

**AMERICAN IDEAS
FOR
ENGLISH READERS**

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American Ideas for English Readers by James Russell Lowell

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

**AMERICAN IDEAS
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ENGLISH READERS**



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,
AFTER THE BUST BY
WILLIAM ORDWAY PARTRIDGE.
(TAKEN FROM THE CLAY)

©
**American
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English Readers**

By

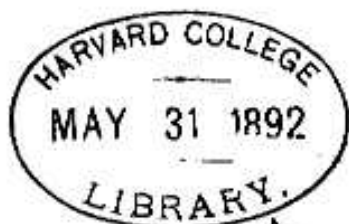
James Russell Bowell

With Introduction by

Henry Stone

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Introduction.

AMONG his many titles to the special consideration and gratitude of his countrymen, James Russell Lowell had one in pre-eminence — an unyielding loyalty to all that was best in American ideas and aims. It was this quality that gave point to the wit of Hosea Biglow, and loftiness to his imagination in his more serious poems. In the earliest of the Biglow papers, he calls upon Massachusetts to

“ Hold up a beacon peerless
To the oppressed of all the World,”

and the tone is not changed to his very latest utterance. In that Commemoration Ode, which will remain the crown of his literary and poetical work, his passion found its highest expression:

“ O Beautiful! My Country! * * *
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore
* * * * *
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love — and make thee know
it
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?”

An impression has prevailed — and has gained credence at some times and in some places, that, in his later years, and in the presence of a society differently organized from that which he found at home, the ardor of his love of country was quenched: — that he became less an American as he saw more of other lands. What is it to be an American? The definition may vary, in different regions. What was it, always, with him? If to be an American means merely to be successful in a large and worldly way — whether in politics, or in business, or in letters; to out-talk, out-spend, out-bid, out-invent others; to drive faster; to travel farther; to push harder; to build bigger houses; to found more richly endowed Universities; to construct greater Observatories; to establish more and larger public libraries: — if to do these and similar things is all that goes to make an American — the charge is true. In such sense, Mr. Lowell was not so good an American as some others. But, in the larger and truer sense: — in striving for all that goes to make a people more noble in aim, more humane, more intelli-