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## The Story of the Dial, 1840-44

By HELEN E. MARSHALL

IN THE spring of 1872, a ragman called at the old home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, in Concord, and carted away a heavy load of dusty magazines. For over thirty years this huge stack of unsold copies of *The Dial* had been stored in the Emerson attic, and no one had ever had quite the courage to dispose of the lot. Culling out magazines and papers was a common occurrence during the house-cleaning season, and the ragman regarded his burden with no unusual reverence. To him it meant nothing that this was the last of the little quarterly which the Transcendentalist Club had sponsored, and which Emerson was editing at the time of its suspension in 1844. He dumped the modest volumes into his cart without knowing that between the uncut pages of *The Dial* were to be found priceless echoes and reflections of the most cultured and spiritual minds in New England during the forties.

From 1815 to 1850, New England was in a state of transition. Commerce was giving way to manufacturing, and the small villages to the great mill towns and cities. With changes in industry, came changes in thought. Calvinism gave way to Unitarianism, and as New England became more tolerant and practical, there was danger that she was becoming less spiritual. There were persons who sensed a feeling of unrest, and wondered if the pendulum had not swung too far. Among them were the Transcendentalists, a little group of staunch souls who were beginning to thaw out, cast off the narrow confines of their New England environment and partake of a world culture. They longed to proclaim their findings. One of the staunchest was Emerson, who wrote in his diary in 1840:

The world is my history. I can as readily find myself in the tragedy of Atrides, in the Saxon

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Chronicle, in the Vedas as in the Old Testament, in Aesop as in the Cambridge platform or the Declaration of Independence.<sup>1</sup>

Of the intellectual forces at work in New England, Emerson early discerned the trend. In the first issue of *The Dial* he wrote:

No one can converse much with different classes of society in New England without remarking the progress of a revolution. Those who share in it have no external organization, no badge, no creed, no name. They do not vote, or print, or even meet together. They do not know each other's names or faces. They are united only by a common love of truth and its work. . . .

The spirit of the time is felt by every individual with some difference. . . to each one casting its light upon the objects nearest to his temper and habits of thought: to one, coming in the shape of special reforms in the state; in modification of the various callings of men and the customs of business; to a third, opening a new scope for literature and art; to a fourth, in philosophical insight; to a fifth, in the vast solitudes of prayer. *It* is in every form a protest against usage, and a search for principles.<sup>2</sup>

About 1835, a group of these like-minded persons, "seekers after truth" began to meet together occasionally in various Boston homes and discuss the things that lay nearest their hearts. An interesting little club was the "Symposium," as Bronson Alcott loved to call it. About fifteen or twenty, never more than thirty of these congenial souls met, and in reading and conversation revealed the strides that each was making toward a fuller and more perfect understanding of the world in which they lived and the relationships to which all men are subject. There were no officers, only those leaders that were created by nature to be out-

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1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journal*, July 31, 1840. Boston, 1910, p. 448.

2. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "From the Editors to the Readers," *The Dial*, Vol. I, No. 1, Boston, July, 1840.

standing, Emerson, Channing, Ripley, Theodore Parker, and Margaret Fuller: The arrival of Henry Hedge from Bangor was usually a signal for a meeting. Looking back through the journals of Emerson, Alcott, and Margaret Fuller, one finds a galaxy of brilliant minds and interesting personalities among those who congregated at the Alcotts, the Emersons, the Ripleys, or the Channings. At these Transcendentalist gatherings might be found Theodore Parker, the great Unitarian preacher; George Ripley and his wife Sophia, who were soon to found the Brook Farm experiment in communistic life; Henry Thoreau, the nature lover; Elizabeth Peabody, who kept a book stall and later opened the first kindergarten in Boston. There was quaint, lovable Bronson Alcott, a great philosopher but a poor provider, and for whose eccentricities Emerson was constantly apologizing and warning people lest they fail to appreciate the true Bronson; and there was Emerson himself, one of the most earnest and gifted of the Transcendentalists, and Margaret Fuller, student, teacher, and brilliant conversationalist. At that time, with the exception of Theodore Parker, Emerson was the most widely known and popular of the New England writers. Later Margaret Fuller was to be a great exponent of woman's rights and in her effort to free herself from bondage of tradition and custom was to shock New England.

