

more despotic. A rigid believer in witchcraft, he doomed to the flames a treatise in which that belief was denounced as a delusion. He was, nevertheless, with all his mistakes of judgment, a singularly able man, who would have made his mark in any community. But to Cotton, his son, the grandson of his reverend namesake, fell the largest share of the gifts of both families. A prodigy of scholarship, acquainted with many languages, deeply read in various lore, a preacher of wondrous power, an enthusiast in fasting and prayer, Cotton Mather had gifts which, in a less bigoted age and under happier direction, might have borne fruit of which all mankind would partake and be satisfied. As it is, his legacy to the world, though valuable for the light it sheds on his time and surroundings, can win small sympathy from an enlightened age. It must be remembered, however, that Cotton Mather simply believed with sincerity what many persons, not of his own communion only, but of all Christian churches, regarded as important verities revealed from above, which to doubt was to commit a well-nigh unpardonable sin. Not by our milder and humaner creed must the Mathers be judged, but by the code of a period on which, though freedom had begun to dawn, its sun was not risen upon the earth. Viewed in that light, they were great men, serving God and their fellows with what they sincerely believed to be the best that was in them, and what a succession! Instead of Brahmins, we might almost say Levites in speaking of New England's family chains of more or less distinguished divines, so rigidly, as if by resistless obligation, did generation after generation serve the altar.

Richard, Increase and Cotton were not the only illustrations of "hereditary genius" offered by this remarkable family. Greater scions than any of them were to grow upon the family tree. In 1703, shortly after Cotton Mather's "Magnalia" had been printed in London, there was born at Windsor, Connecticut, the man in whom the metaphysical acumen which Calvinistic theology fosters in its adepts was to attain its ultimate intensity and sharpness of edge. Of all who shared in the blood of Richard Mather and John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards had the keenest intellect, and won, in his day, the widest celebrity. One might almost fancy that preceding generations had been purposely evolving that gigantic mind that it might master and expound the deep things of Augustinian divinity. Certainly the doctrine of heredity has seldom had a more convincing illustration than Edwards. His ancestry on both sides was clerical for several generations, and the whole vent of his genius was a foregone conclusion. He was, by his origin, the predestined expositor of predestination. In the direction of rigid orthodoxy, driven to its logical goal, development in him reached its limit. We are hardly surprised that in his son Pierrepont, reaction began. An eminent lawyer and patriot, he fought the battle of toleration in the church, as he fought that of freedom in the field and in the senate.

A still more famous representative of the blood and brains of Jonathan Edwards was destined to play an important and, unhappily, not always an honourable part on the stage of his country's political as well as military history. About the middle of the last century, a clergyman of German descent, a graduate of Yale, of scholarship sufficient to enable him to preside with credit over the College of New Jersey, which he had been largely instrumental in founding, paid successful court to a daughter of Jonathan Edwards. Of the marriage was born Aaron Burr, his father's namesake, who began his remarkable career as the bearer of despatches from Arnold to Montgomery, then serving in Canada on the enterprise in which he soon after met his death. In spite of that moral obliquity which misled him so tragically for himself and others, the third Vice-President (by popular vote the Associate President) of the United States was not without redeeming traits. The winning courtesy of manner which came to him from courtly ancestors was also inherited by another and very different representative of the genius of Edwards, the great theologian, Timothy Dwight. In various walks of life, the Trumbulls, also, whom auspicious fate allied with the Edwardses and Pierreponts, did good service to their country in its hour of need and trial. Jonathan Trumbull had the peculiar distinction of being the only Colonial Governor who took the patriotic side in the Revolution; and, if it be true that to Washington's implicit trust in his wisdom and resource is due the epithet "Brother Jonathan," as applied to the typical American, no son of the Republic need be ashamed of the name. His two sons, of whom one also became Governor of Connecticut, while the other was both an artist and a soldier, were entirely worthy of such a father. More famous, perhaps, than either of them was John Trumbull, who wrote "McFingal," the burlesque epic which fought the fight of freedom. A poem that has passed through more than thirty editions and is still read and enjoyed both in America and Europe must have had merits considerably above the average. I find a long and favourable notice of it in the *Monthly Review* for January, 1793. "British royalists," says the candid critic, "have for more than a century enjoyed a poet laureate in Butler; and the American republicans are now supported by no mean satirist in the person of the writer of the poem before us, who possesses a genius which may claim respectable affinity with that which produced the celebrated 'Hudibras.' We are informed that the author of this burlesque epic poem is John Trumbull, Esq., an eminent counsellor in the State of Connecticut, a near relative of the late Governor Trumbull, of that State, and of Mr. Trumbull, the painter, and that he is known in his own country for many other works of genius and of utility both in prose and verse."

Another patriotic pen whose offspring cannot be passed over in silence is that which was wielded with such telling effect by Joseph Hopkinson, author of "Hail, Columbia!" It is in accordance with the theory of heredity that Francis, the father of the poet, one of the aristocracy of the Signers, should himself have wielded the pen of the ready and vigorous writer. As a satirist, he had attracted notice in the dawn of the great

struggle, and through his outspoken republican principles forfeited a good position under the Colonial Government of New Jersey. His wife, Joseph's mother, was Miss Borden, of Bordenstown.

