1913.

the heart of it all. Thus both here, and on the Constitution, Channing came close to the approach of the Progressive historians of the early twentieth century such as Beard.

Even for a historian who had as many problems in organization of material as Edward Channing did, placing a chapter on the Ordinance of 1787 after the one which carried the story through ratification of the Constitution seems a bit strange. Still, he managed to justify it somewhat. The time had come by 1790, he noted, "to formulate a policy of colonization fitted for a republican state." An "ideal system" had been "shadowed forth" in the Ordinance of 1787. Channing recognized Jefferson's 1784 measure as having laid the foundation for the one in 1787. He also discussed briefly the land ordinance of 1785, and summarized the significance of all three rather well when he wrote: "As Jefferson's Ordinance of 1784 was the basis on which the American plan of colonization was founded, so this Ordinance of 1785 is the forerunner of the land system of the next century."[65]

The content of Channing's last chapter, "At the End of the Era," reminds the reader how little of the non-traditional material, i. e., social and cultural, there has been in the volume up to that point. Channing recognized this. "It will be convenient in this place," he said, "to

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[65] History, III, pp. 528, 540. In discussing the situation as of 1790, Channing made use of a colored fold-out map (between pp. 528 and 529) showing the extent of settlement at that time.

pass in review some of the sociological topics that have already been noticed in the earlier periods," and then continued, with what can only be taken as one of his overgeneralizations, "for American history deals above all with the interaction of human aspirations and economic forces."[66] If he had really believed in that last idea, it seems that his History would have been quite different in nature. He followed the statement with a brief discussion of several of those "sociological topics," including immigration, slavery, religion, education, and social reforms.

Channing concluded the volume with praise for the 1761-1789 generation:

> In the thirty years that have just been passed in review, the American people had seceded from the mother country, established republican forms of government within their thirteen States, and had gone far in the readjustment of economic life to their new conditions. They had devised a colonial system that harmonized with their political principles and was to succeed in the coming century beyond that of any other colonizing country of the earth. They had adopted a form of federal government that was new to the world, republican in essence and imperial in power. These were large achievements for a single generation. No wonder that they looked forward with hope to the coming years. Announcing the ratification of the Constitution by New Hampshire and Virginia, the "Pennsylvania Packet" on July 14, 1788, thus advertised the establishment of the new Union:--
>
> "SHIP NEWS-EXTRA
>
> "Arrived safe in port, the ship 'Federal Constitution,' Perpetual Union, commander. In her came passengers Flourishing Commerce, Public Faith, Confidence, Justice."[67]

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[66] Ibid., p. 552.

[67] Ibid., p. 573.

The American Revolution was one of Edward Channing's finest volumes, certainly far superior to the second volume of his History. Paul H. Buck still thought in 1967 that it was "as good as we have" on the Revolution. Channing's grandson considered it one of the two best volumes of the series, and thought it had "no striking drawbacks." And Channing himself was proud of it. "I hope you like the third volume," he wrote to J. Franklin Jameson shortly after its publication, "for there is a lot of new matter in it. Of course, my interpretation of this new stuff may or may not be pleasing to you or to any one else," he continued, "but I think the profession ought to be grateful for the time and money that I have spent in digging."[68]

Jameson responded to Channing's comments that "your third volume seems to have been received with universal favor. For my part, I like it very much."[69] The favorable reception was, indeed, almost universal. Reviews which, in general, praised the work appeared in the English Historical Review, the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, the American Library Association Booklist, the American Review of Reviews, the Outlook,[70] the Nation, the Dial, and

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[68]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Fuller, "Edward Channing," pp. 119, 116; and Channing to Jameson, November 23, 1912, Jameson Collection.

[69]Jameson to Channing, December 7, 1912, Jameson Collection.

[70]H. E. Egerton, English Historical Review, XXVIII (January, 1913), pp. 170-173; Emory R. Johnson, Annals of the

the American Historical Review. Of these, the last three deserve special mention.

The anonymous reviewer for the Nation used Channing's volume as a take-off point for an entirely different interpretation of the Revolution. The desire of the colonists for home rule, he said, Channing seemed to understand very well. But another very important aspect of the same problem he seemed not to understand at all, i. e., class conflict within the colonies themselves. Almost half the review is an elaboration of this class conflict interpretation of American history. The reviewer did praise Channing for his "scholar's conscience" in the use of sources, his "direct and lucid" style, and his freedom from "inaccuracies and exaggerations of the sort to which American writers were once prone."[71]

St. George Leakin Sioussat, in the Dial, noted Channing's thesis that commercial factors were at the heart of the Anglo-American divergence and concluded that it was Channing's emphasis on this, plus "the freshness of his treatment," that gave the volume its distinction. He praised Channing for not

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American Academy of Political and Social Science, XLVIII (July, 1913), pp. 272-273; American Review of Reviews, XLVII (March, 1913), p. 375; and Outlook, CII (November 16, 1912), p. 596.

[71]Nation, XCV (November 21, 1912), pp. 482-483. Paradoxically, the reviewer continued in this vein for a while, noting Channing's "freedom from anti-British prejudice," then ended by criticizing him for telling again "the story with which we are familiar," i. e., "that it was right for the colonists to seek advantage and profit in trade, but wrong for Englishmen to do so," and that the colonists "were united in meeting an unjust attempt at exploitation by legitimate resistance." (p. 482)

taking up too much space with military history, and for exercising a "judicious restraint" in dealing with this topic. Sioussat thought Channing steered clear of sectional bias between North and South, but justifiably questioned whether the West had recieved its due. He also made an entirely valid criticism when he stated that after the Revolution, "one begins to feel a sense of compression and omission which accompanies one to the end of the book." The review ended by hailing the volume as "another installment of a notable contribution to American history."[72]

The most useful review of all those which The American Revolution received was that by C. H. Van Tyne in the American Historical Review. He praised Channing for his "mastery of the period," his "clear, direct style, unadorned except by the simple ornament of truth," his restraint, his "historical technic" ("well-nigh faultless"), his generosity in recognizing the work of others, and his wide use of sources. "After some twelve years' study of the period," said Van Tyne, "the reviewer found the volume abounding in facts that he did not know, and sown with shrewd and canny interpretations which are new and yet convincing."[73]

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[72]St. George Leakin Sioussat, Dial, LIV (January 1, 1913), pp. 20-22. The already-mentioned criticism of Channing for ignoring the West was an issue to practically everyone who commented on the volume. One historian accused Channing of being "oblivious to any divergence of sentiment between the eastern seaboard and the backcountry and unaware that a West existed as an important influence on the Revolution." (Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," in Hutchinson, Jernegan Essays, p. 299.)

[73]C. H. Van Tyne, American Historical Review, XVIII (April, 1913), p. 60.

All this was in the opening paragraph; Van Tyne then turned to criticism. Channing's account, he complained, "rarely leaves the Atlantic coast," so that foreign matters of importance and the contribution of the West to the Revolution receive only "the cold respect of a passing glance" and "the most meagre treatment," respectively. Van Tyne also declared "a radical difference of opinion" with Channing as to the fundamental causes of the Revolution. Channing, he said, showed "an astonishing blindness to social forces, notably those of sectarian and ecclesiastical character." He also considered Channing guilty of "placing the incidental cart before the causal horse" in saying that the differences of political thought between the English and the colonists resulted from the economic differences, i. e., the dispute over trade and taxation.[74]

Van Tyne admitted, however, that there was room for difference of opinion on all these matters. He then proceeded to point out some "actual errors" on Channing's part; but these were relatively insignificant. Finally, Van Tyne became a bit nasty. "The reviewer hardly needs to say that he views with compassion Professor Channing's non-commital attitude on the subject of state sovereignty in the Revolution," he wrote. "Had he read a certain article on that subject--of which he seems unaware--in volume XII of the American Historical Review,

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[74] Ibid., pp. 603-605.

he could not have been in such Egyptian darkness."[75] Channing did not appreciate that comment. When he wrote to Farrand thanking him for The Framing of the Constituion, he concluded the letter in this fashion:

> I would that the book had come earlier. My only consolation in its late appearance is that thereby I was prevented from omitting it from a foot-note and thereby incurring your enmity as I seem to have gained Van Tyne's by not embalming his article on State Sovereignty in a note. But I should not have forgotten it and if I had you would not have laid it up against
>
> Very truly yours--
> Edward Channing[76]

In conclusion, it is well to remember, after all this, that Van Tyne did end on the note of praise with which he had begun: "In spite of the faults--if, indeed, they are faults, and the reviewer not mistaken--the work is a permanent monument to American scholarship, a virile, truthful, and inspiring history, worthy of the great theme."[77]

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[75] Ibid., p. 605. The article Van Tyne referred to was his own "Sovereignty in the American Revolution: An Historical Study," American Historical Review, XII (April, 1907), pp. 529-545.

[76] Channing to Farrand, April 9, 1913, Channing Correspondence.

[77] Van Tyne review, p. 605.

CHAPTER VI

FEDERALISTS AND REPUBLICANS

> Vol. IV seems to have struck a new note, although why I do not say. It seems to me to be of a piece with the rest. If any body buys it, I don't care why they suddenly seem to recognize the historical and literary merits of
>
> Very truly yours,
> Edward Channing.[1]

Once Channing was ready to move into the national period in his History, he was anxious to concentrate on it in his teaching also. The problem, however, was that the course then being offered covering that era was Albert Bushnell Hart's famous History 13, and he was less than anxious to give it up. Indeed, it was only through what, "in retrospect, seems a rather sorry academic intrigue" that the course was "taken away" from him. Fortunately, the leading figure in the intrigue seems not to have been Channing, but another member of the history department, Archibald Cary Coolidge, who "disliked Hart and wanted him out of the history department altogether." This was accomplished in 1914, thanks partially to the intrigue, but partially also to the fact that Hart's interests had been leaning more and more to government anyway--he had become chairman of that department upon its creation in 1910. Hart, in giving up the course, made the "rather

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[1]Edward Channing to George P. Brett [President, Macmillan Company] , February 7, 1918, Edward Channing file in the Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library.

touching condition" that the number he had used for it for thirty years not be used by anyone else. Channing's course which replaced it was thus known as History 32.[2]

From this point on, Channing's teaching was more and more restricted in amount and limited to what he was then writing. Indeed, it must have been quite important to Channing to have his entire thought process move along together through American history. A library employee once went to Channing with a minor question, to which he certainly knew the answer. But his reply was, "That is in volume two; I am in volume four. When I complete one of those things, I forget about it and move on to the next one."[3] Doubtless too much could be made of such an anecdote, but the point must have some validity--Channing did not answer the question.

Channing was relieved of his teaching duties for the first semester of the academic year 1912-1913. He used most of the time for a trip to Europe to rest up after completing his third volume. On his return he proudly wrote to George P. Brett: "While I was away the Corporation of Harvard University raised my salary and appointed me to the old historic McLean

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[2]This account is based on Samuel Eliot Morison, "A Memoir and Estimate of Albert Bushnell Hart," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, CXXVII (January-December, 1965), pp. 43-44.

[3]Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Professorship of History once held by Jared Sparks. So our home coming has been pleasant."[4]

Thus encouraged, Channing wasted no more time in going on with the Great Work. "I have begun volume IV and shall go ahead with it as rapidly as possible," he wrote again to Brett on September 24, 1913. But Channing had problems in working on this fourth volume. He hinted at them in this same letter when he mentioned that he had to teach full-time in the 1913-1914 academic year, both because of his financial condition and the effect taking off another semester would have on his retirement benefits. "Being a professor, as you see, has its drawbacks," he lamented. But he could still see the bright side. He expressed appreciation that the Harvard administration had been "very kind" in allowing him to plan his teaching to go along with his writing, then went on:

> This gives me a chance to "try it" on successive audiences of young and not at all--sometimes--eager listeners. Finally, the having to do with bodies of students as a lecturer and with individual students, as a director of research, keeps me from getting stale and broadens my outlook as only intercourse with numbers of men from all over the country can. For these reasons I am rather inclined to think that my teaching work as it is arranged rather aids than retards my literary pursuits.[5]

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[4]Channing to Brett, February 13, 1913, Macmillan Collection. A copy of the certificate attesting Channing's election to the McLean professorship is in the Channing folder of the A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[5]Channing to Brett, September 24, 1913, Macmillan Collection.

Despite this, however, by January, 1915, Channing was thoroughly dejected. He wrote to President A. Lawrence Lowell asking for a half-year off in the next academic year, and in the course of the letter expressed concern about retirement benefits, the lease on his house, the courses he was to teach the next year, and his progress on the History. He continued:

> I am afraid that I appear rather insistent, but I am greatly puzzled as to what to do. My volume four is well along, but the amount of material remaining to be studied is still great. If I am to go on with this work, I have got to make greater speed that [sic] I have been making lately....I am also conscious that lecturing to my large class leaves me much more inert than was the case ten or five years ago. It seems to be the case of either giving up the book, or the teaching, or distributing my time somewhat differently.[6]

Channing overcame his despondency, however, doubtless aided by the fact that he got off the semester as he requested. "I am pegging away at volume IV and hope to see it in proof a year from now," he was informing Brett on August 29, 1915. "I have a half-year off--beginning with February 1916--which will give me a chance to finish it." He even found time to indulge in some light reading. "I wish that I could write as well as Owen Wister," he told Brett in the same letter. "I read Calamity through last evening and thank you very much for sending it to me." A few weeks earlier he had thanked Brett for some books and expressed his literary inclinations thus: "For me give me blood and thunder like the 'Sunday Magazine' or

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[6]Channing to Lowell, January 2, 1915, Lowell Papers.

real wickedness as Guy de Maupassant--or true tales--Hakluyt, Purchas, Capt. Cook."[7]

In spite of all his problems, Channing moved along rather well on Federalists and Republicans. He wrote Brett in June, 1916, that it was "approaching completion," and in December that it was done.[8] It was published in April, 1917, which was also the month of American entry into the First World War. That conflict affected Channing's work in several ways. "This war is certainly disrupting things," he wrote Brett in September, "but, so far, my understudy has not been drafted--he is too thin--so the prospect is that my plans of study and teaching will not be interfered with. We are, however, drifting from week to week."[9] The disruption caused by the war did not materially affect Channing's progress on the Great Work, for less time lapsed between volumes IV and V than had between III and IV. Still, he did "generously" take up some of the history department's "abandoned courses while his younger colleagues were in the service."[10]

The war also provided the occasion for one of the few times that Channing ran afoul of the professional patriots.

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[7]Channing to Brett, August 19 and July 5, 1915, Macmillan Collection.

[8]Ibid., June 28 and December 4, 1916.

[9]Ibid., September 20, 1917.

[10]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 283.

In the Boston Advertiser for January 27, 1916, a strange article appeared under the headline, "Unpatriotic Americans of Today, Like Yankee Heroes of Old, Scored by Harvard Man." It announced that a "new argument for preparedness" had been advanced at Harvard.

> Prof. Edward Channing, McLean professor of history, is the author, and his statement is that Americans are the most unpatriotic people on the face of the globe. "For this reason," says Prof. Channing, "we ought to train our young men to fight because ignorance added to a natural disinclination to fight would place us in a sorry plight should we be attacked."[11]

That was all he said about the war. But he must have been trying to stir up controversy, for he then launched into a tirade on the revolutionary period. He denounced the British in much stronger terms than he had in the History: "Fortunate it was for us that the English government was then in the hands of the stupidest officials that England has ever had (and that is certainly saying something)." That, however, probably offended only a few. His comments on such heroes as Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, and George Washington must have offended many. Channing, said the paper, presented Washington as a "pitiful blunderer."[12] Here is the major portion of his comments on that person of whom he had written in his second

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[11] Boston Advertiser, January 27, 1916. (In Channing's folder of the "Quinquennial File" of Clippings on Harvard Men, in the Harvard University Archives.) The paper did not make clear whether Channing's comments came in a speech, an interview, or some other form.

[12] Ibid.

volume, "Of all men in history, not one so answers our expectations as Washington":[13]

> "George Washington had no initiative of his own, and often waited so long for the advice of big men and Congress that his strategic opportunities were lost. If it had not been for Coune [sic] de Gras and his fleet Washington could never have stepped in on Cornwallis at Yorktown.
>
> "The 'Father of our Country' did not think of the great idea even at that. He didn't have big ideas--as is easily proven by the management of his personal business.
>
> "The face and figure of Washington is familiar to us all. But the traditional George is not like the real one. The reason he has that strong, square jaw is that toward the end of his life he had a pair of old-fashioned false teeth which were worked by a spring."[14]

Channing did manage to relate these comments somewhat to the problem of preparedness in the era of World War I. "It was only by accident that we won the Revolutionary war," the paper quoted him as concluding, "and we could not hope for this again."[15]

Channing must have made other comments similar in nature after American entry into the war. In April, 1919, he wrote a self-explanatory letter to Max Farrand which is one of his most humorous extant and bears extensive quotation:

> You're another! Or, rather, you are the only one. It appears from the "Washington Star" of

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[13]Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume II: A Century of Colonial History, 1660-1760 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), p. 559.

[14]Boston Advertiser, January 27, 1916.

[15]Ibid.

April 15, 1919, that Mrs. Lily Elliott and Miss A. L. Thompson of Maryland as a committee have denounced us to the D. A. R. as declaring that G. W. was a selfish, tyrannical, and unjust man; that P. Henry was dishonest; that the Boston girls preferred the Britishers to the Continentals; that the American soldiers were not defeated because they ran so fast, the British couldn't catch them; and that the only purpose served by the Decl. of Ind. was to furnish a national holiday. Furthermore, they call upon every D. A. R. and every woman in the U. S. "to make the matter her own personal affair and to use every influence she possesses to compell the governing bodies of Harvard and Yale properly to punish the two professors." As I have never believed any of the above things and therefore could never have stated them, you are undoubtedly the person who is in for it and I hope you will get your deserts.

Seriously, I wonder whether we should regard this as good advertising or should invoke the law of libel to shut up the aforesaid Eliott [sic] and Thompson. Personally, I should very much like fifty thousand to put into the Victory Loan; but whether the aforesaid ladies are worth $100,000, or whether we could collect it from the D. A. R. is not clear to me.

Per contra! I have just been reading a review of your book in "The New Republic" by the redoubtable Roland G. [Usher, a former Channing assistant.] He seems to have been incited by the advertisement of your book, to placing me on a pedestal and to have suggested that I am the real original originator of the modern American history and that you are--well, I don't know what. At any rate, the latter part of the notice is so laudatory of M. F. and the whole so laudatory of both of us, that I am rather inclined to think that we are the only living historians in America worth mentioning, and the only thing for us to consider is how much of the one hundred thousand we get from the D. A. R. we ought to hand over to Roland.[16]

Coincidentally, war was a central topic in Channing's fourth volume, also; the Tripolitan War, the Napoleonic Wars, and the War of 1812 altogether occupy approximately half the

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[16]Channing to Farrand, April 22, 1919, Channing Correspondence, 1897-1929, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

space. But these were so closely tied in with other developments of the period, foreign and domestic, that it will be best to cover the 1789-1815 period in order as Channing did.

The first chapter of Federalists and Republicans is the only one devoted entirely to non-political matters. As usual when Channing is dealing with this kind of material, his comments are interesting but somehow seem strangely unrelated to the general story. One problem is the diversity, as evidenced by this list of page headings from the chapter: population, transportation, postal facilities, compensations, simplicity of living, prices, amusements, drinking habits, treatment of disease, the yellow fever, patent medicines, and lotteries. All that in twenty-seven pages!

Channing gave considerable emphasis to transportation in this first chapter, thus foreshadowing the major thesis he was to put forth on that subject in his next volume. "Of all the things that stood in the way of a realization of the dreams of those who had made the Constitution none was more formidable than the difficulties of transportation," he wrote. The application of steam to transportation in this period "changed the whole face of civilization by making practicable what had before been impossible." And these new conditions of living led to changed manners of thinking--"to the liberalization of the mind, to scientific evolution, to the breaking down of religious barriers, to a radical alteration in the ethical outlook, and to the creation of a new literature." Channing

even related this topic to his central theme of union versus particularism. "Under these difficulties of transportation, the task of administering affairs of peace and war from any one city was certain to be great," he noted. And he wondered, "In view of the divergent interests of the several parts of the country, and of all the social and political prejudices that attended on these divergences, was it going to be possible to administer a constantly growing consolidated federal government for any length of time?" Innovations in transportation, he implied in the next question, helped make it possible: "Had not the steamboat, the railroad, and the telegraph come when they did would the Union have long continued?"[17]

This first chapter was also one of the very few places in the entire History where Channing showed evidence of having done research in newspapers. He footnoted them specifically for some of his comments on amusements, but he was very cautious about relying on them. This was in line with his general attitude toward newspapers as sources, for he reportedly said, "The only thing you can believe in newspapers are the advertisements."[18] In the end-of-chapter bibliographical notes, he commented on the work of John Bach McMaster, who relied so extensively on newspapers for his social history: "McMaster

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[17]Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume IV: Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), pp. 2, 1-2, 8.

[18]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

used the newspapers with great effect, but, sometimes, without the exercise of the critical care which this class of material peculiarly demands."[19]

Channing made some other interesting bibliographical comments here also. Continuing with McMaster, he noted that the author attempted to go "far beyond the merely political" and sought "to bring to view the reasons for political action." Channing thought McMaster's work "unsurpassed" as "a storehouse and index to material," but objected to "a certain metallic quality" about the style and "a lack of variation" which made the book "difficult reading in any quantitative manner." Other authors of multi-volume histories who received mention were Richard Hildreth, James Schouler, and Hermann von Holst. Hildreth's history, said Channing, "remains to this day the most satisfactory account of the administrations of Washington and John Adams, although written three-quarters of a century ago." It "has no pretensions to literary merit, is a mere annal, and is prejudiced," he continued, "but it gives the facts accurately and in usable form." Schouler was dismissed more briefly. His "sympathies are with Jefferson rather than with the Federalists," Channing wrote, "but his style is as dry as that of Hildreth." Von Holst was dealt with briefest of all; indeed, his work was mentioned only in a footnote. It "enjoyed great vogue when it appeared," Channing recorded,

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[19] History, IV, p. 28.

"but owing to his doctrinaire treatment of our history has since lost favor." John Spencer Bassett's Federalist System in the American Nation series was singled out by Channing as an "excellent" smaller work.[20]

One of the most interesting and unique side lights of Channing's diversified first chapter was his comments on the drinking habits of the day. Emphasizing the paucity of amusements, Channing concluded that "the easiest way to forget one's self was to take to alcoholic stimulants." Thus, these "were consumed in almost fabulous quantities." Among well-known public figures who indulged rather extensively were Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Rufus King. Channing speculated:

> It is one of the most curious pursuits of the historian to seek to relate cause and effect. There is little doubt of the preeminence of Jefferson and Madison in the office of Secretary of State, and we have had few better representatives at London than Rufus King. Whether alcohol quickened or dimmed their intellects would probably best be left for decision to others. What effect it produced on their bodily health is also an interesting inquiry and one upon which conclusion would be quite as difficult. King died at the age of seventy-two, Jefferson at eighty-three, and Madison at eighty-five, after years of service unsurpassed each in his way.[21]

One reviewer thought these comments might "bring the author some embarassment." "If the American Liquor Dealer's Association does not jump at this proof of the good effects of

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

partaking of the 'good things' of life," wrote William E. Dodd in the Dial, "it will be because its press agents do not look to the pages of grave and sober historians for support of their cause."[22]

This little diversion by Channing provides the opportunity to indulge in a similar one here, i. e., a brief note on Channing's own drinking habits. The few items on that subject which appear in his correspondence are not significant enough to lead to any conclusions, but they are interesting and sometimes humorous. He wrote to J. Franklin Jameson once enclosing a wine advertisement which, he said, dropped out of a copy of the English Historical Review. "It occurred to me," he continued, "that similar leaflets, inserted in the American Historical Review, of Wilson's Rye and Schlitz's Beer might put that publication on a firm financial footing and save the members of the Association from the payment of any further dues."[23] Most of Channing's comments on his own inclinations to imbibe are found in his correspondence with Brett. "By the way," he wrote after a trip by sea to Richmond, Virginia, for research, "my steamer had some very good Sparkling Moselle of which I annexed a pint every night and thought that it was a pity that some of my good friends were not with me to make it a quart." The last year of his life he was still indulging,

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[22]William E. Dodd, Dial, LXIII (July 19, 1917), p. 62.

[23]Channing to Jameson, May 22, 1911, John Franklin Jameson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

for he wrote, en route to England: "In the smoking room at night, before going to bed, I take a glass of Chartreuse to your very good health and prosperity."[24] Finally, a meeting of the Executive Council of the American Historical Association in 1920, when Channing was president, must have turned into a drinking bout of sorts, for John Spencer Bassett, the secretary, wrote to Channing a few days later: "I hope you are well and that you have recovered from the contaminating effects of Munro's spirits on Thursday night."[25]

Though he separated it into two volumes, Channing must have seen the period 1789-1848 as one in many ways. Besides the emphasis on transportation, there were several other things which led him to this view. He called his fifth volume, on the period 1815-1848, The Period of Transition, but he saw the 1789-1815 period as such an age also.

> The twenty-five years covered in the present volume were distinctly a period of transition from the old order of things to the new, from the modes of thought and action of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to those of our own times. At the moment, the future seemed full of doubt. There were most novel and urgent problems of administration and of finance to be settled at home; and the relations of the United States with the outer world were never more precarious than they were in this quarter of a century.[26]

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[24]Channing to Brett, January 7, 1922, and May 23, 1930, Macmillan Collection.

[25]Bassett to Channing, December 31, 1920, American Historical Association Collection, Secretary File, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. The Munro was William Bennett Munro, the historian.

[26]History, IV, p. 2.

For some reason, there was much less openly evaluative and/or interpretive material in Federalists and Republicans than in any of the first three volumes of the Great Work. Since the coverage here necessarily emphasizes that type of material, this volume can be dealt with less extensively.

In his treatment of George Washington here, Channing did not indulge in the unbridled praise of his earlier volumes. He emphasized the difference between the "traditional" and the "real" Washington. The latter, he said, was very difficult to discover--"no more elusive personality exists in history."[27] The former was largely the creation, according to Channing, of "two Scottish men of genious," Gilbert Stuart and Mason L. "Parsons" Weems. Channing thought it was "extremely doubtful" as to how closely the Stuart portrait resembled "the actual Washington." And he stated decisively that the Washington "of the cherry tree and hatchet" was a product of "the imagination and pen" of Weems, and was "a most striking example of the pseudo-historical art which some persons confuse with history." The first serious study of Washington was that by Chief Justice John Marshall, Channing noted, but he considered the best treatment published as of 1917 to be Paul Leicester Ford's True George Washington.[28]

"Probably never in modern history has a successful revolutionary leader been so bereft of any tangible means of

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[27] Ibid., p. 34.

[28] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

compulsion," said Channing, emphasizing the "chaotic condition of affairs" at the time of Washington's inaugural.[29] Most aspects of "Organization of the Government" by the Washington administration Channing treated favorably. The early evolution of the cabinet, however, he described and evaluated in a very critical fashion: "Thus was established a council that was not elected, that was appointed by its presiding officer--with the advice and consent of the Senate--and was removable by him,--actually an institutional monstrosity." And, though he would say more on the subject later, Channing was careful even at this point to place blame where he felt it was due for one institution in American politics. The spoils system, he wrote, "instead of being an invention of Jacksonian Democrats or Jeffersonian Republicans, was an inheritance from the Federalist Presidents and by them had been built up on colonial and English precedents." Channing also very objectively included some of his ancestors, the Ellerys of Rhode Island, among those men of "lesser clay," the professional office-seekers, who, through the spoils system, "fed at the public crib" for generation after generation.[30]

In a chapter on "Credit and Commerce," the central figure was necessarily Alexander Hamilton. Channing had earlier called him "one of the most remarkable men to whom the

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[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 56, 50.

United States is indebted for its place among the nations."[31] Here the praise was still present, but modified. "It is impossible to overstate the debt of the American people to this far-seeing fearless statesman," wrote Channing, "but it is well also to remember that he made some of the cruelest political blunders in our history." Still, the over-all tone was favorable:

> Apart from administration, Hamilton had extraordinary intuition in forecasting with a statesman's imagination the material development of America. He organized the assets of the nation, calling to his aid all the elements that were in the future to exploit the resources of the country. He was the organizer of exploitation, the originator of monopoly; but he did his work at the precise moment that exploitation needed to be organized and human ingenuity required excitation by hope of monopoly.[32]

For Hamilton's first report on the public credit, in which he put forth the famous funding and assumption proposals, Channing had nothing but praise. The Whiskey Insurrection in western Pennsylvania, stirred up by Hamilton's excise tax, Channing saw as Hamilton himself probably did. It was "no unmixed evil," he wrote, "because it enabled the federal government to show its power and to prove that it was no mere rope of sand that could be easily dissolved."[33] And he concluded the chapter in this fashion:

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[31]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume III: The American Revolution, 1761-1789 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), pp. 463-464.

[32]History, IV, p. 66.

[33]Ibid., pp. 81-82.

> Never in the course of history has there been so immediate and permanent a financial foundation laid for any country's prosperity as that which was built by Hamilton, the men of the First Congress, and President Washington. It is true that they had in their hands an opportunity greater than was ever vouchsafed to any other beginners of a State. There were no national financial institutions to hamper them; there were no laws, regulations, or traditions to hinder them from pursuing the path of wisdom. The slate was perfectly clean. They might establish the credit of the government of the United States on a firm basis; or they might give it an insufficient underpining that would collapse under the weight of the super-structure of later years. They acted with a sagacity that the world has seldom seen. The fabric that they wrought has been changed and mended from time to time to meet the needs of succeeding generations, but the framework is even now essentially as they left it.[34]

In a chapter on the rampant speculation in the period 1789-1800, the activities of Robert Morris stand out. He was, said Channing, "the prince of plungers." One of the most interesting ventures was his connection with the building of Washington, D. C. That this, "the most attractively planned city in the world," wrote Channing, "exists at all is due very largely to the financial genius of Robert Morris and his associates, all of whom passed their declining years in penury." This last, Channing considered a shame. "Republics are proverbially ungrateful," he wrote, "but, considering Robert Morris's services to the United States, it should

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[34] Ibid., pp. 87-88. In the end-of-chapter bibliographical notes, Channing included this interesting statement: "Henry Cabot Lodge's Alexander Hamilton in the 'American Statesmen' series is one of the most artistic bits of biographic-historical writing ever done in this country,--and, for that reason, one of the most dangerous for any except the most erudite." (p. 89)

never have been possible" for him to go through what he did.[35]

Foreign affairs of the new republic necessarily occupied a great deal of space in this fourth volume of the Great Work. Channing introduced the subject as follows:

> The promulgation of the Neutrality Proclamation on April 22, 1793, gave the signal for America's withdrawal from Old World politics. No event in Washington's administration aroused more interest, few of the deeds that are associated with his name had more lasting consequences, and not one of them demanded greater courage or betokened more thoughtfulness and foresight. In the first quarter-century of our national history, the fate of America was bound up with that of Europe to an extent that nowadays seems almost incredible. The War for Independence had freed America from the yoke of British misrule. In the minds of European chancelleries, it had done nothing more; the newly enfranchised States belonged to the Concert of Nations after 1783 fully as much as the English colonies had belonged to it before Lexington and Bunker Hill. Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, John Adams, and those who worked with them, liberated the United States from this European thraldom,--for a century, the American people lived a life apart from the rest of the world.[36]

"In 1789," he continued, "the external outlook was as unpleasing as was the internal....The Americans seemed to be relapsing into the colonial condition from sheer inability to keep out of it." American leaders were wisely united in their determination to keep the United States out of European embroilments.[37]

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[35] Ibid., pp. 96, 107, 112.

[36] Ibid., p. 116.

[37] Ibid., pp. 116-117, 127.

Channing strained to retain objectivity in dealing with the "Citizen" Genêt episode. He wrote that

> it is well to recall that Genêt, with all his activity, hardly went beyond what Franklin, Deane, and Lee had done in France before the signing of the Treaty of Alliance, and that the French government had in effect done for the Americans in the matter of military equipment exactly what Genêt had asked [Secretary of War] Knox to do for him.[38]

But Channing was overly critical of John Jay and the treaty he negotiated in 1794, especially the portion thereof which dealt with West Indian trade. "At the time and since," he wrote, "it has seemed remarkable that so high-minded and patriotic a man as John Jay should have signed an instrument containing so disastrous a stipulation." Jay's "ignorance" and "error of judgment" were blamed; Channing rejected the idea that he had "any purpose of sacrificing the interests of his country."[39] Channing was unaware, of course, as historians were until only recently, of the role which Hamilton played in undermining whatever chance of success Jay may have had in his negotiations with the British.