About 1839, the club became interested in editing a magazine. As early as 1835, Emerson had written to Carlyle inviting him to come to America and edit such a journal.<sup>3</sup> About this time John Heraud began to publish a monthly magazine very much like the one that the Transcendentalists had in mind. It gave the Boston coterie more of an incentive for publishing a magazine of their own. Bronson Alcott wrote in his journal, September 28, 1839:

3. George Willis Cooke, *Introduction to the Rowfant Edition of The Dial*, Vol. I, Cleveland, 1902.

I had an agreeable talk with G. Ripley on the times and particularly on my transatlantic friends. He is much taken with *Heraud's Journal*, which he has read from January last. He wishes to establish an organ of like character among ourselves. We need such a journal but lack the ability to make it worthy of our position. There are but a few contributors and those are not at all free from the influence of the past. Yet such a journal we must have in due time. Doubtless it would succeed even now. Brownson's *Boston Quarterly* is pledged to a party in politics (Democrat) and takes a narrow ground in philosophy and literature. We must have a free journal for the soul which awaits its scribes.<sup>4</sup>

Other contemporary magazines were *The North American Review*, founded in 1815; *The Western Messenger*, a Unitarian magazine devoted to religion and literature, and edited by Channing, Cranch, and Freeman Clarke; *The Harbinger*, published at Brook Farm, and *The Present*, published by W. C. Channing.

By 1840, the scheme had sufficient promise of support to warrant publication. The club wanted Henry Hedge to become the editor but he feared it would take too much time from his Bangor pastorate. George Ripley finally consented to become the assistant editor and Margaret Fuller was made the editor. At a meeting of the Symposium at the house of Cyrus Bristol, on September 18, 1839, Bronson Alcott suggested as a name for the magazine, *The Dial*; he called his dairy by this name and thought it particularly appropriate for the type of magazine which the club was contemplating.

The purpose of the club in editing the magazine is best given in the editorial announcement which appeared on the outside of the rear cover of *The Dial* during Margaret Fuller's editorship.

4. Quoted from Cooke's *Introduction to The Dial*, Vol. I, p. 59.

Preface to *The Dial*, a Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion.

The purpose of this work is to furnish a medium for the freest expression of thought on the questions which interest earnest minds in every community.

It aims at the discussion of principles, rather than the promotion of measures, and while it will not fail to examine the ideas which impel the leading movements of the present day, it will maintain an independent position in regard to them.

The pages of this Journal will be filled by contributors who possess little in common but the love of intellectual freedom, and the hope of social progress; who are united by sympathy of spirit, not by agreement in speculation; whose faith is in *Divine Providence*, rather than in human prescription; whose hearts are more in the future than in the past; and who trust the living soul more than the dead letter. It will endeavor to promote the constant evolution of truth, not the petrification of opinion.

Its contents will embrace a wide and varied range of subjects and combining the characteristics of a magazine and a review, it may present something both for those who read for instruction and those who search for amusement.

The general design and character of the work may be understood from the above brief statements. It may be proper to add that in literature, it will strive to exercise a just and catholic criticism, and to recognize every sincere production of genius; in philosophy it will attempt the reconciliation of the universal instincts of humanity with the largest conclusions of reason; and in religion, it will reverently seek to discover the presence of God in nature, in history, and in the soul of man.

*The Dial*, as its title indicates, will endeavor to occupy a station on which the light may fall; which is open to the rising sun; and from which it

may correctly report the progress of the hour and the day.<sup>5</sup>

*The Dial* was a quarterly magazine and scheduled to appear on the first day of January, April, July, and October. Each number contained 136 octavo pages, which made for the year a volume of 544 pages. The first two numbers were bound in pale green paper, and the subsequent issues were bound in dark brown. The cover carried the modest legend of "*The Dial*, a Magazine of Literature, Philosophy, and Religion," together with the date and number of the issue, and the name of the publisher and the printer. The inside of the front cover carried the table of contents for the issue, while on the inside of the back cover there were listed from time to time the offerings of the publishers, the only advertising matter that the magazine ever carried. It contained papers on art, music, and literature, especially German literature, translations from the ancient oriental scriptures and original modern scriptures in the form of Bronson's Orphic Sayings, and a great deal of verse on nature and other themes attractive to the transcendental mind.<sup>6</sup> After Emerson became the editor he added to the magazine a section styled, "Intelligence" which was devoted to current events such as the reports of conventions which were just becoming popular in America, and lectures of interest to students of philosophy and religion.

