

land, America found it more difficult to cast off the trammels of mental allegiance, than to burst asunder the bonds of physical enthrallment." This is the unkindest cut of all. But it may also serve as a lesson. According to this writer, we are deficient in taste, because we have endeavoured to form ours upon British models; and for the same reason we are deficient in originality, a quality, without which no national literature can exist. Why that should also make us deficient in imaginative powers, I cannot well comprehend, for the powers of the mind are independent of the manner in which they are exercised. But I must leave this to be answered by our Irvings, our Coopers and our Pauldings, and by my amiable friend, the fair author of *Redwood* and of *Hope Leslie*.

Nothing can be more certain than that if we confine ourselves in any art to the imitation of a particular school, (excellent as it may be,) we shall never be able to have a school of our own. Imitation destroys genius; it narrows the range of our imaginations and the field of our conceptions. That we follow too closely the British models, and that our compositions are not sufficiently stamped with originality, is what I am not prepared to deny, and we cannot too much blame the satirist for giving it the name of *mental dependance*, though the imputation comes with a very ill grace from that quarter.

The reasons which have produced this *mental dependance*, (if it can be so called) are too well known, that I should take up much of your time in explaining them. The similarity of language, the constant influx of British books and literary productions of every description, which are reprinted here as fast as they appear, the natural indolence of man which makes him pursue the object easiest to be gained, in preference often to the most valuable; a long cherished congeniality of manners, habits and literary opinions with the nation whose language we speak, and whose descendants we, or the great majority of us, are; a filial respect, which, in spite of parental injuries, is not yet extinguished; all these circumstances together have produced that *mental thralldom* with which we are reproached by those whom it most honours, and from which we are warned by them that it is at last time to free ourselves. The question now occurs, how