Between this introductory treatment of foreign affairs and the continuation of that topic, which was to occupy most of the rest of the volume, Channing inserted a chapter on "The Rise of Political Parties." There was no such thing as a party in existence in 1789, he noted, "as we use the term

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

today." By 1796, there definitely was.

> The differentiation grew out of varying conceptions of the character of the new government and was accentuated by the sectionalism due to divergent industrial conditions, the ever present contests between capitalism and agrarianism, and between conservatism and radicalism. Moreover, the line of cleavage, between those who had and those who had not, had been widened by the disorders of the preceding decade and by the reaction which had placed the propertied classes in power.[40]

As Channing presented it, Jefferson correctly analyzed that Hamilton, having been unable "to secure a 'strong government' directly through the Federal Convention," was "gradually building up such an organization by a liberal interpretation of the Constitution and by executive action." Jefferson thus became the leader of the opposition. Scholar and idealist that he was, he seemed "as unfitted to found and drill a great party as any man who had appeared in the front rank of American history." Yet, his "political methods were inscrutable." "Almost never has a political party been so efficiently and so secretly marshalled and led," Channing wrote of the Jeffersonian Republicans. The Federalists, he noted, were "reactionary and aristocratic from start to finish and became more reactionary and aristocratic with each successive year."[41]

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[40] Ibid., p. 151. Here Channing made use of the obvious opportunity to refer to Charles A. Beard's Economic Interpretation of the Constitution. It was "a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the mainsprings of political activity in this epoch," wrote Channing. It was published too late (1913) for him to make use of it in volume III; but, as we have seen, he was in agreement with it to a certain extent.

[41] Ibid., pp. 162, 165, 169, 164.

Channing gave several reasons for their downfall:

> The Federalists had more organization than the Republicans. For one thing they had the advantage of occupying nearly all of the federal offices. Then, too, presiding over the party's destinies were a dozen men of great ability and administrative experience. Three things were in the way of their continued success. The first was the undoubted unpopularity which Jefferson had managed to cast about several of their measures. Another was the autocratic tone of the leaders. A Federalist letter always begins "It is decided" or "It has been determined,"--the "it" meaning that either Hamilton, or two or three men guided by him, had come to a certain conclusion. In similar cases, on the other side of the political boundary, Jefferson's commands take the form of "Our friends think;" the difference was wide and was vital. The third obstacle to the long-continued predominance of the Federalist party was the lack of harmony within its ranks which clustered about the person and pretensions of John Adams.[42]

It was in his treatment of Adams that Channing most justified the comment of one historian that his "inclination was in the direction of the Federalists."[43] "The perusal of hundreds of pages of printed matter and a mass of manuscripts has served to relieve John Adams of much of the prejudice that an acquaintance with the annals of his earlier life and the most unfortunate literary performances of his later years had left on the present writer's mind," confessed Channing. From that point on, the second president's career was evaluated quite favorably. His role in preserving peace with France in 1798-1799 was interpreted by Channing as "one of the most

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[42] Ibid., pp. 169-170.

[43] Michael Kraus, The Writing of American History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 236.

notable acts of a remarkable man." Even the notorious "midnight appointments," Channing explained away. They resulted from, he wrote, "the goodness of his [Adams'] heart rather than to any selfish desire to defraud Jefferson of any of his rights."[44] Charles A. Beard thought he saw in this last statement an example of Channing's "dry humor"; Carl Russell Fish was probably more correct in considering it "a deliberate judgment on the man in the study of whose character he [Channing] has made the most profound contribution of the volume."[45]

Negatively, Channing justified to a certain extent the charge that he was pro-Federalist by his generally critical treatment of Thomas Jefferson in this volume. He respected that figure's abilities, but obviously disapproved of the way he utilized them on occasion. He even played down the significance of Jefferson's election, the so-called "revolution of 1800." The outcome, he wrote, "turned entirely upon the election in New York and that depended upon [Aaron] Burr's manipulation of New York City politics. To him, therefore, the downfall of Federalism was ultimately due." Channing's conclusion: "It is perfectly truthful, therefore, to say that a change of less than two hundred and fifty votes in the city of New York...would have given New York's vote to Adams and made

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[44] History, IV, pp. 182, 205, 241.

[45] Charles A. Beard, New Republic, XI (July 7, 1917), p. 282; Carl Russell Fish, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IV (September, 1917), p. 246.

him President with seventy-seven votes to sixty-one for Jefferson,--of such was the Revolution of 1800."[46]

Channing did consider Jefferson's first inaugural address "one of the most noteworthy documents that ever came from his pen." It "deserves the careful attention of every one, because the principles therein enunciated underlie democratic government in every age and clime." Channing also admitted that "it would be difficult to find a more effective bit of administration than that of our national affairs in Jefferson's first term." But more typical is this comment, made with the Tripolitan War in mind: "Jefferson's bellicose attitude in the early years of his presidency is well worth bearing in mind in view of his later determination to keep the United States out of the world-wide war regardless of what seemed to many persons to be the national honor."[47]

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[46] History, IV, pp. 236-237. Channing was unwilling to concede that the controversy centering around the Alien and Sedition Acts and the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions had any significant effect on the election. (p. 232) He was even unwilling to condemn the Alien and Sedition Acts, and minimized their harshness and injustice. (p. 224)

One historian commented wrongly that "Channing was rather friendly to Jefferson." (Kraus, The Writing of American History, p. 236) Channing became a rather good friend of Albert J. Beveridge; their "mutual dislike of Jefferson" helped draw them together.--Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), p. 552. Another historian noted that "Channing alone [of Dodd, Jameson, Farrand, and several others who aided Beveridge by reading the manuscript of his Life of John Marshall] seemed to have accepted Beveridge's [critical] treatment of Jefferson."--Tracy E. Strevey, "Albert J. Beveridge," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 390.

[47] History, IV, pp. 248, 260, 271.

"The most significant achievement of Jefferson's first administration was the procurement of Louisiana,"[48] wrote Channing. The Louisiana Purchase had been the subject of his Ph.D. thesis; it here occupied two well-written, but slanted, chapters. Well-written because Channing always did better when he had a central theme as opposed to dealing with diverse material; slanted because Channing emphasized how the purchase played havoc with Jefferson's consitutional theories:

> Jefferson, the apostle of the right of man to govern himself according to certain unalienable laws, had negotiated through his representatives a treaty acquiring some thousands of Spaniards and Frenchmen together with an entirely unknown quantity of North American Indians. Government "existed by consent of the governed," but the consent of not one of these persons had been asked. Moreover, in the existing condition of affairs with the world at war and a very large proportion of these recently purchased human beings by no means enthusiastically affected to their new owners, whatever government was established, must be somewhat autocratic. What right, indeed, had the United States to buy lands and rivers without the consent of the inhabitants or with it? Was the Constitution a pact between sovereign States and limited to the area of 1783 or did the American people form a nation? Jefferson and his co-workers had declaimed loudly against the idea that the United States was something more than a bunch of sovereign States working together under an agreement for certain limited purposes and had demanded that this compact should be strictly construed that the rights of the co-States should suffer no impairment. Possibly the most interesting thing that came out of the Louisiana Purchase was the statement by Jefferson to Breckinridge, August 12,1803 that after the treaty was ratified and executed an appeal must then be made to "the nation" for a confirmation of an act which "the nation" had not previously authorized--only five years after the

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 275.

> Kentucky Resolutions and their author was writing about "the nation!"[49]

Somewhat carried away with the significance of the purchase, Channing speculated:

> had there been no Louisiana Purchase there would have been no Missouri Compromise, no Texas annexation, no Mexican War, no Oregon boundary! The Kansas-Nebraska Act would never have been passed and there would have been no War for Secession with its attendant orgies of Reconstruction. But the star of destiny otherwise determined, and it is not the function of history to question.[50]

According to Channing, "The years immediately following the Louisiana Purchase were among the most troublous in our annals." One problem was boundaries: "From this point, the matter of the bounds of Louisiana passed into the hands of the diplomatists, and when they got through with it, by the Florida treaty of 1819, the historians took it up and have been at it ever since." More specifically, however, Channing had in mind Burr's conspiracy. Aaron Burr, he wrote, was "one of the most extraordinary and lamentable figures of American political history."[51]

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[49] Ibid., pp. 333-334. Channing was not too concerned with the problem of who should get "credit" for the purchase. He relegated his comments on that subject to a footnote: "It is not difficult to apportion the credit for this transaction. Napoleon, for reasons having nothing whatever to do with the United States, suddenly determined to get whatever he could for whatever title to Louisiana he had. He threw the province, so to speak, at Livingston, Monroe, Madison, and Jefferson; and they share between them--equally--whatever credit there was in catching it and holding it--that is all." (p. 319)

[50] Ibid., pp. 334-335.

[51] Ibid., pp. 335, 331, 172.

Another part of the aftermath of the purchase was the Florida problem, which flared in 1805. Channing really became critical here. He saw this as "a species of retributive justice for the violation of the Constitution in the procurement of Louisiana and the immorality of receiving stolen goods from the greatest cutthroat of modern times."[52]

The second most significant development of Jefferson's first term was the assault on the federal judiciary. Here, too, Channing found opportunity to be critical of the Jeffersonians. The most important aspect of this attack was the attempt to impeach Samuel Chase, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Channing admitted that Chase, with his partisan harangues from the bench, was an anachronism, but he seriously doubted that that was "a sufficient reason for straining the Constitution to remove him from the bench, embitter the last days of the life of a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, and set a precedent that would destroy the greatest part of the protective efficiency of the federal judiciary and greatly injure that of the State judiciaries."[53]

However, "Jefferson's domestic difficulties were trifling in comparison with those that befell in connection with international affairs," Channing noted. He admitted that Jefferson was "only partly responsible" for these.[54] From

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

this point on, Channing's narrative is largely concerned with these international affairs, particularly, of course, the problems leading to involvement in the War of 1812, and the conflict itself. Channing wrote well about these developments, and usually succeeded in remaining objective. "Sentiment played a large part in dictating the discussions and acts of that day, as well as of our own," he stated.

> The sayings "The flag covers the cargo," "Free ships make free goods," "The freedom of the seas," and others of the kind have given a false glint to the whole debate. Property that is rightfully spoken of as private and neutral, while on the land in a neutral country, ceases to be such the moment it finds itself on the ocean on the way to a belligerent, no matter how directly or indirectly it may go. On the contrary, such property partakes of a semi-military character, however inoffensive it may seem in itself to be, provided it can in any way be used for the support of civilians engaged in supplying military forces with recruits, munitions, or food. A neutral ocean commerce carrier engaged in the transportation of goods to a belligerant in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is giving aid and comfort to one country at the cost of lives and treasure to the other, and in so far is performing an un-neutral act.[55]

Or one of the leading points of conflict between the United States and Britain, impressment, Channing made rather contradictory remarks. In one place he agreed that it was an "abominable" practice, but in another he played down its extent and significance and doubted the adequacy of "the evidence laid before Congress by Madison and believed by him to be a complete justification of war on land and sea with all

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[55] Ibid., pp. 352-353.

its killings, and burnings, and pillagings, and doubtfulness of result that attends any exercise of arms."[56]

Channing played down the amount of suffering which resulted from the Jeffersonian Embargo, except in Virginia. Indeed, he talked a great deal about the "constructive" effects of the measure on New England. The high price of illegally imported goods, he noted, "gave would-be manufacturers their chance." "Northern manufacturing owed its rebirth to the Jeffersonians, an outcome of their policy that was certainly very far from their desire."[57]

For a work dealing primarily with national political history, this volume contains amazingly little on presidential elections. The election of 1804, for example, got approximately one page. "Jeffersonianism was still supreme," Channing concluded, "but unless there was a modification in its policies, the political future was by no means secure."[58]

Channing traced the modifications in policy by the James Madison and James Monroe administrations through the Non-Intercourse Act, Macon's Bill #2, and the Cadore letter, to the declaration of war.

> In 1811, it became clear that a large part of the people of the United States was wearying of inaction, was content no longer to submit to insults, and was conscious of a growing spirit

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[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 369, 483.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 388-389.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 398.

> of nationalism. In May, an American frigate fired on a British ship-of-war; in November, the battle of Tippecanoe expressed western protest against British interference with the Indians south of the boundary line; and in December, new men filled with aggressive nationalism came into prominent political positions.[59]

Monroe himself was held largely responsible for the declaration of war. He "came into the office with a serious and firm conviction that the American government must resent the usage which it had received and was receiving from foreign powers, not by arguments and protests merely, but by an appeal to arms," wrote Channing. "These opinions he held forth day and night and was more responsible than any one else for the declaration of war." "Proceeding onward with eyes blinded by a happy Fate and acting under the influence of Monroe, on June 1, Madison recommended a declaration of war."[60]

In Channing's treatment of the War of 1812, itself, the role of the navy stands out. He relied rather heavily in his account on the works of Henry Adams and Alfred T. Mahan, both of whom received praise in his bibliographical comments.

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[59] Ibid., pp. 440-441. Channing made brief evaluations of both Madison and Monroe. "Like so many men of that day," he wrote, "Madison combined scholarship with politics. He is not in the first rank of Americans with Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln; but as a constructive statesman, he stands almost alone by reason of the acumen with which he judged of the possible and impossible, conjoined to a knowledge of the present and the past." (History, III, p. 477) On Monroe, Channing was both more brief and more devastating. "James Monroe," he stated, "was one of those men of persistent mediocrity from whom useful and attractive Presidents have been made." (History, IV, p. 314)

[60] History, IV, pp. 447, 453.

Channing did an excellent job of relating European and American developments in his final chapter, concluding that the significant thing about the Treaty of Ghent was that "It was a treaty of peace to free Britain's hands for the coming conflict with Napoleonism that was to end on the battlefield of Waterloo."[61] He was a good deal more lenient toward New England in his treatment of the Hartford Convention than most historians had been. He concluded this volume, and set the scene for the next one, by describing the reaction to the end of the war:

> The revulsion of feeling was tremendous. Without waiting to look into the treaty "everyone passed from gloom to glory" and drinking and congratulations were the order of the afternoon and the evening. The ratified treaty was at once made public. Within twenty-three hours a copy of it went from Washington to New York,--an unexampled swiftness of transit. Everywhere as the news came "Peace--Security--Prosperity" was the cry; scholars were dismissed from school, flags were exhibited, even Harvard University was "splendidly illuminated in the evening, on this happy occasion." Prices of staple American products bounded up to the gratification of farmer and planter; prices of imported goods were cut in halves, greatly to the sorrow of merchant and importer. Everywhere, throughout the land, interest in foreign affairs and in home politics ceased. The American Nation, with its back to Europe and its face to the West, addressed itself to the solution of the problems of the Nineteenth Century.[62]

When one attempts to discern Channing's over-all interpretation of the 1789-1815 period, some problems emerge. Though he was critical of such nineteenth century historians

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[61] *Ibid.*, p. 557.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 564.

as Hildreth and von Holst, he did not manage to break with their Federalist-Whig-Republican approach to the Federalist era as much as he seemed to think. Hamilton still came off quite well and John Adams even better. As for the Jeffersonian portion of the period, Channing was obviously influenced by the work of his mentor, Henry Adams. Jefferson was not all bad, but Channing's emphasis tended to be on the problems Jefferson had in conforming his philosophy to the realities of politics.

Channing obviously meant, by his comment in the letter quoted at the head of this chapter about the fourth volume having "struck a new note," that it was being received better than the earlier volumes had been. He made it even clearer in other letters that that was his meaning. "Everyone seems to like Volume IV," he wrote to Brett on one occasion, and, on still another: "If it is true that the sale of books is in inverse proportion to review laudation, we wouls [sic] better hire somebody to pitch into yours truly."[63] He was not reading the reviews very carefully. True, they were generally favorable again. But, for the first time, one review left an over-all critical impression. And most of the favorable ones found more to complain about in this volume than in any of the first three.

The critical review was by William E. Dodd, and appeared in the Dial. Dodd did manage to say some nice things

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[63]Channing to Brett, September 20 and October 16, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

about Federalists and Republicans, but always qualified. "If his [Channing's] work fails to show, as one might wish, the evolution of society in America, the meaning of events, and the influence of ideas, it is a useful reference work," Dodd wrote. He filled his review with little innuendoes, like "it may be doubted whether Professor Channing has read," and "it may be doubted whether he knows." After speculating on the amount of time it would take for Channing to complete the entire set, Dodd even seemed doubtful of whether it was worthwhile: "Thirty years to a work which of necessity must be antiquated before it is finished!" Dodd concluded by acknowledging that the volume was "difficult to appraise justly." It was "substantial, informing and useful," he said, but brought to light nothing new, and showed no evidence of very keen insight.[64]

Channing was particularly proud of the "very laudatory" review of this fourth volume of his Great Work by John Spencer Bassett in the American Historical Review and the "very complimentary" ones by Charles A. Beard and Carl Russell Fish in the New Republic and Mississippi Valley Historical Review, respectively.[65] Actually, the praise of all of these reviews is qualified a great deal more than Channing's evaluations lead one to believe.

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[64]William E. Dodd, Dial, LXIII (July 19, 1917), pp. 60-63.

[65]Channing to Brett, October 16, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

Bassett's praise was only slightly qualified, but qualified still. "It does not seem extravagant to say that for the period with which this volume deals Professor Channing must be regarded as having set a new light in the historical heavens in the United States which none of his successors will ignore," Bassett proclaimed. "If critics find flaws in his treatment they will probably find small ones, and they will have to fight hard for their contentions." But he went on to find some of those small flaws himself. And, more importantly, he felt that "it is as an old-style historian that we must rank Professor Channing. For him the political thread is the clue to follow. He gives the first chapter in the volume to social conditions, and thereafter he goes on from one political event to another."[66]

Beard wrote a typical Beardian review in the New Republic. There was praise: "It is not too much to say...that whoever desires a fresh story of the period covered by this volume, founded on the latest investigations of scholars and conceived in a manner thoroughly acceptable to the leading lights of the American Historical Association, must turn to these pages." Channing was a "true scholar," with "a mind of great natural powers." But there were also criticisms and innuendoes. Channing's mind, for example, "had it been devoted to a different type of historical construction, could have

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[66]John Spencer Bassett, American Historical Review, XXIII (October, 1917), pp. 189-192.

contributed still more to our understanding of the early phases of American politics." "No sportive fancies enliven (or mar) Professor Channing's pages," said Beard of Channing's style. "If he reads Tom Sawyer or Plays for Puritans during vacations, he carefully conceals the fact when he writes his History of the United States." And finally, Beard lived up to his reputation when he criticized Channing for reversing things in saying that economic factors accentuated an already-developing ideological split between Federalists and Republicans.[67]

Fish's praise was least qualified. He noted that Channing's volumes "intensify in value as they grow in number, for the advantages that lie in a review of American history by a single mind multiply as the period reviewed lengthens." But even he found cause for complaint. He thought Channing's account of the Hartford Convention "unduly brief and colorless" and his account of the peace negotiations at Ghent "inadequate for the general reader." More importantly, Fish considered it "one of the main limitations" of the volume that it was so overwhelmingly concerned with national politics.[68]

Perhaps the most telling criticism of Channing's fourth volume is that of his grandson, who ordinarily was very

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[67] Charles A. Beard, New Republic, XI (July 7, 1917), pp. 282-283.

[68] Carl Russell Fish, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IV (September, 1917), pp. 243-247. The other reviews, mostly favorable, but most with their complaints also, were: American Political Science Review, XI (November, 1917), p. 793; American Review of Reviews, LVI (August, 1917), p. 215; Athenaeum, XIII (October, 1917), p. 530; Nation, CV (December 20, 1917), pp. 692-693; and Spectator, CXX (January 5, 1918), pp. 16-17.

hesitant to criticize. Here, however, he felt obligated to agree that Channing emphasized national politics too much (the "main criticism") and that he seemed not to have had time "to assimilate all the material in a selective and digested arrangement." He even directed a mild reprimand at Beard, noting, after quoting some of Beard's most praiseful statements, that the volume "does not seem to live up to these highest of recommendations."[69]

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[69]John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), pp. 120-122.

CHAPTER VII

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

> "The development of transportation in the years following the Treaty of Ghent is the most significant factor in American life between the inauguration of Washington and the firing on Fort Sumter." Is this statement true? Explain at length.[1]

Edward Channing first mentioned his fifth volume in his correspondence with Macmillan's president, George P. Brett, in May, 1917, the very next month after volume IV was published. He was thinking about calling it "The West and Jacksonian Democracy, 1815-1850." He did not teach the fall semester, for he wrote to Brett again in November that he was headed West for research. He mentioned, as places he intended to visit, Madison, Salt Lake City, Berkeley, and, on the way back, New Orleans. Before he was through, he visited all those and more--though he seems not to have been concentrating on research at all of them. "We have been here two weeks now," he wrote from Santa Barbara on January 15, 1918, "basking in the sunshine, watching the bathers, and motoring around the country--getting up steam for work the second half year. I hope that you have had enough coal; but you people seem to have had a very hard time. It makes one feel horribly selfish to be so warm when so many good people are suffering." By

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[1]An Edward Channing examination question, from Lawrence Shaw Mayo's notes as Channing's assistant in the period 1913 to 1918, Harvard University Archives.

February 7 Channing had returned and was writing to Brett, "I am back from California and what a welcome the weather man has given me! Moreover, I have little coal in my cellar, my coal dealer has none in his bins, and no prospect of getting any until the ice breaks up. But I am happy, although living at a club," he went on. "Mrs. Channing is in Washington looking after grandson's education, so when we shall begin housekeeping is problematical. Here I am at the old stand," back at work, he concluded.[2]

Channing considered his trip to the West well worthwhile. He had written President Lowell that he felt he "could not write Vol. V. without visiting California."[3] While in Berkeley he had written to Brett:

> At Madison and Salt Lake I gathered much material, local color, and geographic sense for Vol. 5. Here I have been a month working in the Bancroft Library and think that I have got an insight into Trans-Appalachia that I could never have got from printed books. If I can display this on the printed page the sales of the History will be greatly increased.[4]

There was another benefit, too: "I have met a lot of people and made many friends of those who had known me only through my books."[5] When Channing looked back at the trip a year

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[2]Edward Channing to George P. Brett, May 17 and November 1, 1917, January 15 and February 7, 1918, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

[3]Edward Channing to A. Lawrence Lowell, December 9, 1917, Edward Channing folder, A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, Harvard University Archives.

[4]Channing to Brett, December 25, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

[5]Ibid.

later, he saw it this way:

> The net result of my Western trip is the belief that if I can make a reasonably successful volume V--which will concentrate attention on me and my historical work that we ought to be able to double or treble the sales. There is no good book on those years between the close of Henry Adams and the beginning of Rhodes, and if I can write a worthy volume, it will be received with acclaim,--for McMaster is a nightmare.[6]

The summer of 1918 Channing spent in Cotuit. A letter he wrote from there described rather well what volume V was to become:

> Vol. 5 is whacking along and I have written bits of vols [sic] 6, 7, + 8 as I passed on in my lectures. I am making a practically new book of these last four volumes. The first third of 5 will be a study of the humanitarian and me [c] hanical readjustment of the years 1815-1850--transportation [,] settlement of the western country, abolition, labor, prohibition, literature, etc. The last third will be on Texas, Cal. [sic] Oregon + Mexican War. Between will come Jackson and his doings--also his successors.[7]

"May I not inquire as to whether the President and fellows wish to have me teach for the second half of next year," Channing asked President Lowell in a letter dated March 15, 1919. "Or would they prefer to retire me for good and all," he continued. "Personally, I should be very glad to teach for the second half of next year, as I enjoy the contact with a large class of students. But I leave the question entirely in your hands." He was working away on volume V.

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[6] *Ibid.*, January 2, 1919.

[7] *Ibid.*, July 2, 1918.

"I am going down to Charleston next week to study nullification on the spot," he said. A short time later he returned from the trip, saying he had found "a very interesting bit of material," and thanking Lowell and the Corporation for relieving him of his teaching duties for the next fall semester. "This will enable me to finish my fifth volume," he wrote, "or, at all events, to bring it near to a conclusion, so that I can send it to the printer about a year from now."[8]

Channing became very dejected before he finally finished the fifth installment of his Great Work. He went to Cotuit again for the summer in 1919. "You will be glad to know that I have been running ahead under full pressure on volume V,"[9] he wrote Brett. But it was while he was there at "Noisy Point," strangely, that dejection set in. High taxes apparently started it, but from this beginning he became concerned about his problems in general. Here is the way he described the situation to Brett:

> Personally my taxes are so large that I am at my wit's ends. I would like to sell Noisy Pt + give up [the house in Cambridge at] 74 Sparks + go to boarding; but my family is unhappy at either thought--to say nothing of both. So I am getting along without a man. I still have Miss Moore; but I may have to let her go--then good bye to the History after Vol. 5. I should be sorry to give it up because I have masses of material collected for Vols. 6, 7, 8. We will finish 5 at any rate. I told you the Corporation had relieved me of teaching

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[8]Channing to Lowell, March 15 and April 7, 1919, Lowell Papers.

[9]Channing to Brett, July 5, 1919, Macmillan Collection.

until Feb. so that job can be done. After that we will see.[10]

In December, 1919, however, things began to happen which should have brought Channing out of his pessimistic attitude. He attended the meeting of the American Historical Association in Cleveland that month and was elected president. According to his own account, he devoted a great deal of time to the duties of that office during the next year. "I sincerely hope that the two 'babes in the woods,' namely [John Spencer] Bassett [Secretary of the association] and myself are not making any horrid breaks," he wrote to J. Franklin Jameson in April, 1920. "We are both of us sitting up nights and getting thin in our efforts to serve our country and the Assoc." But Channing seems to have maintained his usual isolation to a remarkable extent also. He wrote to Jameson in September apologizing for missing a meeting and giving as his reason that "vol. V must go to the printer as soon as possible."[11] And he wrote to Miss Patty Washington, assistant treasurer of the association, returning a book that had been sent to him for comment:

> I never write puffs for publishers and therefore the thing for you to do is return the book to the gentleman with some very pleasant statement, to the effect that President Channing is busy or unwell or something. If you do not feel able to do this, you might turn it over to Mr. Secretary Bassett, for I have no doubt he would be very glad to have the

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[10] *Ibid.*, July 20, 1919.

[11] Edward Channing to J. Franklin Jameson, April 28 and September 28, 1920, John Franklin Jameson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

books and write the endorsement. At any rate, be very kind to the gentleman and don't send the books to

Very truly yours,
Edward Channing[12]

Channing did, of course, attend the meeting of the association at Washington, December 28-30, 1920. He delivered a presidential address entitled "An Historical Retrospect." In it, he showed a pessimism in relation to things far more significant than his own personal problems. He showed, indeed, that his belief in progress, stated so forcefully in his preface to the Great Work in 1905, may have been somewhat shaken by World War I and its aftermath. He called the hundred years from 1820 to 1920 the "Wonderful Century." But he seriously doubted if some of the developments of that period were so good.

Channing drew very heavily on his fifth volume for the presidential address. Indeed, he may have considered the address a nuisance because it took him away from the Great Work.[13] "The hundred years between 1820 and our own time are without counterpart in the history of the world," he told the assembled members of the historical profession of America. War, he thought, had a great deal to do with it, for the new era began at the end of the long series of wars extending

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[12]Edward Channing to Miss Washington, April 21, 1920, American Historical Association Collection, Secretary File, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[13]Herman Ausubel, Historians and Their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the American Historical Association, 1884-1945 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 70.

from 1756 to 1815. "War in itself is the most dreadful scourge that afflicts humanity. It has another side, however," he cautioned,

> for it loosens the mind and leads men to take new views and to put into execution ideas that have long been dormant....The whole bases of ordinary action break down and men emerge from such a condition of being, some of them filled with high ideals for the regeneration of humanity, others with the fiercest longing for material gain. The next half-century saw a rebuilding of society and a development of the world's resources that was without parallel up to that time.[14]

A major thesis of volume V was stated here in the presidential address also. "The most significant fact in the development of the United States between 1815 and 1865," he said, "was the installation of new systems of transportation of men and goods and the transmission of intelligence and administrative orders." Some of the results of this were good; others were not. In both industry and agriculture, for example, Channing considered one of the final results of changes set in motion by innovations in transportation to be that "the laborer has lost that touch with nature which gave joy to his work." Indeed, there is a touch of nostalgia evident throughout Channing's address. He referred once to the "good old colonial days," and he lamented that "The Jeffersonian idea of the dignity of the individual has disappeared. Now, men and women belong to a society and not to themselves."[15]

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[14]Edward Channing, "An Historical Retrospect," American Historical Review, XXVI (January, 1921), p. 193.

[15]Ibid., pp. 193-196.

He doubted the value of changes in the educational system: "But may we not ask ourselves as to how superior our educational system is to that which produced Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allen Poe, Washington Irving, and William Gilmore Simms?"[16] He doubted the value of constitutional amendments thirteen through nineteen:

> In the changing march of political and social institutions, due in great measure to the ever increasing mobility of men and ideas, the change from federal republican institutions to those of a more or less unified democracy has been inevitable and the change is not yet complete. It may well be asked, however, whether this piecemeal fitting of our fundamental law to new ideas is the best way of going about it.[17]

And finally, he cast doubt on the desirability of all the changes wrought by the "Wonderful Century":

> In all this, in the evolution of the greatest industrial society that the world has ever seen, have we gained or have we lost? Are men and women to-day happier and better off, politically, spiritually, mentally, morally, and physically, than our ancestors were in the days of James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Andrew Jackson?[18]

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[16] Ibid., p. 200.

[17] Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[18] Ibid., p. 202. Ausubel, in Historians and Their Craft, analyzed Channing's presidential address rather well. He emphasized Channing's "past-mindedness": "Channing, who had long considered it his mission 'to study and write without malice,' did not use history to exalt the present at the expense of the past; he showed in 1920 the same past-mindedness that he had shown fifteen years before when he wrote: 'To estimate Americans of the past by the conditions and ideas of the present day is to give a false picture to the reader and the student.'" Ausubel contended that Channing's investigation "equipped him not so much to guide the present as to challenge and deflate it." (pp. 70-71) He also noted

One thing which happened at the American Historical Association meeting which probably did even more than his election as president to cheer Channing up personally was the dinner given in his honor at the Cosmos Club by a group of his former students. An inscription on the program read: "To Edward Channing who so worthily maintains the traditions that were established by Herodotus...a tribute of respect and admiration, of gratitude and affection, has been paid by a few of those whom he has taught to study, and to write."[19] The menu, which included as a beverage "Punch a la Eighteenth Amendment," had on it a humorous caricuture of Channing from the Harvard Lampoon.[20] Among those present were George P. Winship, Sidney B. Fay, William B. Munro, Everett Kimball, and Waldo G. Leland.[21] One result of this occasion was the placing of a bronze tablet above the door of Channing's study, Widener 417, with this inscription:

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that "Channing did not talk about what the content of history should be. Instead, he showed, by using political, economic, social, and cultural data, how broad his view of the past was, or better still, how much broader it had become in the period since he had started to work on the magnum opus." (p. 335)

[19]From the copy in the Channing "Quinquennial" folder, Harvard University Archives.

[20]Ibid.

[21]"A Tablet for Professor Channing," Harvard Alumni Bulletin, other information unknown. A copy of this brief article was found in the "Resignation" folder in the possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller, Chatham, Massachusetts.

EDWARD CHANNING '78
TEACHER OF HISTORY
AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES"
THE FIRST OCCUPANT OF THIS STUDY
THIS TABLET HAS BEEN PLACED HERE IN 1921
BY A FEW OF THOSE WHOM HE HAS TAUGHT
HOW TO STUDY AND TO WRITE[22]

Among those unable to attend the dinner, but who contributed to the tablet, were Charles Francis Adams, Carl Russell Fish, E. B. Greene, Lawrence Shaw Mayo, Roger B. Merriman, Samuel Eliot Morison, and Frederic Logan Paxon.[23] Channing told one of his friends that he was most touched by the dinner, given, as he said, in honor of one "who had been nothing but an old bear all his life."[24]

Samuel Eliot Morison called the years following World War I Channing's "harvest season"; he finally began to gain recognition for his work. In addition to the American Historical Association presidency and the dinner, he received an honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Michigan in 1921.[25]

Channing was doubtless slowed down somewhat in the completion of his fifth volume by the various activities in relation to his presidency. He finished it not long after the

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[22]*Ibid*. The tablet is still there; the study is now occupied by Samuel Eliot Morison.

