

## ART IN AMERICA

that it was the National Anthem of their guests of the evening.

It may be remarked in passing that America has only produced one really great man of science—Simon Newcomb. The boasted inventions of the Americans do not exist.\* What they invent is "notions" based on the discoveries of others. Edison is merely an organiser and adapter of scientific brains. The telephone itself was due to Bell, an Englishman. I cannot think of any one scientific discovery of the first importance which was made in the United States. In Europe we had Kelvin, Helmholtz, Hertz, Haeckel, Darwin, Young, Lister, Pasteur—the pen runs on, one could fill a page from memory. I studied chemistry, physics, and biology pretty thoroughly at one time; I do not recall any American name in the text-books. Such men as we know are people like Tesla and Lowell, who are not even serious. We must absolve America from Tesla, however, as he is but a recently imported product. In medicine the only name that occurs is Weir-Mitchell, and all that he did was to point out that over-worked people had better stay in bed. Of course, there is an enormous amount of work of second-rate importance; but none of the first rank.

As to philosophy, we have even less material for our criticism. The earliest figure in American philosophical literature of any notoriety is George Starkey, the alchemist. There is, however, nothing very distinctive about him; it needs an expert to tell him from Fludd, Ripley, or Sendivogius.

After him, no name awakes in memory until Emerson, and Emerson did nothing particularly new; William James is the only name that occurs to me with anything like a feeling of respect.†

A sorry story!

And why is it? Why is it that with everything in favour of new birth, of "variation," we find so very little born? Consider the astounding avidity with which the American

\* It must be understood that the author is expressing purely personal opinions, for which, editorially, we are nowise responsible.—Ed.

† That feeling is, however, very strong; I think "Varieties of Religious Experience" one of the most important books ever published. But why did the good man waste such a lot of time on Mrs. Piper? Automatic writing will never open the Gates of Immortality.