

Memorial of
Washington Irving
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MEMORIAL OF WASHINGTON IRVING.

Reminiscences of the late Washington Irving.

BY LOUIS GAYLORD CLARK.

THE death of Mr. WASHINGTON IRVING, occurring just as we were completing our Table, rendered it impossible for us to do more than present a biographical and historical sketch of his life and his literary career, from a contemporary daily journal, based, as we knew, upon authentic data, furnished from correct and reliable resources. This biographical sketch we accompanied with a few remarks, such only as we could prepare, with the brief time left us before those pages went to press.

We felt at the time the inadequacy of our notice of the most renowned and most voluminous of all the contributors to the *KNICKERBOCKER* in past days. For it was our 'benignant and happy fortune' to know intimately, and to enjoy the cordial friendship of, the author of the 'Sketch-Book' and of 'Bracebridge Hall,' for a period of over twenty years; an intimacy and a friendship, which was not for one moment interrupted, until at a 'ripe old age,' full of years and full of honors, he resigned his noble, genial, gentle spirit into the hands of his MAKER.

In a recent number of the '*Editorial Historical Narrative of the Knickerbocker Magazine*,' we have, we may hope, conveyed to our readers some idea of the intense delight with which Mr. WASHINGTON IRVING was welcomed to our pages as a contributor. But the pleasure which we derived from that fact, was heightened and continually strengthened by intercourse, not alone with the AUTHOR, but with the MAN. We are giving expression to no extravagant eulogy; we are not over-stating, in the slightest degree, the testimony which every one who had the happiness to know WASHINGTON IRVING, while he was living, will bear as to his character, when we say, that aside from his preëminence as the most justly renowned American author of our time, he was one of the most genial, the most truthful, the *most loveable* authors in the world.

As we have already described, our first preliminary intercourse with Mr. IRVING was simply of a business nature; it was soon arranged; and with a kindness and exceeding pleasantness of manner, which it is a delight to recall, even after the lapse of twenty years.

Soon after Mr. IRVING's permanent connection with our Magazine, as a monthly contributor to its pages, occurred the death of WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK, the twin-brother of the writer of this feeble tribute. His delight at the acquisition of 'GEOFFREY CRAYON' upon our staff of '*collaborateurs*,' hardly 'knew bounds;' and in an ensuing number we shall present his fervent congratulations thereupon. In the mean time, let us ask the reader's attention to the subjoined touching and beautiful letter of condolence addressed to us by Mr. IRVING soon after his decease:



'Sunnyside Cottage, July 8, 1841.

'MY DEAR SIR:

'I HAVE not sooner replied to your letter of the eighteenth of June, communicating the intelligence of the untimely death of your twin-brother, because, in fact, I was at a loss how to reply. It is one of those cases in which all ordinary attempts at consolation are apt to appear trite and cold, and can never reach the deep-seated affliction. In such cases, it always appears to me better to leave the heart to struggle with its own sorrows and medicine its own ills: and indeed, in healthful minds, as in healthful bodies, PROVIDENCE has beneficently implanted self-healing qualities, that in time close up, and almost obliterate, the deepest wounds.

'I do not recollect to have met your departed twin-brother more than once; but our interview left a most favorable impression upon me, which was confirmed and strengthened by all that I afterward knew of him. His career, although brief, has been useful, honorable, popular, and happy; and he has left behind him writings which will make men love his memory, and lament his loss. Under such circumstances a man has not lived in vain: and although his death be premature, there is consolation to his survivors, springing from his very grave.

'Believe me, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

'WASHINGTON IRVING.'

Perhaps it may not be amiss to mention here the occasion in which the subject of this note met Mr. WASHINGTON IRVING. It was at the nuptials of his life-long friend, DAVID GRAHAM, Junior, in Hudson Square, at which he officiated as groomsman: Mr. IRVING, if we remember rightly, as an old friend of the beautiful bride's father, ROBERT HYSLOP, Esq., acting in a similar capacity. Brother WILLIS had this allusion to the event in his pleasant gossiping '*Ollapodiana*,' in the KNICKERBOCKER for October, 1836:

'EATING is earthly and sensual: and the knife-and-fork system of pursuing it, especially when you cannot select your own hardware, is 'faulty.' Commend me to the Turk. I could not eat with satisfaction at the Table d'hôte of any inn in the country, (some *ten* excepted, which it would be invidious to name,) did the table groan with a feast like that which covered the board of KATRINA VAN TASSEL, that Dutch beau-ideal of our beloved IRVING.

'... Talking of WASHINGTON IRVING: Let me take it for granted, reader, that you have never encountered him: for, except in the elevated circle where he moves and shines, I believe he is one who is not ambitious to 'be seen of men.' He affects not your pointings-out in the street, and greetings in the market-places: these he leaves to be struggled after with painful yearnings, 'by the flimsy fry which injudicious friends would inflate to his capacity and standard.'

'It is a year ago, since I had the pleasure to meet this affectionate, noble, genial man. I am myself but little known: and my praise is very far removed from what I should like Mr. IRVING to know that in my heart of hearts I could find it in my soul to bestow upon him. My feeling for him is a feeling of LOVE. His voracious '*History of New-York*' has created more risibility under my waist-coat, than any other volumes from the Past or the Present. I read them regularly once a year. What a transparent flow of wit; what adroit satire; what simple '*happiness*' of expression! As '*GEOFFREY CRAYON*' I am charmed with him: as an historian, I honor him: as a Patriot and a Gentleman, I thoroughly revere him! What a *style* is his!

None of your shallow tinsel, your unnatural emblems, your forced conceits, your windy tropes: all is *Truth*, gentleness, *Nature*!

The day of Mr. IRVING's funeral was, like his life and his character, mellow and cheerful. It was a beautiful specimen of a *Winter Indian-Summer*. A soft, warm haze rested upon his 'River of Delight,' and clothed the bold mountains that towered over the Tappan-Zee, and the lofty Palisades in the distance, with almost a preternatural grandeur and glory. We rode with a daughter along the lovely road to Nyack, seldom saying a word; for she had regarded Mr. IRVING and his writings from merest childish girlhood with an affection which was hardly the first remove from love.

Crossing to Tarrytown, we were received at the landing by a hospitable friend, whose palatial mansion adorns the 'Zee' which it commands in its noblest aspects, and in company with Mr. SPARROWGRASS, were driven at once to 'Sunnyside.'

And all the way we could not choose but think of the delight we had a hundred times enjoyed in going over the same ground before, to the same destination. But now all was changed. The GENIUS of the place had departed!

Before taking up our summer quarters at DOBBS' Ferry, for a couple of seasons, we had visited Mr. IRVING at Sunnyside, by way of the boat to Tarrytown, two or three times, at his request. We were not unaware, however, that he was daily paying the penalty of a glorious reputation and a popularity as an author and a man that was universal: and we reluctated at intruding too frequently upon a leisure so precious as his. When we were first installed, however, at the 'Ferry of DOBB,' Mr. IRVING called in our absence, and left with Dame KNICK the subjoined most cordial note:

'MY DEAR MR. CLARK:

'I have been intending every day for some time past to drive down and make you a visit; but every day something or other has prevented. Do not, however, stand upon ceremony, but come to Sunnyside whenever you feel in the notion. It is but a pleasant walk by a foot-path along the Aqueduct. We dine at three o'clock, and shall always be happy to have you as a guest; but come at any time in the fresh of the morning, and lounge away the day under the trees. I can furnish you with books and leave you to yourself.

'I am still busy with building and improving, and shall be at home for some time to you please, without further invitation.

come, excepting perhaps Saturday, Sunday, and part of Monday next. So come when

'I am much obliged to you for the loan of the periodicals, which I shall return to you in good order.

Very truly yours,

'Sunnyside, July 28th, 1847.

WASHINGTON IRVING.'

