

## HENRY W. BELLOWS



HENRY WHITNEY BELLOWS, D.D., American Unitarian clergyman, pulpit orator, and philanthropist, was born at Boston, Mass., June 11, 1814, and died at New York, Jan. 30, 1882. Graduating at Harvard in 1832, he studied at Cambridge Divinity School, and, having been called to the Unitarian Church on Fourth Avenue, New York city, after its removal known as All Souls' Church, he soon became a power in the religious and social life of the metropolis. He was an eloquent speaker and took an active part in all patriotic and philanthropic enterprises, especially in the formation and conduct of the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. His writings include a work "On the Treatment of Social Diseases," an address on "The Relation of Public Amusements to Public Morality," and a collection of Sermons, "Restatements of Christian Doctrine."

### ORATION AT THE FUNERAL OF WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

DELIVERED IN ALL SOULS' CHURCH, NEW YORK, JUNE 14, 1878

THE whole country is bending with us, their favored representatives, over the bier that holds the dust of Bryant! Private as the simple service is that consigns the ashes of our illustrious poet and journalist to the grave, there is public mourning in all hearts and homes, making these funeral rites solemn and universal by the sympathy that from every quarter flows toward them, and swells the current of grateful and reverent emotion.

Much as the modest, unworldly spirit of the man we mourn shrunk from the parade of public rites, leaving to his heirs the duty of a rigid simplicity in his funeral, neither his wishes nor theirs could render his death and burial less than an event of general significance and national concern. It is not for his glory that we honor and commemorate him. Public fame, for more than half a century, has made it needless, or impossible, to add one laurel to his crown. So long ago he took the place he has since kept in public admiration, respect,

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and reverence, that no living tongue could now dislodge or add to the security and mild splendor of his reputation.

For three generations he has been a fixed star in our firmament, and no eulogy could be so complete as that which by accumulation of meaning dwells in the simple mention of his name.

Few lives have been as fortunate and complete as his. Born in 1794, when this young nation was in its teens, he has been contemporary with nearly the whole first century of its life. If no country ever experienced in the same period such a miracle of growth, if none ever profited so much by discoveries and inventions — never before so wonderful as those made in the half century which gave us steam navigation, the railroad, and the telegraph — he saw the birth, he antedates the existence of every one of the characteristic triumphs of modern civilization, and yet he has not died until they became wholly familiar and nearly universal in their fruitful influence!

Born and bred in New England, and on the summits of the Green Mountains, he inherited the severe and simple tastes and habits of that rugged region, and having sprung from a vigorous and intellectual parentage, and in contact with a few persons with whom nature and books took the place of social pleasures and the excitements of town and cities, his native genius made him, from a tender age, the thoughtful and intimate companion of woods and streams, and constituted him nature's own darling child. It was a friendship so unfeigned, so deep, so much in accordance with his temperament and mental constitution that it grew into a determining passion and shaped his whole life, while in the poetry to which it gave birth it laid the foundations and erected the structure of his poetic fame.

What Wordsworth did for English poetry, in bringing back the taste for nature, as the counterpart of humanity—a world to be interpreted not by the outward eyes, but by the soul—Bryant did for America. One who knew them both, as I did, could not fail to observe the strong resemblance in character and feeling, with the marked difference between them on which I will not dwell. Both were reserved, unsmiling, austere, or irresponsive men in aspect; not at home in cities or in crowds, not easy of access, or dependent on companionship; never fully themselves except when alone with nature. They coveted solitude, for it gave them uninterrupted intercourse with that beautiful, companionable, tender, unintrusive world, which is to ordinary souls, dull, common, familiar, but to them was ever new, ever mysterious, ever delightful and instructive.

Few know how small a part intercourse with nature, for itself alone,—not for what it teaches, but for what it is, a revelation of divine beauty and wisdom and goodness,—had even a half century ago for the common mind. Wordsworth in England, Bryant in America, awoke this sleeping capacity, and by their tender and awed sense of the spiritual meaning conveyed in nature's consummate beauties and harmonies, gave almost a new sense to our generation.

Before their day we had praises of the seasons and passages of poetry in which cataracts, sunsets, rainbows and garden flowers were faithfully described; but nature as a whole, as a presence, the very garment of God, was almost unheeded and unknown. When we consider what Bryant's poems—read in the public schools in happy selection—have done to form the taste and feed the sentiment of two generations, we shall begin to estimate the value of his influence.