In January, 1840, Margaret Fuller wrote to all the possible contributors with whom she was acquainted and asked that they lend a hand in making the magazine worthy of its existence. In a letter from Jamaica Plains, May, 1840, she wrote:

Whether all that has been said is the mere restlessness of discontent, or these are thoughts really struggling for utterance will be tested now. A perfectly free organ is to be offered for the ex-

5. *The Dial*, Vol. I, No. 1, Boston, July, 1840. Probably written by Margaret Fuller.

6. *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, Boston, 1852, V. 2, p. 25.

pression of individual thought and character. There are no hearty measures to be carried, no particular standard to be set up. A fair, calm tone, a recognition of universal principles will, I hope pervade the essays in every form. I trust there will be a spirit neither of dogmatism nor compromise and that this journal will aim not at leading opinion but at stimulating each man to think for himself and to think more deeply and more nobly by telling him how some minds are kept alive by a wise distrust. We must not be sanguine as to the amount of talent which will be brought to bear on this publication. All concerned are rather indifferent and there is no great promise for the present. We can not show high culture and I doubt about vigorous thought. But we shall manifest free action as far as it goes, and a high aim.<sup>7</sup>

There were high aspirations back of *The Dial* and so far as her own writings were concerned Margaret Fuller measured up to the high aim, calm tone, and a recognition of universal principles. She was also successful in getting a large number of the best minds in the Transcendental group interested in writing, most of whom were yet unknown to fame but have since been ranked as the leading writers and thinkers of the nineteenth century. When one considers that none of the contributors was paid, it seems quite remarkable that so many writers were attracted to it, and at the same time that fact explains why some of the writers sent not their best but their second best writings to *The Dial*. The Transcendental magazine served well as an outlet for thought but the demands of the butcher and the baker were more urgent than the desire to build up a quarterly based on ethical considerations, and the more prominent authors looked elsewhere to dispose of their wares.

Among the contributors to *The Dial* were Henry D. Thoreau, W. E. Channing, Frederick Henry Hedge, Charles

7. *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, Boston, 1852, V. 2, p. 53.



A. Dana, Ellen Hooper, Theodore Parker, Samuel G. Ward, C. P. Cranch, Charles Lane, George W. Curtis, Charles S. Wheeler, J. S. Dwight, A. Bronson Alcott, James Freeman Clarke, George Ripley and his wife, Sophia Dana, Caroline Tappan, James Russell Lowell, Elizabeth Peabody, J. F. Tuckerman, W. D. Wilson, Jones Very, and Elizabeth Hoar. Many of these contributors gave several articles or poems to a single issue. Margaret Fuller and Emerson, by virtue of their editorial obligation of 136 octavo pages were compelled to be the heaviest contributors.

Theodore Parker, with his sermons and religious studies was a frequent and voluminous contributor. His writings were the only inducements to the sale of several numbers. Parker was popular with the readers not because he was such a great theologian but because he was strongly anti-slavery. He had articles in all four numbers of the first volume and in all but one of the second volume. Among his contributions to *The Dial* were "Divine Presence in Nature and the Soul," "Truth Against the World," "Parable of Paul," "Thoughts on Labor," "German Literature," "Primitive Christianity," "Thoughts on Theology," and two poems called "Protean Wishes."

George Ripley wrote many of the book reviews for *The Dial*. He showed a particular aptitude for reviewing. He followed Margaret Fuller's injunction that the business of criticism in periodical writing was to sift and not to stamp a work; even today his reviews have the effect of stimulating the reader to investigate the work for himself.

William Ellery Channing, who married Margaret Fuller's sister Ellen, contributed more separate works to *The Dial* than any other person. Most of his writings came at the solicitation of Emerson. Among his poems were "Dirge," "Poet," "William Tell's Song," and "Autumn Woods."<sup>8</sup>

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8. Cooke, *Introduction to the Dial*, V. I, p. 22.

