

230 West 59 Street, New York.

Jan. 24, 1891.

My dear Clark,

Not long ago Mr. Geo. W. Batchelder, who has much to do with the new edition of Webster's dictionary, asked my opinion as to gentlemen in distant regions, who would be able to appreciate the value of the work, and who would write some acknowledgment of its merits which the publishers might refer to. Having examined the book carefully myself, and knowing that it deserves the highest praise, I seized this occasion to get a good book into your library - you being thus far the only man I have recommended. I am informed by a note - but on second thoughts I enclose the note. The address does not appear to be so full as it ought to be for such a valuable parcel. I hope you will test the volume by examination of its treatment of words in which you are interested, and write your opinion. Perhaps it would be well to put Batchelder's name on the envelope when you write.

On my return from England I met Dan'l G. Thompson, who thanked me cordially for introducing him to you. He thinks you had "a good time" here. So I hope. I have been doing a lot of light work (I hope by the way my namesake has received his copy of "George Washington's" "Rules of Civility" - if not let me know), and am now deep in one of the biggest and most delightful tasks of my life. I hope it will appear in the late spring under the title: "Thomas Paine. A History." I never before realized what a very great man Paine was. I have a very large quantity of letters & other materials never published. I

am so fascinated by the work that wife says I do not remember even the names of people unless they lived in the last century. I have just made the interesting discovery that the first thing that Paine ever wrote for publication in his life was in the month after his arrival in America, and that it was a powerful antislavery essay. It might have been written by Wendell Phillips himself. It was published March 8, 1775 in a Philadelphia paper, and then it has lain untouched, unmentioned during all our Abolition movement, until I discovered it last week! I am just writing a letter about it (the proof is before me) to the Nation, which you no doubt see. It will also be printed in the Evening Post. On his arrival Paine edited a magazine (1775) and in it an article (mainly written by himself, I believe) exposing the absurdity & criminality of duelling, denouncing cruelty to animals, and pointing out the wrongs of woman. This is the man whose grave is loaded with anathemas.

Thompson has resigned the presidency of the Nineteenth Century Club, as it interfered with his law business. Brander Matthews, our clever playwright, is in his place, and does well. Higginson came to lecture for us a week ago, on "Americanism"

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in Literature." He didn't quite do himself
justice. The best thing he gave us was a letter of
Washington Irving to Motley, after his visit of the
Dutch Republic, wherein he said that the whole
history of Europe had yet to be reviewed before
the Tribunal of America. - I understand that Dr.
Halmes is still enjoying life. I haven't been to
Boston since my return. If I leave home at
all it is always to see my mother in Virginia.
She is nearly 84. On my return from Europe
she nestled into my arms and said "I am the
child now." In my Sacred Anthology, p. 254, there
is a Chinese saying: "They are happy who can
return to their father & mother the care they
received from them in infancy." &c &c. We have all
been a good deal disturbed by the Parnell scandal.
The way in which so many of the Irish have
abared themselves before a man who has trilled
their flag in the mire, divided their force,
disgraced their cause, has shaken my faith
in the Home Rule movement. If that kind
of medieval clan-loyalty to a man, to a
leader, irrespective of his willingness & sacri-
fice his cause to himself (to say nothing
of his animalism) - if that is what is to be
set up in Ireland, is it worth while? We
have lately had Dillon & O'Brien to lunch
with us. They are both charming men. But
they are heart-broken at the blow their
cause has received. - Our own politics is
worth studying just now. The country, indignant
at the McKinley tariff (passed to repay
some manufacturers who gave money to

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elect the President) has overwhelmingly defeated
the administration at the polls. But the defeated
Congressmen are in full power until March 4,
are condensing all their wicked measures into
that time, and the condemned President will
remain supreme 2 years yet, able to defeat
the measures resolved on by the people. Yet it
is my patriotic duty to inform you that
this is the Great Republic, & that "my
bright home is in the setting sun".

I picture you under your vine and
figtree, with your happy wife and children
beside you, and wish me were near enough
to see each other often. Wife and daughter
remember you affectionately, and hope
some day to see your wife. Daughter is
much absorbed in her "Neighborhood
Guild", for the poor girls of the Bowery.
She gives up parties, dinners, theatres,
for it, and I fear is becoming a sort
of martyr. My son Eustace is busy
at his law. I have much you see
to make me happy. You must remember
me to your "boys", - as I shall always
think of them, even should I meet
them with gray hairs. Let me hear
from you. You and your dear wife,
and your children, must keep a
nook in your hearts for
your old friend,

Moncure D. Conway.