We can affirm, with the entirest truth, that nothing in the whole course of our life ever afforded us more supreme pleasure than we enjoyed in our subsequent visits to Sunnyside. We always walked up on the Croton Aqueduct, a level, dry, and charming path-way, commanding the loveliest reaches of the ever-glorious Hudson; stopping to rest sometimes amid the 'breezy call of incense-breathing morn,' to read an article for, or a proof-sheet of the KNICKERBOCKER, under the shadow of one of the marble ventilators of the aqueduct.

Let us here present a few pleasant *Reminiscences of Washington Irving at Sunnyside*, infracting, as we hope, no privacy, nor embodying any thing which, if living, he himself would not be willing should appear in print.

As we have said, what always struck us the most forcibly was the universal kindness of his heart, and the unostentatious loveliness of his outward acts and his every-day demeanor.

One morning we were taking a short before-breakfast stroll along the north bank of the little stream which throws itself into the Hudson at the foot of the gentle slope on which stands the pleasant mansion of Sunnyside. Passing by a tree, close to the water's edge, we observed a bird sitting upon her nest: she never moved; but only winked her small, bright eyes as we passed.

'That is very strange, Mr. IRVING,' we said: 'is that a wild or a tame bird? she seems to have no bird-like timidity.'

'No,' Mr. IRVING rejoined, 'she has no occasion to be afraid of any one around here. I pass here sometimes a dozen times a day; but I never molest her, *nor she me.*'

At which we remember to have mentioned the story told by our friend Mr. ELLIOTT, the eminent portrait-painter, of a man caught in the act of killing a fat young sheep belonging to a neighbor: 'What are you doing *that* for?' asked the owner. 'What am I *doing* it for?' was the echo of the culprit: 'I'll kill *any* man's sheep, I do n't care *who* he is, that *tries to bite me!*'

At which Mr. IRVING laughed heartily; which fact alone makes us love to mention the anecdote.

While we were sitting beside a dam, 'a profane improvement,' as Mr. IRVING called it, the construction of which his brother had been overseeing, he mentioned the deposition of a rooster, by a sort of *coup d'état* of a stronger bird, which deposed monarch he pointed out as an exile, walking silent and solitary on the other side of the brook. 'He comes over sometimes,' said Mr. IRVING, 'to look in upon his old harem; but the members have no respect for him: his degradation is complete. I am sorry for him: he was a high old cockorum in his day.'

'Do you see that tree?' asked Mr. IRVING, one day after dinner, as we were standing just before the south porch at Sunnyside. 'That tree is now about seventeen feet high, and growing taller and taller every day. I bought that of our friend DOWNING at Newburgh, for a flowering shrub, which was to bear an odorous blossom, and attain to its full growth at about four feet! The discrepancy reminds me,' continued Mr. IRVING, 'of a lady whom I once knew in England, who purchased of a dog-fancier a fine, soft, glossy King CHARLES spaniel. He was made a great pet of, and fed and pampered, even beyond his desires; for after every meal he was in the extremest pain; running round and moaning in the most piteous manner; and one day, after a more than usual hearty repast, he burst his King Charles jacket, and came out in his true character of a stout English bull-dog! My flowering shrub has gone through with a similar metamorphosis.'

It was a most pleasant event, '*A Ride through Sleepy-Hollow with Washington Irving.*' Let us record it for our present readers:

'Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,' that here at Piermont we see rolling slowly over the hills that environ Sleepy-Hollow, on the other side of the river. Even while we watch it, it begins to shake its skirts, and to sift down upon the fading landscape its 'superflux of shower.' Looking at this, we cannot choose but think of a memorable excursion which the writer hereof once made with GEOFFREY CRAYON through the wizard region of Sleepy-Hollow, a neighborhood which his own pen had made world-wide famous. The morning had been thunderous and showery; nor did it entirely brighten up until the removal of the first champagne-cork at the hospitable table of 'Sunnyside;' always a precursor, as the host remarked, of 'pleasant weather about this time.' After dinner, preceded by the ladies of the household and another guest in the family-carriage, Mr. CRAYON, in a light open wagon, 'tooled' the 'Old KNICK' over the high eastern hills that inclose the sheltered valley where in their day lived and flourished old BALTUS VAN TASSEL, and his blooming daughter KATRINE. The sun came out between the pearl-colored opaque clouds; the birds began to sing in the trees; a bobolink was 'rising and sinking on a long flaunting weed' in an adjoining field; and every thing in nature was bright and smiling. Now it came to pass, howbeit, that when, beguiling the way with much rememberable converse, we came to the brow of the last hill that overlooks the turn of the road into the valley, one of the aforesaid opaque clouds, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which had been gradually 'gathering fatness,' suddenly darkened, and presently 'opened upon us;' also there were thunderings and lightnings; and trees, singly and in ranks, tossed their plumes of green, and battled with the storm. Moreover, the rain now descended again; inasmuch that Mr. CRAYON wheeled suddenly into an angle of a rail-fence that skirted an umbrageous grove, dismounted, clambered over, and took shelter under an adjacent tree, holding over his head meanwhile the cushioned wagon-seat, adown which, as from a spout, the rain poured from his back. 'Why do n't you come under here, and be comfortably housed, as I am?' asked the Sleepy-Hollow historian, with amusing mock gravity: 'Whereto thus then?' 'Old KNICK:' 'Dare n't do it, dear Sir; 'fraid of the lightning, now playing about us; had a near relation once struck with the 'electric fluid' (the kind always mentioned by country newspapers as the most fatal) while standing under a tree; came near dying—but did n't.'

'Oh!' answered Mr. CRAYON, 'that alters the case: '*it runs in the family, eh?*'

'Well, well; the idea of lightning 'running in a family;' the odd appearance of the speaker, with his inverted leathern cushion on his head, under which he looked like a Roman beneath his tortoise-shell shield; the after excursion through the valley, with all that we saw and heard by the way; the appearance of a saturated guest about the hearth of 'Sunnyside' that night, clad in roomy habiliments of the host; all these manifold recollections have arisen in about the space of a minute.

'Cur'ous' and very pleasant are the matters lodged in the thousand cells of memory!'

This brief gossipry, short as it is, has exceeded our space: but it will be followed by several similar sketches upon the same theme, covering and including the reminiscences of more than twenty years.

The last tribute was paid to the 'Beloved Departed' at the rural cemetery near Tarrytown, of which he speaks in the following characteristic, felicitous letter:

'MY DEAR MR. CLARK :

'I will thank you to send me the two numbers of the KNICKERBOCKER which contain the story of Mountjoy.

'You once spoke to me about some work, in print or manuscript, in the possession of your Oriental correspondent, relative to the history of Persia, which might be of service to me in writing the life of MAHOMET. Can you procure me a sight of it?

'I send you a plan of a rural cemetery, projected by some of the worthies of Tarrytown, on the woody hills adjacent to the Sleepy Hollow church. I have no pecuniary interest in it, but I hope it may succeed, as it will keep that beautiful and umbrageous neighborhood sacred from the anti-poetical and all-levelling axe. Beside, I trust I shall lay my bones there. The projectors are plain matter-of-fact men, but are already aware of the blunder they have committed in naming it the *Tarrytown* instead of the *Sleepy Hollow* cemetery. The latter name would have been enough of itself to secure the patronage of all desirous of sleeping quietly in their graves. I beg you to correct this oversight, should you, as I trust you will, think proper to notice this sepulchral enterprise.

'I hope, as the spring opens, you will accompany me in one of my brief visits to Sunnyside, when we will make another visit to Sleepy Hollow, and (thunder and lightning permitting) have a colloquy among the tombs. Yours, very truly,

'New-York, April 27th, 1849.

WASHINGTON IRVING.'

And there in that little rural cemetery they laid the Great and Good Man in his final rest. Winter day though it was, the sun shone in spring-like freshness, the sod was soft and green, and the little birds sang a sweet requiem from the overhanging boughs. As the vast multitude, certainly not less than three thousand persons, wended their way homeward, the sun was setting behind the lordly hills of the Hudson, the feathery golden clouds suggesting not only a glorious termination of the day, but a glorious immortality.

