XXIX

Classics and Art
1869

(LETTERS 1830 TO 1902)

OH YE who love to overhang the springs,
And stand by running waters, . . .
Have ye no sense of being? . . .
Nay, doubt we not that under the rough rind,
In the green veins of these fair growths of earth,
There dwells a nature that receives delight
From all the gentle processes of life,
And shrinks from loss of being.
—"Among the Trees," 1869.

As he entered his seventy-fifth year, Bryant felt a growing sense of life's transience and a need to complete unfinished tasks. To those who sought speeches or poems for special occasions he pleaded preoccupation with projects he must finish before it was too late. Consoling a friend on a family loss, Bryant felt in it a "menace" of his own mortality, a subject on which he often commented to Richard Dana. After his brothers Austin and Cyrus had died in 1865 and 1866 he wrote, "I am like a soldier in battle, who sees the two comrades nearest to him fall, one on each side." At another time he confessed, "I feel acutely for those who suffer great bodily pain. I shrink from it, I believe, with greater dread than most people." He hoped that, in the end, he might be "with ease gathered, not harshly plucked."

By February he had translated twelve of the Iliad's twenty-four books; by April, fifteen. At the beginning of December he could foresee an end, and on Christmas eve he had only twenty-six lines to render. Early in the year he delivered a memorial address on Fitz-Greene Halleck, similar in affectionate insight to his discourses on Cole, Cooper, and Irving. In May he gave Putnam for publication a third volume of travel letters, those reporting his journey to Europe and the Near East in 1852–1853. For seven weeks in the fall his translation of Carolina Coronado's prose romance Jarilla won new readers for the widely read New York Ledger. December saw the publication of the first volume of the Iliad. His output that year of original verses was understandably slight, but George Bancroft called his "Among the Trees" "by far the best American short poem or English or German" to have appeared in many a year. His "May Evening" was a tender tribute to the memory of his wife.

Praise for his Iliad, selections from which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, was generous, and there were helpful suggestions from classical scholars on fine points of sense and diction. Bryant's speeches—on Halleck at the Histor-
ical Society, on American poets at the Harvard Club, before Williams College alumni in New York, and at commencement in Williamstown, culminated in an address to a meeting at the Union League Club in November called to plan a “Metropolitan Museum of Art.” Three hundred cultural and municipal leaders elected as their president this man, called by a reporter of the proceedings the “councilor, advisor, and promoter of all projects for the encouragement of American art.” Bryant’s speech, spoken in the midst of his newspaper’s war on the political corruption of the Tweed Ring, challenged the consciences as well as the pocketbooks of New Yorkers. “Our city,” he urged, “is the third great city of the civilized world; our republic . . . is the richest nation in the world, . . . if quietly to allow itself to be annually plundered of immense sums by men who seek public stations for their individual profit be a token of public prosperity. My friends, if a tenth part of what is every year stolen from us in this way, in the city where we live, under pretence of the public service . . . were expended on a Museum of Art, we might have . . . collections formed of works left by the world’s greatest artists, which would be the pride of our country.” He urged a pressing need to face malevolent forces amidst an “aggregation of human life” rapidly exceeding the imagination. We must, he said, “encounter the temptations to vice in this great and too rapidly growing capital by attractive entertainments of an innocent and improving character. . . . We must be beforehand with vice in our arrangements for all that gives grace and cheerfulness to society.”

Within two months from that evening the museum was organized, with Bryant, now in his seventy-sixth year, as its first vice-president.
1830. To James R. Osgood  

My dear sir.

I saw two of the Harpers this morning, Mr. Wesley Harper and his son. The affair is without any difficulty. Immediately on receiving Mr. Dana's letter directions were given to stop any further printing from the plates of "Two Years before the Mast," and to break them up.

I shall write a line to Mr. Dana on the subject.¹

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Minnesota Historical Society.

1. See Letter 1831.

1831. To Richard H. Dana, Jr.  

My dear sir.

After conferring with Mr. Osgood today on the subject of your letter,¹ I went to the publishing office of the Messrs. Harper. I found Mr. Wesley Harper there. On stating that I had received a letter from you desiring me to inquire how matters stood between them and you in regard to the publication of "Two Years before the Mast," he said that last autumn he received a letter from you which he had handed over to his son as a notice of what he was to do in the matter and that he thought it had been answered. For himself he had not attended to the matter on account of a severe illness. The son was called and said that immediately on receiving the notice from you he had given directions to print no more copies of the work from the plates and to break them up.² He acknowledged that the letter had not been answered, which his father told him he ought to have done. So ended the conversation on that subject. They manifested no disposition to make any difficulty and acquiesced in what you had done.

I am, sir,

very truly yours,

W. C. BRYANT


1. Unrecovered, but its contents are suggested below.

2. Bryant's protracted and eventually successful efforts to secure publication by Harper & Brothers in 1840 of Dana's Two Years Before the Mast are detailed in Letters 375, 380, 386, and 391. The occasion for Dana's letter and Bryant's visit to the

1832. To W. Faish


Dear sir.

I have your letter of the 19th before me. If you intend to devote yourself to the composition of poetry, you have chosen a career full of difficulties. The pecuniary rewards to poetry are so small that they may be almost regarded as nothing. I would therefore advise you to choose some vocation which will afford you a living, and to which you should honestly give such attention as will make you expert in its exercise, giving only your spare hours to poetry. In that walk of literature you will find your path full of competitors, among whom it is possible that you will be little noticed, even if your works have real merit, and it may happen that you will have mistaken inclination for genius. In regard to coming before the public I would not counsel you to send your poems to any person for his opinion. Opinions obtained in that way are of little value. Send what you write to the periodicals that will accept them and leave them to the judgment of the public, which is the only judgment on which you can place any dependence. If your poems happen to be much liked, you will, after a while, be paid for them.

I am, sir,
respectfully yours

W. C. BRYANT

Manuscript: NYHS Address: Mr. W. Faish.

1. Unidentified.
2. Unrecovered.

1833. To Hamilton Fish

New York February 1st 1869.

My dear sir.

I am no cabinet-maker, and when I spoke the other day in my journal of Mr. Cobb of New Jersey, whom the Republicans of the legislature of that state had recommended for a place in the Cabinet, I only meant to express the satisfaction of the Evening Post that they had recommended an honest and able man. Nevertheless, a most respectable gentleman has written me the accompanying letter, from
New Jersey, somewhat mistaking my disposition to abstain from interference in such matters, unless I perceive that mischief is about to be done. May I ask you to put the paper, with my assurance of its highly respectable source from which it comes into the General's hands while he is with you that it may receive the consideration which it merits.\(^3\)

I am, dear sir,

very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.