[23]From the copy of an announcement from the committee in charge of the affair to all the contributors, in the "Quinquennial" folder.

[24]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Association*, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 282.

[25]*Ibid*., p. 283.

meeting, however, for he wrote to Brett on March 31, 1921, that it was done. "I think it a humming good job," he added. Publication was delayed still further by a nation-wide strike of printers and binders.[26] The Period of Transition was finally published in October.

It started with a chapter entitled "The Wonderful Century." In this period, Channing noted, the American mind, previously concerned with political matters, "suddenly turned to other problems of human existence and became renowned for fertility of invention, for greatness in the art of literary expression, and for the keenest desire for the amelioration of the lot of humanity."[27] War, said Channing, was responsible for much of this. Some of his comments on war and transportation here sound very much like those he expressed in the presidential address, but they bear quoting at some length:

> In itself, war is a frightful scourge; but in its effects it oftentimes has produced most beneficent results. Wars and revolutions lead to readjustments in social relations, in political affairs, and in the mental outlook of nations and of races. Ordinarily, our rules and regulations, our ordinances, and our laws are directed to the preservation of human life, to the protection of individual liberties, and to the conservation of property. In war, on the other hand, our design is to kill, to destroy, and to make existence painful to men and women on the other side of the boundary line. In such times, the mind breaks adrift from its everyday moorings and turns to thoughts and theories that in peaceful hours seemed fantastic and incapable of attainment.

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[26] Channing to Brett, March 31, 1921, and Brett to Channing, May 16, 1921, Macmillan Collection.

[27] Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume V: The Period of Transition, 1815-1848 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 2.

> War leads to a loosening of the mind, to a breaking of associations, to new thoughts and groupings; and humanity leaps from one stage of civilization to another. In the thirty-five years after 1815, men and women threw off the shackles of the past: they exalted the position of the individual in society, burst the bonds of education and religion, experimented with schemes to better human life, sought the abolition of slavery, and the reformation of drunkards and criminals. All this led to the giving the masses of the people more direct participation in the government of town, city, county, State, and Nation. Unfortunately with the good there was also the bad, for war leads to a slackening of the moral sense, and to an increase in the desire for rapid gain. In such times, men forget their obligations to their fellow men and embark on speculative ventures without other thought than self-enrichment. This was particularly true after the fall of the Napoleonic Empire, for great discoveries in mechanics, in chemistry, in physics, in biology, and in the medical sciences gave opportunities of pecuniary profit that the world had never dreamed of before in historic times. For America, the most important of them all was the application of the new inventions to the transportation of persons and of goods and to the transmission of intelligence and of administrative orders from one part of the country to another. Modern life in all its branches from day to day, in peace and war, depends upon the mobility of men and of things, for it is this that makes possible the association of human beings for the prosecution of sociological, political, and economic objects.[28]

Channing realized that, among other things, he was bucking the frontier interpretation of American history put forward by his colleague, Frederick Jackson Turner. He added a footnote at the end of the above quotation: "For a radically different view of the main springs of our national development from that given in the text," he suggested, see the works of

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

Turner.[29] At least one historian of note, Paul H. Buck, considered Channing's emphasis on transportation to be "fully as important as Turner's thesis."[30] It did not, of course, acquire one-tenth the notoriety of Turner's frontier hypothesis. Part of the problem was that Channing did not really make the transportation thesis an integral part of his history of the period. Said one critic:

> On at least one occasion, Channing was content frankly to state his thesis, leave it suspended in midair, and hastily return to safer ground. Upon the rejection of Professor Turner's view of sectionalism and the West as "mainsprings of our national development," he substituted "the mobility of men and things" as the most significant cause of national progress. Content with a brief explanation, the generalization was pushed no farther, and it was associated with virtually no subsequent developments.[31]

The critic had a point. But he got carried away with it, as Channing himself sometimes did. In the first place, Channing said a great deal more than that "the mobility of men and things" was the most significant cause of national progress; the extensive quotation above is alone enough to show that. More importantly, this critic drastically overstated his case when he said that Channing did not associate his thesis with any subsequent developments. Actually, Channing attempted

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[29] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[30] Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[31] Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 304.

to relate the thesis to many things later in the volume, sometimes with success and sometimes not so successfully. He connected it with the westward movement, industry, agriculture, cities, and the early labor movement all in the following brief quotation:

> The settlement of the West was a dispersion of families over a great space of territory; the building up of the cities of the Northeast was the concentration of men and women in limited areas.... This increase of the farming area and this building up of centres of commerce and manufacture depended upon the development of transportation and this in turn created a demand for labor; but the steamboat and the railroad made it possible to feed, house, and warm large groups of people in contracted spaces. At the same time the constantly broadening market for manufactured goods and the increasing area from which the manufacturer could draw his supply of raw material rapidly led to manufacturing in larger units and thereby separated the owner and manager from the working men and women.[32]

Channing related his thesis to the success of William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist activities, writing that "with the improvements in transportation that came so rapidly after 1825, Garrison was able to organize the new movement on a much larger and more permanent basis than had been possible in the earlier time."[33] And finally, he speculated, rather profoundly for 1921, about transportational developments in this fashion:

> It is an interesting thought how one invention supplants another. For a time, the cry was for roads and more roads; the Nation, the States, and private

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[32] History, V, pp. 70-71.

[33] Ibid., p. 148.

> companies undertook their construction and operation usually in return for tolls that were levied on all traffic passing over them. Then came the canals which rendered partially useless the stagecoach and the wagon, and also the stone road except for merely local purposes. In their turn the canals were hardly completed as a system when the steamboat and the railway took business away from them. Is it not possible that the automobile and motor-truck with the airplane and the electrically propelled car will one day, and perhaps a not far distant one, likewise deprive the railroad of its place in the transportation system of this country?[34]

In all fairness, however, it should also be noted that Channing put forth another thesis in this volume just as sweeping as the one concerning transportation, and really did not do much else with it. He wrote:

> The persistent and ever increasing demand for cotton fibre, the improvement of the cotton-gin, and the discovery that the short staple, green seed cotton plant throve marvellously in the uplands of South Carolina and Georgia and in the black belt to the westward, changed the whole course of economic and social existence in the South and, indeed, governed the course of history of the United States down to the year 1865. In so far as Eli Whitney's perfection of the cotton-gin contributed to the cultivation of the upland cotton plant on a great scale it was a curse to the South, to the United States, and to humanity.[35]

He had earlier brought the two factors together somewhat when he wrote in the fourth volume:

> The phenomenal extension of cotton culture determined the history of the Lower South and... fastened Negro slavery on that region; the application of steam to water transportation made

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[34] Ibid., pp. 19-20. Just a few other pages where Channing gave attention to transportation as an important factor in one way or another are: pp. 30, 33-34, 77, 88, 99, 174.

[35] Ibid., p. 121.

> possible the rapid settlement of the West in time to counteract in a measure the growing strength of the Slave States.[36]

The only way Channing changed The Period of Transition from the way he had it planned when he wrote to Brett in the summer of 1918 was in the apportionment of space. The humanitarian and mechanical readjustments of the years 1815 to 1850 occupied the first half of the volume, rather than only the first period. The "doings" of Jackson and his successors (actually Monroe and his successors) and the material on Texas, California, Oregon, and the Mexican War all together occupied the second half, rather than the last two-thirds. This, indeed, is the most strikingly obvious thing about volume V, the greater proportion of space given to non-political material as compared with the first four volumes.

Though the reader is once again bothered by Channing's failure to make the story of some of these topics an integral part of the history of the era, there is still some very interesting and worthwhile material in the first half of this volume. Most of the first chapter was taken up with transportation, the Erie Canal receiving particular emphasis. Channing credited DeWitt Clinton with the construction of the canal, and said the effects of its opening were "immediate and great." "It provided a comparatively easy and uninterrupted mode of

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[36]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume IV: Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), p. 436.

transportation from the Hudson to Lake Erie." And, "It facilitated the movements of western emigrants and provided a commercial outlet for the surplus products of their farms," but "its greatest effect was to stimulate the growth of New York City."[37] The rest of the chapters of the first half were devoted to "The Westward March," "The Urban Migration," "Social Readjustments in the First Half of the Century," "The Changing Religious Scene," "Education," and "Literature."

The West, of course, was necessarily a major concern of Channing in this volume. It almost seems, though, as if he dealt with it only because it was necessary. He called the entire area "Transappalachia." His comments on Frederick Jackson Turner's works at the end of "The Westward March" were largely non-committal; he did concede, however, that Turner's The Frontier in American History was "the best work on the subject."[38] He seriously doubted that the frontier had had such a significant democratic influence as his colleague had contended. "It is remarkable how evanescent has been the influence of these new conditions," he wrote, almost sarcastically, "for the American people is now and has been for some years among the most conservative of the nations of the earth."[39] His account showed that he had at least read Turner, however,

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[37] History, V, pp. 11-13.

[38] Ibid., p. 67.

[39] Ibid., p. 66.

and he sometimes wrote passages that sound like Turner himself. "The migration from the 'Old Thirteen States' on the Atlantic seaboard and from European countries to the Mississippi Valley is one of the marvellous phenomena of history," he said. It "substituted civilization for savagery at the cost of the extinction of the original occupiers of the land, to the accompaniment of warfare, treaties, and the inevitable effects of the contacts of savagedom with the vices and diseases of civilization."[40] He managed to keep transportation an integral part of the story, of course:

> The obstacles to the occupation of this country [Transappalachia] had been the difficulty of reaching it from the Atlantic seaboard and the lack of surplus population in that section to take advantage of such means of transportation as then existed. In 1800 there were not enough people living in the original States to more than scratch the surface of opportunity. Those who sought the lands over the mountains in the earlier time were actuated mainly by the love of adventure, by the lure of the wilderness; stern economic necessity had not as yet touched the people of the older settled area. From 1800 to 1820, the embargo, the war, and the hard times spurred on migration; but it was not until the financial revulsion of 1837 and the critical years thereafter that eastern people sought the western wilds in great numbers. This gradual strengthening of the tide of emigration from east to west synchronized with the development of the new modes of transportation.[41]

Channing's description of the stages of frontier settlement was brief and simplified, but written in language worthy of the author of the frontier thesis himself:

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

> The first settlers were backwoodsmen, or frontiersmen, or pioneers, or pathbreakers,--they cannot be called farmers or planters because as soon as they had brought a little patch of ground into farming condition, they sold out to the next comer and moved away into the wilderness. They were temporary reversions to the hunter type; they did not belong to the agricultural stage. They loved solitariness and the smell of the smoke of a neighbor's chimney was in itself enough to drive them back to the wilderness road. The mother and children had as great a fondness for the life of the fringe of civilization as the father and moved willingly on and on with him. Daniel Boone is the stock representative of this type and he is a very good one, because not until age stiffened his limbs could he be brought to quiescent living. Next came the farming and planting pioneers following hard on the first rank of wilderness invaders. They exhibited some symptoms of settled existence, building better cabins than the half-faced camps. They cultivated the fields for several years until the ground was free from stumps, the soil pulverized, and neighbors appeared. Then the "Western Fever" seized upon them and drove them once more to the wilderness....[42]

In the chapter on the plantation system and the abolition movement, Channing gave a rather critical evaluation of the radical abolitionists, but praised the work of such moderates as John Quincy Adams and his own great-uncle, William Ellery Channing, who, said Channing, "trod the middle path that satisfies no one, but sometimes is the path of wisdom."[43] The plantation system itself appeared most unappealing to the twentieth century New England historian. Here are excerpts from his description:

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[42] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[43] Ibid., p. 170.

> The life on one of these great plantations must have been monotonous in the extreme. It was one ceaseless round of looking after the slaves, keeping them in health, seeing that they did not steal or run away, and superintending the superintendents or overseers....All in all, the troubles and vexations of plantation life must have detracted immensely from the pleasures of existence and to this must be added the burden of debt that often hung over the owner of thousands of acres and hundreds of slaves. In fact, the great planter of the Cotton Belt had all the business cares of the prosperous Northern manufacturer or man of commerce with a multitude of petty human details thrown in. It is by no means improbable, as one Southern writer had intimated, that the slaves were often happier than their masters.[44]

In the opening paragraph of his chapter on "Social Readjustments," Channing wrote that "Until the War of 1812 the people of the United States were occupied--apart from the necessary bread winning--with the resettlement of the political fabric after the separation from the British empire. There had been reformers and philanthropists before 1783," he continued, "but their voices had been those of individual men and women crying in the wilderness." Channing expressed confidence in the efficacy of reform legislation, saying that "it seems certain that a nation's habits can be markedly changed by legislation which, in the course of years, sets up a new standard in men's minds and consciences." And he thought the period under review a most productive one in this regard. With the one exception of lotteries, which Channing considered a "most demoralizing institution," he felt that "the first

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[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 123-125.

fifty years of the nineteenth century saw more progress in the reconstruction of American morals than all the years that had preceded since the first settlement at Jamestown in Virginia."[45]

In his comments on religion, Channing was careful not to be prejudiced in support of his Unitarian ancestor William Ellery Channing. But he expressed views traditionally associated with that faith, which was also, of course, his own. He seemed to write with approval of the broadening activities of the churches:

> As the years went by, the activities of the churches widened. The religious people began to look after the affairs of the body and before long devoted so much time, strength, and resources to the founding and maintaining of schools, hospitals, and recreative organizations that the modern observer sometimes finds it difficult to discriminate between those that may well be looked upon as religious and those that are mainly concerned with physical and mental welfare.[46]

He also showed a most broad-minded attitude toward divergent religious beliefs:

> As the century advanced change succeeded change; new doctrines, new disciplines, new modes of procedure are everywhere to be discerned. To a twentieth century historical onlooker it is oftentimes difficult to comprehend what some of these differences really were and even more difficult to understand how men were willing to sacrifice themselves and their families for what seem to have been distinctly doubtful matters or matters of small moment. But so it was, and however much difficulty one may have in understanding, there is no question whatsoever that the earnestness of purpose and tenacity of belief of

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[45] Ibid., pp. 172, 179, 200.

[46] Ibid., p. 209.

> the holders of any one of these hundred or more religious divisions deserve the most earnest and respectful consideration.[47]

He even strained to be objective in dealing with the oft-criticized Mormons. For one thing, he actually read The Book of Mormon. He wrote to Brett in 1917 noting that he and his family had been speculating as to whether a book Brett had sent them was fiction or fact, and then continued:

> As for me I am reading the Mormon Bible about which there is also much speculation. If I can write six pages on Mormonism + continue in good odor in the First Parish Church + also sell copies in Salt Lake City I shall have accomplished a straddle like that the Kaiser wished to achieve.[48]

In Channing's treatment of education, the same nostalgic note is sounded as in his American Historical Association presidential address. "The first third of the nineteenth century is usually regarded as the most barren in the educational history of English America," he wrote, "yet that was the precise time when the reading habit was the most widespread among our people, when the writing of verse and prose was most common, and when our greatest writers were doing their best work or securing their mental stimulus." If the object of education was to produce scholars, felt Channing, the educational system of that time was "singularly successful." But, he admitted, "its influence was not widespread." The small "ungraded

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[47] Ibid., p. 206.

[48] Channing to Brett, August 9, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

schools" of that day Channing considered an ideal educational institution if it had the advantage of a "born teacher." Students in such a situation "must have been mentally stimulated and educated in the truest sense of the word,--far beyond what they can gain in the excellent graded schools and with the admirable text-books of our own time." Indeed, concluded Channing, "by 1860, the golden age of American scholarship was passed."[49]

Channing had an extremely high opinion of the literary productions of the era under review; some considered it excessively high. Channing's own grandson stated emphatically that "The field of American literature was definitely not the province of the scientific historian." Indeed, Channing's treatment of the subject, according to this descendent, was "somewhat queer," and contained "some very funny judgments."[50] What did Channing say to deserve such criticism?

> Great as were the changes in the outlook of the people of the United States that have been noted in the preceding chapters, it is in the domain of literature that the renaissance of the American mind is most noticeable. Before the Revolution there was no literature or very little that can be so accounted and the Revolutionary epoch itself was taken up from the literary side with the production of a series of most remarkable political papers that reach their highest point in "The Federalist." With the turn of the century

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[49] History, V, pp. 242-243, 271.

[50] John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), p. 124.

> the production of works of fiction, poems, and essays proceeded on an ever increasing scale, both as to quantity and as to quality until it culminated in the literary efflorescence that is associated with the names of Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and the others of the New England group.[51]

He also said: "In short, this half-century in the United States in poetry, in fiction, and in history stands apart,--it is without an equal since the days of Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, and John Milton."[52] If Channing's comments were so "queer"--and they do at least seem to have differed from the views of experts--why? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the recollection of a former graduate student in English literature at Harvard that Channing "used to amuse himself by telling me I should give it up and devote myself to American History. He had very little interest in literary history, and loved to make gentle fun of those who did."[53] If this is true, Channing should have been more cautious in his judgments on that subject.

With so much space devoted to the non-political, Channing's account of the political history of the years 1815 to 1848 was necessarily much more compact than usual for him. Of particular interest and importance here are his comments on the "Era of Good Feeling," Chief Justice John Marshall and the Supreme Court, the Missouri Compromise, the Monroe Doctrine, the election of 1828, and the Mexican War.

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[51] History, V, p. 274.

[52] Ibid., p. 305.

[53] Letter to the author from Kenneth B. Murdock, September 17, 1966.

Channing added a unique note to the "Era of Good Feeling." He realized that the period was such only superficially, but he made the consolidation of control of the federal government by the South the major development of these years. Here is the heart of his analysis:

> Politically and superficially the ten years from 1815 to 1825 were years of calm within the boundaries of the federal government. They have often been termed the Era of Good Feeling and are usually regarded as having no interest and as being of little importance. In reality they were a formative period in our political history and in our international history of the greatest interest and of the highest importance. It was in that time that forces were taking shape that were to determine the history of the United States down to the year 1865. The Southerners consolidated their grip upon the government of the country and developed the solidarity of society to the southward of Mason and Dixon's line that was to become apparent to every one in 1850.[54]

This was made possible, said Channing, by the general high quality of Southern congressmen, which resulted from the fact that a leisured class, devoted to politics, had developed in the South. Business, farming, literature, etc., on the other hand, occupied the most able men of other sections. Thus, "One could enumerate twenty-five or fifty men in the South in this period whose abilities could not be matched by more than a dozen Northern politicians."[55]

An approving tone is evident in Channing's treatment of the Marhsall Supreme Court. Marshall was a Virginian, but "a Virginian of the George Washington type," wrote Channing.

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[54] History, V, p. 307.

[55] Ibid., pp. 307-308.

"Like him he was not deeply versed in the minutiae of learning, but like him he had steadfastness of purpose and the power of commanding the learning of those who worked with him." For the thirty-five years he was at the head of the federal judiciary, Marhsall remained a Federalist. "In seven leading cases spread over the twenty-one years from 1803 to 1824 Marshall and his colleagues announced the supremacy of the federal government over the States of the Union," and "the principles and the reasoning upon which these decisions were based remained and remain to this day practically the supreme law of the land. In death, indeed, the Federalist party triumphed."[56]

Channing found it easy to relate the Missouri Compromise to his union versus particularism theme. He began by noting that it was generally supposed that the compromise postponed civil war for a generation and was therefore justifiable from the anti-slavery point of view.

> There is another way of looking at it. This attempt of the Northern politicians and Northern abolitionists, or both, to limit the power of the South by destroying the institution of slavery in Upper Louisiana aroused the whole slaveholding population of the South to defend their rights,--as they saw them. At the moment the South and the Southern leaders acquiesced in the settlement from a sense of the value of the Union and from a sentimental attachment to it. But from that moment may be dated the beginning of Southern section-nationalism. It developed slowly at first, but by 1825 it threw off disguise in South Carolina and by 1830 had acquired considerable solidarity, although

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[56] Ibid., pp. 308-310.

> not enough to bring the other slaveholding States to the side of South Carolina. In reality, therefore, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 marked the ending of one epoch in our history and the beginning of another.[57]

Later, he made the point still more forcefully. The compromise "marked the end of the first chapter in the history of nationalism," he wrote. "From that time for forty years, the whole spirit of our development was towards dualism,--for the Missouri Compromise practically marked the division of the country into two groups, having distinctly different economic interests."[58]

Channing's evaluation of the Monroe Doctrine takes the form of an evaluation of John Quincy Adams as Secretary of State:

> Adams was not a lovable man nor a companionable man and he had eccentricities of temper and awkwardnesses of action that concealed his real capacities and aroused enmities where none need have existed. But very few men have ever controlled the foreign affairs of a country in an exceedingly critical time who possessed the power of the younger Adams to appraise a difficult situation and especially to deal with it with a courage and a tenacity almost unsurpassed. In friendly union with Monroe's cautionsness and the almost childlike acumen of the vulnerable Jefferson and Madison, the United States was carried triumphantly through.[59]

"The election of 1828 marked the breaking down of the old system and the coming into power of the democracy of the next thirty years that was ushered in by the triumphant election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency,"[60] wrote Channing.

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[57] _Ibid._, pp. 328-329.

[58] _Ibid._, p. 405.

[59] _Ibid._, p. 330.

[60] _Ibid._, p. 365.

Notice that he did not say "frontier" democracy; indeed, he took issue with Frederick Jackson Turner's interpretation of that election as a victory for the forces of frontier democracy. The campaign itself Channing properly considered "one of the most woful in our annals," with its unwarranted attacks on Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams; he was careful to point out that Adams himself engaged in no such practices.[61] Here is the heart of Channing's analysis of the election results:

> When the votes were counted, it appeared that one hundred and seventy-eight electoral votes had been cast for Andrew Jackson of Tennessee and only eighty-three for John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. This was hailed by the Jackson men as a great popular triumph and it did mark the beginning of a new era in our history. None the less, it is worth while to analyze the figures a bit before acceding to this or any other assertion....Jackson was really chosen to the presidency by the solid South, as was quite proper as he was a Southern man, a slaveholder, and a cotton grower. At the same time, he could not have received a majority of the electoral votes, even adding the twenty-four electoral votes of the Western States to his Southern votes, without the aid of Pennsylvania and New York....Indeed, however one manipulates the figures, it would seem that Jackson was raised to the presidency by the over-representation of the South due to the federal ratio combined with the employment of most unjustifiable methods by his partisans in Pennsylvania and in New York. On the whole, possibly it was more honorable to have been defeated in 1828 than to have been elected.[62]

Channing probably even regretted that he had conceded earlier, in volume IV, that Jackson "possessed the courage and confidence of a man of the frontier"![63]

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[61] Ibid., pp. 375, 372, 370.

[62] Ibid., pp. 375-376.

[63] History, IV, p. 512.

Channing had some trouble at times making Jackson and his administration sound so completely southern in nature. He thought the real interest of Jackson's administration lay "in the relation between the federal government and the growing power of Southern sectionalism, as shown in the nullification episode and the rising spirit of capitalistic industrialism in the North as exemplified in the bank struggle." "In the upshot," Channing concluded, "Southern ideas triumphed, although nullification and secession were laid at rest for a generation."[64] In another place he wrote of Jackson: "To him the Union was sacred. He was a States'-rights man, like most other Southerners, but that dogma should never be used to justify action derogatory to the continuance of the Union."[65] It seems that Channing could have made his interpretation more credible by simply admitting that Jackson was, after all, a mixture of a Southerner and a Westerner, explained at least in part by the fact that he was from the nationalistic frontier area of the Southern slave state of Tennessee.

Interestingly, Channing was quite willing to attest to the accomplishments of Jackson's administration. He discounted the idea that Jackson was a radical, concluding that he was "distinctly a conservative and used the powers of his high office to restrain rather than to excite." And Channing

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[64] History, V, p. 402.

[65] Ibid., p. 423.

contended that "Jackson's administration was successful beyond dispute." He even played down the evil effects of the spoils system. "It may be said that the introduction of the 'spoils system' should not be regarded as a cause of satisfaction, and it should not," wrote Channing, "but the change from the old colonial system of permanent official tenure to the more democratic mode of political rotation in the public offices was inevitable, and Jackson may fairly be said to have minimized the blow."[66]

Channing's views of Jacksonian Democracy then, do not conform to any clearly-constituted school of thought on the subject, but were largely his own. By his willingness to recognize Jackson's contributions, he broke with the patrician approach of such writers as James Parton which prevailed through most of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, his emphasis on the southern nature of Jacksonianism made it clear that he did not accept all the views of the Progressive historians on the period either, for Turner's emphasis on western democracy was a vital part of that approach.

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[66] Ibid., pp. 378, 401-402.

Channing's view on three other things are worthy of brief notice. He was critical of John C. Calhoun and his role in the nullification crisis, concluding that "political considerations and not convictions" caused him to behave as he did. (p. 420) Channing largely absolved Jackson of blame for the Panic of 1837 and went rather far afield in his speculation that "the forces of nature" may have been responsible since the panic "synchronized with a maxima of sun spots." (pp. 456-457) Finally, Channing was critical of all involved in the presidential election campaign of 1840, which he saw as one "of 'Hurrah!' and unreason that has never been paralleled in the United States." (p. 463)

Channing's interpretation of the Mexican War sounded at times like President James K. Polk's war message. He praised the first American colonizers of Texas as "hard-working, God-fearing men and women of the very best type for so arduous an enterprise." He admired Santa Anna somewhat, but considered "the great mass of the human material that he had to work with...helplessly inefficient and hopelessly corrupt." He thought it "easy to see" why the Texans revolted against Mexico, and emphatically stated that the Mexican people were "hopelessly inept" in the art of government.[67]

Channing's comments on the general background for the war were completely one-sided:

> It was the destiny of the United States to extend to the Pacific and as far south as the arid portions of Mexico. California, New Mexico, Texas, and Oregon in its old geographical sense were all practically unutilized by man in 1835. Of course, it cannot be said that the people of the United States had any moral right to take over lands that had been practically unused by another people; but it must be said that the moral argument for the retention of these splendid lands by a people who did not and could not convert them to the benefit of humanity raises a strong presumption in favor of their acquisition by those who could make, and, as a matter of fact, have made, a good use of them. The United States was ready to pay Mexico an adequate sum for their transfer. For years, there had been a continual diplomatic wrangling over the refusal of the Mexicans to treat American merchants with fairness. They encouraged them to start enterprises on Mexican soil and then refused them all facilities for so doing. In this way and in other ways, pecuniary claims by

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[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 520, 592, 522, 524.

> American citizens against Mexico arose. Allowance must be made for the disorganized political condition of the Mexican people. Their governments lacked stability and any concession to an outside power was the signal for a new revolution. Mexican politicians, therefore, were afraid to comply with the plain dictates of justice. Recognizing their weakness and helplessness, the United States yielded to the verge of ignominy. At length, in 1839, a treaty was signed providing for the arbitration of the American claims. After long delays, Mexico was adjudged to pay certain sums of money and as her coffers were in the usual depleted condition, time was given for making these payments by instalments. Mexico paid one or two of them and then paid no more and further negotiations were entered into. Then, also, American citizens, who had no call to go into Mexican territory, except for the pursuit of gain, mere curiosity, or love of adventure, found themselves in Mexican prisons. Some of them were inhumanly treated. The United States protested, but received scant consideration at the hands of the Mexican authorities. The fact was that the ruling classes of Mexico had a feeling of contempt for the people of the United States....[68]

If anything, Channing justified the American position still more completely in his coverage of the immediate background for war:

> In the summer of 1845, General Zachary Taylor was ordered to the Texan boundary. He was instructed to occupy a position "on or near the Rio Grande" as soon as the Texans had voted for annexation. Orders were also sent to Commodore Sloat, commanding the American naval force in the Pacific, to seize California in case of a declaration of war. In view of the probability of Mexican attack on Texas while the consideration of the annexation plan was proceeding, the strengthening of the American army in Louisiana was perfectly justifiable, if the annexation of Texas was. As the independence of the Texas Republic had been recognized by Great Britain, France, and the United States for eight years or more, and as the Texans had been governing themselves all that time

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[68] Ibid., pp. 550-551. In another place Channing had stated that Texas, New Mexico, and California belonged economically to the United States anyway. (p. 525)

> without any adequate attempt on the part of Mexico to reconquer her lost province, the rightfulness of annexation would seem to be beyond the line of argument. As to California and New Mexico, which lay between that province and Texas, if Mexico made war on the United States on account of this perfectly justifiable annexation, then those provinces might be considered in the light of an indemnity for the expenditure which Mexico would force upon the United States, and in that point of view the seizure of California and New Mexico would be right and proper.[69]

Channing completely white-washed Polk of any blame. He thought the president had "suffered severely at the hands of contemporaries and historians." Polk "possessed a strong will and an inflexible determination to do the right thing as he saw it," "in every crisis of his administration, it was his hand that guided events," and he simply carried out "'the will of the people' as expressed in his own election."[70]

Continuing through Channing's account of the war, the present-day reader can only be appalled at some of his statements. The general picture which emerges is that patient, peace-loving, superior Americans were finally provoked into a war which they quickly won because of the righteousness of their cause and the inferiority of their enemy.[71] One can only wish that Channing had been more objective, and note the influence on his views of the notorious two-volume work, The

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[69] Ibid., p. 552.

[70] Ibid., pp. 546-547.

[71] Statements which help give such a picture abound. See, in addition to those already quoted, Ibid., pp. 554, 558, 562, 580-581, 589, 612.

War with Mexico, by Justin H. Smith, which had appeared in 1919.[72]

Channing concluded The Period of Transition with his usual combination summary and lead-in to the next volume:

> In the third of the century described in the preceding pages, the American people threw off the social conditions of colonial days. They kept their old forms of government, but altered the spirit of administering them in the direction of democracy. They crossed the Appalachiams in great numbers into the valley of the Mississippi and over that river into the lands that they had acquired from France. "Manifest destiny" urged them on to the acquisition of Florida, to the regaining of Texas on the South, and to the possession of the lands westward from the crest of the Rockies to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. It remained for the future to show what would be the effect of these great changes in society and these immense accessions of territory. Would the Republic remain one united country, or would it be divided according to the social and economic desires of the inhabitants of the several sections into which it was geographically divided?[73]

Federalists and Republicans received one generally critical review, the first such the Great Work had suffered; three of the five reviews found of The Period of Transition were critical, one was non-committal, and only one gave an over-all impression of praise for the work. Perhaps Channing had hired "somebody to pitch into yours truly," as he had once suggested to Brett they should do?[74]

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[72]Channing acknowledged his reliance on Smtih. "Smith's research was so profound and his judgment generally so just that one can place peculiar reliance on his statements," wrote Channing. "At the same time, like all historical students, he has his prejudices." (Ibid., p. 615) If only Channing had realized how far-reaching those prejudices were, and the effect they would have on his own work!

[73]Ibid., p. 614.

[74]Channing to Brett, October 16, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

Actually, the figures are slightly misleading, because two of the critical reviews were by the same person, Charles A. Beard. One appeared in the Freeman, the other in the New Republic. In the latter, Beard expressed the view that Channing told the same old story, with "no revelations, no striking divergences from accepted views, no new interpretations." The major difference he noted between this and Channing's earlier volumes was the emphasis, with more than one-half of volume V dealing with non-political material. Beard, of course, had to get in his economic blow:

> Economic affairs will project themselves rudely into politics. Tariffs, banks, and internal improvements will burst into the pages of the Congressional Globe and the historian must take account of them, but American writers look upon them as they do upon bad boys who disturb an otherwise peaceful Sunday school.[75]

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[75]Charles A. Beard, "The Solemn Muse," New Republic, XXIX (January 4, 1922), p. 161. Beard was the master of the tongue-in-cheek. Note these additional comments; "Professor Channing comes on down the years in full regalia and with solemn mien, his fixed eyes betraying not a twinkle and his stern visage not a wrinkle. American history without laughter and without tears! Nowhere in these massive six hundred pages is there any departure from the canons of the American historical guild. The offerings to Clio may be as rollicking as Swift's Tale of a Tub, as sober as Hallam's magisterial volumes, or as boisterous as the Communist Manifesto, but Professor Channing reveals no suspicion of this mysterious fact.... In style and form and language apt he addresses the members of the brotherhood and they will answer him approvingly. Some who have their doubts, as they look upon the fresh waters flowing by their college doors, may remember that a professorship at Harvard is the academic kingdom of heaven for all those who labor with rod and stylus. The editor of AHR, mindful of time and circumstance, will not ignore as critic what he knows as a political animal. The laurel of respectibility will be laid upon this volume as it was upon its four predecessors. It is altogether fitting." (pp. 160-161)

Beard concluded that Channing left unanswered all the important questions of the period.