Washington Irving as an Invalid.

BY DR. JAMES O. NOYES.

FROM various sources, but principally from Dr. J. C. PETERS, Mr. IRVING's only physician from 1852 to the day of his death, we have collected a number of facts and anecdotes that are new, and may interest our readers, in connection with the preceding pages. The relation of the patient to his physician was so intimate and confidential, that, though frequently solicited by the latter, he would never consent to avail himself of other medical advice.

A strong and elastic constitution, with remarkably abstemious habits, carried Mr. IRVING through a laborious life in comparative health. For a period of twenty years he neither called in a physician nor took a dose of medicine. His love of Nature — an idea that because he loved her, she would do him no harm — led him frequently to expose himself unnecessarily. Until within a few years

he would carelessly fall asleep on the ground or on the settee in the piazza of Wolfert's Roost. A severe catarrh, which for a long time affected his voice, was the consequence. Of this difficulty he was suddenly relieved, by the prescription of a good lady in the neighborhood, but an asthma immediately supervened, which at intervals caused him great suffering, until within two or three months of his death, when it entirely disappeared.

The asthma was the precursor, if not the cause, of the fatal enlargement of the heart that developed itself about the time Mr. IRVING finished writing his fifth volume of the Life of WASHINGTON, the proof-sheets of which he was not able to correct. His great and laborious work had been carried on without any serious interruption, and as it drew to a close, Mr. IRVING promised himself and his anxious friends that he would take a long holiday of repose. Though 'out of sorts,' he considered himself sound. He had suffered previously from several attacks of fever and ague, contracted by a tour to the Western lakes. In the stage of fever he would fall into a lethargy that lasted several hours, and from which he could not be aroused by artificial means.

Some of Mr. IRVING's friends also believed that he never entirely recovered from the effects of the fall from his horse, alluded to in Mr. WILLIS' letter. His face was much bruised, but he called the attention of his physician especially to his chest, remarking jocosely that his skull was very strong; that he had never had the head-ache in his life, or any unpleasant sensation in the head, except a few attacks of vertigo when writing the first volume of his Life of WASHINGTON.

Mr. IRVING was informed of his actual condition through his nephew. At the next interview with his physician, he told him, in private, what he had heard, wished him to explain the nature of the disease, and remarked that he supposed he must be prepared to die suddenly. He added that he would like to live so long as he could make himself useful to those about him, but hoped that he might never become a confirmed invalid, a helpless burden upon his friends. He requested the doctor also to have as little said about the matter as possible, as he did not wish to become an object of sympathy, or have those not immediately about him speculate as to the probable time of his death. He would trust to Providence, to his excellent constitution, and what his physician could not alleviate he would bear with all the resignation he could summon. Mr. IRVING, especially after the completion of his great work, suffered much from sleeplessness, producing nervous agitation, and at times despondency. During his whole life, in fact, he did not remember to have slept six hours without waking. Entire forgetfulness for four hours was a circumstance to be remembered. CHARLES LANMAN, Esq., writing of him in 1853, says that for years he had frequently spent half the night awake, and that at such times he was in the habit of reading a great deal. Mr. IRVING said he really envied the man who could sleep long and soundly. Until within a few years he slept in his library, with lamp, matches, and books at the head of the bed. When comparatively well, he was to be heard every morning, between four and five o'clock, in his room, taking the indispensable sponge-bath, and preparing for the morning walk. His habit of early rising often produced drowsiness in the afternoon and evening, when he would sleep in his

chair or on the sofa, his head inclined slightly forward, but without nodding or loud breathing.

About the time of the completion of his last volume, Mr. IRVING called upon his physician, in the city, greatly depressed and agitated, saying that he had not slept for four nights, and begged that something might be done for him. He remained in the city a few weeks, for better treatment. The doctor found that in the evening it was comparatively easy to procure his patient sleep, when a piano was playing or people were conversing in the room; but when he retired by himself, there would return the same wakeful nervousness, sadness, and despondency. His friends would read to him by the hour, not that he wished or allowed himself to become interested, but to hear the monotonous tones of the voice, which were very soothing to his excited nerves. He had travelled so much, and known so many distinguished individuals, however, that in reading there was danger of exciting him, by touching some chord of association or sympathy.

Mr. IRVING suffered greatly from these attacks of despondency during the remaining months of his life, consequent, no doubt, upon his failing health. He did not allow them, however, to interfere with his long established habits. Down to the day of his death, he was regularly in his chair at the head of the table, carved, and waited upon all who were seated, in that unstudied but graceful manner that was characteristic of all his acts. When suffering the most, he would sometimes cheer up suddenly, his eyes sparkle and his face flush, so as to give him the appearance of being years younger, exhibiting in a remarkable degree the power of a strong will over his weak body, and leading visitors, especially, to believe that the reports of his illness were exaggerated. At such times he would utter, in a quaint way, some of those bright and humorous sayings for which he was so remarkable. When, for the first time, he found himself too weak to carve, or to cut up the piece given him, he remarked sadly that he would go and lie down. He rose with tottering steps, and one end of his shawl happening to drag upon the floor, he looked back and said playfully: 'I must look like a bird of Paradise, with my fine long tail.' When a number of people in the room were talking about a woman who had ascended in a balloon and never been heard from, and wondering what had become of her, Mr. IRVING, suddenly brightening, said: 'Why, she's up above; handed out by Enoch and ELIJAH!'

Mr. IRVING, as we have already said, was remarkably abstemious. He could endure nothing gross, was fond of delicate bits, and seemed not to eat half so much as an ordinary person of his size. He drank tea and coffee, and had wine on the dinner-table, using it himself, however, most sparingly. Mr. IRVING always offered his arm to one of the ladies present, to conduct her to table in the olden style; said grace himself; usually attended the morning and evening prayers, while his parting from the members of the family in the evening, and his greeting of them in the morning were as affectionate as if he had been about to leave, or had been separated from them a long time. Rarely or never has there been seen in an American family one so kind, so considerate, so gentle, and yet so noble, uniting in himself all home virtues and courtly manners.

Such was the delightful place Mr. IRVING filled at Wolfert's Roost, and from

which he was suddenly called away to other and brighter scenes. On the evening of his death he played five games of whist, and retired to his room at the usual hour, his niece carrying up with him his medicines and a small pitcher of ice-water. Leaning a moment with his elbow upon the mantel, he complained of low spirits, saying: 'I never in my life felt so sad.' He then walked a few steps, put his right hand on the foot of the cottage-bedstead, his left over his heart, and a moment after began gradually to sink. His niece, thinking he was trying to seat himself in a chair by his side, caught him in her arms. His head fell back upon her shoulder, and with three little gasps for breath, without a groan or struggle, life was extinct.

He was buried in plain citizen's dress; and it was noticed, as a singular peculiarity, that the rosewood coffin was marked by a number of distinct crosses in the natural wood. On his table, where he had placed them, were some of his favorite books: the Bible and Prayer-Book, 'Pilgrim's Progress,' CAMPBELL'S 'Pleasures of Hope,' etc.

