

WINSLOW HOMER

recognizable form. He had not feeling for the hint or the suggestion until he came to the water-color, which is of course most essentially that sort of medium. He knew its scope and its limitations and never stepped out of its boundaries, and he achieved a fine mastery in it. His imitators will never arrive at his severity because they are not flint yankee. They have not the hard head and snappy tongue. It was yankee crabbedness that gave Homer his grip on the idea he had in mind. Florida lent a softer tone to what Maine rocks could not give him. He is American from skin to skeleton, and a leader among yankee as well as American geniuses. He probably hated as much as Thoreau, and in his steely way admired as much. It was fire from the flintlock in them both, though nature had a far softer and loftier persuasion with the Concord philosopher and naturalist.

Homer remains a figure in our American culture through his feeling for reality. He has learned through slavery to detail to put down the essential fact, however abundantly or however sparsely. He has a little of Courbet's sense of the real, and none whatever of his sense of the imaginative. It was enough for him to classicize the realistic incident. He impels me to praise through his yankee insistence upon integrity. Story is story with Homer and he leaves legend to itself. It is the narrative of the Whittier type, homely, genuine, and typical. He never stepped outside of his yankee determina-