

atrociously turgid, the books possessed a true ring and a genuine flavour. They interested me very much, and I began to wonder at what I had been told. The next time I met my friend I asked him why Alcott's writings were looked upon by some persons as mistakes. "Oh," said he, "Alcott shouldn't write. His forte is to talk." It then began to dawn upon me that Mr. Alcott was a conversationalist, and that his books were composed of scraps of talk, bits of intellectual gossip from his easy chair and detached sentences from his drawing-room conversations. I became at once deeply interested in the man. I had read his works, I wanted to know more about his personality and his mode of life. I am afraid I felt very much like the two young damsels, Thackeray tells of, who having paid their shilling to see the Zoological Exhibition, and being unable to get past the pushing multitude, were about giving up in despair the idea of seeing anything for their money, when a man near them pointed out Lord Macaulay who was standing in the crowd, whereupon one of them exclaimed in a loud voice, is that Mr. Macaulay? Never mind the hippopotamus. Let us see *him*.

Mr. Alcott is four years the senior of his friend and near neighbour, Emerson. He was born at Walcott, Connecticut, on the 27th November, 1799, and like the poet-essayist at an early period in his life, he studied philosophical subjects and leaned towards Transcendentalism—that intellectual episode, as some one has not inaptly termed it. Indeed he was one of the great prophets and heads of the faith in New England, and though he never belonged to the Brook-farm Association, he linked his fortunes with a similar undertaking on a farm at Harvard, to which he gave the name of Fruitlands. This project embraced among other things, the planting of a Family order whose great aim was to afford a means of enjoying a quiet, pastoral life—a sort of bucolic and ideal existence which the devoted people who comprised the little community had framed in their