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1. See 774.1.
2. George Thomas Cobb (1813–1870), who had made a fortune in foreign trade in New York City, had been a United States congressman from New Jersey, 1861–1863. From 1865 to 1869 he served as mayor of Morristown, New Jersey. BDAC.
3. Although Fish was not appointed President Grant's secretary of state until a week after the inaugural on March 4, 1869, he was intimately acquainted with the general, who was apparently visiting him, not for the first time, when this letter was written. The letter Bryant forwarded to Fish is unrecovered. Cobb was not appointed to Grant's cabinet. See Allan Nevins, Fish, I, 93, 112–113.

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1834. To William Darwin Woodue\(^1\)

New York Feb. 3d 1869.

Dear sir,

I send you as you have requested my photograph with my name written below in my hand writing. If you find any thing savage in the expression of the face please put it to the account of the battles which the owner of the face has had to fight for so many years. With thanks for your good opinion of my journal\(^2\) I am

respectfully yours

W. C. BRYANT.

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1. Unidentified.
2. The photograph Bryant sent is unidentified. Woodue's letter is unrecovered.

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1835. To Henry White\(^1\) and Daniel C. Gilman


Gentlemen.

Your kind letter is before me,\(^2\) inviting me to read before the New Haven Colony Historical Society my paper on the Life and Writings
of Fitz-Greene Halleck. I cannot, for various reasons comply with your request, flattering as it is. It required some persuasion to induce me to compose it, and read it before the Historical Society here, and I feel a strong repugnance to carrying it out of town and reading it before an audience of entire strangers. Another reason is the time of life at which I have arrived, and a certain literary project to which I must devote all my leisure, lest I be surprized by the final summons before my task shall have been ended. With my best acknowledgments for the honor you have done me.

I am, gentlemen, 
faithfully yours,

W. C. BRYANT.


1. Unidentified.
2. Letter unrecovered.

1836. To John Howard Bryant

New York, February 10, 1869

... General Grant has been here, and has been much run after. I did not go with the rest, as you know I never do on such occasions; but I hear that, when they said to him that they were curious to know how he would make up his Cabinet, he answered that Mrs. Grant was equally curious. ... But I have been told that Grant makes no secret of his resolution to stop the plunder of the public that is carried on, partly by fraud, and partly by legislation, for personal objects. Of course, he will encounter a terrific opposition, but it is said that he has made up his mind to meet it. One third of the Republican strength will fall away from him if he carries out his resolution with firmness and energy, but that will be no loss. The people will stand by him as they did by Jackson. ... I have just finished my translation of the twelfth book of Homer’s Iliad. In regard to what you say about Homer, I would observe that Pope’s translation is more paraphrastic than mine, and will probably have several thousand more lines. I have somewhat more than seven thousand of the original to translate. Yesterday I translated sixty of the Greek, making some seventy or
eighty in my shorter blank verses; but generally I cannot do so much. Sometimes not more than forty. . . .

1. Apparently visiting Hamilton Fish; see Letter 1833.
2. Probably in an unrecovered letter.

1837. To Daniel C. Gilman

My dear sir.

I did not look for such a compliment as the letter in which the professors of Yale seconded the invitation given by your Historical Society to repeat my discourse on the Life and Writings of Halleck, in New Haven.1 If you should meet any of them, and think of it, will you do me the favor to say how much I have been flattered by their letter.

I have had a few copies of the discourse printed for private distribution and will ask of you the favor to accept of the one I have sent you by mail. I have not published it in this form.2

Yours faithfully,
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: JHU address: D. C. Gilman Esq.
1. Letter unrecovered.
2. See 1835.3.

1838. To Richard H. Dana

Dear Dana.

The graduates of Harvard in this city had a dinner on the 23d of this month, to which I was invited and made to say something in answer to the toast, “The Poets of America.” I took the liberty to bring in your name, and therefore send you enclosed a copy of what I said.1

Your old friend,
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: LH address: R. H. Dana Esq.
1. At this third annual dinner of the Harvard Club of New York, Bryant recalled his visit to Cambridge in 1821 (Letters 72–74) to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard. In naming those “sons of Harvard” who had helped him at that time to publish his first collection of verses, he spoke of Dana as “the born poet.” See text of speech in EP, February 24, 1869.
1839. To Martha Joanna Reade Nash Lamb

[New York?] March 5, [1869]

... I was born in Cummington, Massachusetts, November 3, 1794. I began to write verses early, and at the age of ten one of my poems was published in the county paper—the Hampshire Gazette. At the age of thirteen a poem of mine, entitled “The Embargo, a Satire” was published at Boston, which the next year appeared in a second edition with other poems. After leaving college I studied the classics and mathematics awhile, but about that time wrote my poem entitled “Thanatopsis.” I am not quite certain whether this was in my eighteenth or in my nineteenth year, probably the latter. I then began the study of law with Judge Howe in the neighboring town of Worthington, and completed it at Bridgewater in the office of the Hon. William Baylies. I was admitted to the bar in 1815. I practiced law in Plainfield one year and at Great Barrington nine years. “Thanatopsis” and one or two other poems were sent by my father in 1816 to the North American Review, and published. In 1821 I delivered at Cambridge, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, a poem entitled “The Ages,” which was published the same year, along with several smaller poems. In 1820 I wrote several poems which appeared in the Boston Literary Gazette. In 1825 I removed to New York and became one of the editors of a monthly entitled the New York Review. The same year I was temporarily employed in the Evening Post, a situation which became permanent the next year. The New York Review was merged that year in the United States Review, published both at New York and Boston, in which I was associated with Mr. Charles Folsom of Cambridge. It lived but a year. In 1827 and the two following years I was associated with Mr. Gulián C. Verplanck and Mr. Robert C. Sands in an annual publication called the Talisman, consisting of miscellanies written almost exclusively by us three. In 1832 I published a collection of my poems in New York, which has since been re-published in many enlarged editions. I went abroad in 1834, returning in 1836. I went abroad again in 1845, and a third time in 1849, and on returning published a volume entitled “Letters of a Traveler.” In 1852 I went to Cuba, and the same year again to Europe, extending my journey to Egypt and the Holy Land. I made a fifth voyage to Europe with my family in 1857, when I visited Spain and Algiers, and on my return published a volume entitled “Letters from Spain.” In 1864 I published a separate volume of verse entitled “Thirty Poems.” In 1867 I again visited Europe, when I traveled in Spain for the second time.