Every anecdote or incident concerning Mr. IRVING will be treasured by his friends. As an instance of his kindness to animals, he said one day, to his physician, when they met in the road a team which had formerly belonged to him: 'I can't bear to see those poor horses drawing dirt. They were once my carriage-horses. I shall never again sell any animal that belongs to me.' The horses, however, were well cared for, the owner being very proud of them.—Mr. T. ADDISON RICHARDS gives us the two following incidents. While he was sketching the pleasant picture seen through two beautiful elms, as you look up the river from the Sunny-Side lawn, and talking with Mr. IRVING, the latter fell into some allusions to his advancing age and declining strength, and added, with his characteristic sly humor: 'Some twenty years ago, I carried both those trees on my shoulder; but, bless you, I couldn't do it now!' He had planted the trees himself. Speaking one day of the pretty gardener's cottage, he said that he had been forced to build it; that ROBERT, after basking in the smiles of Fortune as a jolly, contented bachelor for many years, had been overtaken by calamity, and got married; that it was a sad affair, a very sad affair, although ROBERT did not seem to think so, but on the contrary, deemed himself a more lucky boy than ever. Still, the thing was done, and could not be undone; and it only remained to make the best of a bad bargain. He had foreseen the consequences at once, (pointing to the youngsters playing in the cottage park,) and so set forward to plan and erect a new edifice. It was Mr. IRVING's custom to buy Christmas toys for the children of his gardener and coachman, and present them himself. Last Christmas the unpleasant weather kept him in-doors, but he was uneasy all day about the children, who received the presents, but, he knew, would miss his visit. The next day he called upon them, to enjoy their bright smiles. In the cars one day from New-York an Irish woman in the next seat could not keep her two noisy children quiet. Mr. IRVING took one of them in his arms, caressed it, and when the woman got out she thanked him, saying: 'You must be a kind, good father, Sir.' 'No,' said Mr. IRVING, 'I am, unfortunately, an old bachelor.' The children at Tarrytown would often put flowers in his church pew.

Mr. IRVING cherished tenderly the memory of his excellent mother. On meet-

ing Mrs. CUSTIS, he was so struck with her resemblance to his parent, then dead forty years, that his feelings overpowered him, and he was obliged to apologize to the lady for the emotions her presence excited. It is well known that Mr. IRVING was engaged to the sister of a distinguished lawyer, and that she died of consumption before the expiration of the time fixed for their marriage. We have heard of a well-worn miniature confided by him to an artist, in order to have the ravages of time upon the precious relic repaired so far as possible. Mr. IRVING and his affianced, with two friends situated like themselves, once visited a watering-place near the city. Many years later, Mr. IRVING called upon the same friend, surrounded by a happy family, and was so overcome by the associations suggested, that he burst into a flood of tears.

ADDRESS OF HON. GEORGE BANCROFT, BEFORE THE N. Y. HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

'MEMORY cherishes the lovely qualities and beautiful career of our friend who has just ceased to be mortal; but words are wanting to portray his genius and his virtues. No American since WASHINGTON has taken with him to the grave the undivided affection of the American people like IRVING. And it is right that it should be so. He came into the world just as a treaty with England gave our Republic a recognized existence among the nations; and he was lulled in his cradle by the pleasant songs of returning peace. The first great solemnity that he gazed upon in his childhood was the inauguration of our Constitution; so that the early life of him who was called to take the foremost part in creating an American literature, was bathed in the purest dews of our country's morning. As he grew up, his genial humor was nursed by the traditions and inspirations of his own native State; he opened his heart to all the pleasant influences that surrounded him; he made himself one with Nature as she reveals herself in her glory along the Hudson; and when he was scarce six-and-twenty years old he had written what the world will not suffer to be forgotten.

'Thus far his literary activity had been the out-going of the joyousness of youth; his mind was to be ripened, his character to be matured, his rightful career to be made plain by the trials of affliction. He had loved and been beloved; and he watched, to use his own words, 'beauty and innocence languish into the tomb.' The being was departed whom he had loved as he never again was to love in this world, who had loved him as he was never again to be loved; and the gladsome humor that marked his entrance into life had become, not subdued, but tinged by a sweet-souled melancholy, and a large and more earnest sympathy with his kind. Now, when he stood mid-way in the path of human life, of a sudden his outward fortune was swept away and disappeared, and he was left in possession of nothing but his own mind. Blessed adversity! that opened to him the treasures which lay heaped up within his soul. Sorrow and misfortune only brought out in its brightness the purity of his nature, and were but as clouds that reflect the sunshine in a thousand hues.

'In a foreign land, alone, impoverished, bereaved, he was so good and true, we might also say angels ministered to him. He looked with serene wisdom upon the angry waves that threatened him, and they passed under him without harm.

'The career of letters now claimed him for its service. He had not been deeply read in books; but his mind was richly stored with images of beauty and primal truths, and he knew Nature by heart. The English language, which better than any other can express the sincerity of affection, the delicacy of sentiment, the freshness of rural scenes, spread out its boundless wealth as his own; and at that period of what he himself calls

'his troubled life,' he conquered for himself fame and good will wherever that language is spoken.

'It was at this period of his life that, during a summer at Paris, I formed with him that relation of friendly intimacy which grew in strength to the last. Time has in a measure effaced the relative difference of our years, but then he was almost twice as old as I. As we roamed together over the fields around Paris, many an earnest and noble and encouraging word fell from him for my behalf; and sometimes he would speak to me of his own occupations. How he proceeded with descriptions, I cannot say; but I found that where he gave expression to feeling, he would write continuously, pouring out as it were at one gush all he intended to give forth. One evening, after we had been many hours together, he took me to his room and read to me what he had written at one sitting, without pause, under one inspiration, and almost without intermission or erasure.

'I remember it to this day; it was his 'St. Mark's Eve,' from the words 'I am now alone in my chamber,' to the end. He that studies such passages closely will find confessions of IRVING's own inward experience and affections.

'As an historian, IRVING stands in the front rank. His life of COLUMBUS has all kinds of merit—research, critical judgment, interest in the narrative, picturesque description and golden style; exquisite in the melody of its cadences and in its choice of words. His life of WASHINGTON, which is still dear to the American people, is a marvel. No one has so painted the Father of his Country to the life; modestly disclaiming great extent of original research, he has yet added much that was not known before. But what distinguishes him is the grace and facility of his movement. He writes American history, as it were, by the aid of special endowments; he takes with him a candor that never fails; a clear, impartial judgment, and an unrivalled keenness of insight into character. He may err in minor details, but never in the general effect. No one has drawn so true, and touching, and vivid a picture of WASHINGTON in his retirement as IRVING, who published it while suffering from prostration of the nerves, a depression of spirits, and that attack of asthma which harassed him to the last.

'Nor let it be forgotten that IRVING is a native of our own New-York. Like CHAUCER, and MILTON, and POPE, and GRAY, his birth-place was in the heart of a city. Among the Greeks, when a victor returned from the Olympian games, the citizens of his own home esteemed his prizes their own, went out to welcome his return, and would even break down the walls to receive him in greater triumph. Our IRVING has wrestled in the game of life and come off the conqueror; he has gone to his long home; on the mildest of winter days we have surrounded him with flowers and laid him among his kindred, and his spirit in its flight has been borne upward on the affections of countless multitudes. Now, what shall we do here to mark for him our veneration and love? He gave to this city of merchants fame throughout the world of letters. Will not, then, the merchants of New-York raise to his memory a statue of purest marble? It would be the payment of a debt to his fame, a just tribute to his virtues, a lesson to the rising generations. Fathers might then take their sons to gaze on his lineaments, and say: 'There is the man who during more than fifty years employed his pen as none other could have done, and in all that time never wrote one word that was tainted by skepticism, nor one line that was not as chaste and pure as the violets of spring.'

EXTRACTS FROM DR. JOHN W. FRANCIS' REMARKS BEFORE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

'THERE was a period in the life of the great author in which I think I have some advantage, in information at least, over the orators of to-night; and that fact, and that only, impels me to the utterance of a few circumstances associated with WASHINGTON IRVING during a portion of his school-boy days.