And when we recall in all his writings not a thought or

feeling that is not pure, uplifting, and reverent, we can partly measure the gratitude we owe to a benefactor whose genius has consecrated the woods, and fields, and brooks and wayside flowers, in a way intelligible to plainer minds, and yet above the criticism of the most fastidious and cultivated.

But if fortunate in passing his early life in the country and forming his taste and his style in communion with nature, and with a few good books and a few earnest and sincere people, he was equally fortunate in being driven by a love of independence into the study of the law and a ten years' practice in a considerable town in western Massachusetts, and then drawn to this city where he drifted into the only form of public life wholly suited to his capacities—the editorial profession.

It was no accident that made Bryant a politician and an editor. Sympathy with individual men and women was not his strong point; but sympathy with our common humanity was in him a religious passion. He had a constitutional love of freedom and an intense sentiment of justice, and they constituted together his political creed and policy. He believed in freedom; and this made him a friend of the oppressed, an enemy of slavery, a foe to special and class legislation, an advocate of free trade, a natural Democrat, though born and reared in a federal community that looked with suspicion upon extensions of the suffrage and upon the growth of local and State rights.

But his love of freedom was too genuine to allow him to condone the faults even of his own party, when freedom's friends were found on the other side. He could bear, he did bear the odium of his unpopular conviction, when what was called the best society in New York was of another opinion

and belonged to another party — and he could bear with equal fortitude the ignominy of lacking party fidelity, when his patriotic spirit felt that his old political friends were less faithful than they should be to freedom and union.

The editorial profession enabled his shy and somewhat unsocial nature to work at arm's length for the good of humanity and the country; and I can conceive of no other calling in life that would have economized his temperament and faculties so fully in the public service. His literary skill, his industry, his humane philosophy, his sentiments of justice, his patriotism, his love of freedom, here found full scope without straining and tasking his personal sympathies, which lacked the readiness, the tact, and the geniality that in some men make direct contact with their fellow creatures an increase of power and of influence.

What an editor he made you all know. None could long doubt the honesty, the conscientiousness, the elevation and purity of his convictions or his utterances. Who believes he ever swerved a line, for the sake of popularity or pelf, from what he felt to be right and true? That he escaped all prostitution of his pen, or his conscience, in his exposed and tempted calling, we all admiringly confess. And what moderation, candor, and courage he carried into his editorial work. Purity of thought, elegance and simplicity of style, exquisite taste and high morality characterized all he wrote. He rebuked the headlong spirit of party, sensational extravagances of expression, even the use of new-fangled phrases and un-English words. He could see and acknowledge the merits of those from whom he widely differed, while unbecoming personalities found no harbor in his columns. Young men and women never found anything to corrupt their taste or their morals in his paper, and families could safely lay the

“Evening Post” upon the table where their children and their guests might take it up.

Uncompromising in what his convictions commanded, and never evading the frankest expression of his real opinion, however unpopular, he was felt to be above mere partisanship, and so had a decided influence with men of all political preferences. His prose was in its way as good as his poetry, and has aided greatly to correct the taste for swollen, gaudy and pretentious writing in the public press. He was not alone in this respect, for none can fail to recall the services in this direction of Charles King and Horace Greeley, not to name less conspicuous instances. But Bryant's poetic fame gave peculiar authority to his editorial example, and made his style specially helpful and instructive.

That he should have succeeded in keeping the poetic temperament and the tastes and pursuits of a poet fully alive under the active and incessant pressure of his journalistic labors,—making his bread and his immediate influence as a citizen and a leader of public sentiment by editorial work while he “built the lofty rhyme” for the gratification of his genius and for the sake of beauty and art, without one glance at immediate suffrages or rewards,—if not a solitary, is at least a perfect example of the union in one man of the power to work with nearly equal success in two planes where what he did in one did not contradict or conflict with what he did in the other, while they were not mingled or confounded. Nobody detects the editor, the politician, the man of business, in Bryant's poetry, and few feel the poet in his editorial writings; but the man of conscience, of humanity, of justice and truth, of purity and honor, appears equally in both.

This is somewhat the more remarkable, because affluence,

versatility, and humor are not characteristic of his genius. It is staid, earnest, profoundly truthful and pure, lofty and perfectly genuine; but not mercurial, vivacious, protean and brilliant. Like the Jordan that leaps into being full, strong, crystal-pure, but swells little in its deep bed all its course to its sea, admitting few tributaries and putting out no branches, Bryant's genius sprang complete into public notice when he was still in his teens; it retained its character for sixty years almost unchanged, and its latest products are marked with the essential qualities that gave him his first success. Never, perhaps, was there an instance of such precocity in point of wisdom and maturity as that which marked "Thanatopsis," written at eighteen, or of such persistency in judgment, force, and melody as that exhibited in his last public ode, written at 83, on occasion of Washington's last birthday. Between these two bounds lies one even path, high, finished, faultless, in which comes a succession of poems always meditative, always steeped in love and knowledge of nature, always pure and melodious, always stamped with his sign-manual, a flawless taste and gem-like purity — but never much aside from the line and direction that marked the first outburst and last flow of his genius.

