

OUR IMAGINATIVES

in the midst of conventions of a severer type of rigidity than now, to preserve themselves from commonplace utterance. They were not affected by fashions. They had the one idea in mind, to express themselves in terms of themselves, and they were singularly successful in this despite the various difficulties of circumstance and of temper that attended them. They understood what this was better than anyone, and the results in varying degrees of genius attest to the quality of the American imagination at its best.

I should like, for purposes of reference, to see a worthy exhibition of all of these men in one place. It would I am sure prove my statement that the eastern genius is naturally a tragic one, for all of these men have hardly once ventured into the clear sunlight of the world of every day. It would offset highly also, the superficial attitude that there is no imagination in American painting. We should not find so much of form or of colour in them in the stricter meaning of these ideas, as of mood. They might have set themselves to be disciples of William Blake's significant preachment, "put off intellect and put on imagination, the imagination is the man"; the intellect being the cultivated man, and the imagination being the natural man. There is imagination which by reason of its power and brilliance exceeds all intellectual effort, and effort at intellectualism is worse than a fine ignorance by far. Men who are highly imaginative, create by feeling what they do