'I was a boy of the same school with young IRVING, now some sixty-two years since, in 1797. The institution was situated in John-street, next to the primary Methodist Meeting-



house, and in the vicinity of the renowned John-street Theatre. There were some six years difference in our ages, and IRVING occupied a place in the school among the older youth at the head where the prominent master had his desk and exercised his ferule. The younger the scholar the nearer the entrance or door seemed to be the disposition of the seat for him. In that day of dreary teaching in our academies, young IRVING was associated with boys of about the same age with himself, and their studies blended in classes in the ordinary way so common in school arrangements. I remember well the elementary books scattered about so characteristic of a common English school. The 'Columbian Orator' of BINGHAM, and HAMILTON MOORE's 'Monitor'; the 'School-master's Assistant' of DILWORTH, and the 'Arithmetic' of PIKE, with here and there a copy of DYCE's English Dictionary. In those days ballads, on printed slips or folded in octavo half-sheets, were widely sold in the streets, and many found their way in the school-house. WARRY and MEG was of the number, supposed generally to be an offspring of BURNS, but afterward known as an early production of the celebrated ALEXANDER WILSON, the great American ornithologist, and many of the songs of the famous DIBDIN. Young IRVING was, I think, more of a reader than a student, so far as prescribed duties enjoined. I take it that even at this juvenile period he had already adopted his own peculiar method of obtaining knowledge. That quick foresightedness, that apt seizure of a principle or a fact, that quick comprehension rendered it comparatively any easy matter for him to master his rule of three, and as to grammar, we may infer from the ever dominant beauty and gracefulness of his diction in all his writings, that he was etymological from the beginning. The leading teacher of the institution was ever insisting on the importance of rhetoric, and struggled hard to make every boy a CICERO. He assigned pieces for memory, to be rehearsed at the public exhibitions of his scholars and such was his ethnological science, that he assigned to IRVING the heroic lines:

'My voice is still for war,'

while I, nearly seven years younger, was given for rhetorical display,

'Pity the sorrows of a poor old man.'

'There was a curious conflict existing in the school between the principal and his assistant—the former a legitimate burgher of the city, the latter a New-England pedagogue. So far as I can remember, something depended on the will of the boy's parents; but if not expressed otherwise, the principal stuck earnestly to DILWORTH, and the assistant, for his section of instruction, to NOAH WEBSTER: the same system was adopted with the school in unfolding the intricacies of arithmetic. DILWORTH was all in all with the principal, while NICHOLAS PIKE, with his amended federal currency, was imparted by the assistant.

'It is a remark, well founded, that realities are but dimly to be traced in the twilight of the imagination, and the first impulses of genius are often to be illustrated by the subsequent career of the individual. Young IRVING at school was a quiet boy. I can narrate no wild freaks or sports originating from his conduct. It is true, that except from the general good order of his section of the room and his devotion to reading, I had little chance to do more than look at him as at other scholars, witness his movements in the street, and observe his rather taciturn and sequestered way. He seemed to have a habit of loneliness or abstraction; but he was early a reader, and I might say an observer from the beginning to the end of his life. These qualities, it is not to be supposed, were so prominent as to induce special notice at that period of life; yet, as his teacher seemed to bestow particular attention to his pupil, his maturer wisdom may have found in his scholar a temperament of peculiar indications, and thus tolerated the impulses of a youth who gave promise of character. Among the incidents of young IRVING's life, we know him to have been remarkable for his pedestrian excursions, at times alone; sometimes accompanied with his intimate friends, BREVOORT, PAULDING, and BLAUVELT, an unfledged

poet: his rambles at Weehawken, his tours to the Passaic; his walks through the Stuyvesant line of cherry-trees, (which it may be remarked passed directly through the grounds on which this edifice in which we are now convened stands,) all betray that love of nature which he has so luxuriantly unfolded in his captivating writings.

'Did not the lateness of the evening forbid, I would dwell somewhat upon that remarkable faculty which IRVING possessed of rejoicing in the luxuries and beauties of nature; his love of animals, his delights in surveying the garden and the farm-yard, his zeal to behold the anomalies of the vegetable world, his gratification in comprehending the labors of the naturalist, and point out how the defects of the schools of that day were overcome by his reading and his minute observation. He has more than once dwelt with me upon the odd characters he has encountered in the streets of our city in those days, and none seems to have made a stronger impression on him than the once famous HERRMANN, popularly known as BILLY the Fiddler. I do not recollect whether this musical genius and singularly constructed man finds a place in any of IRVING's writings.

'You all, gentlemen, have dwelt upon the genial humor of IRVING; his kindly nature was ever apparent. That his mind was fructified by a close study of the older dramatists, I think a safe inference. That fountain of knowledge yields a living spring to all who delineate human character, and who has excelled him in that branch of intricate illustration? He had a marvellous tendency to the curious. IRVING, had he walked through a lunatic asylum, would seem to have been qualified to write a treatise on insanity; had he been bred to physic, could his sensibilities have endured such servitude, he might have become famous for his descriptive powers in diagnostic pathology. There was a trait of singular and peculiar excellence in Mr. IRVING. His courteous and benignant intercourse with others, whether in the humbler or the higher walks of life, was of so captivating a character as never to create a rebellious feeling, but ever awaken emotions of friendship. Unobtrusive with his vast merits, he won esteem from all beholders. He possessed a quick discernment in the analysis of character. Of all mortals he was freest of envy, and merit of every order he was ready to recognize. A literary man, *par excellence*, he could admire the arts and look upon mechanical skill and the artisan with the feelings of the most accomplished in scientific pursuits; he knew that intellect presided in mechanics as well as in the Homeric song. Posterity, to whom he may most safely be confided, will forget neither the man nor his writings: these unfold the treasures of a commanding genius laden with the excellencies of an unparalleled diction, while of the author himself we may emphatically affirm that his literary products are a faithful transcript of his peculiar mind. He enjoys a glorious triumph; he need not plead in extenuation of a line that he has penned. Let us console ourselves at his loss that he was native, and 'to the manor born,' that his life was immaculate and without reproach, and that in death he triumphed over its terrors. Let it be our pride that the patriarch of American literature is indissolubly connected, in his mighty fame, with the Father of his Country.

'The lateness of the hour forbids a longer trespass on your indulgence.'

FROM MR. WILLIS' 'IDLEWILD' LETTER.

'DURING the ten minutes before Mr. IRVING came in, (for he was out upon his morning drive when we arrived,) his nieces very kindly gratified our interest in the 'workshop of genius' by taking us into the library—the little curtain-windowed sanctuary where his mind had found both its labor and its repose, though, by the open newspapers scattered carelessly over the large writing-table in the centre, and the inviting readiness of the well-cushioned lounge in the recess, it now serves more the purpose of the repose more needed. It was a labyrinth of books; as it was a labyrinth of tender associations, in which, as the eye roved over its consecrated nooks and corners, the fancy, in all reverence, rambled lovingly! The tear at the heart kissed the threshold as we left it.

'I was looking admiringly, once more, at JARVIS's record of him at the Sketch-Book period

of his life, (the portrait with the fur collar, which all who have seen it will so well remember,) when Mr. IRVING came in from his drive. We had heard so much, recently, of his illness, that I was surprised to see with how lively and firm a step he entered—removing the slouched hat (a comfortable departure from the old-school covering, which I had never expected to see on so proper a head!) with as easy elegance as ever, sitting down with his gray shawl left carelessly over his shoulders, and entering upon kind inquiries and exchange of courtesies with no hindrance of debility that I could see. He is thinner somewhat, in both form and features—owing to the asthma, which interferes somewhat with his repose when lying down—but the genial expression of his countenance is unchanged, and his eye as kindly and bright. As to sprightliness of attention and reply, I could see little difference from the WASHINGTON IRVING of other days. The reports of his illness must have been exaggerated, I thought.

‘Conversation falling upon exercise, Mr. IRVING remarked that he daily took his drive in the carriage—less from any desire to go abroad than from finding, since he had given up habits of labor, that time hung heavy on his hands. If he walks out, it is only in the grounds. We spoke of horseback-riding, and he gave us a most amusing account of his two last experiences in that way—a favorite horse called ‘Gentleman Dick’ having thrown him over his head into a laurel bush, which kindly broke his fall; and another very handsome nag, given him by his brother, having proved to be opinionative as to choice of road—particularly at a certain bridge, which it was very necessary to pass in every ride, but which the horse could not by any reasonable persuasion be got over. With the sending of this horse-dogmatist to town, to be sold to meaner service for his obstinacy, had ended the experiments in the saddle.

