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the principal asset of the artist; but at least America might have produced a Herrick or a Burns. The continent is epic in mass, lyric in detail, dramatic in motion, dithyrambic in rest—and nothing comes of it. Is it because there is no settled order of things, no standard acquiesced in for centuries? Sometimes I think it must be that. Archimedes must have a fulcrum for his lever. In Europe the overturning of the dynasties has usually been the signal for an outburst of every kind of art. Here, however, there is in a sense nothing to overturn. People drift from Methodism to Zionism through Theosophy, Christian Science and Nut-foodism, without a single wavelet over their mental gunwale. If you tell a man that black is white, he gets thoughtful, and says: "Yes, stranger, I guess that is so."

Nothing is a shock; nothing shatters a great citadel in the soul. Hence no fireworks when the fortress falls, which it does at the blast of no ram's horn, but at the rattling of dried peas in an ass's skull!

If this is not a satisfactory explanation, one must fall back upon the old platitudes about America being a "very young country." It is true: there is so much to do that no one has time to reflect. Poetry is born in the stillness of the soul; boredom is one of its chief stimuli.

The actual life of America is anything but favourable to art production; and there is such exuberance of vitality that there is no need of its concentration. America, too, is a great place for mute inglorious Miltons; a thousand poets might write masterpieces, and we never hear of it. The commercialism of the country is too rampant.

And yet (in conclusion!) the record of America is not bad. Giant inducements, no doubt, but also giant obstacles, and this—deeper and higher than all—that, take one thing with another, man is not equal to his circumstances. Art comes when man has understood his milieu, mastered his life.

There is one poet who has spent most of his life among mountains. He has sung a good deal of the hills of Cumberland, written a little of the Alps, made a poem or so on the mountains of Mexico, an allusion here and there to the Himalayas, though he spent more time in the last than the first, and the impression was a thousandfold more