Beard made his economic point still more forcefully in his review in the Freeman. "Why does Professor Channing... tell us something (not much) about John Marshall's epoch-making decisions, but keep silence on John Marshall's economics and politics?" queried Beard. "His answer would be more interesting and important than his book."[76]

The non-committal review appeared in the Booklist; the praiseful one appeared in the American Historical Review.[77] Dixon Ryan Fox was the reviewer who praised Channing's work. He thought The Period of Transition itself represented a period of transition in the writing of American history with its extensive attention to the non-political. He praised specifically Channing's fairness in dealing with sectional questions, his extensive use of sources, his style, and the charts and maps in the volume. And he concluded:

> The reader carries away the impression of a wise and careful scholar with whom no traditional judgment can pass without investigation and to whom nothing that is American is foreign....If in each generation some single veteran scholar should take stock of what is going forward in the historical study of the United States, Professor Channing should be warmly thanked for his service to our own.[78]

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[76]Charles A. Beard, "The Art of History-Writing," Freeman, (December 21, 1921), p. 356.

[77]Booklist, XVIII (March, 1922), p. 184; Dixon Ryan Fox, American Historical Review, XXVII (April, 1922), pp. 590-592. Perhaps Beard was right!

[78]Fox, p. 592. Fox, as co-editor of the pioneering

Paul H. Buck stated it mildly when he said that Channing's fifth volume "upset the West."[79] That the West got even more than upset by the work is well attested by the review by Clarence W. Alvord which appeared in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review. It was the most critical review by far that an Edward Channing book ever received; it was probably one of the strongest ever to appear in the Review. No wonder it "was the one review that 'got in Edward Channing's hair!'"[80]

Alvord claimed his first thought upon reading Channing's opening lines on war, transportation, and the Turner thesis, was, "So this is the effect of the world war on the historical mind. I was expecting it." The big problem, as Alvord saw it, was, of course, Channing's treatment of the West. Alvord even resented Channing's use of the term Transappalachia, and countered it by referring to the region as Cisappalachia throughout his review. "Although the book proves that Mr. Channing has discovered the West, he has not learned to appreciate the significance of events in 'Cisappalachia' in the development of the United States," contended Alvord. "These events possess in his eyes an antiquarian interest or an illustrative value, but they have not perverted his eastern point of view." One "vital factor in the development of the west,"

History of American Life series, would have been particularly pleased to see Channing's attention to non-political history.

[79]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[80]Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 122.

the Indians, "is entirely omitted from this volume," Alvord continued. He complained of the "very thin narrative" of the political history of the era; he felt Channing's arguments on the election of 1828 simply missed the point; and he saw as "particularly interesting" about Channing's transportation thesis "the humorous aspects of the subject".[81] Finally, even when Alvord tried to sound apologetic for the bitter tone of his review, he failed:

> Since this review is written for western men and women, its emphasis has lain naturally on Mr. Channing's treatment of events in which Cisappalachians are interested, and the reviewer may have appeared somewhat unfair to a writer of such pronounced eastern affiliations as is Mr. Channing, even though he is writing a History of the United States.[82]

Fortunately, Channing's sixth volume fared better.

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[81] Clarence W. Alvord, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VIII (March, 1922), pp. 377-380.

[82] Ibid., p. 380.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE, AND THE END OF THE GREAT WORK

> I hope the American Historical Review will thinkg [sic] it [volume VI] "just the thing"; But I am shivering in my shoes, for the Grand Army of the Republic and the Daughters of the Confederacy will join arms and march on Widener 417 and throw me out of the window. Never mind! Let them come! It has been great fun writing the book and I hope that at least one person will have some ideas as to the labor it has cost.[1]

A former student of Edward Channing recalls that his "dedication toward completing his history was complete and intense."

> He was working on volume 5 when I was his student for the doctorate. Naturally his students worked on thesis subjects which would serve Channing's current work. This sounds selfish. It wasn't. It gave the student the sense of being a fellow craftsman. Channing was more apt to read to a student something he had written than to read something the student had written. In the role of a fellow scholar Channing showed how he and his longtime secretary, Miss Eva Moore, achieved accuracy of statement and citation--a valuable lesson.[2]

With help from students and an almost unbelievable amount of effort on his own part, Channing was able to publish the Pulitzer Prize-winning sixth volume of his Great Work, The

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[1]Edward Channing to J. Franklin Jameson, June 9, 1924, John Franklin Jameson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[2]Letter to the author from Edward C. Kirkland, July 18, 1966.

War for Southern Independence, in June, 1925. The extent of his own labors becomes abundantly evident in his correspondence. He wrote to President A. Lawrence Lowell from Richmond, Virginia, on January 7, 1922, describing his activities as follows: "At this place I have exhausted the Confederate Museum + the State Library--very profitably--and tomorrow tackle the Archives. There is very little general matter there + we shall go to Washington Wednesday or so--if we can find quarters to stay several weeks and work in the manuscripts." In July of the same year Channing wrote to George P. Brett that he was "blazing away on Vol. VI."[3]

Channing had problems again before he finished this volume, however. His eyes, a problem even in his youth, began to bother him significantly. "The truth of the matter is that my eyes have been acting rather queerly and just at present the future seems to be a little doubtful," he wrote to Brett on November 6, 1922. "If my eyes do not come back in fighting trim, we shall probably have to stop the whole thing with volume six," he continued. "I have got so far in the research on that volume that I could probably finiah [sic] it. But just at present, I do not feel like saying anything more." He tried

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[3]Edward Channing to A. Lawrence Lowell, January 7, 1922, A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Edward Channing to George P. Brett [President, Macmillan Company] , July 9, 1922, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library.

to conclude optimistically. "This may be a passing whirl," he said, "and my eye doctor may be able to fix things up."[4]

Channing visited his doctor, and the situation did improve. He wrote again to Brett on December 14:

> I have returned from Chattanooga, restored in body and in mind,--at least I hope so. I think the eye man was right, that the trouble with me was fatigue, the result of trying to write volume vi. As a matter of fact I wrote some of it in my mind at Chattanooga and more at Washington. I am working one hour less a day and am trying to make more use of my secretary's eyes. Also, I am cutting out newspapers and various other luxuries. How long this freedom from eye strain will last, I cannot say, and how much difference in time it will make in the appearance of volume vi I cannot say.[5]

Channing wrote to J. Franklin Jameson in May, 1923, that "The <u>book</u> [heavily underlined in ink], vol. vi, is worming its way along, after the manner of such things. At the present moment, I am lost in wonder as to why we ever 'fit' in 1861 and why having begun, we ever stopped."[6] By September of that year he almost had the solution, for he optimistically predicted to Brett that the volume would be ready by February, 1925. He continued:

> I know, of course, from a publisher's standpoint, this seems to be an absurdly slow rate of progress, but you must remember that this is the "standard History of the United States" and is to remain so for fifty years. So it is better to go slowly, even

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[4]Channing to Brett, November 6, 1922, Macmillan Collection.

[5]<u>Ibid</u>., December 14, 1922.

[6]Channing to Jameson, May 3, 1923, Jameson Collection.

> if one sacrifices those returns that will probably come when you have the whole set at your disposal and the royalties go to my heirs![7]

On December 28, 1923, Channing informed Brett that he was through with the first draft of the volume, and on June 9 of the following year that he was "preparing for the final bout." Ill fortune struck again, however, The mother of Channing's secretary became ill and died. Channing told Brett of this in a letter of December 29, 1924. The misfortune had placed them behind schedule a couple of months, he said, but he tried to console Brett by assuring him that the volume would "have a good sale--better than any of the others--and will help the sales of all of them."[8]

By March, 1925, his manuscript was apparently in the hands of the publisher, for he wrote to Brett:

> The sooner it gets out the better. I am informed that if teachers get it in May, they will be in a position to compell hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of students, throughout this broad land of ours, to purchase the book or, at all events, to read it.[9]

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[7]Channing to Brett, September 26, 1923, Macmillan Collection.

[8]*Ibid.*, December 28, 1923, June 9 and December 29, 1924. Channing apparently maintained his habit of isolating himself all through this period. He must have been speaking of the meeting of the American Historical Association when he wrote to Jameson in June, 1924: "I rejoice to receive your annual letter and invitation and if I do not join the brethren at Branford, it is not because I do not love my brothers and wish to commune with them, it is because I am mortgaged to volume vi of a 'History of the United States'." (Channing to Jameson, June 9, 1924, Jameson Collection.)

[9]Channing to Brett, March 4, 1925, Macmillan Collection.

Channing was very concerned when Brett suggested that the manuscript might be too long. "I fully believe it to be the best thing I have ever done and should be very sorry to injure it by hacking," he wrote. The letter was typed, but Channing added a phrase with his pen: "even if you have to charge five dollars for it."[10]

The War for Southern Independence did not quite make Channing's May publication deadline, and whether hundreds of thousands of students were forced by their teachers to read it that fall is not known. But Channing may very well have been right in considering the volume the best thing he had ever done; it was, certainly, one of his finest works. His grandson considered volumes III and VI the two outstanding volumes of the series. More importantly, Paul H. Buck in 1967 still considered volume VI "as good as we have" on the subject.[11] It was certainly well received. At least fourteen reveiws of the volume appeared in print, a greater number than accorded to any single volume of the Great Work thus far. They had their criticisms, of course, but the general impression is a very favorable one. The volume also received the $2,000 Pulitzer Prize as the outstanding book on United States history published in the year 1925.

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[10] Ibid., March 17, 1925.

[11] John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer" (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), p. 126; Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Channing began the volume with a chapter entitled "A Divided Country." Though he did not point it out himself, his description of the situation as of 1850 sounds much like his idea that there were two nations within the British empire by 1760:

> By the middle of the century, two distinct social organizations had developed within the United States, the one in the South and the other in the North. Southern society was based on the production of staple agricultural crops by slave labor. Northern society was bottomed on varied employments--agricultural, mechanical, and commercial--all carried on under the wage system. Two such divergent forms of society could not continue indefinitely to live side by side within the walls of so loosely constructed a system as that of the United States under the Constitution. One or the other of these societies must perish, or both must secure complete equality...or the two societies must separate absolutely and live each by itself under its own government.[12]

In his further analysis of the situation, it must be noted that Channing was not entirely free from an anti-southern bias. After quoting a statement made by Langdon Cheves of South Carolina before the Nashville Convention of 1850 to the effect that the South had to secede from the Union as the only efficient protection against "aggravated wrongs" at the hands of the federal government, Channing commented: "The twentieth century historical student finds it difficult to understand how the slaveholders and the slaveholding States could by any possibility have endured aggravated wrongs at the hands of the

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[12]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume VI: The War for Southern Independence (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), pp. 3-4.

Federal government, for the Southerners themselves had held that government within their control for at least fifty of the sixty years of its life." He proceeded to show how the South, or Southerners, had controlled the Presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court for the major portion of the 1789-1850 period. "Not only had the South possessed control of the Federal government," concluded Channing, "it had constantly and consistently used this power for its own protection."[13] But this situation was coming to an end:

> It was possible that slavery might have remained a living institution within the limits of the cotton-growing States for many, many decades. Moreover, had the Southern leaders been men of great widsom and foresight, peaceable secession might have been achieved in 1850. As it was, instead of ameliorating the slave-labor system and confining it to the Cotton States or pushing on separation while it was feasible, the Southerners sought to combat the free-wage-system society of the North by enlarging the area of slave territory and securing the right to carry their slaves with them, without danger of loss, into every part of the country. This attempt to secure the recognition by law of their peculiar institution was against the whole economic, social, and moral sentiment of the times, not merely in the Northern United States, but throughout the greater part of the civilized world....It was perfectly plain, even in 1850, that in every year the North was increasing in man power and in material resources as compared with the South. Inevitably this superiority would sooner or later be translated into elements of political power and the South would lose the grip on the government of the United States that it had enjoyed since 1789.[14]

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[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

Channing even condemned Southerners somewhat for not seeing what was happening in the 1850-1860 decade, *i. e.*, their failing to match the North in population, wealth, and the like. They "remained on their plantations, closed their eyes, and contented themselves with counting the wealth of prominent Southern persons and families." "Of course, it is men and ideals and not money that make a nation and give the direction in which progress shall move," Channing admitted. "But when one thinks of taking a radical and far-reaching course of action, it is well to look the cold facts of numbers of men and millions of dollars squarely in the face. The Southern leaders were either unwilling or incapable of doing this very thing."[15]

Beyond this general analysis, however, Channing was remarkably free from bias for the period in which he was writing, and he showed on occasion a great deal of insight. He painted a meaningful, if slightly overdrawn, portrait of the Southern planter, who had developed "a distinct physique, a distinctive speech, and a characteristic mode of thought":

> The typical Southern plantation white man was of good height, with a lean body, a thin face, and a characteristic far-off look in his eyes. As he stood, he held his hands a little in front of the median line and his shoulders ordinarily were drawn a little forward. He had a soft sub-tropical intonation and a "plantation patois" that had come to him in part at least from childhood association with the ever-faithful colored "mammy" and his playmates, the "little niggers." His dialect was in a way as marked

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[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

> as that of the New England farmer or of the Northwestern settler in the days before efficient transportation had broken down barriers of speech as well as of occupation. The Southerner was very self-centered and intent on his own affairs,--upon the condition of the crops, the price of cotton, or the run of sugar. For half a century and more the Federal capital had been the rallying point of the more influential political leaders of the South; the State capitals had served the lesser politicians, and the county elections had been the principal meeting ground of local leaders and the voters. Apart from the crops and from litigation over lands and debts, politics was the chief mental excitation of the Southern white, rich or poor. Living in close contact with an alien race, he naturally and necessarily had self-protection always in the very front of his mind. At any moment of the day or of night, he might be required to strike at once and to strike hard to save his own life and to protect his wife and his children. He possessed a militant nature and brooked no insult from any one--Southerner or Northerner. If he felt aggrieved, he sent the other man a challenge, and if the other man refused to fight, he knocked him down or horse-whipped him at the first opportunity....The Southern planters lived contented and happy lives surrounded by a white peasantry and a black servile laboring class. They believed themselves to be the chosen of the earth and as superior to the fanatics, business men, laborers, to "the mongrels and hirelings" of the North as one set of men could be superior to another. To their minds it would be a "dishonor" to be governed by such as these.[16]

Channing was able to remain quite detached from the institution of slavery:

> In any attempt to appraise the condition of negroes in slavery in the epoch under review, it must be, in part at least, governed by the fact that each one of them in the years of his or her greatest activity and at this period in our history was worth from one thousand to two thousand dollars. No planter could have worked his slaves beyond their capacities or inflicted labor-destroying punishments upon them without serious loss to himself. In point of fact,

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[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

> if the crops were poor, if provisions were hard to get, it was the white family in the house that suffered, and not the negroes in the cabins; for whatever else might happen the bodily capacity of the slaves must be maintained for the next crop season. Also it is true that for a brief period in each year, at cotton-picking time and at the sugar-making season, labor was severe in the field and in the sugar house, but it may safely be said that it was never more severe than it was in the iron-making establishments of the North or, at times, on the farms of the Free States. Southern writers and speakers, one after another, tell us that one could see more wretchedness in a day's walk on the streets of New York than one could witness on a tour through the South,--and the slave when old and infirm was cared for on the plantation and not turned adrift to beg or to starve.[17]

As evidence for the last portion of these statements, Channing noted the usual facts of lack of slave support for John Brown and slave quietude during the war years. Channing did admit that there were valid objections to the slavery system. He recounted a story attributed to Andrew Carnegie which he felt exhibited "the essence of the objection to the system":

> An Ohio judge is represented as interrogating a fugitive slave and upon the colored man telling him that he had plenty of food, good shelter, plenty of clothes, and a good master and that he did not have to work very hard, the white man suddenly asked, why if he had all these things did he run away, and the fugitive replied that the place he had left was open, that the judge could do down and take it,--and resumed his line of march for Canada.[18]

"Like everything else," concluded Channing, "the goodness or the badness of the system depended upon the point of view."

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[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Channing addressed himself briefly to the oft-disputed question of the profitability of slavery, concluding that before the great increase in slave prices after 1850, "it was probably true that on the best conducted plantations the slave gang was the cheapest and most efficient agricultural labor in the world in terms of the crop produced." Even after 1850, he concluded, "more slaves not more land was the need of the South."[19]

When he turned from the institution of slavery to the Negro himself, Channing was not quite so successful in remaining objective. At least, according to the standards of today he was not; but we should be even more careful than he was to judge by the standards of the time under consideration rather than those of our own. Here are parts of his comments on the Negro:

> All treatments of Southern life by Northern writers gave an entirely false assessment of the weaknesses and the strengths of the slave system. They uniformly applied white standards to black life without any comprehension of the actualities of negroid, racial development. This was partly due to the inability of every man and woman to see good in unaccustomed ways of living of other persons; but it was more especially due to the fact that in those days knowledge of negroid institutions and conceptions of negroid ideals were very vague and extremely inaccurate. Since 1890, many competent explorers have visited Central Africa and the Congo and have set down in print the results of their observations and of their communings with the natives. Reading these many accounts, weighing them, and trying to draw judgment from them, it appears that it is about as hard for the Ethiop to

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 16.

> change his institutional and racial conceptions as it is for him to alter the color of his skin. Both his institutions and his skin are matters of heredity. They have come down from a very remote past and are, even today, being handed on unchanged to future generations.[20]

"In his pure condition, undiluted by white or yellow blood, the negro is essentially a communist and a fatalist," Channing's analysis continued. Something further of Channing's view of the Negro is expressed in a letter he wrote to Jameson in 1916. It was a recommendation for Carter G. Woodson, the well-known Negro historian. "Woodson wrote his thesis under my guidance," Channing began.

> He impressed me as a very good man. He was more assertive than most of his race and was desirous of doing thorough work. He is accurate in details, but like most of us, white as well as black, sometimes overlooks an authority. I think you can trust him as fully as you can any colored man; but he has, of course, the defects of his color.[21]

After a fifth volume in which approximately half the space was devoted to non-political material, Channing reverted to an almost completely political narrative for his sixth volume. In several ways, this was logical. For one thing, the political events centering around the North-South divergence over slavery and other matters certainly constitute the dominant theme in the history of the 1848-1865 period. For another, there was a good deal of overlap at both ends in

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[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

[21] Channing to Jameson, June 1, 1816, [*sic*] Jameson Collection.

Channing's social and cultural chapters in the first half of volume V--in other words, they covered, to a certain extent, the entire 1789-1865 period. Finally, it was not only logical but also beneficial that Channing's sixth and final volume was predominantly political in nature. He wrote political history better, and, more importantly, he wrote better when he had a central theme. Here, for the first time in the entire set, actually, he had one for an entire volume. And not only did he have a central theme, but it was also the culmination of his thesis from the preface to the Great Work, i. e., that the most significant single development in United States history was the victory of the forces of union over those of particularism. Channing did not take the opportunity to elaborate specifically on that thesis here, but it is an obvious under-current throughout.

One of the few places in the volume where Channing stepped aside from this central theme was in the second chapter, on "California, Oregon, and Japan." But even this material he managed, after a fashion, to relate to the slavery crisis in his end-of-chapter summary:

> All in all, what with California gold, Oregon wheat and salmon, the opening of Japan, the growth of far eastern trade, and the looking into the Caribbean and the countries of Central America...these years and these achievements betokened a coming change in the mental attitude of the American people that seems always to portend revolution. In all this change and coming revolution, the people who gained were the merchants and ship owners of the North. Almost alone in the advancing modern world, the South stood still. As it was in 1830 so it was in 1850 and so it was quite likely to be in 1860. Southern forward-looking

> men felt a certain nervousness which they could not conceal, but which they tried to hide under a recounting of their invincible position in the world of commerce. They possessed, James A. Seddon declared, a monopoly of the production of cotton fibre and if they refused to plant their cotton fields for one, for two, or for three years, the manufacturing nations of Europe and the Northern States of the Union would see the sources of their own prosperity dry up; the Northern lords of the loom, the merchant princes, the wealthy mechanics, and the thriving laborers would feel the gloom of a common cloud. Northern ships would rot at the wharves, factories crumble stone by stone, cities dwindle to half their size, and all this would happen unless the Northern men in Congress would accede to Southern demands for the extension of slavery and slave territory.[22]

When General Zachary Taylor was inaugurated President on March 4, 1849, "he found himself face to face with difficulties fully as great as those that had confronted any previous President since the days of Washington," wrote Channing. "Every week, every month, almost every day," he continued, "the mutterings of the political storm that was sweeping up from the South became more and more audible until, by the middle of 1849, their import could by no possibility be misjudged."[23] The problem, of course, was that the South, sensing a long-range threat to its "peculiar institution," was now insisting upon the right to take slaves into the newly-acquired areas of California, Utah, and New Mexico. Channing insisted that these areas had come into the United States as free

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[22] History, VI, pp. 62-63. An interesting sidelight of this chapter is Channing's treatment of the Cuban episode of the 1850's. The Ostend Manifesto he labeled as "undiplomatic," and he considered the United States to be "clearly in the wrong" in the entire affair. (p. 58)

[23] Ibid., p. 74.

territory, since slavery as such did not exist in Mexico, and that the question, therefore, was whether they were to remain free.[24] This obviously affected his coverage of the entire controversy culminating in the Compromise of 1850.

Channing saw that the general prosperity of the 1850's did a great deal in bringing the South to acceptance of the Compromise; it "drove thoughts of secession away from the Southern mind," he said. But Daniel Webster was Channing's hero of the hour:

> Looking backward, it is astounding to realize the accuracy with which Daniel Webster sensed the situation in the South and recognized that a concession on the part of the North, like that contained in the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, would cut the ground from under the feet of...[Southern radicals] and put off the inevitable crisis until the North should outstrip the South in man power and material resources--so much so, indeed, that possibly secession and war would never come. As one reads his "Seventh of March Speech" one realizes that Webster was trying to say to his countrymen: "Make this concession to our Southern brethren! They love the Union, they want to remain in it, but they have been led to believe by their political chiefs that you Northerners are designing their ruin and the ruin of their social system. The concessions made in the Compromise Acts as a whole do not amount to much, apart from the Fugitive Slave Law, for slavery can never profitably exist in New Mexico and Utah and the Fugitive Slave Law is only the carrying out of the plain provisions of the Constitution of the United States." The abolition propagandists of the North turned upon him with a fury that showed they realized that what he had done was to put an end for the time being to their schemings. There are no more painful, no more unjustifiable, lines in

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

American poesy than those in John Greenleaf Whittier's "Ichabod," describing Webster as the fallen, the lost, the man for whom "the Tempter" had laid a snare:--

> Let not the land once proud of him
> Insult him now,
> Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
> Dishonored brow.[25]

According to Channing, "No part of the settlement of 1850 aroused so much bitterness, not even the admission of California as a free State, as did the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law and the attempts that were subsequently made to enforce it." With this sentiment, Channing himself was fully in sympathy. "A layman ought not to take issue with the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, or an historian to argue with a lawyer," he wrote, "but a suggestion or two may be possible." He did indeed make some:

> Under the fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a citizen of a "sovereign State" of the Union might be seized and taken from the State of his birth and residence from youth up, to be tried for that which is dearer than life--his liberty--simply on the oath of an inhabitant of another State. The defenders of the Fugitive Slave Law constantly reiterated the statement that the cases of the alleged fugitive slave and of the fugitive from justice were alike and that no one objected to the extradition of the alleged criminal as so many persons did to the return of the fugitive slave. In reality the cases were very unlike, The squint of the law was the same as to the murderer or the thief, north or south of Mason and Dixon's line. It was very different as to holding a human being in bondage for life.[26]

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[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

To Channing, the most important effect of the act was not the increase or decrease of the number of runaway slaves, the growth of the free Negro colony in Canada, or the spectacular events associated with fugitive slave cases: "it was that these things put together converted hundreds of thousands of people of the North from a position of indifference or of hostility to abolition to a position of hostility towards the slave power," he thought. "It induced hundreds of thousands of voters, who cared very little whether the negro was a slave or a free man, to use all means at their disposal to stop the further extension of slavery and to put an end to it whenever they could, constitutionally."[27]

Channing attached great significance to Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin in the coming of the Civil War. "The New England literary and oratorical group has a great responsibility on its shoulders," he began. He took the opportunity to speculate briefly about the role of the propagandist in history. "From the time of Peter the Hermit to Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, mankind has been ruled by the propagandist," Channing contended. "Whether right or wrong, he has only to shout loudly enough or write virulently enough and public opinion sooner or later will turn in his favor. He will crush his opponent." All this set the stage for his verdict on Uncle Tom's Cabin. It "did more than any other one thing

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[27] Ibid., p. 103.

to arouse the fears of the Southerners and impel them to fight for independence."[28] A bit over-stated, perhaps, but probably not as bad as Channing's grandson thought. "This judgment appears strikingly fanciful," he wrote, "and shows that Channing occasionally reached some fantastic conclusions."[29]

Channing presented himself with unnecessary organizational problems by having a chapter on "Parties, Politics, and Politicians, 1848-1859." This caused him to have an awkward overlap between this chapter and later ones on such things as the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott case. Still, he did generalize meaningfully about the period. "These eleven years were the most significant in our history," he wrote,

> for it was then that the Southerners determined to have their own way within the United States, or else to leave the Union, no matter what their numbers might be in comparison with the Northerners; and the people of the Northern States determined in their own minds that the time for concession had passed and that there should be no more compromise with slave power.[30]

Channing, likewise, made some interesting remarks on specific political parties of the period. It is hard to determine exactly what he thought about the Whig party, for in one place he wrote that it "was born of opposition to Jacksonism and died in the effort to 'swallow the Fugitive Slave Act.'

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

[29] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 127.

[30] *History*, VI, p. 119.

It had no reason for existence other than its devotion to things that were past." It was an upper class party, he concluded, but "had no principles, other than opposition to the Democratic control of the government." On the other hand, he wrote in another place that the Whig party "had an honorable history and was composed of some of the best elements in American political life and in American life." But if Channing's evaluation of the Whigs was somewhat vague, he was crystal clear on the reason for the success of the American, or Know-Nothing, party. "Know-Nothingism offered a refuge for politicians and voters who wished to bilk the real issue of the hour," he wrote, "namely, the expansion of slave territory, as provided for in the Kansas-Nebraska Act."[31]

Channing was quite critical of the presidents of the 1850's. "Apparently the best recommendation for the presidency in those days was to have been in the public eye and to have done nothing in recent years about which any kind of enthusiasm could arise," he wrote. He had Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan in mind when he wrote that, but he was also quite critical of John C. Fremont. He considered it "grotesque" that the new Republican party chose Fremont for its first standard-bearer, and he speculated, sarcastically, that the candidate's nickname of "Pathfinder" must have meant that "he popularized paths that other people had found. Possibly to

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[31] Ibid., pp. 124-125, 137, 135.

the enthusiasts at the convention the person who had found the paths to the West might also hit upon a route to the White House." Channing seemed proud that Fremont had not found the latter route. "The defeat of Fremont has been generally welcomed by historians," he wrote, apparently agreeing, "for it seems reasonably certain that the South would have seceded in 1856 had a sectional President been elected, and certainly the public opinion of the North in 1856 was not in favor of coercing their fellow countrymen back into the Union fold."[32]

Channing strained to remain objective, and generally succeeded, in his speculations on the controversial point of Stephen A. Douglas' motives for the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He began by admitting that "one's Douglas or anti-Douglas prepossessions largely influence the investigator and the historical narrator." Channing had a rather high opinion of Douglas himself, for he wrote of his "great ability, his winning personality, and his power of elucidating difficult questions to his own satisfaction and to that of his hearers." After considering all the possible factors which could have motivated Douglas, Channing decided that the best possibility was that it was "the result of a bit of local Missouri politics," meaning that Senator David R. Atchison of that state had influenced Douglas to introduce the bill because

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[32] Ibid., pp. 142-143, 143, 144, 145-146.

of the desire of his constituents for cheap land to the West.[33]

Channing caught the essence of the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision in one brief sentence. "In reality, instead of settling anything in the minds of the people of the North," he wrote, "what the Dred Scott decision did was to unsettle their belief in the impartiality and justice of the Supreme Court of the United States." The other major event of that year, the Panic of 1857, Channing considered particularly important because of the detrimental effects it had on the fortunes of the Democratic party in the industrial areas of the North, making the rise of the Republicans possible there.[34]

John Brown was treated with moderation by Channing, but in the end came out rather well. Channing seemed to doubt that he was insane.

> He may have been so, but in any discussion of insanity or of what constitutes a maniac it is perhaps well to remember that the line between the sane and the insane is very tortuous and exceedingly difficult to draw and that success or failure is hardly a secure metewand with which to measure one's sanity or insanity. Besides, in the march of history, Thermopylae was as desperate as Harper's Ferry, and when one comes to turn over the beginnings of great events, Captain Parker of Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775, or the embattled farmers at Concord Bridge a few hours later on the same day, were likewise tempting fate.

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[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 150-157.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 196, 200.

> In each case success followed; Greece was freed from Asiatic control,--for a time; the colonies became the United States,--with the aid of France; and within five years from the death of John Brown, the Emancipation Proclamation came from the pen of Abraham Lincoln. In dying, John Brown achieved the success that evaded him when living.[35]

The election of 1860 provided Channing his first opportunity to evaluate Abraham Lincoln. He had trouble finding words to show just how highly he regarded that great man:

> To men of his time, Lincoln appeared to be weak and vacillating and to be actuated more by the desires of the moment than by any firm settled policy. Nowadays, we realize that Lincoln was a man of marvellous power in the management of men and that he had political foresight almost without parallel among the men of mediaeval and modern times who have risen sufficiently above the mass of mankind to cause their doings to be recorded in documents and assessed by students.[36]

Lincoln was not only the "greatest of Americans" and "A 'Master of men,' incomparably above anyone who has ever walked the American stage," he was also "unsurpassed in modern history," and he "produced the most perfect piece of English prose that has yet been written in America," the Gettysburg Address.[37]

Lincoln not only set the stage for the election of 1860, he also "struck the keynote of the history of the United

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[35] Ibid., p. 221.

[36] Ibid., p. 299.

[37] Ibid., pp. 388, 309, 295, 228. Channing found only one occasion to be critical of Lincoln, and he emphasized it so strongly that one gets the feeling he must have been trying to prove his objectivity. He labeled Lincoln's support of re-colonization of the Negro in Africa "one of the most remarkable failures of Lincoln's whole career." (p. 525)

States for the next seven years" when he made his famous "house divided" speech in 1858. By the time of the election, according to Channing, the Republicans "stood for distinctly Northern desires, economically and socially, and formed, therefore--quite irrespective of the slavery issue--a sectional political party." Strangely, Channing seemed almost to lament the election of Lincoln in one passage. "It would seem that if Bell and Everett had been chosen," he wrote, "no Southern State would have seceded and there would have been no war, and in the fullness of time, slavery would have yielded to the new spirit of the nineteenth century, or, at all events, to the spirit of the twentieth century." Two factors, however, made this outcome impossible: the activities of Southern radical secessionists, and Lincoln's determination not to yield on the extension of slavery.[38]

Nowhere in this volume did Channing actually inform the reader that he was going to discuss the causes of the Civil War and then proceed to enumerate them. And certainly he was

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[38] Ibid., pp. 229-230, 232, 253. Speaking of the Southern radicals, Channing wrote: "They had brought about the existing crisis--at least so it would seem--to serve as a pretext for secession and, having succeeded in that, they were absolutely opposed to any sort of concession to the North. And they were absolutely right, if the Southern social system were to live, it must live under its own government. It was so out of tune with the opinion of mankind that it could not exist under the domination of any other rulers of the white race. It is extraordinary that any set of people should have likened themselves, as many typical Southerners did, to the lords and ladies, to the thanes and squires of the pages of Sir Walter Scott and not have realized that a mediaeval state of society could not exist in the modern world." (p. 254)

no single causationist, holding, for example, that slavery was the one and only problem which led to the conflict. Still, if one makes the effort to piece Channing's comments on this subject together, a pattern does emerge, and probably a much more realistic idea of how the war came about than can be gathered from historians who strive to prove one particular theory. One of Channing's most helpful passages for understanding the sectional conflict came not in this volume at all but in his fourth, Federalists and Republicans:

> Sectionalism had begun with the first settlement of the country, owing to the different industrial conditions of the regions then occupied. The same sort of people went to Virginia and to New England; they desired to do similar things, but were forced to adapt themselves to their natural environments. The Virginians tried to introduce concentrated municipal life, entirely without success; the Massachusetts leaders attempted to work their lands in large units; they were obliged to content themselves with farming on a moderate scale and to utilize the rest of their strength in commerce and in the rougher forms of manufacturing. The separation between agrarian and capitalistic effort was not so pronounced in New York and Pennsylvania, or, perhaps, it would be better to say that both were present in the Middle Colonies. These primal differences were soon greatly accentuated by the introduction of black servile labor, which proved to be unsuited to the North and most congenial to the South. With the development of slavery the southern agriculturist became a magnate, the white race an aristocracy, and its more prosperous and stronger men a true landed oligarchy,--the "Virginia Lordlings," as Stephen Higginson termed them. They soon came to have the contempt of their class for trade, for shop-keepers and mechanics; and they feared capitalists. Whether the people of these several sections could ever work together in reasonable harmony was distinctly a question for the future in 1789.[39]

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[39]Edward Channing, A History of the United States.