Happy the man that knows his own powers — their limits and their aptitudes — and who confines himself rigidly within the banks of his own peculiar inspiration. Bryant was too genuine, too real a lover of nature, too legitimate a child of the muse, ever to strain his own gift. He never made verses, but allowed his verse to flow, inspired by keen observation and hearty enjoyment of nature, watching only that it flowed smoothly and without turbulence or turbidness, which his consummate art enabled him perfectly to accomplish.

Never, perhaps, was a natural gift more successfully

trained and cultured, without losing its original raciness and simplicity. Nothing less than the widest and deepest study of poetry, in all literatures, young and old, in all languages and schools, could have enabled him to keep his verse in such perfect finish for sixty successive years. He knew all the wiles of the poet, some of which he disdained to practise — but of no man in his time was it less safe to assume ignorance or neglect of anything that belonged to the poet's art. His knowledge of poetry was prodigious, his memory of it precise and inexhaustible. He had considered all the masters, and knew their quality and characteristics.

But marked as his own style is, it is marked only with its native hues. There is no trick in his adroitness, no artifice in his art; nothing that tires, except it be the uniformity of its excellence. Considering how long his genius has been known and acknowledged, and how thoroughly he represents the old school of Dryden in his purity and fastidiousness of language, it is, perhaps, not to be wondered at that his popularity, as a citizen and a man, has even somewhat eclipsed his immediate popularity as a poet. I think him fortunate in not having the popularity of novelty, of fashion, of sing-song verse, of morbid sentiment, of mere ingenious thinking, or some temporary adaptation to passing moods of popular feeling, whether in universities or in social circles.

He curiously escaped, if indeed his truthful genuineness of nature did not give him an original defence against it, from the introversive, self-considering, and individualistic temper which has characterized much of the poetry of the highest academic culture in our time. Either he was born too early, or he emigrated from New England too early, to fall under the influence of this morbid subjectiveness; or his active and practical pursuits kept him in the current of real

life, and near to the universal feeling of men. At any rate,—free, rational, as his genius ever was,—there is not a suspicion of the sceptical or denying element in his works. He is not sick or morbid, or melancholy, or discouraged.

Sentiment enough he has, but no sentimentality; awe of the Infinite, but no agnosticism; a recognition of all human sorrows and sins, but no querulousness, much less any despair. He loved and honored human nature; he feared and revered his Maker; he accepted Christianity in its historic character; he believed in American institutions; he believed in the Church and its permanency, in its ordinances and its ministry; and he was no backward-looking praiser of the times that had been and a mere accuser and defamer of the times that are.

This made his poetry, as it made his prose and his whole influence, wholesome, hopeful, nutritious; young, without being inexperienced; ripe, without tending to decay. The very absence of those false colors which give immediate attractiveness to the clothing of some contemporary poetry, gives his undyed and natural robes a fadeless charm which future generations will not forget to honor. Every one must notice that great immediate popularity is not a good augury for enduring fame; and further, that poetry, like all the products of the fine arts, must have not only positive quality, power and harmony, but must add to these freedom from defects.

It is strange what an embalming power lies in purity of style to preserve thoughts that would perish, even though greater and more original if wrapped in a less perfect vesture. What element of decay is there in Bryant's verse? How universal his themes; how intelligible and level to the com-

mon heart; how little ingenious, vague or technical; how free from what is provincial, temporary, capricious; how unflawed with doubtful figures or strained comparisons or new and strange words; how unmarred by a forced order or weary mannerisms!

He is a rigid Puritan, alike in his morals and his vocabulary; there is scarcely a false foot, a doubtful rhyme, a luckless epithet, a dubious sentiment anywhere to be found in his works. And, perhaps nature withheld from him what is called an ear for music only to emphasize his ear for rhythm and save him from the danger of a clogging sweetness and a fatiguing sing-song.