I was married in Great Barrington in the year 1821 to Miss Fanny Fairchild of that place. She was taken from me in July, 1866. I have
held no public office except some small local offices in Great Barrington, except that I was one of the electors at large of the State of New York at Mr. Lincoln’s first election as President. I have now been forty-four years a journalist. . . .


1. Martha Joanna Reade Nash Lamb (1829–1893), a native of Plainfield, adjoining Cummington, Massachusetts, in addition to writing a deservedly popular history of New York City in several volumes, was later (1883–1893) editor of the Magazine of American History.

2. 1817; see 44.3.

3. Although Mrs. Lamb wrote that she printed this letter “verbatim,” either she or Bryant misstated date and title of publication. In 1824–1825 Bryant contributed twenty-three poems to the United States Literary Gazette, published at Boston. See “Bryant Chronology,” Volume I, 7.

1840. To Leonice M. S. Moulton

New York March 10, 1869.

My dear Mrs. Moulton.

I was glad to learn from your note of the other day that you were passing the winter so pleasantly. The episode of your visit to Washington must have divers[i]ed agreeably your visit to the south. You were of course in Washington at the time of the Inauguration of the President, which is of course a grand pageant, and I think must be an impressive one, although I am so averse to crowds that I have never had much curiosity to see it. This time, I believe, it could not be seen but at the cost of a drenching from the rain.

I do not see that either you or your husband have been remembered in the bestowment of offices by the new President. As you were not candidates you will bear the neglect with the more equanimity. We have great hopes of General Grants administration in this quarter. His revoking several infamous pardons, issued by Andrew Johnson, and directing certain prosecutions to go on which Johnson had stopped does credit to the uprightness and vigor of his way of dealing with such matters.

I sent you the other day a copy, not a very handsome one of a paper which I read before the Historical Society on the Life and writings of Fitz Greene Halleck which I take for granted came to your hands. I had it put in type to read from, and then had some copies struck off for private distribution.

Please make my regards to your husband and to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart and such of their children as remember me.

I am, madam, very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT
Dear Miss Cary.

I cannot say that your Swallow shall make her appearance with the flowers

"That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty—"

for the Evening Post is now so crammed with advertisements that we have small space for verse, but she shall be sent forth as soon as her sisters return from the South.³

I am glad to learn from you that the appearance of one of your earliest poems in the Evening Post was found to be of service to you in your literary career. I remember that Forrest the actor was so struck by a poem of yours of a pathetic cast, which he found in the Evening Post, and the name of which I forget, that he committed it to memory and I once heard him recite it.

I shall endeavor to avail myself of your kind invitation to your evenings,⁴ at some time shortly.

I am, madam,
very truly yours.

Wm C. Bryant.

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1. Alice Cary (1820–1871) and her sister Phoebe (1824–1871) were popular Cincinnati-born poets then living in New York.
2. Winter's Tale, IV, iv, 118–119.
3. Miss Cary's verses, "To an Early Swallow," were reprinted in the EP for March 25, 1869, from Harper's Magazine.
4. No letter to Bryant from Alice Cary at this time has been recovered.
1842.  To Hamilton Fish

New York  March 31, 1869.

My dear sir—

I write on behalf of the Rev. Dr. Max Stern of Louisville in Kentucky who desires the appointment of Consul at some port in Germany, which I hope he may obtain.¹

I know him well. Twenty one years since he was married in my house to a young woman in whom my wife took much interest.² Since that time he has been laboriously occupied in building up one church after another among the German population in the Western States. For several years he has been President of the Northwestern Synod of the German Reformed Church. His health is now impaired and he desires a respite from his clerical labors, in order that he may recruit. He has been obliged by ill health to resign the pastorate of his church in Louisville.

Dr. Stern has been loyal in the most trying times and in one of the most persistently disloyal of the states—and let me add did good service to the loyal cause. He never concealed his detestation of slavery. He kept his congregation in Kentucky faithful to the Union with the exception of one man. Going to Crawford County in Ohio when he had been settled for nine years, he found the secessionist feeling strong—but though threatened to be turned out of the pulpit, he ascended it and preached on the duty of Christians to their government. The next day at Bucyrus the County seat, where he was well known, he found four hundred people gathered to resist the draft in great excitement. He went among them and persuaded them to go home— In short, he is a good, useful, and poor man, with a pretty large family—speaking German, for he [i]s a German born, and English like an American, and would make a good Consul in Germany.—

I am, sir,

truly yours

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: LC address: Hon Hamilton Fish / Secretary of State docketed: Wp C. Bryant.

1. The Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, records no such appointment for Stern, who has not been identified beyond Bryant's description of him.

2. Bryant seems not to have recorded this incident elsewhere, but for an earlier occasion when Bryant offered his home for the nuptials of a German couple, in 1841, see Letter 412.
1843. To Hamilton Fish  
New York April 1st 1869.

My dear sir.

I have been desired to write to you in favor of appointing Genl. J. F. B. Marshall our Minister Resident at the Hawaiian Islands. The information I have received from a friend who has visited those islands, and in whose representations I have every confidence, enables me to do it cheerfully. Genl Marshall resided many years at Honolulu, where he left a reputation for honesty and capacity. He speaks the Hawaiian language fluently and while in those islands was a general favorite both with the American residents and the natives. Allow me to express a hope that the testimonials which will be or have been presented to you in his favor from some of the best men of Boston where General Marshall resides, will not be overlooked in the multitude of applications for diplomatic and consular posts, which are pouring in upon the department of State.

I am, dear sir,  
very truly yours  
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: LC ADDRESS: To the Hon  Hamilton Fish, / Secretary of State.

1. John Fowle Baldwin Marshall (1818–1891), a Boston merchant doing business in Honolulu between 1838 and 1859, was instrumental, while representing the Hawaiian native government in 1843, in securing a convention in which Britain and France recognized the independence of the islands and promised not to annex them.  
2. Failing of this appointment, in 1870 Marshall became associated with Samuel Chapman Armstrong (1839–1893), Hawaiian-born commander of a Union Negro regiment, 1864–1865, in the administration of the pioneering Negro college Hampton Institute, at Hampton, Virginia.

1844. To Richard H. Dana  
New York April 8th. 1869

My dear friend.