‘The honored invalid complaining a little of hoarseness in his voice, I mentioned to him an alleviative I had lately chanced upon myself for a similar trouble—asking accidentally for some help to my hoarseness in an apothecary’s shop, and getting a lozenge with a most mysterious name, which I had since found an invariable throat deepener for three notes in the gamut. I contrived to call to memory the Osawatamystic inscription on the box, (‘Brown’s Pectoral Trochees,’) and I was amused with the affectionate playfulness with which Mr. IRVING called on one of his nieces, (explaining, aside, ‘this is my doctor,’) to remember the name of the medicine. This same charming household physician, I observed, followed him to the door, as he came out afterward to see us off, and guarded him against the cool air by tenderly drawing the shawl about his neck and placing his hat upon his head—caressing affections which he evidently submitted to as a habit, the gentle troop who are thus his constant ministers being like a portion of his own personal existence.

‘Attributable, perhaps, to a rallying of his animal spirits with cessation from work, I could not but wonder at the effortless play of ‘DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER’ humor, which ran through all his conversation. WASHINGTON IRVING, in his best days, I am very sure, was never more socially ‘agreeable’ than with us for that brief visit. One little circumstance was mentioned in the course of this pleasant gossip. There was some passing discussion of the wearing of beards—his friend, Mr. KENNEDY, having made that alteration in his physiognomy since they had met—and Mr. IRVING closed a playful comment or two upon the habit by saying that he could scarce afford the luxury himself, involving, as it would do, the loss of the most effectual quietus of his nerves. To get up and shave, when tired of lying awake, sure of going to sleep immediately after, had long been a habit of his. There was an amusing exchange of sorrows, also, between him and Mr. KENNEDY as to persecution by autograph-hunters; though the ex-Secretary gave rather the strongest instance, mentioning an unknown man who had written to him when at the head of the Navy Department, requesting, as one of his constituents, to be furnished with autographs of all the Presidents, of himself and the rest of the Cabinet, and of any other distinguished men with whom he might be in correspondence!’

FROM THEODORE TILTON’S ‘HALF-HOUR AT SUNNYSIDE.’

‘Mr. IRVING is not so old-looking as one would expect who knew his age. I fancied him as in the winter of life; I found him only in its Indian summer. He came down stairs, and walked through the hall into the back-parlor, with a firm and lively step that might well have made one doubt whether he had truly attained his seventy-seventh year! He was suffering from asthma, and was muffled against the damp air with a Scotch shawl, wrapped like a great loose scarf around his neck; but as he took his seat in the old arm-chair, and, despite his hoarseness and troubled chest, began an unexpectedly vivacious conversation, he made me almost forget that I was the guest of an old man long past his ‘three-score years and ten.’

‘But what should one talk about who had only half an hour with WASHINGTON IRVING? I ventured the question:

‘Now that you have laid aside your pen, which of your books do you look back upon with most pleasure?’

‘He immediately replied: ‘I scarcely look with full satisfaction upon any; for they do not seem what they might have been; I often wish that I could have twenty years more, to take them down from the shelf, one by one, and write them over.’

‘He spoke of his daily habits of writing, before he had made the resolution to write no more. His usual hours for literary work were from morning to noon. But, although he had generally found his mind most vigorous in the early part of the day, he had always been subject to moods and caprices, and could never tell, when he took the pen, how many hours would pass before he would lay it down.

‘But,’ said he, ‘these capricious periods of the heat and glow of composition, have been the happiest hours of my life. I have never found, in any thing outside of the four walls of my study, any enjoyment equal to sitting at my writing-desk with a clean page, a new theme, and a mind awake.’

‘His literary employments, he remarked, had always been more like entertainments than tasks.

‘Some writers,’ said he, ‘appear to have been independent of moods. Sir WALTER SCOTT, for instance, had great power of writing, and could work almost at any time; so could CRABBE—but with this difference: SCOTT always, and CRABBE seldom, wrote well. I remember,’ said he, ‘taking breakfast one morning with ROGERS, MOORE, and CRABBE; the conversation turned on BYRON’S poetic moods; CRABBE said that, however it might be with Lord BYRON, as for himself, he could write as well at one time as at another. But,’ said IRVING, with a twinkle of humor at recalling the incident, ‘CRABBE has written a great deal that nobody can read!’

‘He mentioned, that while living in Paris, he went a long period without being able to write. ‘I sat down repeatedly,’ said he, ‘with pen and ink, but could invent nothing worth putting on paper. At length I told my friend Tom MOORE, who dropped in one morning, that now, after long waiting, I had the mood, and would hold it, and would work it out as long as it would last, until I had wrung my brain dry. So I began to write shortly after breakfast, and continued, without noticing how the time was passing, until MOORE came in again at four in the afternoon—when I had completely covered the table with freshly-written sheets. I kept the mood almost without interruption for six weeks.’

‘I asked which of his books was the result of this frenzy: he replied, ‘Bracebridge Hall.’

‘None of your works,’ I remarked, ‘are more charming than the Biography of GOLD-SMITH.’

‘Yet that was written,’ said he, ‘even more rapidly than the other.’ He then added: ‘When I have been engaged on a continuous work, I have often been obliged to rise in the middle of the night, light my lamp, and write an hour or two, to relieve my mind; and now that I write no more, I am sometimes compelled to get up in the same way to read.’

‘Sometimes, also, as the last Idlewild letter mentions, he gets up to shave.

"When I was in Spain," he remarked, "searching the old chronicles, and engaged on the *Life of COLUMBUS*, I often wrote fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four."

"He said that whenever he had forced his mind unwillingly to work, the product was worthless; and he invariably threw it away and began again; 'for,' as he observed, 'an essay or chapter that has been *hammered out*, is seldom good for any thing. An author's right time to work is when his mind is aglow: when his imagination is kindled—these are the precious moments; let him wait until they come, but when they have come, let him make the most of them.'"

"I referred to his last and greatest work, the '*Life of WASHINGTON*,' and asked if he felt on finishing it, any such sensation as GIBBON is said to have experienced over the last sheet of the '*Decline and Fall*.' He replied that the whole work had engrossed his mind to such a degree, that, before he was aware, he had written himself into feebleness of health; that he feared, in the midst of his labor, that it would break him down before he could end it; that when at last the final pages were written, he gave the manuscript to his nephew to be conducted through the press, and threw himself back upon his red-cushioned lounge with an indescribable feeling of relief! He added that the great fatigue of mind, throughout the whole task, had resulted from the care and pains required in the construction and arrangement of materials, and not in the mere literary composition of the successive chapters."

"On the parlor wall hung the engraving of FAED's picture of 'Scott and his Contemporaries;' I alluded to it as presenting a group of his former friends."

"Yes," said he, "I know every man of them but three; and now they are all gone!"

"Are the portraits good?" I inquired.

"Scott's head," he replied, "is well drawn, though the expression lacks something of Scott's force; CAMPBELL's is tolerable; LOCKHART's is the worst. LOCKHART," said he, "was a man of very delicate organization, but he had a more manly look than in the picture."

"You should write one more book," I hinted.

"What is that?"

"Your reminiscences of those literary friends."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is too late now! I shall never take the pen again; I have so entirely given up writing, that even my best friends' letters lie unanswered. I must have rest. No more books now!"

"He referred to the visit the week before, from Mr. WILLIS, whose letter he had just been reading in the *Home Journal*."

"I am most glad," said he, "that Mr. WILLIS remembered my nieces; they are my housekeepers and nurses; they take such good care of me, that really I am the most fortunate old bachelor in the world! Yes," he repeated, with a merry emphasis, "the most fortunate old bachelor in all the world!"

"It was delightful to witness the animation of his manner, and the heartiness of his gratitude, as he continued to relate how they supplied all his wants—gave him his medicine at the right time, without troubling him to look at the clock for himself; called him down to breakfast; cloaked and shawled him for his morning ride; brought him his hat for his fine weather walks; and in every possible way, humored him in every possible whim."