And how much more questionable it was in 1850 or 1860!

"One of the distinctive lines of thought that separated the North and the South," wrote Channing in volume VI, "was on the question of the constitutional position of the States within the Union. In the North, the general opinion was that the Union was sovereign and the States part of it." He realized it had not always been so, evidenced well enough by the Hartford Convention. But thanks largely to the "economic inter-dependence of the Northeast and the Northwest and the extremely profitable relations that existed between the manufacturing and commercial parts of the Northeastern States and the slave-holders of the South," it was so by 1850. Channing also felt that "The idea that the people of the United States formed one nation had been powerfully reinforced by the coming of the immigrant from abroad," for they came, after all, not to a state, but to "The United States and looked upon it as their adopted home." In the South, on the other hand, "every white boy and girl grew up to regard himself or herself as born into the service of his or her State and as owing, not merely allegiance, but devotion and life itself to her protection and to the furtherance of her well-being." The only "feeling of solidarity" which Channing could discern among Southerners was "that of the community of interest of the slaveholding aristocracy and their white neighbors."[40]

Volume IV: Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), pp. 154-155.

[40] History, VI, pp. 268-270. "The motives and reasons

So, Edward Channing doubtless would have largely agreed with something like this as a simplified statement of the causes of the Civil War: It was the result of a natural, environmentally-induced sectionalism in which the two leading factors were slavery, economically and socially, and the view of the nature of the union, politically; and, in the end, it became a purely emotional thing, for, as Channing wrote, "The psychology of men's actions is often beyond the ken of the historian; but in this case sentiment overruled every other consideration in the North,--and in the South."[41]

In adopting such a broad and moderate view of causation, Channing was ahead of his time. Howard K. Beale wrote in 1946 that Channing, "provincial Bostonian and conservative

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that led the men and women of the South into secession are as inscrutable now as they were in 1860 and in 1861," wrote Channing. It was a rather strange remark for him to make, for he went ahead to delineate the reasons, concluding that "The great mass of the white inhabitants of the Cotton States sincerely believed that they were in danger of persecution and of disaster and that their 'honor' demanded independence." (pp. 256, 264-265)

[41] Ibid., p. 315. Louis Gottschalk emphasized the political more in his analysis of Channing's interpretation. "Edward Channing conceived of the struggle as a phase of evolving nationalism," wrote Gottschalk. "The growing nation's aims were ambiguous: Which definition of aims should prevail, that of the North or that of the South? When the South concluded that its definition was doomed, it determined to follow the example of the colonies in 1776 and work out its own destiny. The Civil War to Channing was a War for Southern Independence, a war to ensure to the South freedom to organize a nation after its own design, free from the implications of Northern definition." Louis Gottschalk, ed., Generalization in the Writing of History: A Report of the Committee on Historical Analysis of the Social Science Research Council (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 136.

as he was, emphasized in his ivory tower many of the economic motives and psychological factors generally not stressed until after he published his volume, and even then chiefly by historians with whom no one would have suspected Channing of agreeing." Also, Channing's treatment of the Civil War places him squarely in the midst of what is now generally referred to as the nationalist school of historians on that subject. Indeed, a recent survey of major interpretations of American history considers Channing one of the leading exponents of the nationalist approach, along with James Ford Rhodes and Woodrow Wilson. Some of the characteristics of this school are: the beginning of a more balanced, less partisan picture of the Civil War; the belief that the war was an "irrepressible" conflict; and approval of the outcome of the war and subsequent developments such as the growth of industry and the Negro's being forced to accept a subordinate role in American life.[42]

In 1861, Channing felt, Northerners were divided into four groups:

> (1) the Buchananites, who represented the old Northern men with Southern principles; (2) the abolitionists, who were glad to see the Southerners go and the sooner they went--and the farther--the better; (3) the Northerners who had elected Lincoln, but were willing

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[42]Howard K. Beale, "What Historians Have Said About the Causes of the Civil War," Theory and Practice in Historical Study: A Report of the Committee on Historiography (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1946), p. 89; and Gerald N. Grob and George Athan Billias, Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives. Volume I: To 1877 (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 418-421.

> to compromise with the South to bring the seceded States back into the Union; and (4) a few determined men with Lincoln at their head who were resolved that there should be no more compromise that would lead to any possible extension of slave soil.[43]

Channing showed his open-mindedness toward the South by praising Confederate civil and military leaders. "Among the leading men of the first group of the Confederate States, there was no one better qualified for the presidency than Jefferson Davis," wrote Channing. Davis had "a fine mind," and was "an excellent administrator and a good judge of fit men."[44] As for the military:

> The Southern soldiers enjoyed the great advantage of having at the outset half a dozen remarkable men at their head: Robert E. Lee, J. E. Johnston, Albert Sidney Johnston, P. G. T. Beauregard, Braxton Bragg, and James Longstreet. Albert Sidney Johnston was killed at Shiloh, otherwise these men were in high command at the time of Appomatox [sic] and their presence with the Southern armies was worth many regiments, divisions, or army corps. On the Union side, there were no such outstanding military figures in the early months.[45]

After the "early months," there were. Among Northern generals who were praised by Channing were George B. McClellan

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[43] History, VI, p. 289. Channing considered Buchanan "an experienced and tried Democratic politician of the old school," but "infirm in body and mind." (p. 281)

[44] Ibid., p. 277. Channing showed an even more sympathetic attitude toward Davis on pp. 624-626.

[45] Ibid., p. 326. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and J. E. B. Stuart were also praised by Channing, Stuart as "one of the outstanding military figures of the war" and Jackson as "one of the few military genuises that the war produced" and the Confederacy's "greatest soldier." (pp. 480, 469, 478)

("He exhibited remarkable organizing ability and brought discipline and military cohesion within a few months into the Army of the Potomac that remained with it through years of campaigning, disaster, success."), Winfield Scott Hancock ("one of the most brilliant soldiers in the army"), William Tecumseh Sherman ("the war probably produced no greater strategist and tactician"), Philip H. Sheridan ("one of the foremost fighters of the century, in America or in Europe"), and U. S. Grant:

> The poet in his study has, oftentimes, estimated a man better than the orator or the historian; so James Russell Lowell at Elmwood in Cambridge, Massachusetts, appraised Grant:--
>
> "Strong, simple, silent...such was he
> Who helped us in our need; the eternal law
> That who can saddle Opportunity
> Is God's elect...
> Was verified in him."[46]

Channing must have really had that high an opinion of Grant. One of Channing's former students and assistants recalled: "Once he threw me out of his office for making what seemed to him a disparaging remark about Grant as a General, and did not let me back for over a month."[47]

Channing again showed his great ability to distill the essence of war into a few brief passages in his treatment of <u>The War for Southern Independence</u>:

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[46] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 403-404, 481, 558-559, 573, 557. A more detailed evaluation of McClellan appeared on pp. 474-476.

[47] Letter to the author from Herbert W. Hill, September 26, 1966.

> At first glance, running over the statistics of population and production of the States that seceded and of those that did not secede, viewing their differing economic interests, and bearing in memory the outcome, one is amazed at the hardihood of the Southern leaders in pressing their people into inevitable and hopeless conflict. In reality, their cause was not at all hopeless, nor was defeat inevitable; and it did not seem to be nearly as hopeless as it was to the Southern leaders whose horizons were bounded by their own little locality and who possessed neither the training nor the desire to study the social, economical, and international relations of the countries of the world. Three fixed beliefs strongly affected them: the one was that cotton was "King" and that the cessation of exportation for a few months, or years at most, would bring the nations of Europe to their knees in supplication to the Southerners to plant cotton, and would even bring about the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France. The second idea was that the North would not fight, that secession would be peaceable. The third idea was that if the Federal government did attempt to coerce the South, the people of the Ohio Valley would not rally behind Lincoln and his Black Republicans. In all these three expectations the Southern leaders were wrong.[48]

The problem with the first of those three beliefs was that the British did not need cotton as much as they needed wheat; as Channing said, "For the time being wheat had usurped the position of royalty in the economic fabric of the United Kingdom that cotton had occupied."[49] The first battle of Bull Run convinced the North that it had to fight, and thus made the second belief wrong.

The third belief, concerning the Ohio Valley, occupied most of a chapter for Channing, "The Decision of the Ohio Valley." "As matters were," he wrote, "the outcome of secession depended ultimately upon the attitude that the people of

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[48] History, VI, pp. 332-333.

[49] Ibid., p. 341.

the Ohio Valley assumed."

> If they took the part of their kinsfolk and commercial friends of the South, secession was reasonably certain to be permanent. If they took upon themselves an attitude of neutrality, the case was very doubtful. If they stood squarely behind the Union government, the decision might be prolonged, but success would eventually be with the Union cause. Abraham Lincoln, himself a native of the Ohio Valley, saw with certainty into the future and based his whole policy upon the contingency of rallying the people of that section to the side of the Union.[50]

It was not as much a foregone conclusion as one might think, Channing made clear, that this region would choose the third alternative. The southern portions of the states there had been settled by southerners and had close economic ties with the South. It was only transportational links with the Northeast, particularly railroads, which kept the crucial Ohio Valley loyal to the Union.[51]

Another place where Channing generalized meaningfully was in discussing the changing art of warfare:

> In ages past, in the times of Alexander and of Caesar, of Wallenstein and of Napoleon, the ability to march long distances and day after day, to carry weights, and to ride on horseback were of the first necessity for the soldier. It was a man trained to outdoor life, to delving in the soil, to following the plow, or to ranging the woods, who was useful in war. It followed that an agricultural country was the strongest country for military purposes, that cattlemen, herdsmen, and shepherds were the best soldiers. By 1860, the art of war was beginning to take on the industrial phase in which

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[50] Ibid., p. 374.

[51] Ibid., pp. 375-379.

> machines and not marchers were to be supreme. In the future, soldiers were to be transported by rail or boat, instead of marching hundreds of miles to the fields of battle. And when in front of the enemy, artillery, and not infantry or cavalry, was oftentimes to be the deciding factor. It is a long way from the horse-frightening cannon of Cressy and Poictiers to the seventy-five-mile carrying gun of the year 1918. The War for Southern Independence came in the mid-interval. It came at the moment when machines, from the steam-locomotive to the breech-loader and the torpedo, were beginning to play their parts. The war was to be aged industrially as no war had ever been waged before. In this regard the South was hopelessly handicapped and the outcome was in the hands of the Northern people, provided they stood fast.[52]

And finally, Channing saw the character of the conflict as going through three stages, "first a war of coercion, next a war of conquest, and, finally, a war for the destruction of the Southern social system." "In its final stage," he elaborated, "the war developed into a campaign for the destruction of the economic foundation of Southern life which entailed sufferings upon the Southern people and aroused a spirit of the South and in the North that it took decades to live down." "The two most lamentable failures of the war," according to Channing, "were the lack of the care of the sick and the wounded and of the prisoners."[53]

Of military campaigns as such, little need be said. Channing showed his usual ability to make them understandable;

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[52] Ibid., pp. 581-582.

[53] Ibid., pp. 435-436. Channing thought the blame for the controversial Andersonville "belonged on the utter breakdown of the Confederate administrative bureaus" rather than on any maliciousness on the part of Southerners. (p. 442)

two received his highest praise. Grant's campaign at Vicksburg was "one of the most brilliant operations in the annals of war." The bad effects of Sherman's "March to the Sea" were played down and its accomplishment built up. Typical of the plain language employed by Channing in military history was the phrase "as the crow flies" to indicate a straight distance. Another use of the same idea was Channing's famous description of the Shenandoah Valley after Sheridan's campaign there: he "left the Valley in such condition that a crow flying over it would have to carry his food with him." There must have been some Westerners appalled at Channing's coverage--or lack of it--of the West in the Civil War: "We can dismiss at once the country beyond the Mississippi, for the campaigns in that region, after the very beginning, had slight significance." And that was all! Typically, Channing devoted an entire chapter to "The War on the Water and Trade with the Enemy." It was high-lighted by his detailed account of the Monitor-Merrimac conflict, with his conclusion that it "spelled the doom of the existing navies of the world."[54]

"The Election of 1864" was a very weak and poorly-named chapter near the end of this volume. Channing's comments on the election itself actually filled only about five of the thirty pages; page headings included everything from the westward movement to negotiations for peace. The few things he

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[54] Ibid., pp. 552, 562, 456, 575, 445, 504.

did say about the election were quite strange. "From the vantage point of the twentieth century," he wrote, "it seems reasonably clear that at no time in the year 1864 was the reelection of Abraham Lincoln within the realm of doubt." The fact that Lincoln had the "plain people of the North" behind him was the reason for this statement; they greatly outnumbered his opponents, including Radical Republicans, Peace Democrats, and the extreme abolitionists. These latter groups simply showed up well because they were so "mighty in speech and pen." "For almost the first time, Lincoln's political instincts failed him," said Channing in reference to Lincoln's famous note of concern about the probability that he would not be reelected. "Possibly a recurrence of one of those depressive eras that marked his earlier life for a time clouded the clearness of his vision."[55] Noting the closeness of the election's outcome in the three crucial states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, Channing concluded:

> Had these three States gone the other way and been joined by a couple more, the election would have been fairly close; McClellan might have been elected; and the history of the next few months might have been very unlike what it was;--there would have been no march to Appomattox.[56]

The final chapter of <u>The War for Southern Independence</u> is entitled "The Collapse of the Confederacy." It is an

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[55] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 605-606.

[56] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 610.

excellent example of Channing's problem-solving technique. He began with the assumption that the Confederacy was not militarily defeated in April, 1865. "The Southern people, had they so wished, could have held out for a long time," he wrote. Why, then, the sudden collapse? Rejecting the ideas that it was due to a lack of either war material or of food, Channing concluded that the answer was a loss of morale. "It is abundantly evident to the under-surface seeker that by the summer of 1864, and even more so by December of that year, the will to fight had gone from large sections of the Southern people."[57]

Allan Nevins has made a useful criticism of Channing's analysis of the causes for the collapse of the Confederacy. "The conclusion Channing reaches is not satisfactory" for Nevins; "it evades the question, Why did morale collapse?" Nevins' major point, however, is that Channing oversimplified in attributing the sudden Southern collapse to a loss of morale alone. "He overlooks the fact that it may have been, and probably was, a conjunction of all the elements he has named... which brought about the surrender." Also--and what a strange, but true, criticism this is of Edward Channing!--"He entirely overlooks one highly important element, the collapse of transportation." "Altogether," Nevins concluded, "Channing attributes too much to a single factor in a complex situation."[58]

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[57] Ibid., pp. 612-621.

[58] Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, New, revised edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1962), pp. 241, 243-244. One reviewer, on the

There is an interesting footnote which can be added to the problem of why the Confederacy collapsed. Sometime between 1906 and 1925 Channing changed his mind about the reasons. In the former year, he wrote to Charles Francis Adams:

> The blockade and the economic upbuilding of the North during the war were the two most potent factors in ruining the South. Sometimes when I have thought on the matter for some weeks I find myself asking what would have happened had the Union armies stood on the defensive and simply enforced the land blockade? Would not the result have been the same and in about the same period of time and with one tenth of the cost of men and money?[59]

One of the most interesting critiques of Channing's sixth volume never appeared in print. It was by his colleague, Albert Bushnell Hart. He wrote Channing a letter on November 2, 1925, saying he had just completed "a careful line by line reading" of the book, and praising it in unbelievably glowing terms. He told Channing he had "produced a notable, permanent and unbiased history of the most dramatic period in the history of the United States." "I am amazed at the penetration of your book throughout," he continued. "Channing, you did indeed hold the mirror up to nature." "I know no writer who takes greater pains than you to put himself into the times about which he

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other hand, no less a historian than William E. Dodd, was completely satisfied with Channing's interpretation, feeling that it was "surely going to be the final verdict on this part of the subject."--New York Tribune, August 9, 1929.

[59]Edward Channing to Charles Francis Adams, January 6, 1906, Adams Family Papers, Charles Francis Adams II File, Massachusetts Historical Society Library, Boston. Channing specifically minimized the role of the blockade in the History, VI, pp. 519-521.

writes; to give every important conflict of opinions a fair hearing and a fair showing." To Hart this was Channing's finest work. "Above all, my dear colleague, I recognize that throughout the book that [sic] quality of fearless truth which has characterized all of your historical work." And finally, the conclusion: "We have been coworkers and friends for many years, but I have never appreciated your gifts as an investigator and writer and a medium of truth as I have in reading this volume." Amid all this, there was only a brief hint of what was to come. Hart said he had noted in his copy several "queries," "marks of approbation," and "sometimes," "a difference of opinion"; he would gladly type these up and submit them to Channing if the latter desired.[60]

Channing must have been thrilled with that letter. "I opened your letter with fear and trembling," he replied to Hart, "and was astounded and gratified at what I read therein." He continued:

> In point of fact, I read it three times! I think that you have shown a most wonderful spirit toward your ancient colleague, for there must be hundreds of things in that book that were most distressing to you. I tried to set these things before the reading and studying world with entire truth, but in such a way that no one's feelings would be hurt. I am glad to feel that I succeeded.[61]

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[60]Albert Bushnell Hart to Edward Channing, November 2, 1925, Albert Bushnell Hart Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[61]Channing to Hart, November 3, 1925, Ibid.

Channing concluded by saying he would be glad to have the typewritten comments. He must have been astounded again, but certainly not gratified, when he received them. Hart gave him nine pages of detailed, sometimes biting, criticism--and this only covered the first 197 pages! It was filled with "differences of opinion"--but Hart was rather dogmatic in his positions--"errors," "queries," references to Hart's own books, etc.[62]

One point to which every commentator on this volume addresses himself is Channing's attitude toward the South. Hart praised Channing in the November 2 letter for his "detachment from sectional prejudice."[63] Channing's grandson forthrightly stated that "Never before had Channing taken such a pro-Southern point of view." Strangely, he concluded that the result of this was "a fair analysis of the Civil War and its causes."[64] David Seville Muzzey, reviewing the volume for the Political Science Quarterly, wrote that Channing "regards the aggressiveness of the Abolitionists as mild in comparison with that of the Southern fire-eaters." Channing, he said, felt that slavery led to secession, and that secession was a crime and a blunder. "We doubt if Professor Channing's volume will

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[62] Ibid. The document is headed: "Queries on Channing's History of the United States, Volume VI, Put by Albert Bushnell Hart, November 4, 1925."

[63] Hart to Channing, November 2, 1925, Ibid.

[64] Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 126.

meet with a wholly hearty reception south of the Mason and Dixon line," concluded Muzzey; he even thought the title misleading, for it was not, he said, as much of a concession to the Southern apologist point of view as The War for Southern Independence implied.[65] Charles Beard expressed the same view in his typical fashion. "It is not probable that any right thinkers will approve this book, the Daughters of the Confederacy least of all," he wrote in the New Republic. "Doubtless that tribute will be paid to its excellence."[66] On the other hand, a Southerner, B. B. Kendrick, reviewing the volume for Historical Outlook, praised its "spirit of detachment and impartiality." Kendrick said he was an "only partially emancipated" Southerner, and he found the book not only fair to the South but sometimes even flattering. Channing commented on this review to Brett: "It was written by a Southerner and finds no cause for serious resentment in the book. I am afraid we will have to hire somebody to chop it up with a meat axe."[67]

Probably the only safe conclusion to draw from all this is that persons were reading between the lines in Channing's History on the still-emotionalized topic of the Civil War to

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[65] David Seville Muzzey, Political Science Quarterly, XL (December, 1925), p. 624.

[66] Charles A. Beard, "History and an Antidote," New Republic, XLIV (November 11, 1925), p. 311.

[67] B. B. Kendrick, Historical Outlook, XVI (October, 1925), pp. 283-284; Channing to Brett, October 10, 1925, Macmillan Collection.

get what they wanted out of it. Channing must have strived consciously to be fair to the South, just as he did to the West; but in both cases, he did not always succeed. One of his southern students, a distant relative of Jefferson Davis, recalled Channing's comment to Eva G. Moore when he entered Channing's office: "Give me my cane--I don't want him to attack me!" But he also remembered Channing talking a great deal about trying to be fair to the South, and specifically being proud of the title for his sixth volume because he thought it was fairer than "Civil War."[68] The most moderate, and probably the most accurate, statement on Channing's treatment of the South was made by Carl Russell Fish. "Southerners will not be altogether pleased with his handling of Southern problems," Fish wrote, "and yet his book is a marked advance over that of Mr. Rhodes. He treated Southerners as equals, without condenscension, and he really understood the South better than his predecessors, even when not approving of it."[69]

Besides the review by Kendrick, there is only one other on which Channing's opinion is available. It was by William MacDonald and appeared in the Nation. MacDonald criticized Channing for being weak on economic and social history and too

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[68]Interview with Hugh O. Davis, September 22, 1966, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Davis also recalled of his student association with Channing: "I believe that I was his <u>last</u> student. The only reason that he 'took me' was that I was a southerner and distant kin of 'Pres. Jeff,' and he was a bit partial!"--Letter to the author, August 2, 1966.

[69]Carl Russell Fish, "Edward Channing: America's Historian," <u>Current History</u>, XXXIII (March, 1931), p. 865.

brief on foreign affairs; but his general impression of the book was favorable. Still, Channing did not like it. "William MacDonald seems to have evened up matters with me in a recent number of 'The Nation,'" he wrote to Brett. "I suppose for turning down the book that he asked you to publish. It is of no matter," Channing consoled Brett, and himself, "because MacDonald plainly had not read the book and nobody nowadays reads 'The Nation.'"[70]

Of the many other reviews, only two are worthy of special note. One was by Beard. Here is the heart of it:

> The dissertations of scholars, the buried articles of specialists, and the upturnings of local historians have all been raked over, sifted, and examined in the cool light of a trained mind. Extreme statements are avoided; a judicial atmosphere pervades these pages. Those who want to know what doctors of philosophy think about the events and characters of the period must read this volume.[71]

Beard complained about Channing including social and literary history in volume V but not in volume VI, where, he felt, it was really more important. "The world is full of a number of things," he concluded, "and our author has put several of them together. That is his right." And, of course, Beard had to get in his usual economic criticism. He took Channing's remarks about two distinct societies existing within the United States by 1860 to mean that Channing thought economic differences were

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[70]William MacDonald, Nation, CXXI (September 23, 1925), pp. 334-335; Channing to Brett, September 28, 1925, Macmillan Collection.

[71]Charles A Beard, "History and an Antidote," New Republic, XLIV (November 11, 1925), p. 311.

at the heart of the irrepressible conflict, and then queried: "If this analysis is right, and it seems to be right, then why a book telling in the main the traditional tale? The reviewer surrenders."[72]

Dixon Ryan Fox, in the American Historical Review, noted the intentional limitations of Channing's work. "One lays down the volume...with his knowledge and belief revised in detail, but not as a whole," he wrote. He must have irked Channing considerably when he went on: "This is not the kind of general interpretation that Mr. Beard may some time write of the great crisis; one discerns no thematic pattern such as might mark a similar work of Professor Turner." Fox also noted that there was "less attempt in this volume than in its predecessor to swing the whole circle of American life," meaning, of course, to cover non-political developments. His over-all impression of the book, however, was favorable. He found Channing's thesis concerning the collapse of the Confederacy stimulating, and he concluded:

> It may be said in general--and it is high praise indeed--that Professor Channing's sixth volume justifies the hopes of his readers, that every page is marked by the trace of an original mind, functioning rather obviously in New England but severely resolved to be fair, and that his story is told with a perfect clarity of statement leaving no one at any time in doubt as to exactly what he means.[73]

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Dixon Ryan Fox, American Historical Review, XXXI (October, 1925), pp. 151-154. The other reviews of volume VI are: Booklist, XXII (December, 1925), p. 111; Independent,

Perhaps Allan Nevins' judgement on Channing's sixth volume is the most meaningful and valid one of all. He noted that "some comprehensive histories resolve themselves, upon close examination, into a clear succession of problems freshly restated, freshly attacked, and freshly resettled." Channing's work he considered an excellent example of this. It was by no means a full narrative of the years 1848-1865, omitting much that one would normally expect to find in an account of those years, and yet much that it did contain was novel. "Leaving out the familiar story of Congressional battles, foreign difficulties, and Civil War campaigns, [a slight exaggeration] it attacks distinct questions as if no historian had ever dealt with them before."[74] Or, as Nevins stated it in another place, it "offered a score of analyses of problems, consistently declining to draw them together upon any interpretive thread."[75] He concluded:

> No critic would call Channing's history an ideal work. It is addressed too much to the specialist and too little to the lay reader; it lacks continuity, symmetry, and completeness; and the succession of problems gives it a jerkiness that is inimical to literary finish. At the same time,

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CXV (July 18, 1925), p. 79; Willis Fletcher Johnson, "Studies in History," North American Review, CCXXII (September-October-November, 1925), pp. 177-187; C. M. Morrison, New York Evening Post Literary Review, September 5, 1925; Outlook, CXLI (December 23, 1925), pp. 641-642; Wisconsin Library Bulletin, XXI (October, 1925), p. 230; and Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, "American Annals," Saturday Review of Literature, II (August 22, 1925), p. 61. Oberholtzer, disciple as he was of McMaster, had to complain about Channing not using newspapers as sources.

[74] Nevins, The Gateway to History, p. 231.

[75] Ibid., p. 267.

> it illustrates the means by which the best historians attain penetration and originality.[76]

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In 1926, Channing's "harvest season," as Samuel Eliot Morison called it, reached its peak. The War for Southern Independence received the Pulitzer Prize, and Channing was awarded an honorary degree of Litt.D. by Columbia University and elected a fellow of the American Academy. "Channing greatly enjoyed this public recognition, although it was both unsought and unexpected," according to Morison. "He had never played academic politics, or catered to the critics, or courted favor from any man."[77]

Channing did not allow all this acclaim to keep him from going on with the Great Work. When he originally planned the project back in the 1890's, he had thought in terms of eight volumes. As the years went by, he considered several different possible approaches, but in the end it made no difference: the seventh volume, virtually complete when he died, was never published.

It is interesting to trace the evolution of Channing's thoughts on the History in his correspondence with Brett. For some reason, as of 1922 the contract with Macmillan called for

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[76] Ibid., p. 232.

[77] Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 283. There is a copy of the letter from Frank D. Fackenthal, Secretary of Columbia University, to Channing, informing him of the Pulitzer Prize award, in the "Resignation" folder in the possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller.

only seven volumes. In October of that year Channing wrote concerning the possibility of adding another, bringing the narrative down to 1912, rather than stopping with the end of the Spanish-American War as planned. "Indeed," he continued,

> it would seem desirable to bring some of the topics having to do with industrial conditions and labor conditions, and especially with the financial development of the country down to an even later date....In outlining these later volumes in my mind, I find myself regarding the new industrial development of the United States as beginning in 1861 with the secession of the Cotton States, the inauguration of A. Lincoln, and the departure of the Southern Senators and Congressmen from the national legislative body. This gave the North a chance to reverse the half-century old policy of the federal government--as long as it had been in Southern hands--and build up the agricultural and industrial interest of the North and they devised their taxing systems, land systems, etc., with that end in view. In fact the industrial development of the four years of the war time belongs with the industrial development of the later years. Do you see any objection [to] my leaving it out of volume vi--except as explaining the preoccupation of the people in other pursuits than war--and showing the extended treatment into volume vii?[78]

It was later in that year that Channing had trouble with his eyes, but then decided he would be all right by cutting down on his schedule slightly. And Brett seems to have responded favorably to Channing's ideas about another volume, for Channing mentioned in a letter in December that it was already being advertised that way.[79]

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[78]Channing to Brett, October 18, 1922, Macmillan Collection.

[79]*Ibid.*, November 6 and December 14, 1922.

In July, 1925, the next month after volume VI was published, Channing specifically informed Brett that he had begun work on volume VII. A month later he was saying he was exhausted from writing the first chapter, and suggesting it might be better to "print a one volume book on the last fifty years." In September he was planning a trip abroad with "the missus" to "get up steam for Vols. 7 + 8." The next month he expressed some doubt as to whether the eighth volume would ever be completed. "Of course, I could speed up on the production," he speculated, "but where so much obloquy has been showered on Rhodes for the declining character of his last two volumes, I feel hardly like doing that."[80]

The four letters of the preceding paragraph might imply that Channing was approaching old age, and realized it. In December of 1925 he wrote a letter to Brett which made this quite clear. Brett had been ill. "As we grow on and approach middle life--you and I--we are liable to have some of the troubles of middle life," he told his friend and publisher.[81] When he wrote the letter, he was seventy years old; from that point on, the problems of his age become increasingly apparent. When he commented on his work now, it was "poking" along; and he showed the oldster's concern about "progress" in the form of commercialization in the Cotuit area. Brett seemed to sense

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[80] Ibid., July 3, August 21, September 13, and October 29, 1925.

[81] Ibid., December 8, 1925.

the situation. He felt compelled to praise Channing in a letter of August 4, 1927--though he doubtless had in mind spurring Channing on also. "As you know, I have been looking forward to the completion of this set of books as one of the really worth while things I have had to do with in my fifty years of publishing," he told his aging historian.[82]

On January 21, Channing wrote a letter "To the President and Fellows of Harvard College" seeking permission to retire from teaching. "May I take this occasion to express my gratitude to the President and Fellows for their consideration of me for nearly half a century," he added.[83] His retirement was approved effective August 31. Its announcement occasioned dozens of letters from former students and friends, including Howard K. Beale, Roger B. Merriman, Arthur Lyon Cross, and James Phinney Baxter III, and a telegram from the two Adolph A. Berles which is typical in its comments:

> ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR RETIREMENT TWO GENERATIONS OF ADMIRERS SALUTE YOU IN RECOGNITION OF MANY FRUITFUL YEARS AND VOICE THE HOPE THAT MANY MORE GOLDEN YEARS REMAIN STOP AMERICAN HISTORY OWES A DEBT TO YOU WHICH WILL BECOME GREATER AS LATER SCHOLARS CARRY ON YOUR WORK STOP YOUR STUDENTS CARRY YOUR IMPRINT IN THEIR LIVES AND WORK AND ARE GLAD TO JOIN IN THE DAY OF YOUR HONOR[84]

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[82] Ibid., March 19, 1926, August 3, 1927, Brett to Channing, August 4, 1927.

[83] Channing to President and Fellows of Harvard College, January 21, 1929, Lowell Papers.

[84] The telegram and letters are in the "Resignation" folder.

