

believe, is the germination and increase, in the organism which we call a nation, of such vital cells as the instinct of loyalty. Perhaps after a thousand years more, when for the tenth time in their history an Emperor William has come to the throne of his ancestors, the Germans may be able to realise something of what we felt when we saw the descendant of Edward the Elder following in the funeral train of a Queen of England who was the fifty-second monarch of her lineage and title.

And now, after all these centuries of an allegiance upon which we look back with a just and honourable pride, we find ourselves standing in more ways than one upon the threshold of a new age. In the long reign which has just ended, successive generations of men were born and came to maturity under a freedom which was still rather expanding than contracting; and not only the thoughts of mankind, but their very modes of thought were widely changed. There is not one of all our beliefs and feelings which has not been subjected to the test of criticism as well as of experience; they have been tried by fire, by acids, and by solvents. Opinions differ strangely as to the result. According to some, it is to be the passing away of Christianity as a motive force in the world's progress—a theory which may safely be left to time for an answer; others have proclaimed the extinction of all those ideas which have lasted from mediæval times into our own day, but which we are told must now disappear, with their greatest exponents, Shakespeare and Scott, into the limbo where the fragments of feudalism rust. "From first to last," Walt Whitman says of these two typical poets, "they exhale that spirit of caste which we Americans have come on earth to destroy." And he finds in another typical poet of our own time "the flavour, the conviction, the lush-ripening culmination and last honey of decay of that feudalism which the mighty English dramatist painted in all the splendours of its noon and afternoon."

In the essays from which these words are quoted there is much that is true or prophetic, and little that is not admirable at least in spirit. But the argument seems to us to be