The writings of Henry Hedge were deeply influenced by European study, while the writings of James Freeman Clarke and Thomas Treadwell Stone reflected the sentiments of the reformers of the age, the woman's rights party, peace movement, and the anti-slavery agitation. Clarke always approached his themes through poetry. William Dexter was a New England contributor who had developed his own system of metaphysics. William Ellery Channing favored Ripley's doctrine of associationism and rejected the individualism of Emerson and Alcott. His best contribution to *The Dial* was "The Story of Ernest the Seeker," the experiences of a young man who, seeking the truth of religion in the various churches was led through the Catholic, Methodist, Quaker, and Unitarian principles, scripture, soul, and society, and finally to a love of Christ himself.

Few contributions attracted so many widely different kinds of criticism as Bronson Alcott's Orphic Sayings. Some readers hailed the new scriptures with delight, others were extremely critical, and even Christopher Cranch was tempted to cartoon and caricature the wisdom of the Cheshire sage, while Emerson himself confessed that Alcott had vision without talent, and compared him to a mighty Torso, a colossal head and trunk with hands and feet. Sophia Ripley, the drudge of Brook Farm, contributed a significant article on "Woman." Henry Thoreau contributed articles on nature and selected the Ethnical Scriptures. The most consistent contributors of poetry were Christopher Cranch, and the Sturgis sisters, Caroline Tappan and Ellen Hooper. Of the two, Mrs. Tappan's poems were probably the better.

A comparison of the list of contributors to *The Dial* with the names of those who met in the Symposium reveals the one almost identical with the other, and a study of comparative biography would show other interesting similarities. Most of the men were graduates of Harvard Univer-

sity and over two-thirds were either graduates of the Harvard School of Divinity or had studied there. The women were chiefly teachers whose education in the deeper studies of philosophy and religion was self-imposed and self-taught, there being no institutions of higher learning for women in that period. On the whole the Transcendentalists were young. In 1840, Ripley was only 38, Emerson 37, Hedge 35, Margaret Fuller, Parker, and W. H. Channing 30, Barton, Cranch, and Dwight 27, Thoreau 33, and W. E. Channing 22. The youth and idealism of the contributors gave to the quarterly a quality of vigor and determination, and hope that made it different from other magazines of the day.

Editorially, the history of *The Dial* falls into two periods. From 1840 to 1842, Margaret Fuller was the editor, and from April, 1842, until the magazine was suspended after the sixteenth number, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the editor. He was assisted by Henry Thoreau.

Since the story of *The Dial* is largely a story of aspirations, and the reflection of certain modes of current thought, it can not be properly told without noting the objectives and the methods of the two editors. Their editorial policies differed as may be observed from the types of articles each accepted, and in the records they have left in their diaries and letters. Margaret desired a free open magazine with no definite plan, merely a reflection of people's thoughts and reactions as they made their search for truth. She believed the experiment worth trying. "Hearts beat so high," she wrote, "they must be full of something, and here is a way to breathe out quite freely. It is for dear New England that I want this review."<sup>10</sup> However, dear New England did not take so heartily to it. The subscriptions came in slowly and some of the Transcendentalists who had been so enthusiastic over the project of the quarterly were quite indifferent on the matter of sending in literary offerings.

9. Cooke, *Introduction to the Dial*, V. I, p. 27.

10. *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, Boston, 1852, V. 2, p. 27.

Many times the editor was compelled to rely upon her own resources for filler for the 136 pages which had been promised the subscribers. Days filled with teaching and evenings devoted to public lectures were often followed by nights occupied with writing filler for the impatient printer. Although much of Margaret Fuller's writing was done under pressure and in haste, she produced her very best work in *The Dial*. Several of her studies which were published in it for the first time, were later expanded and incorporated into larger and more comprehensive works. "The Great Lawsuit," in number one of volume four was later published under the title of "Woman in the Nineteenth Century." This was her largest and best work. In its originality and freshness of treatment, her genius is best revealed. Her interpretation of the nature of woman is clear, unbiased, and compelling. She made a strong appeal for the emancipation of her sex, and a broader outlook and opportunity for women. Bronson Alcott declared the sex had no abler advocate.<sup>11</sup>

For two years she edited *The Dial* under the most adverse of circumstances. The Symposium had not been as practical as it had been ambitious in establishing a magazine, and all too often the two hundred dollars that were allowed for the editor, went to pay the printer. In 1841 after the failure of Munroe, Weeks and Jordon, Elizabeth Peabody volunteered to take over the publication. Soon she complained that there was not enough money to pay even the printer.