The day they spoke of was March 11. A group of friends, colleagues, and former students collected money and commissioned Charles Hopkinson to paint Channing's portrait; it was presented to the university on March 11. Approximately fifty persons attended the occasion, held in the faculty room at University Hall. John Channing Fuller, five-year old son of Channing's daughter Elizabeth, unveiled the portrait. Morison, who made the presentation, recalled that Channing "radiated benevolence" on that happy occasion.[85]

Channing's old age and retirement apparently did not affect the vitality of his personality. A person of the library staff recalled asking him a question, shortly after he had received emeritus status, about a certain graduate student. Channing became very interested at first, even going to the nearby stall of the student to see if he could figure out the answer from the materials thereon. Then, suddenly, he became very nonchalant about the whole affair. Turning away, he said, "But, I don't have to worry about those things now." And, skipping merrily down the aisle with hands in pockets, he chanted, in a sing-song fashion, "I'm a professor emeritus, I'm a professor emeritus...."--taking no note of the heads of

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[85] Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 283. A brief article on the event appeared in the Boston Herald of March 12, 1929. (Clipping in "Resignation" folder.) The portrait now hangs in the Union Catalog room of Widener Library.

curious students popping out here and there to investigate the disturbance.[86]

The retirement doubtless gave Channing even more time to work on his History. Even though he wrote to Brett in May, 1930, that he was off to England and Scotland because "The 'Old Man' feels rather tired," he was through his part of volume VII the next month. The only thing left was for his secretary, Eva G. Moore, to check the footnotes. "And, as you are well aware, the foot-notes to the pages of the great work are the most important part of its being," he wrote. This brings to mind again the crucial role of Miss Moore in Channing's work; it seems to have become more and more crucial as Channing grew older. He hinted at this in the same June letter. "I have an idea that the text of the new volume will be ready by October," he told Brett, "but the Lord and Lady--otherwise known as my Secretary--are the only persons who can give any information as to when the foot-notes will be completed." In August he stated it even more explicitly: "Miss Moore informs me that this book cannot come out until next spring,--and she knows a good deal more about it than I do--for she has to make sure that no lies are told in the text." Channing tried to console Brett about the delay by telling him he thought the work, which he was planning to call "From Appomattox to Santiago," was going to be "a whacking good volume."[87]

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[86] Interview with Robert H. Haynes, August 24, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[87] Channing to Brett, May 13, June 25, and August 6, 1930, Macmillan Collection.

Channing's declining mental vigor and reliance on Miss Moore came out even more forcefully in a series of letters he wrote to her in his last days, mostly while he was in Cotuit and she in Cambridge. He began to become concerned about whether the manuscript for volume VII was long enough to match well the others in the series--"Please look up length of Vol 1"--and apparently even asked her to elongate it as she typed! "I hope that you are elongating Vol. 7 as you go along," he wrote. "It must be big enough to stand with the rest + give us a chance for an eighth volume with the General Index."[88]

Though Channing "appeared to most people his usual ruddy and healthy self" to the very end, "to his family and closest friends there seemed to be a distinct slackening of his mental and physical powers from the year 1929." The American Historical Association held its meeting in Boston in 1930, but Channing did not attend; he did not even feel well enough to receive old friends and students who wished to call on him to pay their respects.[89] He died a few days later, January 7, 1931. He was working in his study to the very end; Miss Moore had not completed her portion of the seventh volume, for it was still not in the hands of the printer.

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[88]Edward Channing to Eva G. Moore, July 15 and September 9, 1930, Channing Correspondence, 1884-1930, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[89]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 284.

According to Channing's daughter, her mother felt that hardening of the arteries led to poor memory, and this in turn led to a marked falling off in the quality of Channing's later work, with which she was "very displeased." Indeed, in spite of her lack of formal education, Mrs. Channing apparently joined Miss Moore in checking everything Channing wrote in his later years.[90] She was quite opposed to publication of his seventh volume in the form it held at the time of his death, as well as to allowing anyone to revise it for publication. She wrote a letter to Brett in March, 1931, which explains the procedure followed:

> The manuscript of volume VII has been found to be too incomplete to publish. There has been delay in this decision because I first had to have a photostat copy made, as there was no complete duplicate. Then I asked our two outstanding Professors of American History here, Schlesinger and Morison, to read the copy, and give me their unbiased opinions. Of course all this has taken time. Both Professors independently of one another agree substantially in their verdicts--first that it not only is far from ready for the press but that it is not up to the standard of the other volumes--and then that publication of it would detract from Mr. Channing's reputation.
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> This is tragic after these years of hard labor, but Mr. Channing's powers of work had lessened very much of late and his memory was not certain. For these reasons I felt it imperative to have the advice of experts before communicating with his publishers.[91]

After discussing briefly the question of providing a general index for the series, Mrs. Channing became more personal in her analysis:

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[90] Interviews with Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 18 and 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[91] Alice T. Channing (Mrs. Edward Channing) to Brett, March 12, 1931, Macmillan Collection.

> It is a great disappointment to me as I am sure it is to you that we must give up volume VII, but you will agree with me that Mr. Channing's reputation must be safeguarded. He always emphasized the fact that it was a mistake to publish a man's unfinished work. He also impressed upon me that any incomplete work of his must never be revised and edited by another.
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> He was so keen about volume VII and longed so to finish it, it is heart-breaking.[92]

Brett's response to this is unknown, but as a publisher he must have felt remorse that the volume could not be published. Mrs. Channing wrote a very similar letter to President Lowell, and received a reply in complete agreement with her decision.[93] Both Schlesinger and Morison have gone on record as agreeing with her account of the story. Schlesinger felt "The fact was that in moving beyond the oft-trodden ground of the period before 1865 Channing had shown little grasp of the new forces of industrialization and urbanization which in the century's final years transformed the country." He was also careful to point out that "The outcome undoubtedly would have been far different had Channing essayed the volume at the peak of his powers."[94] Morison said Channing's manuscript definitely showed that he had declined, and, among other things, said it "went off into rhapsodies about such figures as James J. Hill

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Alice T. Channing to Lowell, March 11, 1931, and Lowell to Alice T. Channing, March 12, 1931, Lowell Papers.

[94] Arthur M. Schlesinger, In Retrospect: The History of a Historian (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Incorporated, 1963), p. 86.

and Rockefeller, and completely left out many important things."[95]

So volume VII was never published; indeed, Mrs. Channing apparently destroyed the manuscript. Morison was even in agreement with this action. It was "the only thing to do," he said, for one evaluating Channing on the basis of that manuscript would have considered him a second-rate historian.[96] A second-rate historian Edward Channing was not; the six volumes of his Great Work which were published provide proof enough of that.

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[95] Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[96] Ibid. Channing's grandson, John Channing Fuller, said the manuscript was destroyed by the family, apparently upon the recommendation of Lawrence Shaw Mayo, whom he described as "an intimate friend of Channing, and as closely associated with him as anyone." (Fuller, "Edward Channing," p. 130) The present author can understand the reluctance to publish the manuscript, but would strongly take issue with the widow Channing, Samuel Eliot Morison, or anyone else who would contend that it is "the only thing to do" to destroy any historical document which might possibly have any value. And certainly Channing's comments on the 1865-1898 period would have been very interesting and valuable, incomplete and imperfect though they apparently were. It also seems inconceivable that any perceptive reader of such a manuscript would have decided on the basis thereof that Channing was a "second-rate historian." Would he not instead have decided, as Morison and Schlesinger themselves did, that Channing's abilities as a historian were declining with age? The destruction of the manuscript can only be lamented. Strangely inconsistent with Morison's stand on the destruction of the Channing manuscript is his condemnation of the adopted twin sons of A. B. Hart for their failure to preserve intact his collection of materials. And they did not destroy, but simply dispersed, with profit as their motive.--Samuel Eliot Morison, "A Memoir and Estimate of Albert Bushnell Hart," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXXVII (January-December, 1965), pp. 50-51.

PART III

OTHER WORKS

Here is not only the eminent historian of the twentieth century rising from glory to glory as the succeeding volumes of his History of the United States were acclaimed by the scholars of the world, but also the struggling Channing of an earlier time who knew that it was in him to be one of the foremost American historians of his generation and was determined that his light should shine. It is not surprising that the first item, Town and County Government, is as sound as the last, the sixth volume of the History. But the variety of interest exhibited in Mr. Channing's minor writings of the 1880's will probably be a revelation to some of us who knew him only in the twentieth century. A revelation rather than a surprise, for now and then he would astonish his disciples by the breadth of his knowledge.--Lawrence Shaw Mayo, "Introduction," Bibliography of Edward Channing by George W. Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), p. 3.

CHAPTER IX

TEXTBOOKS

> In 1896 I took my family to England for nine months and wrote a high-school text book, entitled "A Students' History of the United States," which took me four months to write and has added greatly to the comfort of my wife and children. It has also made it possible for me to devote a large portion of the last quarter of a century to the production of a "History of the United States."[1]

Though it was by no means his first publication, the first book-length work which Edward Channing authored alone was a volume in the Cambridge Historical Series entitled simply The United States of America, 1765-1865. It was published in England in 1896. The aim of the series was "to sketch the history of Modern Europe, with that of its chief colonies and conquests, from about the end of the fifteenth century down to the present time." It was "intended for the use of all persons anxious to understand the nature of existing political conditions," and it was hoped that the volumes would "be useful not only to beginners but to students who have already acquired some general knowledge of European History."[2] Properly speaking, then, Channing's volume in this series probably was not designed to fit the normal definition of a "textbook." Still,

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[1]Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, Number VIII, Fiftieth Anniversary Report, 1928.

[2]Edward Channing, The United States of America, 1765-1865 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1896), p. iv.

because of its general nature, and because of the relationship it bore to his major text, A Students' History of the United States, it does not seem inappropriate to deal with it as such.

Channing stated in his preface that his aim was "to trace the steps by which the American people and its peculiar type of federal state have developed out of such heterogeneous and unpromising materials for nation-building as were to be found in the English-American Colonies in 1760." He had devoted less space to "campaigns and battles" than was usual, he said, so that he could give more to "the deeper causes underlying the American Revolution" and to the period from 1783 to 1817. Channing made it clear that his "Bibliographical Note" at the end of the volume was merely suggestive, rather than indicating the sources upon which the narrative was founded. The first six chapters, covering up to 1809, were "based on the author's own reading of the original sources," while Henry Adams and James Ford Rhodes were the authors of the most extensively-used secondary works for the rest of the volume. And finally, he showed the same awareness of the problem and importance of maintaining objectivity which he was later to show in the Great Work. Not only is it "practically impossible to be absolutely accurate in a work of this size, covering such an extended period and dealing with so many disputed events," he wrote, but it is also "sometimes impossible for an American to appreciate the motives of his 'kin beyond sea.'" "The utmost that an historical student can do," concluded Channing, "is to study and write without malice in his

heart--and this the present writer can fairly claim to have done."[3]

In general, The United States of America corresponds with what one would expect, after having read the History, Channing to have written in a book of that size on that period. Two things, however, are rather surprising. For one, Channing proved quite willing, writing for a British audience as he primarily was in this case, to make concessions to the British point of view, particularly, of course, in the Revolutionary era. For example, here we learn that James Otis was wrong in his argument against writs of assistance, since Parliament was the supreme legislative body of the empire and did have the right to issue them; that the Stamp Act was "a fair and equitable measure"; that the Boston riots against that measure were "disgraceful"; and so forth.[4]

The second surprising thing which comes out of this volume is the fact that Channing changed his mind in his evaluation of certain things between the time he wrote this and when he wrote his multi-volume series. The coverage of the Mexican War here is certainly no whitewash of the American side; indeed, we are told that this was a case of "an attack on a weak nation by a strong one." Likewise, Channing had not yet settled into his later understanding of the causes of the

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[3] Ibid., pp. v-vi.

[4] Ibid., pp. 44, 31, 49, 53.

Civil War. There was a problem in his assertion, on the one hand, that the material interests of North and South were so different that they led to war--he even criticized the leaders of the time for not understanding that this was the "true nature" of the conflict and thus appealing to the Constitution --and his contention, on the other, that consitutional interpretation was at the heart of the conflict. He had made up his mind as to the causes, or rather cause, of the collapse of the Confederacy. It was not loss of morale, but the blockade which "contributed more than any other single thing to the destruction of the Confederacy." Finally, Robert E. Lee was here presented as "the ablest soldier of the war. Indeed, he takes high rank among the foremost military leaders of modern times."[5]

But this is perhaps an unfair approach. Channing, after all, had not yet written the Great Work as of 1896, and therefore had not done the extensive research which led him to the conclusions he was to draw therein. Anyway, a historian should have the right to change his mind, indeed should be ever ready to do so if the alteration is based on sound evidence. Over all, The United States of America was an excellent little volume for its time, sound and eminently readable. Only at one point does a different view between it and the larger work seem more important and difficult to understand. Channing, in

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[5] Ibid., pp. 44, 31, 49, 53.

the later work, seemed to imply approval of the victory of the forces of union over those of particularism in United States history. Here, however, he noted the decision of the First Continental Congress to give each colony one vote in its deliberation as a particularistic tendency, then went on to point out how most historians had lamented this decision and emphasized "the evils which have resulted from the state-right theories." His own conclusion here was that "it may well be that the salvation of the country has been due to the strong local pride which prevails among its citizens and to their dislike of centralization."[6] The spirit of such a statement, at least, is not in agreement with the nationalistic, Unionist sentiments expressed by Channing at many points in the History.

Reviewers received this book very well; basically favorable notices appeared in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Critic, Dial, Athenaeum, and School Review.[7] But the most important review appeared in Britain in the Spectator. This publication felt that it would "be difficult for any one to approach the treatment of the many controversial issues which are strewn across the period dealt with in this book with more entire freedom from prejudice or bias than that shown by its author." This was, indeed, "the

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[6] Ibid., pp. 107-108.

[7] Herbert Friedenwald, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, IX (March, 1897), pp. 83-84; Critic, XXVIII (May 16, 1896), pp. 349-350; Dial, XXI (October 1, 1896), pp. 193-194; Athenaeum, CIX (May 22, 1897), p. 676; and School Review, IV (November, 1896), pp. 694-695.

prime qualification of a historian." "The second chief qualification of a historian--the power of vivid presentment of the events related--he [Channing] does not seem to us to possess in such large measure." He was "a good plain writer," but no "literary artist." In conclusion, it was "a book which, though not without les defauts de ses qualites, is a distinctly useful aid to the study of a subject upon which every intelligent Englishman ought to be well informed."[8]

The United States of America was translated into French, German, Japanese, and Russian. According to Samuel Eliot Morison, Maxim Gorki once told Channing that the Russian translation "was read aloud in revolutionary gatherings, and helped the good work of undermining the Czarist regime." Despite all this, the translations and the accolade of reviewers, the book did not do very well in England; Morison said that was because "the English will not read American history unless written by one of themselves."[9] Probably the most important result of its publication was the invitation it brought to Channing from George P. Brett of the Macmillan Company to write a one-volume textbook in United States history. Channing recognized this later himself, for he wrote to Brett in 1903: "I have no great affection for that Cambridge book from which I get very little

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[8] Spectator, LXXVI (June 13, 1896), pp. 846-847.

[9] Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), p. 271.

money--indeed the only really good thing that I have got from it is my pleasant and profitable relations with you, but that is worth a great deal."[10]

"Worth a great deal" indeed! The four months Edward Channing spent in England in 1897 writing that textbook were probably the most important of his life. He called the volume A Students' History of the United States. Published by the Macmillan Company in 1898, it "proved to be one of the most successful books of the sort, selling by the tens of thousands, and, in several revised editions, holding its own for thirty years among a host of rivals."[11] Channing had serious doubts about undertaking the project, for he had planned to use his first sabbatical to get started on his projected eight-volume history. He felt "an undercurrent of desire for larger financial family resources," on the part of his wife, however, and his mentor on the Harvard faculty, Charles F. Dunbar, advised him specifically to write the book. Also, he was doubtless influenced by the proposed contract, which, he said, offered royalties so generous as to "make most school book publishers blush with shame."[12] Surely he was never sorry about his decision to do it; the only ill effect was writer's cramp. It is

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[10]Edward Channing to George P. Brett, March 6, 1903, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library.

[11]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 274.

[12]Edward Channing, "The Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man," (manuscript in possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller, Chatham, Massachusetts), p. 38.

hardly an exaggeration to say that the Student's History made the Great Work possible.

As became a habit with Channing, once he made up his mind to write a text, he wasted no time. On January 21, 1896, he informed Brett that he had "had some idea of preparing" a high school text, but "the matter has not yet taken shape in my mind." Less than two months later, on March 16, he wrote a six-page letter outlining in detail almost exactly the way the Students' History turned out. The text was to be designed for "the upper classes in High Schools, the lower classes in the Normal Schools, and the lower classes in the less advanced colleges." It was to emphasize "three lines of development: constitutional, industrial, and social." The length should be between five and six hundred pages, including maps and illustrations and "topics and references."[13]

The Students' History was an interesting, well-written text, better by far than many of today's books used at the same levels. Of particular interest here, since they were topics not covered in Channing's later work, is the "Introduction," actually a full-length chapter on "The Land and its Resources," and that portion covering the years after 1865. In the introductory chapter, Channing stated that "Students of history and geography have long been agreed that, within certain limitations as to rainfall and temperature, the physical formation of a

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[13]Channing to Brett, January 21 and March 16, 1896, Macmillan Collection.

country, the character of its soils, and the extent and variety of its mineral deposits exercise a decisive influence on the life of the people which inhabits it."[14] The chapter, then, is actually an excellent brief description of the geographical setting of American history.

In the Students' History, Channing was naturally much less interpretative than in the Great Work--because he had less space, because it was a textbook, and, on the post-Civil War years, because he was dealing with relatively recent events. It would have been interesting indeed to see the evaluations he placed upon people and events in the years after 1865 in the manuscript for the seventh volume of his History! The coverage in the Students' History is a poor substitute. Channing did show a good deal of foresight occasionally. For example, he did not say, as historians have tended to since, that the Spanish-American War marked the rise of the United States to world power status, but he knew already, at least as early as 1910, that this had come in that period. He associated it specifically with the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900:

> It marks the entrance of the United States into the arena as a World Power and the breaking down of that policy of isolation which was dear to Washington and to Jefferson; but it is very possible that if these great men were now living, they would view the matter very differently from what they did one hundred and more years ago.[15]

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[14] Edward Channing, A Students' History of the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898), p. 11.

[15] Ibid., "New Edition, with Additions," 1910, p. 582.

A little can be discerned from sources other than the Students' History as to how Channing felt about certain things in the post-1865 period. Two places in print Channing said things which indicate something of his view of the Reconstruction era. Of the closing scene at Appomattox, involving the men of the armies of Northern Virginia and the Potomac, he wrote: "Well would it have been had the reconstruction of Southern society been in the hands of these men and of others who respected one another and were guided by Abraham Lincoln." After quoting approvingly from Lincoln's second inaugural address, Channing concluded: "Six weeks later...an assassin's bullet closed the life of this greatest of Americans and delivered the Southern people into the hands of the Radical Republican politicians of the North."[16] At the same point of the story in The United States of America, Channing carried this idea a little farther. "Thus perished the one man able and willing to restrain the Northern extremists," he wrote of Lincoln's assassination. "The 'reconstruction' of the Union fell into less capable hands, and many of the later woes of the South may be regarded as in part due to this most unholy of murders."[17]

Even in the Students' History, Channing had hinted at his view of one major issue of the 1865-1900 period by referring

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[16]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume VI: The War for Southern Independence (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), pp. 635-636.

[17]Channing, The United States of America, p. 292.

to "the scheme of civil service reform."[18] In the History he stated it more forcefully:

> Of late years, [written in 1925] the building up of a bureaucracy, under the guise of civil service reform, has tended to cast reproach upon the earlier Presidents. It is not at all certain, however, that the civil service under John Quincy Adams or Andrew Jackson, in the second year of his administration, or James Buchanan, was any more inefficient than it has been under the bureaucratic system that has necessarily developed with civil service reform.[19]

In a letter to James Ford Rhodes in 1919, Channing expressed a low view of two of the leading politicians of the "Gilded Age." "I have been reading your new volume and have been much interested in your estimates of men and things," he wrote. "We all grow kindly as we advance in years; but have you not been a little mite too gentle with Blaine and Garfield --I find it difficult to understand how the latter ever gained so great a reputation."[20]

One of the most interesting, but rambling and somewhat bitter, letters Channing ever wrote was to Brett in 1912. What set it off is unclear, but it is perfectly obvious that Channing was upset. The letter was handwritten and labeled "Confidential." Here are significant excerpts:

> The Kansas City Star or some other paper says that we have a constitution made by generals +

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[18] Channing, Students' History, 1910 ed., p. 551.

[19] History, VI, p. 124.

[20] Edward Channing to James Ford Rhodes, October 29, 1919, James Ford Rhodes Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

statesmen who died one hundred years or more ago--let us have one made up by up-to-date live Americans. Here they are:--

Dead Gen^{s} + statesmen	Live colonels + ?	Others
Washington	T. R.	Weyl
Franklin	Gifford Pinchot	Simons
Jefferson	LaFollette	Debs
Madison	J. A. Garfield	Gompers
Hamilton	Dixon	Haywood

I take my chance with the deceased. Seriously these men of the second [column] fail to understand that the Constitution of the United States is buttressed on the Common Law--the old Anglo Saxon Law. They want to substitute for it the ideas of theorists on human rights--and they cannot do it until they shut up the law schools + kill the lawyers--and drive out of the American conscience respect for "The Law." When they do that there will be the devil to pay.

I agree with you that it is nonsense to educate everyone to be a university professor--teach the mass of the people commercial expertness. Let them work + let the lawyers and professors rule. That is what it amounts to + being a professor I am with you.[21]

Channing knew he was getting a bit carried away; a later paragraph read: "I know that you abhor my hand writing or I would go on + tell you about politics. I had faith in man once."[22]

The reviews of the Students' History doubtless helped it to its great success, for they gave it almost universal acclaim. A. A. Freeman, for example, in the American Historical Review, hailed it as "decidedly the best one-volume American history yet published."[23]

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[21]Channing to Brett, March 9, 1912, Macmillan Collection.

[22]Ibid.

[23]A. A. Freeman, American Historical Review, III (April, 1898), p. 544. Other reviews were: Hugh E. Egerton, English Historical Review, XIII (October, 1898); Nation, (March 17, 1898), pp. 211-212; John William Perrin, Yale Review, VIII

Another thing which must have helped sales for the text was Channing's constant striving to please the public. He once said the two essential requirements for a school history text were "careful selection of important events and their narrative in a direct, simple, but not childish style." He also strongly condemned several texts for romanticizing such events as the landing of the Pilgrims and the signing of the Declaration of Independence.[24] But Channing was more than willing to suppress his own debunking inclinations for his textbooks. "I intend to use Lincoln as frontispiece and to say nothing to stir up the G. A. R.," he wrote to Brett just before publication of the Students' History; "we have no portraits of southern generals to which they have always objected." "I suggested Tilden to placate the Dems., who will not like some of my tariff remarks," he wrote in another place; "as you think it will unduly irritate the Republicans I have" decided to omit it. And still again, "If any good Catholic or any one else except an 'unreconstructed' person has alleged aught against either book [the Students' History and another text] kindly have me informed that I may redress the grievance." Note the

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(August, 1899), pp. 219-220; and Francis W. Shepardson, School Review, VII (March, 1899), pp. 186-187. Also, these four reviews of the third revised edition: Chautauquan, LXXII (January 10, 1914), p. 382. Educational Review, XLVII (January, 1914), p. 97; Independent, LXXIX (August 17, 1914), p. 250; and Nation, LXLVIII (May 7, 1914), pp. 548-549.

[24]Edward Channing, "Some Recent School Books," Magazine of American History, XIII (February, 1885), pp. 185-186.

lack of concern about the South; even this changed. The cover of the Students' History was originally designed with "colors as near as binding cloth will go of the blouse and breeches of the Union soldiers of the Civil War." Later: "From what I have heard the objection to the book in the South is mainly based on the cover; and that we propose to obviate by putting it into a new dress."[25]

Whatever the reasons, the Students' History went through four major revisions, in 1904, 1913, 1919, and 1924, and many printings in between, which sometimes included minor changes and corrections.[26] Channing was apparently surprised by this success. "The cordial welcome and continued favor which have been accorded to this advanced manual of United States history have been far in excess of the author's expectations,"[27] was a statement he included in the preface to all the later editions. But he was always duly aware of and grateful for the success also. In 1927, when he knew the book was on the way out, he wrote to Brett: "It has had a good run and has been a profitable venture for us both,--and I think every year that I owe you a debt of gratitude for suggesting to me that I should write it."[28]

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[25]Channing to Brett, July 7 and 13, 1897, February 15, 1901, December 26, 1897, and February 15, 1904, Macmillan Collection.

[26]George W. Robinson, Bibliography of Edward Channing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), pp. 13-14.

[27]Channing, Students' History, 1910 ed., p. vii.

[28]Channing to Brett, August 3, 1927, Macmillan Collection.

On the basis of the success of the Students' History, Channing wrote three other American history texts for various levels. They were not nearly so successful. He also wrote an English history text which was his least successful--and poorest.

Channing's second textbook effort came only two years after his first; A Short History of the United States for School Use was published by Macmillan in 1900. Little need be said of it except that it was merely a shorter version of the Students' History, designed for grammar schools, and it did not do very well. Channing first mentioned the idea of "an elementary work for use in grammar grades" in his correspondence with Brett on December 22, 1897; he had it written by August 25, 1899. It was published in 1900; by 1904 Channing was already admitting that the book had "not won its place" and "shows clearly that it is not constructed to meet the demand."[29] The one review found of the Short History took the form of a "list of shortcomings" and indicated "the direction in which Prof. Channing should revise his work."[30] The educational department of Macmillan informed President Brett in 1908 that it could not "offer sufficient suggestions" to warrant revision. "We think an entirely new book should be written."[31] A new edition,

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[29] Ibid., December 22, 1897, August 25, 1899, and January 27, 1904.

[30] Athenaeum, I (January 5, 1901), p. 12.

[31] F. F. Hammond to Brett, October 8, 1908, Macmillan Collection.

revised in consultation with a Miss Susan J. Ginn, did appear the following year;[32] but after that it was dropped.

After three years, Channing had still another United States history text on the market. It was called First Lessons in United States History and was published by Macmillan in 1903. As the title makes clear, it was designed for beginners in the subject; Channing once said it was for children from seven to nine years old. He also said, in his letter to Brett outlining the project, that it was "to be childlike and biographical, anecdotal and replete in folklore." When he finished the manuscript, he wrote Brett that he was anxious to get it in print as he had no duplicate copy. "I have never troubled myself about a manuscript before," he wrote, "but this one seems very precious--possibly because it is so worthless."[33] In spite of these comments, Channing was actually quite proud of the little volume. "It was designed for the small fry," he wrote in 1917, "but has proved to be of use to visiting European professors and lecturers in the Lowell Institute, who absorb it bodily and pour out little anecdotes about Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln to their admiring hosts and hostesses on Beacon Street and elsewhere."[34] And he wrote to Brett in 1927, when First Lessons was finally about to go out of print,

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[32]Robinson, Bibliography, p. 15.

[33]Channing to Brett, February 21, 1901, and October 1, 1902, Ibid.

[34]Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. VII, 1917, p. 13.

that he was "really sorry about the threatened disappearance." "I have always been very fond of that little book and it has always greatly pleased the small boys and girls to whom I have given it."[35] For showing the nature of the book itself, one of the little "Do Not Forget" sections included at the end of each chapter is sufficient, this from the chapter on George Washington:

DO NOT FORGET

1. Washington's early life and training fitted him to be a soldier.
2. He taught himself good manners.
3. He was grave or gay as the occasion demanded.[36]

Channing's last effort in the American history textbook field was written in consultation with the same Miss Ginn who aided him in the revision of his Short History. It was published by Macmillan, in 1910, and was entitled Elements of United States History. Channing probably wrote this volume because of the lack of success of the Short History; it was more elementary, but seems to have been designed for basically the same purpose. He signed the contract for it in October, 1908; it was written by 4:16 p.m. on September 2, 1909, when Channing wrote to Brett: "I have this moment finished the first draft of the 'Book of Lies' otherwise known as Channing's 'Elements of United States History.'" Later he wrote: "I

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[35]Channing to Brett, August 3, 1927, Macmillan Collection.

[36]Edward Channing, First Lessons in United States History (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 78.

think that we have given you a first-rate book for second rate grammar schools."[37] This text apparently never did very well either, for it was never revised and seldom sppears in Channing's correspondence.

Actually Channing's first textbook in point of time was English History for American Readers, published in 1893 by Longmans, Green and Company. Channing was the co-author with his relative, Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The book, under the new title of English History for Americans, was reprinted in 1894 and revised in 1902 and 1914.[38] How it survived that long is difficult to understand; it was one of the poorest pieces of work to which Edward Channing ever attached his name. It was actually a rather elementary English history text in which the "for American Readers" of the title was frequently forgotten. The authors did not even succeed often in their stated objective of treating at greater length those developments in English history which were of particular importance to America, and certainly they did not make any attempt to show English institutions being planted in and modified in America, nor did they deal extensively or meaningfully with relations between England and America. In conclusion, if not for the authors' reminders in a couple of places, the reader could go through

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[37]Channing to Brett, October 20, 1908, September 2, 1909, and June 13, 1910, Macmillan Collection.

[38]Robinson, Bibliography, p. 12.

the entire volume, unaware of its title, and never guess that it was anything other than a rather mediocre "English History."

All reviewers had criticisms of the book, but two gave it the panning it deserved. The Critic felt the most obvious weakness was "the one that the very title suggests," i. e., that the authors "hold an entirely erroneous view of the functions of history." The Critic also said "it is thus with regret that we see the name of a professor in our oldest college on the title-page of a book conceived in so unscientific a spirit."[39] The Catholic World surpassed even that. "The intellect of America would appear to be in a very immature state, in the view of the authors of the new work, English History for American Readers," it began. This reviewer thought the style of narrative bore "a remarkable resemblance to that adopted in such favorite romances as Jack the Giant-Killer and History of Old Mother Hubbard." He also referred to the "slipshod style," "slovenliness in statement of fact," "carelessness," and "gross and unpardonable misstatements." His conclusion: "History, at its best, is generally only a revelation of half the truth about anything; in such compressions and distortions of it as these under notice, the densest ignorance about it is a state more preferable than the sort of knowledge derivable from such a source."[40] All told, the Channing

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[39] Critic, XXIII (November 18, 1893), pp. 315-316.

[40] Catholic World, LVIII (November, 1893), pp. 282-286. Other reviews were: Athenaeum, CIII (June 9, 1894), pp. 739-

admirer can only assume that Higginson did most of the work on this volume.

Edward Channing, then, wrote one textbook of which he could well be proud--two if The United States of America is considered a text. A Students' History of the United States succeeded because it was an outstanding book. But he wrote four others that, if they do not detract from his reputation, certainly add nothing to his stature as a historian.

740; Nation, LVII (September 21, 1893), pp. 214-216; and School Review, II (March, 1894), pp. 172-173.

CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

> There is something enduring about bibliography of high quality even after it has been outmoded and replaced. One of Channing's and Hart's former graduate students, Carl Russell Fish, who paid tribute to the Guide of 1896 thirty-five years later, declared that "...timeliness was more important than perfection, and few books stand in so significant a relationship to any scientific study as does this to the development of research and teaching in American history."[1]

In 1883, the budding historian Edward Channing was trying to get both his teaching and writing careers off to a good start. He wrote to Wendell Phillips Garrison of the Nation in January that he was "very anxious to write as much as possible, and I hope that the enclosed [book review] will encourage you to send me something more. It is my first attempt to write a review 'out of a book,'" he continued, "and I hope you will bear this in mind in judging of my capabilities." In February he sent this publication a "voluntary offering" to try to get them to call on him for further writing chores.[2] Hardly the confident Channing of later years!

After 1883, However, Channing's list of publications expanded rapidly. In 1884, he published the Toppan Prize-

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[1]Lester J. Cappon, "Channing and Hart: Partners in Bibliography," New England Quarterly, XXIX (September, 1956), p. 340.

[2]Edward Channing to Wendell Phillips Garrison, January 10 and February 12, 1883, Fields and Garrison Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

winning essay on Town and County Government in the English Colonies of North America, plus two articles in Science, and the Encyclopedia Britannica's entry on the American colonies. In 1885, twelve items appeared in print under Channing's name, mostly articles in the Magazine of American History and Science and brief "remarks" on various subjects in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Only five were added in 1886, but two of these were more significant: The Narragansett Planters in the same Johns Hopkins series as Town and County Government and a chapter on "The Companions of Columbus" in Justin Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America. And thus it continued, until Channing's bibliography at the time of his death consisted of approximately sixteen books and sixty-four miscellaneous publications, including articles, book reviews, etc.

