

The visionary philosopher followed up his project so far as to transport himself—not to the summer islands, of which Waller had sung,—but to Rhode Island, where he sojourned for three years, in pleasant seclusion and meditative work. He rejoiced in the “still air of delightful studies;” planned many perfect Utopias; speculated on space and time, and objective idealism; and then bade farewell to America, and to his romantic dream of regenerated savages and a renovated world.

Yet the refined metaphysical idealist was by no means the latest dreamer of such dreams. In our own century Southey, Coleridge, and the little band of Bristol enthusiasts who planned their grand pantisocratic scheme of intellectual communism; created for themselves, with like fertile fancy, a Utopia of their own,

“Where Susquehanna pours his untamed stream;”

and many a later dreamer has striven after ideal perfectibility in “peaceful Freedom’s undivided dale.”

In truth, in all ways we are reminded that this is a new world, still young and sanguine; familiar with the splendour of its own western suns; and seeing in them the promises of a brighter morrow. The thoughtful student of history cannot look on the marvellous advantages, and all the wondrous capacities of this young country, without anticipating for it a great future. And why should not young Canada indulge the amplest hopes of youthful fancy, on which no thought of the impossible intrudes?

“Maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth.
This fine young world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that
guides.”

With all the impulsive eagerness of youth, as the leaders of thought and of action, alike in the young Republic,

and in our still more youthful Dominion, take each new step, it is with the consciousness that it is a first step, untrammelled by the traditions and the conventionalities inherited from an ancient past; “a happy clime,” as, with Bishop Berkeley, we would fondly believe,

“Where nature guides, and virtue rules;
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense,
The pedantry of Courts and Schools.”

The poet Longfellow—in the highest characteristics of his genius as a sweet singer, a true link between old and new England,—has very recently passed away from us; and as I note the movement for some fitting monumental memorial of the sweet New England singer, the fact serves to recall the characteristic terms with which, in very recent years, Bayard Taylor thus dedicated the monument to another of the New England poets: Fitzgreene Halleck. “We have been eighty years” said he, “an organized nation, ninety-three years an independent people, more than two hundred years an American race; and to-day, for the first time in our history, we meet to dedicate publicly, with appropriate honours, a monument to an American poet.”

Since then the youthful American Republic, vigorous offspring of Old England, has attained her majority; and at the grand Centennial gathering at Philadelphia, in May, 1876, the poet Whittier’s graceful invocation, after craving that beneath our western skies may be fulfilled “the Orient’s mission of good-will,” thus closed the nation’s appeal to “our father’s God:”—

“O! make Thou us, thro’ centuries long
In peace secure, and justice strong;
Around our gift of Freedom draw
The safeguards of Thy righteous law,
And, cast in some diviner mould,
Let the new cycle shame the old!”

We too are this day inaugurating a