When the strain of teaching and the labor of editing the quarterly became too much for Margaret, she resigned, and Emerson, somewhat reluctantly, became the editor. On March 20, 1842, he replied to her appeals that he take over the editorship:

After thinking a little concerning this matter of *The Dial* I incline to undertake it for a time

11. A. Bronson Alcott, *Concord Days*, Boston, 1888, p. 78.

rather than to have it stop and go into hands that know not Joseph. I had rather have it not be suspended. Your friends are my friends and will give me such aid as they have given you, and my main resource is to adopt the expedient of selection from old or foreign books almost with the liberality to which Alcott would carry it, certainly to make Signesius or Lucian or Chaucer speak themselves when a dull article is offered or rejected. Perhaps I shall rue this day of accepting such an intruder on my peace, such a consumer of my time as a *Dial*.<sup>12</sup>

His principal motive in taking over *The Dial* was to see it continue, and he did not want Theodore Parker to edit it lest it become the organ of reformers in theology. In his diary we find:

*The Dial* has to be sustained or ended, and I must settle the question, it seems, of its life or death. I wish it to live but I do not wish to be its life. Neither do I like to put it in the hands of the Humanity and Reform men because they trample on letters and poetry, nor in the hands of scholars for they are dead and dry.<sup>13</sup>

In writing to Carlyle of the new venture Emerson spoke of having committed himself to a "necessary literary patriotism."<sup>14</sup> *The Dial* was frequently mentioned in the exchange of letters between Emerson and Carlyle, and the American Scholar was plainly anxious that the little journal be well received on the other side of the water. After receiving the first number of *The Dial*, Carlyle wrote from Chelsea, September 26, 1840:

*The Dial* No. 1 came duly. Of course, I read it with interest; it is an utterance of what is purest, youngest in your land; pure ethereal, as the voices

12. Emerson's letter to Margaret Fuller. Quoted from Cooke's *Introduction to The Dial*, V. 1, p. 92.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Letter from Emerson to Carlyle, July 1, 1842. *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, Boston, 1892, V. 2, p. 329.

of the Morning. And yet, you know me, for me it is too ethereal, and more confessedly inadequate, untrue, unsatisfactory, almost a kind of mockery to me.<sup>15</sup>

Emerson appreciated Margaret Fuller's efforts but he had not always agreed with her editorial policy. After the first number of *The Dial* appeared he wrote in his journal that he thought it ought not to be a mere literary journal but that it should contain the best advice on the topics of government, abolition, trade and domestic life.<sup>16</sup>

New hopes came with the new editor. Aspiring writers were anxious to attract the attention of the widely known and influential Mr. Emerson, and, for a few months the editor's desk was deluged with copy which he could not print either from lack of space or because it lacked the transcendental temper. Emerson had always favored stressing the poetical contributions in *The Dial* but a close comparison of the first issues which Miss Fuller edited and the first issues brought out by Emerson shows scarcely any better poetry or any more poems in the last than in the first years of *The Dial*.

The financial status of the journal was always bad, but Emerson, with the help of Thoreau, who made a house to house canvass for subscriptions, was able to tide the magazine over for a time.

People saw in *The Dial* various things. Admirers were especially enthusiastic, critics were harsh and abusive. The Philadelphia Gazette called the editors, "Zanies," "Bedlamites," and spoke of them as being considerably madder than the Mormons.<sup>17</sup> Horace Greeley, who was just beginning to dabble in spiritualism, saw in *The Dial* a profound spiritual force which might be developed to an advantage. In New York, Thomas Delf approached Emerson and inquired if it

15. Letter from Carlyle to Emerson. *Correspondence*, V. 2, p. 330.

16. Emerson, *Journal*, July 31, 1841.

17. Henry Goddard, *Transcendentalism*, New York, 1908.

would not be possible for every number of *The Dial* to contain at least one article which would be a statement of principle, good for doctrine so that there would be something solid and distinct for the eye of the reader to rest upon, and an advancing evolution of thought. Emerson did not think this unreasonable.<sup>18</sup>

None of the Transcendentalists was really happy over *The Dial*. Alcott wrote an English friend that it partook of their vices, it consulted their moods, and was awed somewhat by the bearing of the existing orders, but it was superior to other literary organs for it satisfied in part the hunger of youth. To him it measured not the meridian but the morning ray.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand the insurgent wing of the Transcendentalists, the Reformers, desired action, and were not content that *The Dial* should report the progress of the hour and the day alone but hoped to make it push the day ahead. *The Dial* was addressed to a rather sophisticated audience which existed only in the minds of the Symposium. It revealed a love for truth and beauty but it did not make the great contribution to human happiness and understanding which the club had coveted for it.

