

CONTRIBUTIONS.

HOW IRVING BROUGHT ABOUT THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

BY MAUDE HICKS.

With feelings of deep regret, Irving noted the literary animosity growing daily between England and America. Animosity had been awakened in regard to the United States, and the London press was filled with volumes of travels through the Republic; but these publications seemed to diffuse error rather than knowledge, and notwithstanding the constant intercourse between the nations, there were no people concerning whom the British public had less pure information. It was the misfortune of our country to be visited by the lowest type of English travelers, while to the deserts and barbarous nations she sent her cultured men to study the habits of a people with whom she could have no permanent intercourse, profit or pleasure. To America came the broken-down tradesman and scheming adventurer from whom England seemed content to receive information concerning a country in a singular state of moral and physical development, a country in which one of the greatest political experiments in the history of the world was being enacted. That such men should give prejudiced accounts of America, is not a matter of surprise, from a standpoint of human nature, for the conditions of our country were too vast and elevated for their comprehension.

Washington Irving, the first American recognized in England as a writer, was also the first who had no political or religious views to teach. Until his time, American books were in England almost universally ignored, but before the close of his literary career our literature had won for itself the respect and hearing of the greatest literary nation. Before this time, however, Europeans had thought it marvelous that one from the wilds of America should express himself in good English; naturally he was looked upon as something new and strange in literature, a prodigy of America.

In early childhood he had read of the historical and political associations connected with places of Europe, and naturally his young, adventurous spirit craved to be near and see these strange and interesting novelties. His first visit to Europe in 1804 made him familiar with the rural life of France, Italy, Switzerland, and England, and inspired within him the desire for the cultivation of the aesthetic powers which he hoped to attain through the study of art and attention given to music. Thus, on reaching England, he was prepared to mingle

with the best of society, and felt at home among students of art and music. When he last visited the Old World he remained many years, and became prominent in the most exclusive society, making a close friendship with England's greatest poet of the day, Sir Walter Scott.

Irving had a shrewd perception of that which lent itself to literary treatment, which is probably due to his English origin, nevertheless he was a true American both in spirit of ideals and patriotism.

We are unconsciously drawn to Irving through a humor that is free from bitterness, through a goodness that is unfeigned and pure, and through a love and sympathy that he has for all mankind alike. His first important work, *History of New York*, a satirical history of the Dutch, is rightly called the first masterpiece of American wit and humor, a proof of which is shown by Scott's reading it aloud to his family, meanwhile laughing heartily over it. However, in the *Sketch Book*, the humor is more restrained and gentle, yet the style is easy and winning and we are impressed with it as a whole more than with the exuberant fun of his first effort.

Through the short stories of the *Sketch Book*, which were descriptive scenes of both countries, were portrayed the true features with such a charm that won each to the other and drew forth appreciation where before existed, through ignorance, animosity and prejudice.

Irving, a typical American, fearless and honest, looked England straight in the face and revealed the situation in which one stood in relation to the other. His winning personality, his big-heartedness and his abundant flow of humor were no small influences in bringing about this change of feeling and fair understanding, but it was mainly through his pen came that harmonious chord of good feeling along all lines.

Then it was he realized the accomplishment of his highest hopes, when he said, "If I can make my reader more in good humor with his fellow-beings and with himself, surely—surely I shall not then have written entirely in vain."

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE NEW ENGLAND AND THE VIRGINIA COLONIES.

BY MAMIE WILDER.

"It has been said of these two colonies that one was the offspring of economical distress, and the other of ecclesiastical tyranny." Whether or not they came for the worthy purpose of advancing civilization or for mere personal interest, it is sufficient to know that these colonies have been the fountain heads of the nation's greatness.

As widely as the motives, inhabitants, re-

ligion, government, climate, and education of the two colonies differed, in such contrast do we expect their development along all lines to take form.

The settlers of Virginia, who landed on the banks of the James River in 1607, were mostly soldiers of fortune, idlers, debtors, and men representing almost every shade of social condition, of religion, politics, and moral character. Though Virginia was settled for glory or for gold, we shall see that she accomplished far more than such motives would lead us to expect.

The settlers of New England, who landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, had a higher and more worthy motive perhaps—to seek freedom of worship, more clearly expressed by one of the clergymen in the early days of the colony, "We came hither because we would have our posterity settled under the pure and full dispensation of the Gospel, defended by rulers that should be of ourselves." They wanted to be separated from the world and live a life of pious devotion and self-denial.

It has long since been proved that the middle class is the pillar of any country, and on this foundation the New England colonists began to build. By seeing how conscientiously they pursued their work and what progress they made in their many enterprises, we verily believe with them that "God sifted a whole nation that He might send the choice grain over into this wilderness of New England."

This chosen man of the North tilled the soil and made all his necessary furniture and kitchen utensils—thus proving true the old saying, "necessity is the mother of invention." His southern brother tilled the fertile soil of the Sunny South, and with the money made on the farm purchased his chairs, tables, and many other essentials, from England. In this way the former's mental and physical faculties were exercised, while the latter's physical faculties alone were strengthened.

The government of Virginia was a monarchy, while that of New England was a republic. This northern section was divided into districts or townships, in each of which was a meeting place where all the male inhabitants gathered and discussed freely any question that was of interest to them. This was really the beginning of the republican form of government, which we to-day deem such an excellent institution. Virginia, seeing the advantages of this form of government, made hers conform more to that of her sister colony's, profiting thereby.

Virginia was blind to the needs of education from the erroneous idea that learning brought about disobedience and heresy. During the early half of the eighteenth century