The books, in addition to the Great Work and texts, were the famous Channing and Hart--or, after the 1912 revision, Channing, Hart, and Turner--Guide to the Study of American History, The Jeffersonian System in the American Nation series, The Story of the Great Lakes by Channing and Marion Florence Lansing, and The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence, a work edited by Channing and Archibald Cary Coolidge.

By far the most important of these was the Guide. The original edition was published in 1896 by Ginn and Company. It was divided into three main parts: "Methods and Materials," "Topics and References in Colonial History," and "Topics and References in United States History." Channing and Hart gave

no indication as to which of them was most responsible for any particular part. However, in the "Revised and Augmented Edition" of 1912, which added Turner to the authorship and broadened the title to Guide to the Study and Reading of American History, they did do so. Channing was primarily responsible for the "Classified Bibliography," included as a part of the "Methods and Materials" section in the first edition, and the section of topics and references on "Colonial History and the Revolution." Thus these are probably the portions on which he concentrated in the earlier edition also. "Methods and Materials" discussed the content of American history, its status in schools, teaching methods, and libraries. It also included the general bibliography of American history. In the two "topics and references" sections, there was a "Summary" of each topic followed by references under these headings: "General," "Special," "Sources," and "Bibliography."

The 1912 Guide was much the same. "Methods and Materials" of the old edition now became three parts: "Status and Methods," "Classified Bibliography," and "Teaching and Reading History." A new section of topics and references was added, on the 1865-1910 period. This was Turner's work, as were the additions on the West throughout the volume.

Many have tended to give Hart more credit than Channing for the original Guide. Lester J. Cappon, for example, wrote that "From the scanty evidence extant it appears that Hart first developed a concrete plan for the kind of book, approximately, that the Guide became, and that in the course of his

preparation he proposed that Channing collaborate with him." Cappon also stated that in the manuals Hart used in his courses one could see the Guide "in embryo."[3] Cappon should have pointed out, however, that Channing too had done such manuals. In 1893, for example, he had printed a little booklet entitled Topics and References in American History, 1492-1783 for use in his courses that fall; its format was exactly that of the bibliographical portions of the Guide.[4] Cappon himself admitted that Channing's role was probably more important over-all, even if Hart had laid the foundation, for he wrote that "It was clearly Channing's feeling for consistency of presentation and meticulous attention to stylistic details that assured superior results in form and structure." In another place, however, Cappon speculated that the Guide "might appropriately have been published as Hart and Channing, rather than the reverse," but went on, "but the latter's primacy, which he insisted upon at the outset, was earned, in a sense, by the time he devoted to matters of detail, thus assuring that the form would match the content in excellence."[5]

The Guide received extensive praise from reviewers. "If there has ever been printed a duodecimo volume more useful than this to the student and the teacher of American history,"

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[3]Cappon, "Channing and Hart," pp. 327-328, 324.

[4]Edward Channing, Topics and References in American History, 1492-1783 (Cambridge: Edward W. Wheeler, Printer, 1893).

[5]Cappon, "Channing and Hart," pp. 335, 339.

exulted the American Historical Review, "it is not known to the present reviewer."[6] Historians have praised the Guide ever since. Harry Elmer Barnes, in A History of Historical Writing, referred to it as "the authoritative guide to the writings on American history." H. Hale Bellott, in American History and American Historians, considered it the "indispensable handbook of all students of American history." Samuel Eliot Morison, in a tribute to Hart, noted that the Guide "had an immense influence throughout the United States at a period when the teaching and study of American history were rapidly expanding."[7] The greatest tribute of all came in 1954 with the appearance of the Harvard Guide to American History, which included this inscription on a dedication page:

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[6] American Historical Review, II (January, 1897), p. 357. The review was unsigned, but was probably written by the editor, J. Franklin Jameson. Two other reviews were: Nation, LXIII (November 16, 1896), p. 409; and Bernard C. Steiner, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, IX (March, 1897), pp. 84-87. Two reviews of the 1912 edition were: A. L. A. Booklist, IX (April, 1913), p. 349; and Marcus W. Jernegan, American Historical Review, XVIII (April, 1913), pp. 589-592. Jernegan reviewed the volume quite critically, noting several errors and omissions. His concluding paragraph shows the tone of the review: "Much might be said of the excellencies of the book but these are well known through the wide use of the first edition. It is of course not only the best, but an indispensable manual for the student of American history, and contains an enormous amount of material skillfully arranged. It does not, however, rise to the highest standards of scholarship, though one would expect authors of such high reputation to put out a more perfect book, especially in a revised edition." (pp. 591-592)

[7] Harry Elmer Barnes, A History of Historical Writing (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937), p. 398; H. Hale Bellott, American History and American Historians: A Review of Recent Contributions to the Interpretation of the History of the United States (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

TO THE MEMORY OF
EDWARD CHANNING
ALBERT BUSHNELL HART
FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER
WHO BLAZED THE WAY[8]

Besides this, the authors of this 1954 Guide, Oscar Handlin, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Jr., and Paul Herman Buck, which many consider the most valuable single bibliographical aid in American history today, paid tribute by acknowledging that their work "in its main outlines follows that of Channing, Hart, and Turner."[9]

The next most important of Channing's miscellaneous books after the Guide was The Jeffersonian System, 1801-1811. It was published by Harper and Brothers in 1906 as volume XII of Hart's series, The American Nation: A History. The 200 pages in the Great Work devoted to Jefferson were far superior to the 300 in The Jeffersonian System. Probably the major reason for this is the greater amount of research Channing had done by the time he wrote the fourth volume of his History in 1917. In 1906 he had done very little in the original sources,

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1952), p. 22; Samuel Eliot Morison, "A Memoir and Estimate of Albert Bushnell Hart," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXXVII (January-December, 1965), p. 40.

[8]Oscar Handlin, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Jr., Paul Herman Buck, Harvard Guide to American History (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954).

[9]Ibid., p. viii.

acknowledging in his preface that Henry Adams' "masterpiece," History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison, was the "foundation" of his Jefferson volume.[10]

Channing himself apparently did not have a very high opinion of this book. He proposed "to do the job as a pot-boiler," secondary to his own volumes, and to do it at all only because of the money and the necessity of getting along with Hart. Some of the flaws of the volume Channing would doubtless have admitted, but would have attributed most of them to Hart's editing. He once noted some "curious omissions" in John Spencer Bassett's volume in the American Nation series, then continued, "but having also written a number in that same series, I am not at all certain whether this eccentricity should be charged to him or to the editor."[11]

Hart's American Nation series as a whole has, of course, been highly regarded by historians. Morison has written that the importance of the set lies in the fact that "it was the first general presentation of the subject by the group of professional historians of the United States that had grown up

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[10]Edward Channing, The Jeffersonian System, 1801-1811 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906), p. xiii.

[11]Edward Channing to George P. Brett [President, Macmillan Company], January 21, 1902, and October 10, 1906, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library.

in the previous twenty-five years."[12] Max Farrand, reviewing the entire series for the American Historical Review after all volumes had been published, noted that the specialist had usually been disappointed with the volumes in his field but pleased with the others, while the layman had been enthusiastic about them all. The first fifteen volumes were considered better than the other twelve--The Jeffersonian System was the twelfth volume--but it was also noted that "the series as a whole has achieved a somewhat surprising degree of excellence both in readableness and in accuracy." The conclusion, perceptive considering the time it was written, was that the series was not an "epoch-making" work so much as it was an "epoch-marking" one. "Save for an occasional exception, the volumes represent the end of the old and not the beginning of the new history that is being studied and written."[13]

All told, then, The Jeffersonian System was not one of Channing's outstanding works, but neither was it one of his worst. Indeed, it was rather good, and an effort of which he could well have been proud, if for no other reason than that it was a part of the memorable American Nation series.

Channing was producing major volumes at a rapid pace in the years 1905 to 1910. In 1905 the first volume of his

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[12]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Albert Bushnell Hart, 1889-1939," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXVI (October, 1936-May, 1941), p. 437.

[13]Max Farrand, American Historical Review, XIII (April, 1908), pp. 592-595.

History appeared, in 1906 the Jefferson volume, and in 1908 volume II of the History. On December 5, 1908, Channing wrote to Macmillan's President Brett that the manuscript of "the Great Lakes" was ready. "I think that it is a good book," he added.[14] He was referring to what became The Story of the Great Lakes by Edward Channing and Marion Florence Lansing, published by that company in 1909. The volume was divided into three parts, "Discovery and Exploration," "The Struggle for Possession," and "Occupation and Development." "A Brief List of Books" was added at the end. The Great Lakes is actually quite elementary in nature: there are no footnotes nor end-of-chapter bibliographical notes, only the brief list of books, which is just that; there is virtually no interpretation of events; and nearly all of the factual material, except for the personal travel narratives, could have been taken from the appropriate portions of the History so far as extensiveness of coverage is concerned.

The Dial heaped praise upon The Great Lakes, and basically favorable reviews also appeared in the New York Times, the A. L. A. Booklist, the Literary Digest, and the Nation.[15] But, more importantly, the book received a highly critical notice in

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[14]Channing to Brett, December 5, 1908, Macmillan Collection.

[15]Lawrence J. Burpee, Dial, XLVII (July 16, 1909), pp. 45-46; New York Times, May 8, 1909, p. 290; A. L. A. Booklist, V (May, 1909), p. 133; Literary Digest, XXXVIII (May 22, 1909), pp. 898-899; and Nation, LXXXIX (July 8, 1909), pp. 36-37. Two reviews were non-committal: Independent, LXV (June 3, 1909), pp. 1239-1241; and American Review of Reviews, XXXIX (May, 1909), p. 639.

the American Historical Review. Furthermore, the comments appeared under "Minor Notices," no compliment itself. The title, wrote this reviewer, was a misnomer, for the book was "less the story of the Great Lakes than chapters from the history of the regions contiguous to the lakes." Even the selection of "chapters" was not very well done, for the story of Lincoln and Douglas in Chicago "has about as much to do with the story of the Great Lakes as it has with the story of Barnegat." The book was, "for the most part, a pleasant retelling of facts familiar to the student and long accessible in works of established repute." "The adequate history of the Great Lakes," concluded the reviewer, "is yet to be written."[16] The Story of the Great Lakes holds the same position in Edward Channing's bibliography as English History for the American Reader. Fortunately, once again, there is a co-author on whom much of the responsibility can be placed.

Channing's name appeared in connection with one other book, of which he was co-editor with Archibald Cary Coolidge. Published in 1912 as a volume in the Harvard Historical Studies under the title The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence and Illustrative Matter, 1760-1770, it consisted of selections from the papers of Sir Francis Bernard, a colonial governor of both New Jersey and Massachusetts. These were a part of the original manuscripts collected by Jared Sparks and left to the

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[16] American Historical Review, XV (October, 1909), p. 189.

Harvard Library.[17] Lord Barrington was a cousin of Bernard's wife and holder at various times of such important positions as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary at War. Much of the correspondence was between Barrington and Bernard, and thus the importance of the letters, according to the editors' introduction, lies in "the fact that they are friendly and confidential epistles and not official letters, although they were written by two of the most highly placed government officers in England and in America."[18] Their major importance to Channing was the fact that he was able to use them to good advantage in the third volume of his Great Work.[19]

Morison has stated that Hart was "the only person who extorted a volume from Channing after the latter started his History of the United States."[20] This, of course, is an

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[17]A letter from Channing to Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell, dated April 27, 1910, inquiring as to the efficacy of publication of a volume of these materials, in view of the restrictions in Sparks' will, is in the Edward Channing folder, A. Lawrence Lowell Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[18]Edward Channing and Archibald Cary Coolidge, eds., The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence and Illustrative Matter, 1760-1770 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), p. vii.

[19]See, for example, Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume III: The American Revolution, 1761-1789 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), pp. 58, 59, 89. The one review found of this volume was almost completely descriptive and non-committal, only criticizing the editors mildly at one point for being too critical of Barrington.--George Louis Beer, American Historical Review, XVIII (July, 1913), pp. 816-818.

[20]Morison, "Albert Bushnell Hart, 1889-1939," p. 438.

exaggeration, for in addition to The Jeffersonian System of which Morison spoke, Channing published The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence, The Great Lakes, and several textbooks all after the first volume of the History was published in 1905. Still, it is true that he concentrated on the Great Work, and that this led to a decreased output of not only other books but of miscellaneous shorter publications as well.

Before 1905, Channing had produced a significant amount of such work, and, although not major, it deserves attention. The first entry in his personal bibliography, dated 1884, was the Toppan Prize-winning essay on Town and County Government in the English Colonies of North America, a volume in the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, edited by Herbert B. Adams.[21] Interestingly, Channing stated that this was "written under the stimulus derived from" Adams' own contribution to the series, on the Germanic origins of New England towns.[22] This is especially interesting because of the fact that Channing's conclusions differed rather significantly from those of Adams. The difference was even greater in a follow-up on Channing's part in the form of "A Few Remarks on the Origin of New England Towns" made before the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1892.

Here he said he could not accept Adams' "Germanic theory." It seemed to him that "the advocates of the Germanic

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[21]Baltimore: N. Murray, 1884.

[22]Ibid., p. 5.

origin of New England towns have pushed the theory of the continuity of history farther than the facts in the case will bear." "Perhaps the germs of our local institutions may all be found some time in those old communities living in the German forests so long ago," Channing thought, "but they have not yet been found there." He insisted he was not trying to disprove the theory, but simply contending that it was nothing more than a "working hypothesis," unproven, and therefore "a very poor basis on which to build an elaborate superstructure." He could still go no further than to assert, as he had in the Johns Hopkins volume, that "both the Southern parish and the New England town were 'survivals' of the English Common Law parish of 1600."[23]

Paul H. Buck was correct in referring to Channing's Town and County Government as "a first-rate piece of scholarship for its time."[24] In 1886, another brief work of Channing's was published in the same series. It was entitled The Narragansett Planters: A Study in Causes, and was a description of the unique, for New England, landed artistocracy of stock farmers and dairy men in the southern part of what became Rhode Island.[25]

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[23]Edward Channing, "A Few Remarks on the Origin of New England Towns," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, III (1891-1892), pp. 243-244, 245, 247, 251.

[24]Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[25]Baltimore: N. Murray, 1886.

In 1885, Channing wrote a brief note on "The Sackville Papers" for the Magazine of American History. He thought the collection deserved "the careful attention of the future historian of the American Revolution,"[26] and made good use of the material himself in his volume on that period.[27] In 1886, he contributed the first of two chapters to Justin Winsor's eight-volume predecessor of the American Nation series, the Narrative and Critical History of America. This was in the second volume, and dealt with "The Companions of Columbus," actually a brief history of Spanish Caribbean exploration in the period 1498 to 1519. Channing's second contribution to the set came in 1887 in volume VI and was entitled "The War in the Southern Department." It was a more thorough coverage of the Revolutionary war in the South than his later History had the space to give. Both these chapters, as with the Narrative and Critical History in general, were detailed, factual, largely non-interpretive, essays with extensive bibliographies.[28] As William A. Dunning

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[26]Edward Channing, "The Sackville Papers," Magazine of American History, XIII (June, 1885), pp. 490-491.

[27]See, for example, History, III, pp. 137, 249, 253.

[28]Justin Winsor, ed., Narrative and Critical History of America, II (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), pp. 187-216; and III (1887), pp. 469-555. Channing also aided Winsor in an appendix to volume VII (1888) entitled "Territorial Acquisitions and Divisions," pp. 527-562. An interesting side-light to Channing's work on the Winsor set appears in the Draper-Wisconsin Historical Society Correspondence at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. Channing requested some aid of the well-known archivist Lyman C. Draper with some minor research problems, and apparently received it--in part. [Xerox copies of two letters from Channing to Draper, dated January 4, 1886, and January 17, 1887, are in the possession of

once noted, the Winsor set was a "failure except as a mass of material."[29]

Channing contributed the entry on "The American Colonies" to the American Supplement of the ninth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica in 1889. It was simply a brief description of colonial government based on the royal-proprietary-charter breakdown, and of colonial life using Virginia and Massachusetts as case studies.[30]

Finally, of Channing's miscellaneous publications before 1905, mention should be made of the series of documents published under the editorship of Channing and Hart beginning in 1892. The purpose of the project was well stated by a reviewer for the Magazine of American History. The leaflets, he wrote, were "designed to promote the scientific method of studying history from its documents, and furnish in convenient form copies of original documents that have become famous in our colonial and constitutional history."[31] The general

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the author.] According to Larry Gara, "Lyman Copeland Draper," in Clifford L. Lord, ed., Keepers of the Past (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 49, Draper, becoming with old age "more crotchety in his habits and more possessive about his collection," and having "little understanding of the newer academic historians who increasingly turned to him for assistance," turned down some of Channing's requests.

[29]William A. Dunning, "A Generation of American Historiography," in the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1917 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), p. 353.

[30]Edward Channing, "The American Colonies," American Supplement to Encyclopedia Britannica, ninth edition, II, pp. 305-306.

[31]Magazine of American History, XXVIII (November, 1892), pp. 399-400.

title for the series was American History Leaflets: Colonial and Constitutional. A total of thirty-six of them was published, the last in 1913. Brief editorial comments introduced each document, followed by bibliographical references, then the document itself. Some of those included were the Constitution, the Ostend Manifesto, the Stamp Act, Lincoln's inaugural address, and the like.[32] This pioneering effort in making significant historical documents readily available to students was another project to which Channing could well be proud that his name was attached.

After 1905, the date of publication for the first volume of the Great Work, the amount of Channing's extraneous publications decreased, and when he did produce something, it was usually directly related to his History. For example, he read three papers before the Massachusetts Historical Society, in 1910, 1911, and 1913, on "The American Board of Commissioners of the Customs," "Commerce During the Revolutionary Epoch," and "Washington and Parties, 1789-1797."[33] These obviously grew out of Channing's research on volumes III and IV, as the

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[32]Edward Channing and Albert Bushnell Hart, eds., American History Leaflets: Colonial and Constitutional (New York: A. Lowell and Company succeeded by Parker P. Simmons, 1892-1913). For a complete list of the leaflets in the series, see George W. Robinson, Bibliography of Edward Channing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), pp. 8-11.

[33]All three appeared in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, respectively in XLIII (October, 1909-June, 1910), pp. 477-490; XLIV (October, 1910-June, 1911), pp. 364-377; and XLVII (October, 1913-June, 1914), pp. 35-44.

articles on "William Penn," "Colonel Thomas Dongan, Governor of New York," and "Kentucky Resolutions of 1798," which appeared in various places, grew out of the portion of his History Channing was working on at the time.[34]

Channing did have one other writing project going in his very last years. This was his autobiography which he intended to call "The Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man." His earliest mention of it was in a letter to Brett in October, 1925. He referred to it then as simply his "memoirs." He said it would "have to do mainly with the revolution in Harvard which has taken place in the course of my connection with it." He also noted that the project "appeals to Miss Moore because, as she says, we can lie as much as we please in

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[34]These articles appeared respectively in the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), I, pp. 191-197; Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, XVIII (October, 1907), pp. 336-345; and American Historical Review, XX (January, 1915), pp. 333-336. One Channing article in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, XLVII (October, 1913-June, 1914), pp. 348-355, grew out of a personal, more than a research, interest. It was a "Memoir of Thomas Wentworth Higginson."

Channing did no book reviews after 1905, and very few ever. It is easy to see why he wished to avoid them if he felt obligated to be as thorough as he was in the one he did of J. A. Doyle's two-volume The English in America: The Puritan Colonies for the English Historical Review, II (July, 1887), pp. 587-593--note the length! Channing gave a tribute to Doyle before the Massachusetts Historical Society also (Proceedings, I (1907-1908), pp. 196-198), mention of which leads to a category of listing in the Robinson Bibliography of Edward Channing which lengthen it considerably, but are not in most cases very important. These are the "remarks" by Channing on various subjects at the meetings of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

that vol.,--which, of course, you understand we do as seldom as possible in the 'History.'" The work he actually did on it came in a few months in 1929-1930, and by then he had named it. "I am spending my leisure moments in writing 'The Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man,'" he wrote. He seems to have enjoyed the work he did on it immensely. This is evident from the pages of the document itself, but he also said so in his correspondence. He told Brett in June, 1930, that he was soon going to Cotuit to "have another whack" at the "Recollections," "the first pages of which I even now, when weary read with a chuckle."[35] Unfortunately, Mrs. Channing did not enjoy them. "Madam does not like them so we will abandon them for a time at any rate," he wrote to Miss Moore in July.[36] He never returned to the project, so, interesting though it is, it does not cover his Great Work and the major portion of his teaching career.

In conclusion, Edward Channing was a productive historian both quantitatively and qualitatively; after 1905 the quantity decreased but the quality increased. Of Channing's miscellaneous works, the outstanding ones were the Guide, The Jeffersonian System, Town and County Government, and the American History Leaflets.

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[35]Channing to Brett, October 20, 1925, August 17, 1929, and June 25, 1930, Macmillan Collection.

[36]Channing to Moore, "Prob. July 17, 1930," Channing Correspondence in Houghton Library. The tentative date was added to the letter by someone other than Channing.

PART IV

AN EVALUATION

I think C[hanning] and his work are underrated these days, and I hope your study will help to restore him to us.--Letter to the author from Crane Brinton, July 3, 1967.

CHAPTER XI

EDWARD CHANNING, HISTORIAN

> Question by the author: "Does Channing's History still have value today?
>
> Answer by Samuel Eliot Morison: "I never go to it on any subject without finding something worthwhile."[1]

Several brief attempts have been made to evaluate Edward Channing as a historian. The most recent one was in 1963 by Glenn Weaver in Social Studies. Rather poorly written, it included no footnotes, and made several factual errors. Still, it included some ideas of value. For one thing, Weaver discussed Channing in relation to several "schools" of historiography. Though he admitted that Channing "was critical of all schools whether of history, philosophy, or literature," Weaver insisted that Channing had "toyed" with Herbert Adams' "Teutonic Germ School" through his Town and County Government, then rejected it in his remarks before the Massachusetts Historical Society. Weaver noted also Channing's rejection of the "Turner School," but contended that, even though Channing "would probably have been the first to deny it, certain passages [in his work] strongly suggest economic determinism." One of the main bases for this contention was Channing's comment that commercialism was at the heart of the struggle

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[1]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

between England and America. Finally, Weaver thought "Channing would have been less unhappy about his inclusion, along with Osgood, Beer, and Andrews, as a member of the 'Imperialistic School.'" Though Weaver exaggerated to prove his point when he wrote that "Channing's pro-English bias is everywhere evident," his basic contention was correct.[2] With Channing's insistence in the preface to his Great Work that he "considered the colonies as parts of the English empire, as having sprung from that political fabric, and as having simply pursued a course of institutional evolution unlike" that of England, the Imperialistic, or, more commonly, Imperial School is certainly where Channing must be placed among colonial historians.[3]

Weaver is not the only one who has had trouble placing Edward Channing in some neat historiographical category. Such a perceptive viewer of the course of American historical

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[2]Glenn Weaver, "Edward Channing: A Literary Biography," Social Studies, LIV (March, 1963), pp. 85-88.

[3]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume I: The Planting of a Nation in the New World, 1000-1600 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. v. Allan Nevins compared Channing's work quite unfavorably with another member of the Imperial School: "Channing's volumes on the colonial period contain no thesis worth mentioning, while those of George Louis Beer contain a sharp-cut, novel, and emphatic thesis. The result is that while nobody ever speaks of Channing's ideas, Beer's ideas have been a staple of discussion ever since they were propounded; while we try to remember Channing's facts, we distinctly remember Beer's views."--Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History, New revised edition (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1962), p. 295.

writing as Michael Kraus made statements about Channing which on the surface seem contradictory. In a 1937 volume entitled A History of American History Kraus placed Channing in a chapter on "The Imperial School of Colonial History." In what is essentially a revision of this work, however, published in 1953, Channing is a part of "The Nationalist School." Kraus seemed to complicate matters still more by saying that Channing was "one of the earliest and finest products of the 'scientific school' of historiography in America." Finally, Kraus refers vaguely in one place to "the school of Edward Channing," apparently meaning the problem-solving technique of historical research.[4] Actually, there is no contradiction here at all. On most aspects of colonial history, Channing aligned himself with the Imperial School; on the Civil War, he was one of the outstanding nationalists. And as for his scientific approach and problem-solving technique, they tie him to no particular school; indeed, they help explain and justify Weaver's contention about Channing's aloofness from all schools as such.

Weaver also commented on Channing's sources and style. Though he thought the reader would "doubtless be amazed at the great body of historical literature which must have passed through" Channing's hands, Weaver emphasized that Channing's use of unpublished sources was very limited. Indeed, he

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[4]Michael Kraus, A History of American History (New York: Farrar Rinehart, Incorporated, 1937); and Michael Kraus, The Writing of American History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 232, 328.

found the great number of monographic studies cited "the most striking thing" about Channing's sources. Finally, Weaver contended that Channing usually made too much of the few sources that he did find that had never been used simply because of the fact that he was the first to use them. Weaver stated that "Even the most casual reader would notice Channing's numerous infelicities of style," then went on to list some of the criticisms various reviewers had made. He concluded that the most that could be said for Channing's writing was that "the meaning is always clear."[5] Finally, Weaver said of Channing's History that it marked "the transition from the older school of narrative writers to the newer 'scientific' school."[6]

The next most recent attempt at an evaluation of Channing's historical work would have agreed with this and more. This was by John A. DeNovo, and appeared in 1952 in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review. Considering the space

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[5]Weaver, "Edward Channing," pp. 92-94. The comments of other evaluations will be noted, but brief ones from two other sources seem in order here. A former student wrote thus of Channing's sources: "His footnotes and end-of-chapter notes bear testimony to the extent of his research and furnish indispensable leads to other writers...." (Letter to the author from Richard L. Morton, July 7, 1966.) Van Wyck Brooks, though he recognized that Channing's History "in scope and massiveness...covered its field better than any other," was highly critical of the literary style. "There were few sparks of the artist in Channing," wrote Brooks. "He scarcely wished to be thought a writer. That history was a form of literature seemed to him to mean that it could not be a form of science, and his work, with all its dignity, was bald and humdrum....Channing wrote for his graduate students," concluded Brooks.--Van Wyck Brooks, New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915 [(New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated, 1940), pp. 474-475.]

[6]Weaver, "Edward Channing," p. 95.

he had, DeNovo did an excellent job. Certainly he had his criticisms. Channing sometimes failed, he noted, in his attempt to evaluate individuals and movements in terms of their own times. DeNovo admitted that Channing's generalizations sometimes made the reader "raise his eye-brows." He took note of Channing's "never quite successful effort to solve the ever-present problem of organizing and weaving together his narrative." He also considered justifiable the criticisms which had been made of Channing for his "undying New England point of view" and his over-emphasis on the political. Finally, DeNovo felt that "Channing's achievement in historical method ranks high, while he falls down in the art of synthesis and interpretation."[7]

The over-all tone of DeNovo's evaluation, however, was quite favorable. He considered Channing a master at the succinct evaluation of individuals. He thought the amount and variety of sources used for the Great Work "staggering," and contended that Channing was "a careful workman who seldom lost sight of the need for the rigorous application of historical method to his evidence." He praised Channing's use of the "tools" of foreign languages, statistics, and geographical information. Finally, DeNovo wrote that even the "severest appraisers hestitate to challenge Channing's intellectual honesty or sincerity," that practically all reviewers "have

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[7]John A. DeNovo, "Edward Channing's 'Great Work' Twenty Years After," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIX (September, 1952), pp. 262-272.

found more to praise in Channing than to criticize," and that "The agreement is almost complete that his was a unique accomplishment of high quality."[8]

The most critical evaluation of Channing was by Ralph Ray Fahrney. It was published as a chapter in the Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography in 1937. There are, of course, many valid criticisms which can be made of Channing's historical work, and Fahrney pointed out most of them, plus some others. He weakened his case, however, by exaggerating and by such tricks as quoting only the most critical portions of basically favorable book reviews. Certainly it was an exaggeration to say that Channing's "entire life, except for brief trips, was spent in the New England environment, from which he seldom strayed," and that his interpretations therefore indicated "viewpoints and prejudices traceable to the Atlantic coastline." So was it exaggerated, if not completely wrong, to write that "Channing was disposed at all times to underrate, or entirely disregard, sectionalism as a force in American history."[9]

Fahrney wrote that "Perhaps the greatest weakness of Channing is his faulty organization of material and technique

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[8] Ibid., pp. 261, 268, 271-273. DeNovo gave examples of footnotes in the History in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, and Latin. By statistics he meant primarily Channing's utilization of census figures. The maps he considered the major benefit of Channing's geographical information.

[9] Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," in William T. Hutchinson, ed., The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 296, 299-309.

of presentation." He suggested a possibility ignored by all other Channing critics, but one which seems quite logical, when he attributed this problem of Channing's to the same type practice in teaching, i. e., lecturing without notes because of his contempt for the "finished lecturer" and the "spoon-feeding" of students. Fahrney was willing to concede that Channing's style "merits neither high praise nor sharp criticism," and that his sources were "adequate, both in number and variety."[10] He concluded:

> After the most critically minded have had their innings dissecting and analysing the Channing history with the avowed purpose of unveiling all of its deficiencies, there still remains a bountiful measure of praise to be awarded to the one American historian of the twentieth century who had the courage to attempt a task so colossal. If other historians managed to escape some of the snares into which Channing stumbled, it was in large part because they limited their endeavors and trod upon safer ground.[11]

Carl Russell Fish made one of the earliest attempts at assessment of Channing the historian. His brief effort was published in Current History in March, 1931, only two months after Channing's death. Considering the date, and the fact that Fish was something of a friend of Channing anyway, the evaluation was a remarkably good one. Fish did not have unqualified praise for Channing's work, for he recognized that there were valid criticisms, but the over-all tone of

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[10] Ibid., pp. 307-309.

[11] Ibid., p. 311.

his comments was, of course, favorable. He considered Channing "one of the first of our scientific historians."[12]

Another evaluation of Channing written soon after his death and by a person who knew him well was "Edward Channing: A Memoir." By Samuel Eliot Morison, it appeared in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Morison's remarks before that society, of which Channing had also been a member, still constitute one of the most useful evaluations of Edward Channing available in print. To Morison the "wholeness of view" evidenced in the preface to the Great Work was one of Channing's distinguishing characteristics as a historian. Channing, thought Morison, "leaned over backwards to give other points of view than the orthodox New England ones, their proper place; and he succeeded notably." Morison considered Channing's "most striking characteristic as an historian," however, to be "his ability to wipe his mind clear of preconceived interpretations and theories, even if he had been teaching them all his life; to study every question and period anew, from the sources, and to reach fresh conclusions." There was, concluded Morison, "hardly an important question, from Jamestown to Appomattox, on which his views were orthodox."[13]

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[12]Carl Russell Fish, "Edward Channing: America's Historian," Current History, XXXIII (March, 1931), p. 864.

[13]Samuel Eliot Morison, "Edward Channing: A Memoir," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXIV (October, 1930-June, 1932), pp. 278-279. In an interview, Morison stated the same thing more succinctly; Channing's great quality as a historian, he said, was "his ability to

Morison was willing to agree with those who criticized Channing's style. He once proclaimed as a general principle that "Dictation is usually fatal to good historical writing."[14] In Channing's case, he thought it "resulted in a rather formless, and occasionally slipshod style."[15] Though Channing was incapable of it himself, he did appreciate good historical prose, and, as Morison proudly recalled, used to read brief passages from Morison's own Maritime History of Massachusetts to students as an example of how to write history.[16] According to Morison, Channing was aware of his stylistic deficiency; yet to others, he seemed actually proud of his style. Richard L. Morton recalled that "Channing once remarked that the historian should be able to write at odd moments--to turn his work on and off like a spiggot." Frederick Merk said that Channing took great pride in his mode of composition, and was known to compare his books to a string of pearls, with as little connective tissue between the parts as possible.[17]

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change an opinion upon learning new facts." (June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.)

[14]Samuel Eliot Morison, By Land and By Sea: Essays and Addresses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 293.

[15]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 280.