I am rejoiced to learn that the surgical operation to which your son Edmund has been obliged to submit, is likely to end well. I do not know whether you have ever heard that Weir the painter of West Point had two operations for stone in the bladder performed on him within, I think, the space of one year, and that he is now very well. He was gradually growing weaker and suffering severely when the first operation was performed, and a large stone was taken out. The pain however, was but slightly lessened and an examination revealed that another stone quite as large had been left in the bladder. He submitted to a second operation, and is now as well as any body of his age. A
different result took place in the case of my brother Cyrus—the brother next younger to myself. He had suffered for a long time, and had been brought very low when the operation was performed and he never rallied.

I recollect very well our visit to the Harpers. The one with whom I made the bargain which the other members of the firm disowned, as you may recollect, because they had not been consulted, died a few days since in consequence of having been thrown from a carriage and dragged for some way on the ground.1 He was a man of uncommonly hale appearance and young looking, although not far from my age. The accident happened either in or near Central Park.

It is true as the newspapers have told you, that Fields and Osgood are to publish my translation of the Iliad when it shall be finished. I have translated fourteen books of the twenty four, and am in the midst of a fifteenth. The task is by no means disagreeable to me, on the contrary it interests me a good deal and I go to it daily with pleasure. It is far lighter work than original composition making no demand upon the invention, nor putting any strain upon the thinking faculty, and I find that, since I began, I have gained something in facility of versification. At my time of life, it is natural that I should feel a little anxiety about seeing it completed as soon as may be and therefore I go on with it diligently yet not so industriously as to occasion fatigue.

Please remember me very kindly to all those of your household and congratulate your son for me on the prospect of his recovery, from the effects of the operation and on the probability that he will now be better in health than he has been for years.2

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.


2. Bryant’s hope was in vain, for Edmund T. Dana (417.2) died on May 18, 1869; see Letter 1861.

1845. To Hamilton Fish

The Evening Post
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty
New York, April 15, 1869

My dear sir.

Mr. Miner for whom I applied asking his appointment as Consul at Leith or Glasgow—the Glasgow—Consulate I see is filled—has sent
me the enclosed, which he seems to think would be proper to lay before you. I have only to say that no appointment of a foreign consul would be more creditable to the administration than that of Mr. Miner.¹

I am sir
with very great respect
Your obt Serv!

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: LC ADDRESS: Hon. Hamilton Fish docketed: Wm C Bryant.

1. In a reply to this letter on April 22 (NYPL-BG), Fish said that, although Miner’s name had been on the appointments list, others prevailed in reappointing the incumbent. He complained of the “insincerity and duplicity” of those influencing political appointments, and added, “I am thankful that the cup of my patronage is drained.” In fact, according to Nevins (Fish, p. 654), “The worst of Grant’s appointments were those to consulships. Though the character of our consuls had been a standing jest for decades, . . . Grant actually lowered it.” Miner has not been further identified; Bryant’s enclosure is unrecovered.

1846. To Hamilton Fish

New York April 21. 1869.

My dear sir

Mr. Nordhoff has written a note to you,¹ in which are some expressions that, I fear may be misapprehended. I did not, and do not, ask the appointment of Mr. Miner as consul at Leith or Glasgow as a favor to myself, but as creditable to the administration and the country and highly satisfactory to Americans abroad, and to the people among whom he is to reside. If my testimony given after having been on the spot, with full knowledge of the man, his character his capacity and the good he is doing, and may be expected to do, does not show that his appointment would be so desirable as almost to be an exception to the average quality of such appointments, then it is of little consequence whether it be made or not. The only favor I have asked is that my testimony in his favor should be well considered. I would have the matter put on that ground and no other, having no other desire to gratify than a desire for the common good.

I am, sir,
very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: LC ADDRESS: Hon. Hamilton Fish docketed: Wm C Bryant.

1. Unrecovered.
1847. To Ulysses S. Grant

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty
New York, April 29, 1869

Sir.

Allow me to give my testimony in favor of the merits and qualifications of Alfred B. Street Esq., whose friends have applied for his appointment as Surveyor of the port of Albany in this state. Mr. Street is a man of excellent personal character, of no little distinction as a man of letters, educated to the bar, and for twenty years Librarian of the State Library at Albany. He is in all respects competent to the duties of the office, and it could not be given to a worthier or more upright man.

I learn that his appointment is supported by such men as Senator Sumner, Lyman [Trumbull?], Thomas W. Olcott, George William Curtis, H. Greeley and Mr. Harris of the U. S. Senate. Mr. Street was a warm friend of the Union during the war and his martial songs were read all over the country. I sincerely hope that he will receive the appointment.

I am, sir,
with great respect
and regard
Your obt. Servt.
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa ADDRESS: To Gen' U. S. Grant. / President of the United States.

1. See 955.1.
2. Surely Bryant intended to write “Trumbull,” rather than “Tremain.”
3. Curtis (915.1) edited Harper’s Weekly from 1863 to 1892; Thomas W. Olcott, a prominent Albany banker, had been a member of Martin Van Buren’s “Albany Regency” in the 1830s and 1840s; Ira Harris (1802–1876) was a Republican United States Senator from New York from 1861 to 1867.
4. From 1848 to 1862 Street had been the director of the New York State Library at Albany, and from 1862 to 1868 the state law librarian. A search of Street’s personal records, as well as public records, in the State Library suggests that this appointment was not made.

1848. To John Howard Bryant

The Evening Post
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, April 30th 1869

Dear Brother.

I have sent your poem to the Galaxy a respectable monthly published in this city, having taken the liberty to make a little change
at the close. It seemed to me that the last stanza was a little too much in the ordinary style of hymns.¹

I have none of the pamphlets on the treatment of the insane of which you speak,² but I sent out yesterday and bought a book entitled “Gheel” which I have sent you.³ It contains an account of the new method as practiced in Belgium. There is a private madhouse conducted on that principle near Philadelphia by Dr. Given—⁴ I shall write to Dr. Dickson⁵ of Philadelphia about it and will let you know what I learn.

Yours affectionately

W C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: DuU address: John H Bryant Esqr.

1. No verses identifiable as having been written by John Bryant appeared in the Galaxy during 1869.
2. John’s enquiry is unrecovered.
3. Possibly A Catechism on the Necessity and Possibility of a Radical Reform in the Treatment of Insanity, by the Author of the “Gheel Question” (London, 1864).
4. Not further identified.
5. Samuel H. Dickson (646.3). Neither Bryant’s letter to Dickson on this subject, nor Dickson’s reply, has been recovered. See Letter 1852.

1849. To Edwin W. Field

New York April 30. 1869.

My dear sir.