It is the glory of this man that his character outshone even his great talent and his large fame. Distinguished equally for his native gifts and consummate culture, his poetic inspiration and his exquisite art, he is honored and loved to-day, even more for his stainless purity of life, his unswerving rectitude of will, his devotion to the higher interests of humanity, his unfeigned patriotism and his broad humanity. It is remarkable that with none of the arts of popularity a man so little dependent on others' appreciation, so self-subsistent and so retiring, who never sought or accepted office, who had little taste for co-operation, and no bustling zeal in ordinary philanthropy, should have drawn to himself the confidence, the honor and reverence of a great metropolis, and become, perhaps, it is not too much to say, our first citizen.

It was, in spite of a constitutional reserve, a natural distaste for crowds and public occasions, and a somewhat chilled bearing toward his kind, that he achieved, by the force of his great merit and solid worth, this triumph over the heart of his generation. The purity of the snow that enveloped him was more observed than its coldness, and his fellow citizens

believed that a fire of zeal for truth, justice, and human rights burned steadily at the heart of this lofty personality, though it never flamed or smoked.

And they were right! Beyond all thirst for fame or poetic honor lay in Bryant the ambition of virtue. Reputation he did not despise, but virtue he revered and sought with all his heart. He had an intense self-reverence, that made his own good opinion of his own motives and actions absolutely essential. And though little tempted by covetousness, envy, worldliness or love of power, he had his own conscious difficulties to contend with, a temper not without turbulence, a susceptibility to injuries, a contempt for the moral weaknesses of others.

But he labored incessantly at self-knowledge and self-control, and attained equanimity and gentleness to a marked degree. Let none suppose that the persistent force of his will, his incessant industry, his perfect consistency and coherency of life and character, were not backed by strong passions. With a less consecrated purpose, a less reverent love of truth and goodness, he might easily have become acrid, vindictive, or selfishly ambitious. But he kept his body under, and, a far more difficult task for him, his spirit in subjection.

God had given him a wonderful balance of faculties in a marvellously harmonious frame. His spirit wore a light and lithe vesture of clay—that never burdened him. His senses were perfect at fourscore. His eyes needed no glasses; his hearing was exquisitely fine. His alertness was the wonder of his contemporaries. He outwalked men of middle age. His tastes were so simple as to be almost ascetic. Milk and cereals and fruits were his chosen diet. He had no vices, and no approach to them, and he avoided any and everything

that could ever threaten him with the tyranny of the senses or of habit.

Regular in all his habits, he retained his youth almost to the last. His power of work never abated, and the herculean translation of Homer, which was the amusement of the last lustre of his long and busy life, showed not only no senility or decline in artistic skill, but no decrease of intellectual or physical endurance.

Perhaps the last ten years of his life have made him nearer and dearer to his fellow citizens than any previous decade; for he had become at last not only resigned to public honors, but had even acquired a late and tardy taste for social and public gatherings. Who so often called to preside in your public meetings or to speak at your literary or social festivals? who has pronounced as many hearty welcomes to honored strangers, unveiled as many statues, graced as many occasions of public sympathy? who so ready to appear at the call of your public charities, or more affectionately welcomed and honored on your platforms? All this, coming late in life, was a grateful, I might almost say a fond surprise.

He had wrapped himself in his cloak to contend with the winter wind of his earlier fortunes, and the harder it blew (and it was very rough in his middle life) the closer he drew it about him. But the sun of prosperity and honor and confidence that warmed and brightened the two closing decades of his life fairly melted away his proud reserve toward the public, and he lay himself open to the warm and fragrant breeze of universal favor. He was careful, however, to say that he did not hold himself at the public's high estimate.

In a long conversation I had with him at Roslyn, two years ago, he showed such a surprising self-knowledge and such a just appreciation of popular suffrages, that it was

impossible to doubt his genuine humility, or jealous determination not to be deceived by any contagious sentiment of personal reverence or honor springing up in a generation that was largely ignorant of his writings. Yet he fully and greatly enjoyed these tributes — and more and more, the longer he lived.

Of Mr. Bryant's life-long interest in the fine arts; his large acquaintance with our older artists and close friendship with some of them; of his place in the Century Club, of which he was perhaps the chief founder, and of which he died the honored president, I could speak with full knowledge; but artists and centurions both are sure to speak better for themselves in due time, as the city and the nation surely will.

I must reserve the few moments still left me to bear the testimony which no one has a better right to offer to Mr. Bryant's strictly religious character. A devoted lover of religious liberty, he was an equal lover of religion itself; not in any precise dogmatic form, but in its righteousness, reverence, and charity. What his theology was you may safely infer from his regular and long attendance in this place of Christian worship.

