

dauntedly defying its power. How just is our Island Homer! Neither Greek nor Trojan sways him; Achilles is his hero; Hector is his favorite; he loves the counsels of chiefs, and the palace of Priam; but the swineherd, the charioteer, the slave girl, the hound, the beggar, and the herdsman all glow alike in the harmonious coloring of his peopled epic. We see the dawn of our English nation, the defence of Christendom against the Koran, the grace and terror of feudalism, the rise of monarchy out of baronies, the rise of parliaments out of monarchy, the rise of industry out of serfage, the pathetic ruin of chivalry, the splendid death struggle of Catholicism, the syivan tribes of the mountain — remnants of our prehistoric forefathers — beating themselves to pieces against the hard advance of modern industry. We see the grim heroism of the Bible martyrs, the catastrophe of feudalism overwhelmed by a practical age which knows little of its graces and almost nothing of its virtues. Such, I say, is Walter Scott. A "back number" forsooth! This glorious and most human and most historical of writers, without whom our very conception of human development would have been forever imperfect. No, Walter Scott is too great a genius ever to become a "back number," and any man who cannot perceive his transcendent qualities is very deficient himself in mental equipment.

And what shall I say of Charles Dickens, the greatest novelist that the world has ever bred? I should like to tell you what he has done for me, personally; how strong and sweet his influence has ever been and will continue to be as long as life lasts. If it be the soul that makes men rich or poor, he who has given the world a truer conception of beauty, which is the body of truth, as love is its spirit, has done more for the happiness of his country and to secure its freedom than if he had doubled its defences or its revenues. He who has taught a man to look kindly upon a flower or an insect