This note will be handed to you by the Rev! Dr. Samuel Osgood a Unitarian minister with what may be called Broad Church sympathies. He has been for twenty years a resident in New York where he is greatly esteemed and beloved, and regarded as one of our ripest scholars. He now takes a respite from his long and somewhat exhausting labors, which have not been confined to his pastoral duties, but have included every worthy public object.

I am, dear sir, truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UTex address: Edwin W. Field Esq.

1850. To David D. Field¹

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, May 7th 1869—

Dear Mr. Field.

I am sorry not to be able to accept your invitation. On Monday I removed with my family into the country. This morning I came to
town and am obliged to return this evening. I should have been very glad to meet your brother had not the reason I have mentioned stood in the way, and in thanking you for your kind invitation, I beg you to say to him how much I regret being prevented from meeting him.  

I am, dear sir,  
truly yours.  
W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: University of California Library, Berkeley  
ADDRESS: D. D. Field Esq.

1. For a generation after the Civil War David D. Field (492.4) was an outstanding constitutional and municipal lawyer, practicing in New York.
2. Since Bryant was already acquainted with Cyrus W. Field, this must have been their surviving brother Stephen Johnson Field (1816–1899, Williams 1837), a prominent California jurist.

1851.  To William A. Baker

The Evening Post,  
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,  
New York, May 17, 1869.

Dear sir.

Mr. Motley’s Address has been published by Order of the New York Historical Society and is to be had of Chas. Scribner & Co. of this city.  

Yours respectfully.  
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Stanford University Library  
ADDRESS: Wm A. Baker Esq.

1. Unidentified.  
2. This address by the historian John Lothrop Motley (1814–1877), “Political Progress in Europe and America,” delivered at the New-York Historical Society on December 16, 1869, was published under that title the same year by Scribner’s.

1852.  To Samuel H. Dickson

Roslyn, Long Island,  
May 17th 1869.

My dear sir.

We are very sorry—both Julia and myself—that we cannot have you and Mrs. Dickson with us at the time mentioned in my last.  

We had assigned to you the holiday of the year, the season of strawberries and roses when the earth is in a blush with both the fruit and the flower—and our garden thus far gives a goodly promise of both. But you must not forget that you are booked for the time when the summer heats are a little over, and when, if we are not disappointed
as we were last year, we shall have fruit for your dessert from our young peach orchard on the hill which has just bloomed profusely, and are now giving place to the fresher and later blossoms of the apple tree. If at that time any of your friends threaten to avail themselves of your hospitality, remember that you are pre-engaged and let them know that you cannot possibly remain at home. Say that you have patients at Cedarmere, who are dying to see you and that you and Mrs. Dickson are bound on an errand of mercy. When we approach that season we will if you please fix the time more particularly. Julia is in town waiting the arrival of Mrs. Godwin from Europe after an absence of three years. Say to Mrs. Dickson that I lay myself at her feet.

I am, dear sir,
very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR ADDRESS: Dr Sam' Henry Dickson.
1. Letter unrecovered.

1853. To Daniel C. Gilman

New York, May 17th, 1869
Office of the Evening Post

My dear sir.

I enclose five dollars for the Am. Oriental Society with the bill to be receipted.

Yours very truly

W. C. Bryant.

MANUSCRIPT: NYHS ADDRESS: Prof Daniel Gilman.

1854. To Fanny Bryant Godwin

New York, May 21st. 1869
Office of the Evening Post

Dear Fanny.

I sent the letter to Mr. Olmsted to his office.¹ The boy returned and said that Mr. Olmsted would not be in town till Monday. I sent again to ask that the letter be sent to him as soon as possible. He returned and brought word that Mr. Olmsted was at Chicago and was not expected till Monday.

Affectionately,

W. C. B.
1. The letter to Frederick Law Olmsted (406.4) is unrecovered. In the light of Letter 1856, however, it seems probable that it was concerned with the renovation of Fanny Godwin's house and grounds, since both Ignaz Pilat and Calvert Vaux (1856.1) were associated with the firm of Olmsted, Vaux & Company.

1855. To George P. Putnam

New York, May 31, 1869.
Office of The Evening Post

My dear sir.

I send you the Letters from the East, prepared for publication. The Contents of the Letters will be not only prefixed to the Letters in their proper place but will make a Table of Contents.

I am, sir,
very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.

1856. To Ignaz A. Pilat

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, [cJune 1] 1869.

My dear Mr. Pilat.

I want some advice in laying out grounds about the dwelling occupied by Mrs. Godwin near me. I have acquired the land north of it, and think of making another entrance to the place. I shall be in Roslyn all this week and the two last days of next week, and should be glad to see you there on any of those days if you will consent to be employed professionally. Can you come, or will you come later? The sooner the better.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT

1. Although the property called "Montrose" passed into the hands of Bryant's son-in-law, Parke Godwin, upon the death of his wife Fanny in 1893, it had remained in Bryant's ownership until his daughter inherited it in 1878 by her father's will. See Bigelow, Bryant, p. [343]. In 1869 Bryant engaged Calvert Vaux, still busy designing...
buildings for New York’s Central Park, to remodel and enlarge the main house at Montrose. See Goddard, Roslyn Harbor, p. 89.

1857. To Donald Grant Mitchell

Roslyn June 7th 1869

My dear sir.

If I might venture to suggest any change in your plan of coming to Roslyn, I would say, come out in the steamer that leaves Peck Slip at 4 o’clock in the afternoon of Friday—the Seawanahaka or the Arrowsmith, pass the night at my house, and return by the afternoon train the next day. I have one reason for suggesting this, namely, that it is my custom to come to town on Fridays and return by the afternoon steamer. Yet, if your convenience requires that you should adhere to your plan, I can come to town on Saturday. Please let me know.—

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.


1. Donald Grant Mitchell (1822–1908, Yale 1841), a writer and agriculturalist, was the author of popular works under the pseudonym “Ik Marvel,” such as Reveries of a Bachelor (1850), and My Farm of Edgewood (1863).

2. In an undated letter to Bryant in NYPL–GR, written perhaps about this time, Mitchell had asked if he might visit Roslyn in order to describe Bryant’s home in an article for the magazine Hearth and Home. This was apparently the article “Roslyn and Ripened Years” gathered in Mitchell’s American Lands and Letters (New York, 1898), pp. 386–396.