Still he was not a dogmatist, but preferred practical piety and working virtue to all modes of faith. What was obvious in him for twenty years past was an increasing respect and devotion to religious institutions and a more decided Christian quality in his faith. I think he had never been a communicant in any church until he joined ours, fifteen years ago. From that time, nobody so regular in his attendance on public worship, in wet and dry, cold and heat, morning and evening, until the very last month of his life. The increasing sweetness and beneficence of his character, meanwhile, must have struck his familiar friends. His last years were his

devoutest and most humane years. He became beneficent as he grew able to be so, and his hand was open to all just need, and to many unreasonable claimants.

The first half or even two thirds of his life had been a hard struggle with fortune. And he had acquired saving habits, thanks chiefly to the prudence of his honored and ever-lamented wife. But the moment he became successful and acquired the means of beneficence, he practised it bountifully, indeed, perhaps often credulously. For he was simple-hearted and unsuspecting, easily misled by women's tears and entreaties, and not always with the fortitude to say No — when only his money was at stake. Indeed he had few defensive weapons either against intrusion or supplication, and could with difficulty withstand the approaches of those that fawned upon him, or those that asked his countenance for selfish purposes. Perhaps he understood their weaknesses, but he had not the heart to medicine them with brave refusal.

He endowed a public library in Cummington, his birth-place, at a cost of many thousands. He built and gave a public hall to the village of Roslyn, L. I., the chosen and beloved summer home of his declining years. When, at his request, I went to dedicate it to public use, and at a proper moment asked, "What shall we call this building?" The audience shouted "Bryant Hall." "No," said the modest benefactor, "let it be known and called simply 'The Hall,' and The Hall it was baptized.

I shall have spoken in vain if I have not left upon your hearts the image of an upright, sincere, humane and simple yet venerable manhood — a life full of outward honors and inward worth. When I consider that I have been speaking of one whose fame fills the world, I feel how vain is public report compared with the honor of God and the gratitude and

love of humanity! It is the private character of this unaffected, Christian man that it most concerns us to consider and to imitate. He was great as the world counts greatness, he was greater as God counts it.

He is gone! and the city and the country is immeasurably poorer that his venerable and exalted presence no more adorns and crowns our assemblies. But heaven is richer! The Church of Christ adds one unaffected, unsanctimonious saint to its calendar. The patriarch of American literature is dead. The faithful Christian lives evermore:

"Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my very heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given  
And shall not soon depart."

## SAMUEL J. TILDEN



**S**AMUEL JONES TILDEN, American statesman and lawyer, was born at Lebanon, N. Y., Feb. 9, 1814, and died near Yonkers, N. Y., Aug. 4, 1866. He was educated at Yale University and at the University of the City of New York. During his college career he wrote an able series of papers in defence of Van Buren's United States Bank policy, and in 1840 delivered a speech on currency and the history of the United States Bank. He was at this time studying law, and in 1841 was admitted to the Bar and began practice in New York city, where ere long he attained a high place in the profession and was employed in the management of many important cases. He early manifested a keen interest in politics, and in 1848 joined the Free-Soil wing of the Democratic party. During the Civil War he contended that the struggle with the Confederacy could be conducted without resort to extra-constitutional methods, and after 1868 he was the acknowledged leader of the New York Democracy. In the proceedings against the New York Tweed "ring," a few years later, Tilden took an active part. In 1874, he was elected Governor of New York, and in 1876 was the Democratic candidate for the Presidency, receiving a popular majority of 250,000. The votes, however, of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida were claimed by both parties, and after much controversy the decision was left to an Electoral Commission of fifteen members, which by a vote of eight to seven accepted the returns of the three States and, on March 2, 1877, reported a single vote in favor of the Republican candidate, Mr. Hayes. This decision was acquiesced in by the country, though not without more or less demurral. After this Tilden declined all further nominations and resumed his professional practice, dying at his country seat of Greystone, near Yonkers. His fortune, of nearly \$5,000,000, was bequeathed to found a free library for New York city, but the will was broken by his heirs, whose donation ultimately was much reduced. Tilden's "Writings and Speeches" were issued in 1885, edited by John Bigelow, who also wrote a Life of the eminent statesman.

### ADDRESS ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

DELIVERED AT SYRACUSE ON HIS NOMINATION FOR GOVERNOR,  
SEPTEMBER 17, 1874

**F**ELLOW CITIZENS,— I thank you for the honor you do me. I know it is the cause, more than its representative, that in such a storm calls out this manifestation of interest and enthusiasm. And well it may!

A peaceful revolution in all government within the United  
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