"I call them sometimes my nieces," he said, "but oftener my daughters!"

"As I rose to go, he brought from a corner of the room a photograph of a little girl, exhibiting it with great enthusiasm. It was a gift from a little child who had come to see him every day during his sickness. The picture was accompanied with a note printed in large letters with a lead pencil, by the little correspondent, who said she was too young to write. He spoke with great vivacity of his childish visitor. 'Children,' said the old man, 'are great pets; I am very fond of the little creatures.'"

*Some further notices of
Washington Irving
from Knickerbocker's Magazine
for January 1859*

read to 'mother' and 'the girls' something touching *that* species of commerce, pricked up his ever-open and not over-prolonged ears 'for a boy of his size'—by sending to our sanctum, for his benefit and behoof, a certain carved wooden operative specimen of mechanical animal 'movement'? He wants a wooden monkey, climbing a small white-wood pole, to which he (the monkey, *not* our 'little boy') is very much attached by his arms. The higher he climbs the more he shows his agility, but at the same time his inability to reach the top; until, his lucky stars favoring him, over he goes, head first, down the other side! We want one of those.

WASHINGTON IRVING UPON THE LATE FENIMORE COOPER. — The subjoined note from Mr. WASHINGTON IRVING, written to us soon after the publication of Mr. COOPER's '*Pathfinder*,' and which we find mis-filed among the letters of the 'loved and lamented' WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK, will form an appropriate opening to a few remarks which we had intended to make upon an able article in the last number of the '*North-American Review*,' upon *James Fenimore Cooper and his Writings*:

'MY DEAR CLARK:

'I hope you have performed your promise, and that we shall see an extended critique on COOPER's new work in your next number, in which the author will receive ample justice. I have just read the '*Pathfinder*,' and it has given me a still higher opinion than ever both of COOPER's head and heart. It is an admirable production; full of noble pictures of exalted virtue in the humbler paths of life. The characters of the '*Pathfinder*' and '*MABEL DUNHAM*' are noble conceptions, and capitally sustained. The old salt-water tar captain, also, is a master-piece, with his nautical wisdom, his contempt for fresh water, and his 'point no point' logic. Let no one say, after reading '*MABEL DUNHAM*,' that COOPER cannot draw a female character. It is a beautiful illustration of the female virtues under curious trials, some of the most terrific, others of the most delicate and touching nature. The death-bed scene, where she prays beside her father, is one of the most affecting things I have ever read; and yet how completely free from any overwrought sentiment or pathos!

'The proof to me of the great genius displayed in this work, is the few and simple elements with which the author has wrought out his effects. The story has nothing complicated; it is a mere straightforward narrative; the characters are few.

'I am interrupted by a call to breakfast; my brother is about to set off, so I must break off.

Very truly yours,

'WASHINGTON IRVING.'

The promise to which Mr. IRVING alludes *was* performed; and if we remember rightly, by the late Mr. HENRY BREVOORT, who translated for our pages, in that connection, the appreciative and eloquent critique of BALZAC upon the great characteristics of COOPER's writings. But we desire to call especial attention to the article to which we have alluded, in the present number of the '*North-American Review*.' It has been ascribed, and we have no doubt correctly, to the pen of Mr. H. T. TUCKERMAN; for it bears all the marks of that gentleman's fine critical taste, true American feeling, and chaste and scholarly manner. The review is based

upon the superb edition of COOPER's works, now in course of publication by Messrs. TOWNSEND AND COMPANY, of our city: and its praise of the character of the enterprise, and especially of DARLEY's exquisite illustrations, is strong and cordial, to a degree somewhat out of the usual order of this old, staid, conservative Quarterly. Designing to refer again to this article, when we come to speak, in the '*Narrative History of the KNICKERBOCKER*,' of Mr. COOPER's communications to our Magazine, we content ourselves for the present with the subjoined brief extract:

'To be thoroughly appreciated, the American novels of COOPER must be read, even by his countrymen, abroad. His fresh and spirited pictures of colonial life in the West gain infinitely, as regards vividness and effect, by the perspective attainable only from a European stand-point. It is when surrounded by the visible tokens of ancient civilization—when the effigies of national maturity and decline, the arts, the polity, the social conventionalities which centuries have made mellow, are visible and audible—that the young life and the virgin nature of the world laid open by COOPER impress the imagination and win the heart. Our idea of COOPER's originality and vigor of conception—especially of his scenic limning and elaboration of native character—was vague, until we thoughtfully communed with his descriptions amid the mediæval architecture of Florence, and on the fertile and historical shores of Sicily. To turn from the massive symbols of European feudalism—from ancient temples, vast palaces, jewelled mausoleums, refined art, Southern nature, trophies that were old when America was discovered—to the leafy forest isles, the sea-like prairies, the settler's lonely log-hut, the primitive communities, the inartificial habits, and nascent civil life, which he delineates, is a contrast so entire, that the mind takes in, as never before, the whole significance of the picture. We feel the very spirit of our native land and our hardy progenitors in its original freedom and purity. Aboriginal figures seem more distinct to the fancy, when invoked in the atmosphere hallowed by sculptured deities and a living race moulded by the highest civilization; the wilderness has a singular charm when contemplated from an old European city; and frank, natural character, bred on the sea or in the forest, has a most attractive reality, when beheld with the extreme types of artificial humanity beside and around us. We seem, in such circumstances, to inhale the balmy fragrance of the primeval woods, we catch glimpses of dusky forms in the twilight, and nestle to the very heart of Nature in her verdant solitudes or ocean haunts, as we follow the firm step and piercing eye of a writer who has caught the inspiration of unhackneyed scenes and fresh, free, intrepid, isolated, but most characteristic life, which, compared with that around and within us, seems indeed born in another hemisphere, and fraught with higher issues than can ever result from the effete civilization of the Old World. COOPER then becomes to us what ARIOSTO is to the Italian exile, CERVANTES to the Spaniard, Scripture to the Hebrew—the literary representative of our nationality—the enchanter through whose spells we are transported, at will, to the bogs and meadows, the Indian trail, the hunter's lodge, the frontier bulwark, the rocky coast, the patriotic strife, the secret council, the ambush, the skirmish, the pure domestic altar, and the simple human sympathies, which make up the adventurous ordeal through which our ancestors passed to win the heritage that is their children's vast and vaunted home. For many years the only two native authors ever found in the American artist's meagre library abroad, on the *diplomat's* table, and in the banker's *salon*, were COOPER and BRYANT—because through the novels of the one and the poems of the other, the history and the scenery of home could be so authentically revived.' . . . 'European readers, satiated with the worn-out romance of Italian amours, German mysticism, and French intrigue, turned with avidity to the grand natural panorama, the novel Indian warfare, the simple colonial life, the magnificent scenery and heroic endurance in the wild and on the billow, unfolded in the pages of COOPER. The American traveller found in the remotest provinces of Europe, that next to WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN, the household word of his nationality was COOPER.'

style and a naturalness of sentiment, delightful in those days of the decadence of what may be called the Georgian prose. They brought back the charm of STERNE without his pruriency and his personal conceit; the grace of ADDISON made warm with the generous gentleness of RICHARD STEELE. Their author became the fashion, but he was not spoiled.

He bent himself with each new success more earnestly to the task of achieving better things. Alternating his residence between London and Paris, and seeing in each capital the best thinkers and the most inspiring society of each, he eventually decided to aim at the high prizes of history, which had then begun to assume the magnificent place since accorded to it in the hierarchy of modern literature. He sojourned three years at Madrid, and brought away from Escorial Libraries and Jesuit Colleges, in 1828, his 'Life of COLUMBUS,' which became at once an authority, and secured for him the honor of sharing with HALLAM the first award of the gold medals conferred by GEORGE IV. for the encouragement of historic composition. If all history be as EMERSON calls it, the biography of eminent men, the prize was fairly won. The 'Conquest of Granada' and the 'Tales of the Alhambra' followed the 'COLUMBUS,' while IRVING was filling at London the posts of Secretary of Legation and Chargé d' Affaires of the United States to his own credit and the honor of our country. The diplomatic inspirations of our Presidents have not materially improved since those times!