The military and naval history of the United States supplies frequent instances of talented families. Again and again we meet with father and son, uncle and nephew, brothers and cousins, who have won distinction on the sea or in the field. The Barrons, father and two sons, the Perry brothers, the Porters, of whom no less than seven rose to high rank in the army and navy, may be cited as conspicuous examples of the possession by several members of a family of the same kind of ability. McClellan, in the estimation of not a few the greatest of American generals, was, according to the English *St. James's Gazette*, a second cousin of Lord Clyde. In other cases, with equal ability, the kinsmen attain to eminence by diverse paths. John Sherman becomes a statesman; his brother, William Tecumseh, wins golden spurs on the battlefield. One Carroll is a diplomatist and political writer; another is a high ecclesiastic. J. J. Crittenden was a senator; his son, a major-general. Benjamin Rush was one of the most famous physicians of his day; his son, Richard, became minister to Great Britain, and negotiated some important treaties. Then, again, there are the *nobilissimi pachi* who are born to distinction to whatever class of workers they may choose to attach themselves, because heredity has endowed them with the *open sesame* that commands success. Such are the Livingstons, the Hamiltons, the Schuylers, the Beechers, the Clintons, the Lees, the De Lanceys, the Chases, and other families which, in the United States, hold the same rank in public estimation as the Cecils, the Spencers, the Grenvilles, the Russells, the Fitzmaurices, the Stanleys, the Howards, and others of the great ruling houses of England.

There is a distinction, nevertheless, to be observed between the advantages which raise to eminence the members of illustrious families on this side of the Atlantic and those by which the sons of British nobles secure the prizes of power. High birth alone will not give to any contemporary Englishman a place of influence in either Church or State; though it was not always so. There, as here, the people are the ultimate choosers of their own rulers. Benjamin Disraeli and William Ewart Gladstone soared by the strength of their intellects, and by inborn force of character, above the heads of scores of noble rivals. Their chances in England were pretty much the same as they would have been in America. But, after all, it was a tough struggle. They won recognition slowly, through persistent courage and strength of will. They were both old men before the common goal of their ambition was reached. Whether in the United States either of them would have been elected President may, owing to peculiarities in the mode of election, be an open question; but, in the start of their careers, they would have been acknowledged and accepted for what they were, and would not have had the chagrin of seeing mediocrities preferred to them merely owing to the privilege of birth. No family record will secure for a dull, inferior man even the minor prizes of life in a republic. If the members of distinguished families attain distinction, it is not through affectionate recognition of ancestral services, but through the signs of promise in the living man. The senator owes his position to nothing at all resembling the system of the British House of Lords, where the young peer has all the advantages of the best training in the highest statesmanship without his asking for them. They are often, in fact, thrust on those who are incapable of appreciating the boon. The educated and polished American senator of good family occupies his seat in the councils of the nation not because he bears a proud, historic name, but because by talent and conduct he has proved himself worthy of it. There may even be cases where, though the inheritor may have ability above the average, the legacy is a drawback to himself, and a cause of disappointment to his fellow-citizens. At any rate, we may rest assured that when an Adams, a Lane, a Pendleton, or a Lincoln is exalted above his fellows, it is on account of his own merits, not by way of tribute to distinguished forefathers. If Mr. Bayard is Secretary of State, it is not because he comes of a family of statesmen, but because he is a statesman himself. Proud though the American people may be of their great men of the past, he would be laughed at who would propose to make Endicott Secretary of War because his ancestor was a Colonial Governor, and his grandfather a Secretary of the Navy; or who would ascribe Mr. Lane's elevation to his place in the Cabinet to the fact that his father had been a minister to England. All the more weighty, as instances of "hereditary genius," are those successes on the higher stage of politics. It is, indeed, especially interesting to meet, not only within the range of statecraft or other public service, but in literature, in art, in social pre-eminence, in philanthropy and in every walk of life, among those who modestly take the places offered to them by popular favour, or its reflection, with the descendants of the great characters which made American history what it is. Looked at in that light, a pedigree has significance. It helps us to understand facts of moment. There are many cases, it is true, where genius—that is, special aptitude for a particular study or research, for creative production in literature or art, or for organizing and administration—cannot thus be accounted for. But if we had more of such biographic sketches as that which Carlyle has left us of his obscure but not ungifted parentage—though there the impression may be heightened by filial veneration—the apparition of men and women of genius amid seemingly incongruous environment, and as if they had been born, not as St. Paul says, out of due time, but out of due place, would, perhaps, be less mysterious. Knowing what we know, however, it is not surprising that the Rev. Abiel Holmes should have a son, Oliver Wendell; or that the distinguished Dr. Bryant should have been the father of the poet, or that the valiant Col. Prescott, of Bunker's Hill, should have had a grandson with the gift of describing deeds of arms; or that Bishop Chase should have been uncle and tutor of the Chief Justice.

I have as yet made little direct mention of women in my list of