1858. To Ferdinand E. Field

New York, June 8th [1869]

. . . Your people seem to be somewhat excited about the Alabama question. The principal objection to the treaty here was that it gave the blockade-runners, and other friends of secession on your side of the water, an opportunity to come before the arbitrators with their claims for indemnity from the American Government—a class of claims which we could not consent to submit to arbitration. As to Mr. Sumner’s speech, it is simply an elaborate statement of the mischievous consequences to our commerce of the course taken by England toward us in the late Civil War. Probably it is not far wrong in its estimate of these consequences, but, after all, the speech is the utterance of an individual, and has no official significance. We do not get excited here about the Alabama question. The great question of the day with us is commercial reform, or revenue reform, which is rapidly coming into general discussion. . . .
1. On January 14, 1869, the American minister Reverdy Johnson and the British foreign minister Earl Clarendon agreed on a convention providing for the arbitration of all claims arising between Britain and the United States since the last general settlement in 1853. Prominently at issue were the American claims for damages done to United States shipping by the Alabama and other merchant shipping raiders built and outfitted by British interests for the Confederate government during the Civil War; see 1821.3.

2. On April 13, 1869, when the Johnson–Clarendon convention came before the United States Senate for a vote, Senator Charles Sumner, chairman of the foreign relations committee, demanded from the British not only the estimated fifteen million dollar value of the American ships and cargoes destroyed by British-built Confederate cruisers, but a full half of the total cost of the war to the federal government, which was four billions. This, and other extravagant demands, such as the cession of Canada to the United States, brought about the defeat of the convention in the Senate by a 54 to 1 vote. The Alabama claims were finally settled by an arbitration commission in September 1872, with the award by Great Britain to the American government of the initial fifteen million dollar estimated shipping loss plus another half million. See Nevins, Fish, I, 150–152; II, 561.

1859. To Eliza G. Wood Pell

[Roslyn?] June 10, 1869

My dear Mrs. Pell:

I have for some time past thought of writing to you to express my deep sympathy for the calamity which has fallen upon your house[hold?] in the death of your husband and my excellent friend Mr. Pell. I do not know that any cause has prevented me hitherto save a certain misgiving lest I should not be able to speak of it in terms adequate to the subject. Mr. Pell was a man of peculiar excellences of character. He was a pattern of frankness and sincerity. No man had a greater honor and [illegible] his principles of conduct were the purest and the highest; he was a philanthropist in the highest sense as one that desired and sought for the general good of his race, while his personal friendships were in their warmth something hardly known out of the province of romance. The serene resignation and patience with which in his last illness he contemplated his departure for another world, might serve as a lesson to men who make far greater pretentions to a religious character than he ever did. I could speak of the beauty of his domestic life which I always admired from my earliest acquaintance with him but on this point what I might say must be short of what you knew and felt. I dwell upon these topics because though they show the greatness of the loss they are a source of consolation. It is a great blessing to have been allowed to stand in near relation to such a man. For my own part I think that out of my own family there is no person left on the earth who felt [such?] a regard
for me—a regard so generous and wonderful that I often wondered why it should be—I could refer it only to the generosity of his nature—....

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).


2. The date of Alfred Pell’s death is uncertain.

1860. To Nathaniel Bradstreet Shurtleff

Roslyn Long Island June 10th 1869.

Sir.

I desire through you to return to the City Council of Boston my thanks for the honor done me in the invitation to be present at the great Music Festival of the 15th. I am glad to know that the Return of Peace and the Restoration of the Union of the States are to be celebrated by rejoicings of so elevated a character and on such a magnificent scale. 

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft) ADDRESS: To the Hon. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff / Mayor of Boston.

1. Nathaniel Bradstreet Shurtleff (1810–1874), a physician and antiquary, was mayor of Boston from 1868 to 1870.

2. This invitation is unrecovered.

1861. To Richard H. Dana

Roslyn, Long Island June 12th. 1869.

My dear Dana.

I had not heard of the death of your son till I was surprized by the announcement in the Evening Gazette, which you sent me. At the same time was brought to me here the Evening Post, containing an article relating to the event, copied from the Boston Daily Advertiser—quite well done, as it seemed to me, which Mr. Nordhoff had caused to be inserted in our paper. But for that, I should have had the one you sent me republished in the Evening Post.

Of the extensive professional attainments and high intellectual culture of your son, these articles gave me a view which never had been presented to me. It seems, at first thought, to be a sad thing that such remarkable endowments of nature and education should not have been made more useful to mankind, as they would have been if
his health had permitted, but, when we think of this life as only one stage of our being, we cannot suppose that any part of that ample preparation for usefulness here has been lost. The training and strengthening of his intellectual faculties has no doubt fitted him for nobler employments in that happier sphere, to which his serene and uncomplaining submission to the divine will, in the midst of his acute sufferings, bids us believe that he is advanced.

Will you assure all your household of my deep sympathy with them in their loss.

ever yours,
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: MHS ADDRESS: Richard H. Dana Esq.

1. On May 29, 1869 the Boston Evening Gazette reported that Dana’s youngest son Edmund T. Dana had died at his father’s home in Boston after a long illness “a few days ago” (on May 18).

1862. To Ignaz A. Pilat

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, June 15. 1869.

My dear sir.

In regard to your coming to Roslyn, I wish you to study your own convenience, and come when you can—only the earlier the better. If it should happen that I am not there, Mrs. Godwin will be, who is to be benefitted by your advice, and who knows what she wants. ¹

I am, sir,
truly yours
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: BLR ADDRESS: I. Pilat Esq.

1. See Letter 1856.

1863. To John Bigelow

Roslyn, Long Island.
June 19th. 1869.—

My dear Mr. Bigelow.

I am sorry that you could not be with us just now—you and Mrs. Bigelow,—for this is the height of the strawberry season, and we do not know that we shall have any thing to tempt you with. I shall be at home next Saturday at furthest—that is to say shall return to Roslyn either on Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon, and I wish you to
fix your own time for coming, as soon after my return as may be—
Saturday if you please, or any other time of the week following. Write
if you please to Julia here, so that if you have decided what day to
come she may get your letter while I am absent. With kind regards to
Mrs. Bigelow and your daughter I am, dear sir,

Very truly yours,
W. C. BRYANT.


1864. To John H. Gourlie

Roslyn, Long Island,
June 19th 1869.—

Dear Mr. Gourlie,

Most certainly do I expect to pass a part of the present summer at
Williamstown. So you see that the newspapers are right, as usual. But
it is a very small part of the summer, that is to say, a couple of days,
and perhaps three nights, and these, unless some cause, now unfore-
seen shall prevent me, I expect to pass next week at the Commence-
ment of Old Williams. On Tuesday I expect to leave Sheffield in
company with Dr. Dewey, and return on Friday. —Unless, therefore,
you make the visit to Williamstown on short notice, I shall not have
the pleasure of seeing you there.