In 1832 Mr. IRVING came back, bringing with him as a farewell from old England the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws won from the fastidious Senate of Oxford University. How his life has since been led, with true laborious days, we all know.

He was not the man to vegetate upon a reputation. He scoured the prairies of the West and ransacked the annals of the past for topics congenial to his maturing mind. In 1842 he was most wisely selected for the post of Minister to Spain—there being no season then for our insulting the monarchy to which our fathers owed so much—and remained at the Spanish court for four years. When the fulness of his time at last had come, IRVING remembered the great name that he bore, a name conferred upon him by his parents in the very dawn of all our national greatness, and gave the final fruits of his thought and feeling and skill in style to the memory of WASHINGTON. He was granted the privilege of completing this latest of his works; and closing then, forever, the portfolio out of which so many sweet and kindly and beneficent creations had passed into the world, and with them not one evil thing, one false spirit, one impure, the old man quietly folded his hands in his well-named home of Sunnyside, the goal of a life sunlit by goodness and beauty; and there awaited the summons which has come to him now as gently as we could have asked it should. He died almost in the arms of his niece, without any visible sign of suffering, and after an evening passed in the society of friends whom he loved, and in the indulgence of all those genial and pleasant emotions which he loved especially to cherish in himself, and in all with whom he was brought into contact.

It was our purpose, in the present notice, to exhibit WASHINGTON IRVING's kindness and goodness of heart, as he exhibited these traits himself, in a familiar correspondence with us, which extended over a period of more than twenty years. The length of the sketch, however, which we have quoted from 'The Times' daily journal, and which as a matter of biographical and historical record could not be omitted, pre-

cludes these passages until subsequent numbers. We content ourselves for the present with citing the subjoined English tribute from the '*Albion*,' which is certainly very beautiful:

'THERE are few men now living whose death would excite a sorrow so universal and so genuine as that which, awakened by the sad event at Sunnyside on Monday last, will not die away until it has thrilled through the civilized world. For the admiration of WASHINGTON IRVING—an admiration mingled largely with a sweet and gentle feeling that might almost be called love—was felt wherever the English tongue is spoken; and the sad news of his death will fly eastward, casting its gloom upon the advancing light, until the East becomes the West, as sympathy in a common sorrow spans the ocean between Canton and California. Yet, since men must die, why should the world grieve that IRVING has left it? He had advanced beyond the ordinary limit of man's healthful life, and was beginning to taste that 'labor and sorrow,' without which few indeed are they who reach the farther boundary of the decade which he had more than half passed over. He had completed his labors, and had voluntarily laid down his pen, after crowning his life with a work of national importance which, in its plan and execution, was worthy of his best years. He had lived a long life, honored and beloved by all who knew him, and admired by millions to whom he was but a name or a thought; and at last, on the spot which his pen had made famous, in the house which he had built for his own home, and where he had passed many years of placid literary ease alternated with the gentle excitement of literary labor, amid scenes in which he delighted, and surrounded by hearts bound to him by the ties of blood, and closest love, after an evening of cheerful social enjoyment, in which he bore the part that he so well could bear, he sank to his rest almost unconsciously, without even the pang of parting. Could he, could any one for him, in his brightest youth have looked forward to a happier close of a life as happy? He seems to have been born to show that whom the gods love do not always die young, and that vicissitude and care are not the inevitable heritage of literature. But let no aspirant for literary fame be tempted to hope that a like fortune may be his; for WASHINGTON IRVING was probably the happiest man of letters that ever lived.

'An American by birth, and the pride as well as the patriarch of American literature, WASHINGTON IRVING was yet not distinctively American in the style of his writing or the tone of his thought. Happily for himself and for his country, he was one of those minds which are recognized simply as English, irrespective of the place of their nativity. 'KNICKERBOCKER'S History of New-York,' humorous as it is, would never have achieved more than such a local reputation as would hardly have balanced the local acrimony that it excited; but in the 'Sketch Book,' and 'Bracebridge Hall,' and 'The Alhambra,' the author handled themes of universal interest, in a manner that awoke universal sympathy wherever the English tongue was spoken. And having thus won the coy world's ear by the magic of his words, she listened ever after to each new tale he found to tell her. His style, how clear it was; and how bright, and genial, and serene, and loving was the nature that shone through it! What kindness even in its satire, what decorum in its humor, and in its pathos what hope and cheer! Happiness was its inspiration, happiness its aim; happy the life and the fame that it won for its author: and happiness go with him; we would not call him back.'



GOSSIP WITH READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS. — We heartily welcome to our pages our California correspondent. He has written before for the KNICKERBOCKER: and the PRESS of the country has shown that his communications were received with marked favor. He cannot 'drop us a few lines' too frequently. What may strike *him* as worthy of record, we are quite certain will so impress our readers:

'FRIEND CLARK: Are you very busy? If so, just lay this by till another time. I want to 'corel' you for a little chat. I am a stranger, but no matter; the best of friends are only known by their names, 'like letters sealed up, we but read each other's supercriptions,' and I do not trouble you often; only once before has my 'crabbed hand-of-write' invaded your sanctum, (*vide* June number of KNICKERBOCKER, 'Railroad-Posting Literature.')

The steamer has just arrived to-night, bringing your Magazine, and now, not being sleepy, although the wee small hours are passing, I light my segar for a quiet talk with you — will you have a segar? See, I stretch my spirit-hand across those rocky hills and long stretch of barren plain that is supposed to intervene, and proffer you the social weed, thus — a light, Sir? thus; ah! now we'll tell stories while we smoke. We have some good things in our golden State beside our gold, as all should know; we have Brobdignagian vegetables, four pound pears and apples that well might hinder the speed of a fleeing maiden, and grapes — such glorious grapes, old Bacchus's eyes would sparkle with delight at the sight of their rich purple clusters, and we have pretty girls, too — California will one day be famous for its beautiful girls. Here in this pure, strong air the human form develops in such perfect healthful symmetry, and the human face divine takes such bewitching graces, that it seems the very Paradise Regained for Eve's delighted daughters. But this is not what I was to tell you of; far up in the mountains, among the cold white tops of the Sierras, we have a water-fall, something over half-a-mile in length, I believe it is, and not long since I made a little trip that way; crossing the rich valley of the San Joaquin, and the brown, bare hills that roll along by its side, we came at last among the deep mountain caverns and the rocky, tree-crowned cliffs farther up. These trees are a sight; long, straight, sugar pines, with their green cones gracefully pendent, cedars and red-wood, such as would furnish the timber for the whole of Solomon's Temple; would not a tree one hundred and twenty feet in circumference and four hundred and fifty feet high do that, do you think? If it would n't, we might find one larger, perhaps. Here we slept for the night, building us a couch of the fragrant hemlock boughs, and a fire of their fallen trunks; no grizzlies disturbed us that night, but the hollow hoot of the owl, and the low, deep murmur in the tall tree-tops mingled and echoed in the silent woods, mingled and echoed that night just as they had for ages before, whispering the same sad sounds to the same old trees that might have listened to their tales when the pyramids were building; those trees whose parents of an equal age were rocked by breezes from the gates of Eden, bearing perfume from the flowers Eve tended. Strange to think of all the changes that the world has seen — its revolutions, struggles, and the little spasm of each human life, while all the time these living monsters have been silently and unheeding gathering from the earth and air their needed particles. Just think of it: here a branch that was broken off when Jesus died; here a shaving that was grown while PLATO lived, and that large limb perhaps was nourished in its earlier prime by breezes that had fanned the cheek of either BRUTUS. And then we lay beneath