The first issue was largely a Boston book. The signature of the author was given only in rare instances. Theodore Parker's articles on religion were usually accredited for very politic reasons. The popular demand for *The Dial* was always somewhat augmented when it contained contributions from the great preacher. Now and then articles were initialed but more were left unsigned. Perhaps this was due to the unhappy state of affairs that compelled the editors to fill so many of the pages with work from their own pens.

*The Dial* in its broadest sense was a magazine of culture and it aimed to stress and stimulate an interest in all things which made for a wider expression and appreciation

18. Emerson, *Journal*, V. 6, p. 164.

19. Van Wyck Brooks, *Emerson and Others*, Boston, 1927.

of the true and beautiful in life. As Boston turned to music she gave only another evidence of New England in transition. Margaret Fuller wrote of the concerts of the winter of 1839-40:

We can not flatter ourselves for a moment that we of Boston are, or shall be for years to come, a musical people. The devoted lover of art is only beginning to be countenanced and recognized as one better than an idler. He must still keep apologizing to his incredulous neighbors for the heavenly influence that haunts him. He does not live in a genial atmosphere of music but in the cold east wind of utility, and meets few who will acknowledge that what he loves has anything to do with life.<sup>20</sup>

She commended the oratorios, "The Messiah" and "The Creation," which were given the previous winter by the Handel and Hadyn society.

Handel should be heard more, and Hadyn and Mozart and Beethoven. The work of true genius which can not be too familiar since they are always new like nature, should salute our ears until the noble cords within our souls respond. We should be taught the same reverence for Bach and Handel as for Homer; and having felt the spell of their harmonies upon us, should glow at the mention of their names.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout *The Dial* the criticisms in art and music were based not upon a technical knowledge but upon the effect which they produced upon the emotions of the reviewer.

Emerson sensed a lack of inspiration in the literature of the period. "Death and sin have whispered into the ear of the wild horse of Heaven, and step by step with the entrance of this era of ease and convenience, the belief in the proper Inspiration of man has departed."<sup>22</sup> Emerson

20. Margaret Fuller, "Concerts of the Past Winter," *The Dial*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Thoughts on Modern Literature," *The Dial*, V. 1, No. 2, Boston, October, 1840.



was hopeful of poetry for here he said was a feeling of the One Mind. It is significant to note that many of the poems first published in *The Dial* were later reprinted in books and are today widely known. An example is the short poem by Ellen Sturgis Hooper.

*Beauty and Duty*

I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty  
I woke and found that life was duty  
Was thy dream then a shadowy lie?  
Toil on, sad heart, courageously  
And thou shalt find thy dream to be  
A noonday of light and truth to thee.

If *The Dial* may be said to have contributed anything to the thought of the nineteenth century, it was most apparent in the field of religion and religious philosophy. Through the Ethnical Scriptures selected by Thoreau, the readers were given a knowledge and approach to the religion and the philosophy of other nations and peoples. The Orphic sayings of Bronson Alcott were a truly American contribution to philosophy. No story of *The Dial* would be complete without a few quotations from the Cheshire teacher and philosopher.

*III Hope*

Hope deifies man; it is the apotheosis of the soul; the prophecy and the fulfillment of her destinies. The nobler her aspirations, the sublimer her conceptions of the Godhead; God is his idea of excellence; the complement of his own being.

*XXVII Sepulture and Resurrection*

That which is visible is dead; the apparent is the corpse of the real; it undergoes successive sepultures and resurrections. The soul dies out of the organs, the tombs can not confine her; she eludes the grasp of decay. She builds and unseals the sepulchres. Her bodies are fleeting, ethereal. Whatsoever she sees when awake is death; when asleep, dream.

*XXXIX Embryon*

Man is a rudiment and embryon of God; eternity shall develop in him the divine image.