As to the offer of the Times of $2.500 for a new fibrous substance
as a substitute for linen rags, in making paper, it does not appear to
me that we need give ourselves much trouble about it. The reward, in
gold, I presume, is enough to induce everybody who has experimented
with any such substance to come forward, with his invention or
suggestion. The Times office will have whole reams of applications,
showered upon it as copiously as Gifford, according to his own account
was once pelted with sonnets—

"Reams of outrageous sonnets, thick as snow."¹

I hope something will come of it. At present our printing paper is
deteriorated by a mixture of straw, which is the cheapest and most
conveniently obtained of the materials for paper.² The "resumption"—
is that the word?—of the cotton culture, makes cotton rags cheap, and
cotton, after all, makes the pleasantest paper to write upon—tough-
ened with a certain proportion of linen, and I believe a better paper
for printing than linen only.—

I congratulate you on your bad luck in fishing—angling, I should
say—for that is a gentleman's amusement—fishing is for those who get
their living as the apostles did. The less luck you have, the less temptation you will have for wasting your time in trying to kill the minnows of the brook.

You are right in saying that things grow too fast in the city. All manner of knaveries grow like Jonah's gourd. Luxury grows apace; prices grow like weeds; rents grow; taxes grow. I do not, however, hear that any man has grown wise and good, so suddenly and so greatly, as to astonish his friends. But we grow old fast enough, both in town and country. Milton in one of his sonnets, you remember, says,

"How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth
Stolen, on his wing, my three and twentieth year!"4

The thief hath done worse by me; he hath stolen more than three times the number of years that Milton speaks of. But I quote Milton as an offset to the poetry in your letter,5 though Milton's lines are not so funny as those you sent me.

The country is in great glory. The trees seem to strut in their luxuriant growth and abundance of foliage, and toss their branches about as a young beauty tosses the head in her pride. You spoke of going to Green River, the day after writing your letter. If you had given me more notice I would have sent my compliments, for we were once well acquainted, though I dare say Green River has forgotten me by this time.—6

While I am writing, I am told that the paper makers use the machine to which your letter refers, by which paper is made immediately from flax.

And now I think I have noticed all the topics in your letter—though not with the skill that you presented them. With my best regards to your sisters,

I am, dear sir,
truly yours,
W. C. BRYANT

P.S. If you cannot come to Williamstown this summer, what do you say to another little trip to Cummington?—where I shall be, I hope, by and by?

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: Collection of Edith C. Gourlie
ADDRESS: John H. Gourlie Esq.

1. This quotation, probably from one of the satires of the British poet and editor William Gifford (1756–1826), has not been located.

2. Following the establishment at Stockbridge, Massachusetts in 1867 of the first
American mill to make paper from wood pulp, American newspapers began to alternate this with rag paper. Other experiments were made with various reeds and straws, as well as more exotic plants. Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, pp. 166–168.

4. John Milton, Sonnet VII.
5. Unrecovered.

1865. *To Mark Hopkins*

*The Evening Post,*

41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty

My dear sir.

I confess that after the discussion of the “financial Question” at the meeting of the Alumni of your college the other day, I felt a little of what Judge Colt called an “aching” desire to contribute a trifle to its aid.¹ I gratify this desire in sending to you the enclosed, and shall be glad to know that it has come to your hands if it be not too much trouble to you.²

I am, dear sir,
very truly yours.
W. C. Bryant.

**Manuscript: WCL address:** Rev. Dr. Mark Hopkins.


2. Bryant enclosed a check for five hundred dollars as a contribution to the college, drawing the response from President Hopkins, in a letter dated June 28 (*Life*, II, 280): “... Strange times we live in, when poets not only possess money, and patronize literature, but make better speeches than anybody else.”

1866. *To Mrs. Morris Ketchum.*

[cJune 1869?]

My dear Mrs. Ketchum.

Your scruples in regard to the liberation of your son do honor to your strong and delicate sense of right, but after careful consideration I cannot allow them the force which you give them.¹ The case seems to be this—that is if the person who has spoken with your husband on the subject takes the right ground—that your son is unlawfully imprisoned— He has done wrong it is true—but he is suffering a penalty
which the law does not impose— Ought he then to submit to it? I cannot see why— What he has suffered . . .

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (partial draft).

1. No letter from Mrs. Ketchum has been recovered, but it seems likely that she had expressed doubts over a writ of habeas corpus which was to be argued on July 2 in the case of her son Edward, then in the state prison. See Letters 1558, 1648, and 1771.

2. Although the writ was unsuccessful, young Ketchum was released in November 1869, five months before his maximum sentence of four and one-half years had been served. New York Times, July 1, 3, and November 16, 1869.

1867. To Charles Deane

Roslyn Long Island, June 6. 1869.—

Dear sir.

I am much obliged to you for the copy of Governor Washburns pamphlet on Slavery in Massachusetts. You were not mistaken in supposing that I should read it with interest. Should you see the author, will you do me the favor to say that I thank him for this able and satisfactory vindication of the character of my native state and my ancestors.

I am, sir,
very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Fondation Martin Bodmer, Geneva, Switzerland ADDRESS: Chas. Deane Esq.


2. Emory Washburn (1800–1877, Williams 1817, Harvard Law School 1819–1820) served a term as Whig Governor of Massachusetts, 1854–1855, and from 1856 to 1876 was Bussey Professor at the Harvard Law School. The publication referred to was probably Slavery as It Once Prevailed in Massachusetts (Boston, 1869).

1868. To John H. Gourlie

Cummington July 24th 1869.

Dear Mr. Gourlie.

We are all here quite comfortable, and I write to say that we should like you to make your visit before the 15th of next month, as I think of going to Newport at that time to be absent for some days.

Mr. Pilat, the landscape gardener is at Stockbridge—at least he told me that he would be there about this time, and he promised also
to make me a visit here. Can you not come together? He is a very intelligent and amiable man and if you do not know him already, you would I am sure like him if you did know him. Kind regards to the Misses Gourlie.

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: PUL ADDRESS: John Gourlie Esq.

1869. To Charles Lanman

Cummington   Massachusetts.
August 2d    1869—

My dear sir.

I hardly think that any bookseller will think it worth his while to bring out a new edition of my "Letters of a Traveller"—though I see it stated in the Evening Post that Mr. Putnam proposes to do so. Nothing has been said to me about it.