[16]Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[17]Letter to the author from Richard L. Morton, July 7, 1966; Interview with Frederick Merk, August 22, 1966, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both these individuals agreed with Morison rather than Channing as to the results of Channing's method, Merk stating that it was all right for readers who were thoroughly familiar with American history but difficult for

Morison certainly was not willing to agree with those who contended that Channing's volumes were composed by simply stringing together the works of others. "Channing carried out his promise to write the History from the original sources," he wrote. Morison did acknowledge that Channing made little use of newspapers as a source, and that this was a distinct loss, especially for volumes IV and V.[18]

A. Lawrence Lowell's published evaluation of Channing also appeared soon after Channing's death. It was not as objective or as serious as Morison's, and thus had less value. Lowell found no fault in Channing's History, and concluded that it was "an achievement that in its scope and detailed study of the sources will never be repeated."[19]

Channing's grandson, John Channing Fuller, when a senior at Williams College in 1943, wrote a thesis on Channing in order to receive a degree with honors in history. Though both the undergraduate nature of the work and the familial relationships of author and subject are frequently obvious, some parts of the study are very useful. Best of all is a section in which Fuller discusses what he considers the "nine

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those who were not, and Morton writing that the system perhaps accounted for Channing's writings not possessing "the easy flow of those of such historians as S. E. Morison or of Louis B. Wright."

[18]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 280.

[19]A. Lawrence Lowell, "Edward Channing," American Academy of Arts and Letters Publication No. 77, 1932, p. 83.

main highlights" of Channing's History. The first of these distinguishing characteristics was the success which Channing achieved in illustrating his "victory of the forces of union over those of particularism" theme stated in the preface. The second was Channing's attention to, and ability to characterize, important individuals. Channing's "inclination to upset historical traditions" was considered a third outstanding trait, and indeed "one of the greatest highlights" of the entire set. Channing's "definite emphasis on and interest in commercial and maritime history" and his "recognition of the connection of the American colonies with England and his realization that America has always been in the world" were considered the fourth and fifth distinguishing points of the History. Sixth on the list was the cartography. The seventh item, this one in "the realm of technical procedure," was "the prolific use of footnotes and notes at the end of each chapter." Though it was not considered "one of the main outstanding elements," Channing's style was listed by Fuller as the eighth highlight of the Great Work. The final distinguishing characteristic was Channing's broad-mindedness.[20]

Within these nine "highlights," most of the distinguishing characteristics of Channing's Great Work are included. Two of the nine, however, probably do not deserve to be listed

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[20]John Channing Fuller, "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer," (Unpublished senior honors thesis, Williams College, 1943), pp. 88-107.

along with the others. The cartography was simply not a major aspect or an integral part of the History, and most of it was not, of course, the work of Channing anyway. Likewise, it is difficult to justify considering Channing's style a "highlight" of his historical work. If one agrees that Channing's style "deserves little comment, other than that it was sufficient for his purpose,"[21] as Fuller himself stated, then why list it as one of the History's outstanding points?

None of these brief evaluations of Channing did much in the way of comparing him with other historians who produced multi-volume histories of the United States. Only a small group did so, the most important of whom were George Bancroft, Richard Hildreth, Hermann von Holst, James Schouler, John Bach McMaster, James Ford Rhodes, and Woodrow Wilson. Four of these were already through their "great works" before Channing began his.

Bancroft (1800-1891) began his vast treatment of the American past in 1834 and finished it, in twelve volumes, in 1882, the year before Channing began his Harvard teaching career. In those twelve volumes, Bancroft never moved beyond the year 1789. And, though his work was a supreme accomplishment for his time, with its uncritical treatment of everything American the works of Channing and other more scientific historians soon relegated it to the shelves to be covered with dust.

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[21] Ibid., p. 107.

Richard Hildreth's (1807-1865) six-volume history, published between 1849 and 1851, enjoyed great vogue in the colleges in the later decades of the nineteenth century, but soon followed Bancroft to the unused book shelf. It was obviously biased toward the Federalist-Whig-Republican interpretation of American history throughout, and it never went beyond 1821. Hildreth may have influenced Edward Channing negatively, but he seems to have had a positive influence on Hermann von Holst (1841-1904). This author produced, in the years 1876 to 1892, seven volumes which were much admired in his day. In reality, however, his work was only a very biased Northern political-constitutional history of events centering around the slavery controversy from 1781 to 1860, and its popularity was short-lived.

Woodrow Wilson's (1856-1924) five-volume History of the American People, published in 1902, really does not deserve to be ranked with these other works, prejudiced though they were. It was a popular work which could have been printed in only two volumes easily by eliminating the hundreds of illustrations.

John Bach McMaster (1852-1932) published the eighth and final volume of his pioneering social history of the American people in 1912, bringing his narrative through the Civil War. Channing that year published the third volume of the Great Work, dealing with the Revolutionary era, which, incidentally, had been McMaster's starting point back in 1883.

These two apparently never regarded each other's work very highly, but this may have been partially a result of the fact that they also competed in the textbook field.

The nationalist historian James Schouler (1839-1920) completed his seven-volume work, begun in 1880, in 1913, and became the first to cover the entire 1789-1877 period by a continuous narrative. James Ford Rhodes (1848-1927) completed his famous nine-volume work on the 1850-1909 period in 1922. After that, Channing was the only major American historian still working on a multi-volume general history of the United States. What was to be his last volume appeared in 1925.

Edward Channing, then, came nearer to covering the entire span of American history from beginnings to his own time than any of these other historians. And he did so in a fashion which bears the scrutiny of modern historical scholarship at least as well as any of them. As Morison said, "Channing accomplished what no man had done before, and what is not likely to be done again...with his own hand, and from his own research, he wrote a great history of the United States from the beginning of colonization to the close of the Civil War."[22]

One thing of use in an over-all estimate of Channing and the historian is his own philosophy of history. Samuel Eliot Morison stated that Channing "had no 'philosophy' of

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[22]Morison, "Edward Channing," p. 284.

history, to my knowledge, other than Ranke's wie es gewesen which I think I heard him quote."[23] This by no means gives a complete picture. True, Channing felt no compulsion to distort the facts of American history to make them fit some particular thread of interpretation, economic or otherwise. And, except for an apparent underlying belief in evolution and progress which he held in common with most of his generation, he embraced no sweeping theory of history like Henry Adams or Arnold Toynbee. His goal was plain, yet very difficult of attainment: the writing of an extensive objective narrative history of the United States from the beginning of colonization to his own time based on the sources. Closely related to this ambition was Channing's desire to teach objectively and to write an unbiased text. Except for the fact that he did not quite make it to his own time, Channing fulfilled his objectives to a remarkable extent. What motivated him to do all this? Many factors played a part: determination to accomplish something because he felt his father had not; inspiration from the works of such historians as Francis Parkman and Henry Adams; reaction against the dogmatism of Henry Cabot Lodge's teaching and the bias of Richard Hildreth's writing; and, finally, that indefinable quality that some men have which drives them persistently on toward some great goal.

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[23]Letter to the author from Samuel Eliot Morison, September, 13, 1967.

In addition to all this, Channing did come much nearer to stating a philosophy of history than Morison's statement would suggest. He wrote an article in 1910 for the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society. History, he said there, "is a mode of thought and expression. Historical writing is the application of the historical method to expression with pen and ink." Historical labor, Channing continued, could be divided into three types: "(1) the collecting and printing of original sources; (2) the reporting on masses of material or on specific topics; (3) historical writing." The first two types he considered craftsmanship, the third art. Channing recognized that the craftsmanship was a necessary prelude to the art, but he could not avoid showing a little contempt for the producer of the second class of historical labor, which included predominantly reports, theses, and dissertations. "Given an adequate amount of material and a sufficiency of time, he must be a mediocre man, indeed, or one whose brain has become indurated, who cannot produce a monograph or volume, or even a series of volumes of this type," thought Channing.[24] In another place he expressed strong disapproval of "the Ph.D. thesis maker thinking that he is an historian--something like the compiler of a lot of statistics about the injury of one's organs by tobacco thinking that he is a scientific man."[25]

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[24]Edward Channing, "The Present State of Historical Writing in America," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, XX (October, 1910), pp. 427-428.

[25]Edward Channing to "Mr. Johnson," March 5, 1912, Century Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

"The qualifications of the historian are multitudinous," proclaimed Channing. He then proceeded to list and discuss them, giving particular attention to "imagination," "broad sympathies," an understanding of the fundamentals of both law and science, and "perspective." The historian, said Channing,

> must have training in research, must be able to handle material in manuscript and in printed form, and to sift the truth from the falsehood. He must have the faculty of using the work of others, of recognizing first-class monographs at a glance, almost. The materials of American history are so vast that the historian, even of a fairly limited period, can hardly hope himself to read all the original sources. He must use the work of others; but he himself must also constantly be using original materials; otherwise he will lose the faculty of recognition; and he will miss that local color and flavor which make historical writing tolerable.[26]

Channing met his own requirements here remarkably well for the author of a multi-volume history. He was also the master of another technique he recommended. The historian, he wrote, should seek "to tell the story in such a way that his readers will become convinced without being aware that they are being argued with." But his requirements concerning the historian being "a master of perspective," Channing did not meet so well, even though he showed that he was aware of the pitfall:

> This is one of the most difficult of all achievements for the historian, because in his researches, he is likely to come upon new material relating to some one part of his studies that no one else has ever seen, or rather that no one else has ever understood. The temptation is great to apportion

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[26] Channing, "The Present State of Historical Writing," p. 429.

> his space according to the importance of the events or the men.[27]

Channing made it clear in his discussion of imagination as a qualification for the historian that he considered the conveying of a truthful impression to the reader the essential thing.

> Oftentimes, to do this he [the historian] must sacrifice absolute accuracy in detail and in perspective. If the impression produced upon his reader is truthful, it matters little whether all his dates are correct, all his names are properly spelled, or if all his facts are accurate. Indeed, his dates may every one of them be correct, his names may all be properly spelled, his facts may be absolutely accurate, and the impression left upon his reader be entirely false.[28]

Channing toyed with economic determinism more in this article than anywhere in the History. Emphasizing the necessity for the historian having broad sympathies--"He must have some sympathy with the ways of the economist and must regard the march of fact in the light of the laws of human development"--Channing went on to say that there was "no such thing as economic history; all history is economic. All historical development is founded upon industry, upon the necessity of supporting life, and the way in which it is done. It is impossible to separate economic history from political history."[29]

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[27] Ibid., p. 431.

[28] Ibid., p. 430.

[29] Ibid., pp. 430-431.

Francis Parkman was used as an example of a great historian by Channing in his concluding remarks. Channing lamented the state of scholarship in America as of 1910, especially historical scholarship: "In looking about for writers of history in this country at the present moment, the seeker is met with greater discouragement than would befall him in almost any other path of original research....There has not been a time for many years...when scholarship has been so lightly valued in the United States as it is at the present moment."[30] The conclusion, however, was optimistic:

> Some day the wheel will turn around; scholarship will again be valued as a national asset; and a new Parkman will arise! Possibly, he may produce only one volume, but if that volume shall be of the quality of the "Pioneers of France," it will do more for the cause of educating the plain people and the building up of his own reputation than the printing of documents by the ton or the publication of monographs by the dozen.[31]

One of Channing's former students has said that his "emphasis was upon people and how they acted and how they felt, particularly in moments of personal crisis or during the rites of passage affecting all of humanity." Channing, this person continues, "insisted upon the necessity of students' identifying with historical situations and personages. I presume this was all he thought about historiography."[32] It is

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[30] Ibid., p. 434.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Letter to the author from Edward C. Kirkland, July 18, 1966.

certainly true that one of the "highlights" of Channing's historical work was his own identification with and ability to portray historical situations and individuals; Carl Russell Fish said Channing had "reactions as personal to the Boston of 1630 and the Philadelphia of 1776 as to the men and things of his own days."[33] But that this was not "all he thought about historiography" should already be evident. He gave appropriate attention to economic factors; he also emphasized the need for the historian having an understanding of geography. "History is the record of man's experience on this earth," Channing once wrote; "geography is the description of the forces of nature which have affected man's destiny. Without a knowledge of the latter it is impossible to understand the former."[34] Finally, he saw the need for an integrative approach to the study of history in this simple, but meaningful, passage from his last volume:

> A quarter of a century ago [written in 1925] or a third of a century ago, it was customary to lay great stress on the influence of economic factors; now it is more often the case to emphasize the sociological or psychical change that is wrought by changed modes of living and by the general operation of economic factors. Possibly the best way to analyze problems of progress or of change in human outlook would be to combine all these various

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[33]Fish, "Edward Channing," p. 867.

[34]Edward Channing, "The Relation of Geography to History," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses (St. Paul, Minnesota: National Education Association, 1895), p. 193.

> factors into one, for surely one's mode of living exercises a very important influence on one's mode of thinking.[35]

Channing's "past-mindedness" was noted in connection with his presidential address before the American Historical Association in 1920. Frederick Jackson Turner had written in 1917 that Channing was "settled in his conviction that it is futile and superficial to try to apply past precedents to present predicaments."[36] Channing was even more strongly opposed to looking into the future as an activity for the historian. He made the point in a humorous fashion in a letter to President Brett of the Macmillan Company at one time. "My boys are constantly asking me to prophecy," he wrote, referring of course to his students. "I answer that the business of the historian and the prophet are distinctly different; that if I could prophecy, I should be a triple billionaire and not a prophesseor (this started to be a pun, but it doesn't look well)."[37] He said the same thing more seriously in the sixth volume of the History, where he wrote that "one of the first things that the historical student learns to

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[35]Edward Channing, A History of the United States. Volume VI: The War for Southern Independence (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 383.

[36]Frederick Jackson Turner to J. Franklin Jameson, May 20, 1917, John Franklin Jameson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[37]Edward Channing to George P. Brett, [President, Macmillan Company], July 12, 1919, Edward Channing File, Macmillan Authors Collection, New York Public Library.

distrust is the vitality of the prophetic vision of himself or of anyone in ages past. Prophesying is the most dangerous of all historical pursuits and also of political pursuits."[38]

Channing once became involved in something of a historical controversy, one result of which was a further elucidation of some of his ideas about history. The scene took place before the Massachusetts Historical Society; the subject was the origin of New England towns; one of the other members had classed Channing as a leader in the so-called "New Historical School" along with Herbert Baxter Adams, John Fiske, and others, because of his stand on that issue. "If the line which separates us from the 'Old Historical School' is the fact that we of the 'New' base our theories on the records, while the older writers copied one from the other, I am well content to belong to the New School," he said. Since the method used by these modern writers was the true historical method, Channing continued, they should actually be called the "True Historical School."[39] He elaborated:

> The true historical method consists in the examination of original records and other contemporaneous sources, and in generalizations based on such research. Where the generalizations are based on a sufficient number of records, the method is the best which has yet been devised.[40]

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[38] History, VI, p. 152.

[39] Edward Channing, "A Few Remarks on the Origins of New England Towns," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, III (1891-1892), pp. 242-244.

[40] Ibid., p. 244.

A good point about the continuity of history was also made by Channing at this time:

> Historical students are accustomed to divide history into periods, for convenience' sake. For example, we speak of Medieval History and of Modern History, as if they were things entirely apart. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to say when one begins and the other ends. In a similar way we speak of the Middle Ages, as to the beginning and end whereof few scholars are agreed. This theory of the continuity of history applies with especial force to the history of institutions, as institutions are of very slow growth and are rarely invented, but almost always evolved from something which went before.[41]

Channing's mention of institutional history leads to a major point about him as a historian. Paul H. Buck considered Channing's "emancipation from the dominant school of institutional historians" to be most significant. Channing, he noted, began to turn away from the political to the social, literary, and the like, but he failed to make it an integral part of his story.[42] It is, of course, true that Channing began to devote space to the non-political, especially in his fifth volume. Sometimes the chapters on these subjects were quite well done and thoroughly interesting; but it is also true that this material usually seemed strangely unrelated to the central story. Perhaps Harvey Wish stated it best when he wrote that Channing "rounded out institutional history with social developments."[43]

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[41] Ibid., p. 245.

[42] Interview with Paul H. Buck, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[43] Harvey Wish, The American Historian: A Social-

Edward Channing, then, did have a working philosophy of history, certainly much more of a philosophy than has generally been credited to him. How he applied this to United States history specifically is best seen in the preface to his Great Work. He intended to treat the growth of the nation as one continuous development, he announced, "from the political, military, institutional, industrial, and social points of view." Channing showed his alignment with the Imperial School of colonial historians when he proclaimed that he "considered the colonies as parts of the English empire, as having sprung from that political fabric, and as having simply pursued a course of institutional evolution unlike that of the branch of the English race which remained behind in the old homeland across the Atlantic." It was here in the preface that Channing stated that he considered the victory of the forces of union over those of particularism "the most important single fact in our development." Channing was doubtless influenced by the evolutionary climate of opinion of his day in selecting what he called the "guiding idea" of his History: "to view the subject as the record of an evolution, and to trace the growth of the nation from the standpoint of that which preceded rather than from that which followed."[44] He elaborated:

> In other words, I have tried to see in the annals of the past the story of living forces, always struggling

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Intellectual History of the Writing of the American Past (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 128.

[44] History, I, pp. v-vi.

> onward and upward toward that which is better and higher in human conception. It is only in this way that justice can be done to the memories of those who have gone before and have left for us a splendid heritage. They treated the problems which arose in their time by the light of the age in which they lived. To estimate them by the conditions and ideas of the present day is to give a false picture to the reader and the student.[45]

In attempting an over-all assessment of Channing, it is perhaps not inappropriate to compare him with Albert Bushnell Hart, for their careers paralleled each other in so many ways. Two brief evaluations of Hart have appeared in print recently, one by Carol F. Baird and the other by Samuel Eliot Morison. Morison's article included little of value on Channing, except that in his opinion, "Channing was the better scholar of the two, but Hart the better all-around man, and at least Channing's equal as a teacher."[46]

The Baird appraisal of Hart, however, can be quite useful in understanding Channing. On at least one point, Channing and Hart differed significantly, for Hart's "conception of history was dominated by the idea that an understanding of the past would enlighten the present." According to this author, one of the factors contributing to the "increased self-consciousness of historians as a professional group" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was their belief

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[45] Ibid., p. vi.

[46] Samuel Eliot Morison, "A Memoir and Estimate of Albert Bushnell Hart," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, LXXVII (January-December, 1965), p. 33.

that history could be a science. There were two variants of this belief, however, one that history could yield laws and generalizations like the sciences, and the other that science in history was simply a method, a search for objective facts impartially reported.[47] Channing would have agreed with only the second concept.

Many things said here about Hart apply equally well to Channing. "Hart contributed no truly original ideas to the study of history," wrote Baird; "he made no brilliant and lasting synthesis of the material at his command." Basically, this is true of Channing as well. This author credited Hart with revitalizing the teaching of American history through replacing "learning by rote" with the problem approach, outside reading, student reports, and the like. Hart himself was more realistic in being willing to share the credit for these innovations with Channing. "I hope it may be remembered for righteousness," he wrote to President A. Lawrence Lowell in 1922, "that next after Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge, Channing and I have the honor of introducing on a considerable scale the study of special topics in American history." Finally, Hart and Channing apparently made similar efforts to break with the traditional conception of history as past politics. "Although Hart devoted much of his time to political

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[47] Paul Buck, ed., Social Sciences at Harvard, 1860-1920: From Inculcation to the Open Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 133-139. The chapter on history centered on Hart, and was written by Carol F. Baird.

material, he attempted to introduce elements of economic and social history, as he understood them....His attempts...were primarily descriptive; he did not have a sense, as one does today, of the ways in which political and economic and social phenomena may be causally interrelated."[48]

Edward Channing once asked: "And how can any master of history use the gifts with which he has been endowed better than by stimulating others to work as he himself has worked?"[49] It is interesting to speculate as to how successful Channing himself was according to that criterion. He once wrote this of his Great Work:

> My idea in writing it was to place before serious-minded persons and students, who have no option, the results of the investigations of American historical students into our history, including my own, and to put this in such form that the aforesaid serious minded could read it without too great effort. As the thing has turned out, it seems to be regarded as a sort of standby by fellow teachers of history throughout the country in universities and colleges. They give it out by chapters and volumes to the helpless.[50]

Channing's Great Work did indeed become something of a "standby" for history teachers, and remained such for a long time. The Macmillan Company was still printing it as late as 1958. The most recent figures available as to number of copies

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[48] Ibid., pp. 147-161.

[49] Edward Channing, "Remarks on Charles Deane," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, V (1890), p. 136.

[50] Harvard College Class of 1878: Secretary's Report, No. VII, 1917, p. 13.

printed by the company indicate that sales were quite good for a work used largely for reference purposes and by graduate students. These figures, dated 1946, are: Volume I, 14,400; II, 12,500; III, 13,200; IV, 10,950; V, 9,450; and VI, 8,600.[51] The obvious imbalance is probably accounted for by the simple fact that the later volumes had not been out as long as the earlier ones; sales probably evened up as time went on.

Channing's comments on the subject in his correspondence with Brett show that he was basically pleased with sales, and that he put the money to good use. Brett himself always felt that sales would greatly increase when the set was completed, and frequently used this to push Channing along. Typical was this comment in a letter of 1917:

> Increasingly your book takes up the most important position in current historical literature and the sales, while not large, are satisfactory, and will, I think, increase as time goes on, and when the happy day comes that the work is completed, I believe a very large sale of the set can be accomplished.[52]

The set was never really "completed," of course, but sales apparently did pick up after the publication of the sixth volume. Brett informed Channing in November, 1926, that there was "an increasing demand for the History this year," and that the sixth volume was running well ahead of all the others.[53]

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[51]DeNovo, "Edward Channing's 'Great Work' Twenty Years After," p. 274. The source of DeNovo's figures was a letter to him from Harry B. McCurdy of the Macmillan Company dated April 17, 1946.

[52]Brett to Channing, July 26, 1917, Macmillan Collection.

[53]*Ibid.*, November 19, 1926.

During the year 1925, Channing commented twice to Brett on sales. In June he wrote:

> I was looking over our letters of 1897 or 1898 in which we outlined the work and the contract. I certainly never expected to write a book that would receive the recognition by scholars that this book has received or bring in the amount of money that this book has brought in. If I remember rightly, you never expected to sell many copies until the set was completed, somewhere about our seventy-fifth year. I am glad that our anticipations failed of realization and that the book has brought in money every year to you and to me. Let us hope that it will keep right on doing so.[54]

In October he speculated about methods of completing the set, then concluded: "But we have sold quite a lot of copies and both of us have made money, so 'Why worry?'" There was also a postscript: "And we are going to make more money by it, too."[55]

As for the use to which Channing put the earnings from his books, not a great deal is known. He seems to have continued throughout his life the habit he developed as a Harvard student of small-scale stock speculation, but mostly he placed his extra income in savings. Commenting on this to Brett in a 1927 letter, Channing said, "I am writing this to let you see that I make a good use of the moneys which my books earn for me and do not spend them in stock gambling or in idle living."[56] His comment to Brett in 1923 that "when the book is completed

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[54]Channing to Brett, June 19, 1925, Ibid.

[55]Ibid., October 29, 1925.

[56]Ibid., December 23, 1927.

and sells by the hundred thousand copies, my heirs will rejoice and my ashes will rise out of Cotuit Harbor and raise a paean of joy,"[57] was not all in jest. According to one of his grandsons, Channing was a "shrewd" financial person who left "a small fortune" when he died, and the family is still [1966] getting royalties from his books.[58]

Such information as this, however, conveys only a small part of the influence of Edward Channing as a historian. There is no doubt of the influence of "thesis" historians such as Beard and Turner, at least in the stimulation of research. For a historian such as Channing, noted primarily for a comprehensive general history, determination of such direct influence is much more difficult. Still there is some evidence of it. At least five students of Channing who became prominent themselves paid tribute to him in one form or another. These were Samuel Eliot Morison, Evarts B. Greene, Carl Russell Fish, Samuel Flagg Bemis, and James P. Baxter III.[59] In addition to the History, with its direct influence and stimulus to further research, surely it is safe to assume a great deal of influence on the part of a person who taught for forty-seven years at one

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[57] Ibid., October 8, 1923.

[58] Willard P. Fuller, Jr., in an interview with him and his mother, Elizabeth Channing Fuller, August 19, 1966, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[59] DeNovo, "Edward Channing's 'Great Work' Twenty Years After," p. 273; and James Phinney Baxter III, The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. viii.

of the nation's great educational institutions, who co-authored one of the finest bibliographical guides to American history ever produced, and who wrote one of the best and most widely used United States history textbooks in the first quarter of the present century.

Certainly Channing had a high reputation at the time of his death. Realizing the tendency to over-statement in obituaries, still it surely is not devoid of significance that Channing's passing was lamented and his work praised by such diverse and important publications as Time, the Nation,[60] and the American Historical Review. Said the latter:

> A faithful and vigorous teacher,...he trained a multitude of students in the application to... history of his own high and exacting standards, and was their steady friend ever after....The merits widely recognized in this monumental work [the History] lie in the thoroughness of the author's researches, his constant use and recognition of special monographs preceding, the determined fairness with which he strove to emancipate himself from Bostonian prepossessions, his sturdy independence, and, especially in the later volumes, a freshness of view which led him, disregarding traditional valuations, to place his emphasis on the things that seemed to him really significant.[61]

If the American Historical Review was inclined to exaggerate on the occasion of Channing's death, perhaps Hart would not have been quite so inclined to do so on the occasion of Channing's resignation. Here is what he wrote to Channing

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[60]"Death v. Historian," Time, January 19, 1931; Nation, CXXXII (January 21, 1931), p. 59.

[61]American Historical Review, XXXVI (April, 1931), p. 661.

at that time:

> Absence over seas has prevented an earlier recognition of the significance of your announced purpose to take the Chiltern Hundreds. That decision will remove the direct teaching of a man who has for two generations been a pedagogical power. Constantly I meet former students who "studied with Channing." You have been a great force in the rational teaching of American History--accurate, live, modern, interesting, memorable.
>
> You have also been a trainer of teachers--the country is studied [sic] with men and women--who have been directed by you into fields of research; and who have learned from you the inestimable lesson of the value above all other things of truth--so far as truth can be discerned.
>
> Of your place as a writer of history I need not enlarge. You are the only trained scholar who has accomplished what Bancroft attempted--a scholarly history of the United States of America, from discovery to the author's own day. I doubt whether any writer in the next generation will repeat that task; it demands youth, health, opportunity, and unconformable pluck. Bancroft is shelved. I expect Channing to be read for a century.[62]

This last prediction was certainly over-optimistic. Despite Morison's statement quoted at the head of this chapter that he still finds Channing useful on specific subjects; despite the fact that he used some of Channing's volumes in courses at Harvard as late as the years just after World War II and found them to be very popular with the students;[63] and despite Herbert W. Hill's statement that much of Channing's work "is still useful and has stood up very well"[64]--despite

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[62] Albert Bushnell Hart to Edward Channing, April 14, 1929, "Resignation" folder in possession of Elizabeth Channing Fuller, Chatham, Massachusetts.

[63] Interview with Samuel Eliot Morison, June 9, 1967, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[64] Letter to the author from Herbert W. Hill, September 16, 1966.

all these things, apparently, virtually no one, even graduate students, reads the Great Work anymore. The Macmillan Company has now let it go out of print. It is probably true, as Crane Brinton says, that Channing's work tends to be under-rated today, indeed even ignored to a certain extent. The most that can be said for Channing's influence today is that it is an indirect one. Channing, Hart, and Turner, says one recent writer, "were the leading historians in the period 1890 to 1930." As such, they "helped to train American historians of the generation immediately prior to that which is now in power," including Morison, Merk, and William L. Langer. The present generation, in turn, looks to these three, plus Schlesinger, as its mentors.[65]

William Roscoe Thayer stated emphatically in 1905 that "The cooperative history will not, it is clear, displace the work of the single historian."[66] Channing himself once expressed an aversion to such series: "I am strongly impressed with the undesirability of 'series' from the teacher's and reader's point of view. There are always a few good books in these publications and a lot of very poor ones."[67] However,

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[65]Frank Pemberton, "New Vistas in American History," Harvard Today (Spring, 1966), p. 4. Herbert W. Hill said this of his Harvard days: "Of the men I saw and got to know well--Channing, Schlesinger, Merk, and Morison, all of whom were distinct characters--I think Channing had more ideas." (Letter to the author, September 26, 1966.)

[66]William Roscoe Thayer, "The Outlook in History," Atlantic Monthly, XCVI (July, 1905), p. 77.

[67]Channing to Brett, September 4, 1919, Macmillan Collection.

the trend toward series with individual authors writing the volumes on their own specialties, already underway even in Channing's day, will doubtless continue. Channing's Great Work, indeed, will surely be the last multi-volume study of all United States history by a single author. What an accomplishment it was, however, for when it was written!

Time has passed Edward Channing's historical works by, and many of his methods. This should not be lamented. Channing himself knew it would happen. "No historian can hope to live as can a poet or an essayist," he once wrote, "because new facts will constantly rise to invalidate his most careful conclusions."[68] But Edward truly was a great Channing, and his work truly was a great work. Something of a transitional figure between the "old" and the "new" history, Channing can also be justifiably considered one of the first of the "scientific" school of American historians. He founded no "school" of history himself, but he did mold hundreds of scholars. He is noted for no all-encompassing interpretation of American history, but he did make hundreds of worthwhile interpretations. Among Channing's weakest points were his literary style and his ability to synthesize. However, even with his stylistic problems, his meaning was always clear. And his meticulous historical techniques can well serve as a model even

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[68]Edward Channing, A History of the United States, Volume V: The Period of Transition, 1815-1848 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 305.

today. Finally, the wholeness of view of a work like Channing's History, with one author covering virtually the entire span of American history, was a quality which the multi-authored series of today simply cannot duplicate. In short, Edward Channing deserves always to be remembered as "one of the giants of American historiography."[69]

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[69]DeNovo, "Edward Channing's 'Great Work' Twenty Years After," p. 257.

NOTES ON SOURCES

I. PRIMARY MATERIAL

In a work of this kind, primarily historiographical in nature, the writings of Edward Channing himself obviously constitute a major primary source even though they are available in published form, for it is his work that is being evaluated.

One Channing effort which had not appeared in print until 1967, when Channing's grandson, Willard P. Fuller, Jr., privately printed a limited number of copies, was his autobiography. Channing intended to call it "Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man," and the forty pages of single-spaced typing he had completed by his death are a gold mine of biographical information. Unfortunately, the narrative stopped with 1896, so that Channing never covered the years of the Great Work.

Though several of the manuscript collections contained interesting and helpful items, by far the most valuable single one was the Edward Channing file of the Macmillan Authors Collection in the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library. It contains two boxes of material, mostly correspondence between Channing and Macmillan Company President George P. Brett in the years 1895 to 1931. The collection was a source of personal information on Channing, the progress on his writings, his own evaluation thereof, the relationship between Channing and his publisher, and, to a limited extent, sales figures for his books.

Interviews with those who knew Channing in one way or another were extremely interesting, and helpful primarily in that they allowed a personal touch otherwise not possible. The same is true of the numerous letters to the author from Channing acquaintances. Among those individuals who were especially helpful in these two areas were Paul H. Buck, E. E. Dale, Robert H. Haynes, Frederick Merk, Samuel Eliot Morison, Merle Curti, Herbert W. Hill, Edward C. Kirkland, Richard L. Morton, Kenneth B. Murdock, Elliott Perkins, Arthur P. Whitaker, and Channing's two daughters, Alice Channing and Elizabeth Channing Fuller, and grandson, Willard P. Fuller, Jr.

The secretary's reports of the Harvard graduating class of 1878 proved helpful, particularly the brief notices which Channing submitted himself.

Finally, the honors thesis which Channing's grandson, John Channing Fuller, wrote as a senior at Williams College in 1943 was a much more useful source than one might assume. True, the work, entitled "Edward Channing: Essays on The Man, The Teacher, and The Writer," sometimes gave evidence of the familial relationship of author and subject and of the undergraduate status of the author. Considering those things, however, it was an excellent piece of work.

II. SECONDARY MATERIAL

The most helpful items in this category were the various brief efforts at assessment of Channing utilized in the eleventh chapter: Weaver, DeNovo, Fahrney, Fish, Morison,

Lowell, and Fuller. There is really no need to say anything further about them here.

Only a few other items are worthy of special mention. Both Michael Kraus (The Writing of American History, 1953), and Harvey Wish (The American Historian, 1960) include brief assessments of Channing and help place him in proper perspective in the over-all story of American historical writing.

The many reviews of Channing's books, showing how they were evaluated at the time, were quite useful in determining how to evaluate them now.

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