*XXXVI Solidity*

Solidity is an illusion of the senses. To faith nothing is solid, the nature of the soul renders such fact impossible. . . Matter is ever pervaded and agitated by the omnipresent soul. All things are instinct with spirit.<sup>23</sup>

George Ripley, in a review of "*Charles Elwood or the Infidel Converted*, by A. O. Bronson" advanced the idea that "Humanity does not traverse in an eternal circle. It advances in one career of progress toward the Infinite, the Perfect." Through the doctrine of atonement, Ripley saw the coming of a new civilization "when man would no longer be regarded as the antithesis of good" and when man would reverence man and slavery would cease.<sup>24</sup>

In the first volume Theodore Parker wrote:

God is present in man as well as in matter, and not idly present in him. The presence of God in the soul is what we call Inspiration; it is a breathing in of God. His action on the outer world is an influence; on self-conscious souls it is an inspiration. By this he imparts Truth directly and immediately without the intervention of second causes. . . . Since every atom is penetrated and saturated with God, it can not be that a few Hebrew sages, prophets or apostles though ever so noble, have alone received visitations from the Soul of all souls, and wholly absorbed the energy and substance of God so that all others must wander forlorn or catch some faint echo of Inspiration reflected in a Hebrew word.<sup>25</sup>

Thus *The Dial* shows the changes that were taking place in New England theology, and the work of Alcott,

23. A. Bronson Alcott, "*Orphic Sayings*," *The Dial*, V. I, Boston, 1840.

24. George Ripley, "Review of Charles Elwood," *The Dial*, V. I, No. 1.

25. Theodore Parker, "Divine Presence in Nature," *The Dial*, Boston, 1840, Vol. I, No. 1.

Ripley, Parker and others was making smoother the pathway and even indicating the direction that Mary Baker Eddy was to take in a more completely industrialized New England thirty years later.

For four years *The Dial* struggled to "occupy a high place and correctly record the progress of the hour and the day" but with the publication of the sixteenth issue in July, 1844, Emerson declared the journal suspended. If it did not occupy a high place, it certainly occupied an unique place, and if it could no longer record the progress of the day and hour, it was not because there was no progress to record but because *The Dial* was not constructed on a very permanent basis.

Had the financial backing of *The Dial* been a sound one, it is doubtful if it could have long continued. Never more than three hundred copies were sold. After Thoreau's rather strenuous canvass in 1844, there were only 220 persons listed as subscribers. The magazine was addressed to an intellectual minority, not the popular mind; and it made its greatest appeal in literary and philosophical fields that were beyond the comprehension of the average New England reader. The noncommittal policy of the editors on subjects of controversy made *The Dial* appear weak in an age that demanded an identification of all periodicals on the issues of the day, and when cleavage was the rule rather than the exception. It had no creed in an era when men were searching after creeds to support. There were too many radicals, "come-outers," iconoclasts, and individualists among the Transcendentalists for them to develop a progressive, harmonious program; and presently all the contributors were scurrying off in a dozen different directions to engage in more exciting if not more compensating fields of labor. Stone was writing peace sermons for William Ladd, George Ripley was absorbed in editing *The Harbinger* as the exponent of associationism at Brook

Farm; Margaret Fuller was in New York writing for Greeley's *Tribune*; Elizabeth Peabody was devoting her time to the kindergarten experiment; James Freeman Clarke was giving lectures on temperance and abolition; and Orestes Augustus Brownson was championing the cause of labor, and along with Sophia Ripley was soon to find solace in the Catholic Church.

*The Dial* in its short life enabled the Transcendentalists to commune with each other if not the world. It afforded them an opportunity to crystalize their ideas and give a clearer expression of what they regarded as a larger and nobler motive in life. Emerson, in compiling Margaret Fuller's *Memoirs* in 1852, neatly summed up the story of *The Dial*:<sup>26</sup>

... *The Dial* betrayed through all its juvenility, timidity, and convention rubbish some sparks of the true love and hope, and of the piety to spiritual law, which had moved its friends and founders, and it was received by its earlier subscribers with almost a religious welcome.

The suspension of *The Dial* and the disbanding of the Symposium mark the close of an epoch in the history of transcendental thought, but the files of the little quarterly published in 1840-44 must ever remain a treasure-trove, or to use Emerson's own phrase, a "valuable herbarium" where one may find rich mementoes of Transcendentalism in its glorious hey-day of the forties.

26. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, Boston, 1852, p. 323.