I do not remember the circumstance to which you refer, but take for granted that you are accurate in your recollection. If you will let me know what the passage was which I omitted, and where it came in, I will consider whether it ought to be restored in case a new edition should be published.²

I am, sir,
very truly yours.
W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa ADDRESS: Charles Lanman Esq.

1. See Letter 590.
2. Bryant’s omission, in his Letters of a Traveller (1850), of a complimentary reference to Lanman originally printed in the EP, had, it seems, continued to trouble Lanman, who apparently asked him to reintroduce it if a second edition were to be printed. And, despite Bryant’s doubt that there would be such an occasion, the paragraph was restored in Letters of a Traveller, or, Notes of Things Seen in Europe and America (New York: Putnam, 1871), p. 286. See 590.1.

1870. To George P. Putnam

Cummington, Massachusetts.
August 9th   1869.

My dear sir.

I have just received a letter from Dr. A. Laun of Oldenburg in Germany,¹ who is about to write a Life of Washington Irving in two moderate sized volumes for German Readers. He desires to obtain the titles of all the works which have appeared in America respecting
Irvings Life and writings. The Life and Letters of Irving by his nephew P. Irving he has already, and adds that he "hopes to find the books of Tuckerman, Griswold and Whipple in a German Library or bookstore." But he wishes me to send him my Discourse on Irving and some work on the subject containing "a succinct biography of Irving which would be a guide through the four volumes of his Life and Letters by his Nephew." He has referred me to Mr. G. Schwab of New York who will pay all expenses. As you have published, I believe, every thing relating to Mr. Irving, might I ask you to help me in this matter. Will you be kind enough to put up a copy of my discourse on Irving, addressed to Dr. A. Laun, and charge it to me along with a copy of some work containing a succinct account of Irving's Life, and send both with a bill of the latter only to Mr. G. Schwab, No 66 Broad Street, who will pay for it. If you would add a list of the other works on the same subject which you have published, or which you know that others have published, you would add to the obligation. I cannot myself here give the information to Dr. Laun or I would not ask you to take the trouble.

I am, sir,
very truly yours.
Wm C. BRYANT.

1. See Letter 1282.
2. Laun's letter making this request, dated at Oldenburg July 10, 1869, is in NYPL-BG.
3. See 1133.1.
4. Laun's biography was published as Washington Irving. Ein Leben-und Charakterbild (Berlin, 1870).

1871. To William Alfred Jones

Cummington, Massachusetts.
August 10th 1869.—

My dear sir.

I remember being pleased with your Characters and Criticisms, but do not remember the notice made of them in the Evening Post. Your letter of the 5th. has been sent to me at this place, where I, of course, cannot get at the files of the Evening Post to refresh my recollection of it, and cannot therefore do what you desire at present. I shall be here for some time, but, when I get to New York, I will look up the number of the journal containing it, and will write to you—that
is, if I can remember it, which I may not do, and therefore shall be glad if you will, at any time after the middle of September, remind me of it.

Yours truly,
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVA address: W. A. Jones.

1. See 433.3.
2. Unrecovered. Jones's Characters and Criticisms had been published at New York in 1857.

1872. To James R. Osgood

Cummington, August 13, 1869.

My dear sir.

I have your note respecting my translation of Homer.¹ I have not the least objection to your using as much of it as you think expedient for the Atlantic. You desire me to suggest some passages for extracting to be used in this way. There is the railing of Thersites and his punishment in the Second Book, the breaking of the Truce in the Fourth Book—the combat of Ajax and Hector in the Seventh Book—the attempt of Juno and Pallas to aid the Greeks forbidden by Jupiter in the Eighth Book—the retreat of Ajax in the Eleventh Book, and the breaking in of the gates of the Greek Wall in the Twelfth Book. If I had the printed sheets before me I could designate more precisely.²

As to the proof sheets I have this to ask—that what you send after you receive this, up to next Thursday inclusive you will send to me at Newport, care of John Paine Esq.³ and after that up to Tuesday the 24th instant inclusive to me at New York—and then send them to me at this place. My changes of place may make the return of the proof sheets in some instances a little tardy—but I shall always send them back as soon as possible, making corrections immediately on receiving them.

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: McGill University Library address: Jas. R. Osgood Esq.

1. Unrecovered.
2. The Atlantic Monthly, XXV (January 1870), 113 contained "The Descent of Neptune to Aid the Greeks / From the Thirteenth Book of the Iliad," from Bryant's translation, XIII, 12–46.
3. With Julia, Bryant apparently visited at Newport John Knowles Paine (1839–1906), organist, composer, and first professor of music at Harvard, and his wife, Mary Elizabeth (Greeley) Paine. See Letter 1876. During this visit he was observed at a
Sunday service in the Unitarian Church by a correspondent for the New York *Tribune*, who described his "majestic head" as "cloud-wrapped, like Wordsworth on Helvellyn," and continued, "The face strikes at once a different chord from all that surround it. It suggests, at once, calm, earnest thought—the higher philosophical regions—not dream-land, something higher still. . . . Through the crowded tide of New-York life, through the changing fashions of manners and politics, it has represented the one moral aspect, the one democratic idea." From an undated clipping in the possession of the present editor.

1873. *To Theseus A. Cheney*

Cummington, Massachusetts.

August 16th 1869.

My dear sir.

From most of the persons mentioned in your letter,¹ I never had a line in my life. If I have any thing in the hand writing of any of them now in my possession it must be Mr. Pierpont² and Miss Sedgwick³ but if I have any of theirs that I could send you it must be at my place at Roslyn Long Island, and I shall not be there for some time to come.

With regard to the dedication with which you propose to compliment me, I scarcely think the word cherished should be used inasmuch as it might be taken—though not indeed necessarily to imply a personal intimate acquaintance— If you were to substitute the word valued—that is if the word could be truly applied in this case, it would I think be better—at least it would not lead to any mistake.

I thank you for your very kind invitation to visit your neighborhood. It is not very probable that any occasion will ever take me to that quarter of the country. I have already reached an advanced age, and find myself less and less disposed to wander.

I am, sir,

very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

**Manuscript:** YCAL Address: Dr. T. A Cheney.

1. Unrecovered.
2. The American poet John Pierpont (1785–1866); see Letter 202.
3. Catharine Sedgwick had died in 1867.

1874. *To an Unidentified Correspondent*

Cummington Massachusetts.

August 16th. 1869—

Dear Sir.

I have been so much occupied that I have not had time to attend to the subject of your letter¹ till now. I think that the composition of
your daughter is not inferior to the one that was preferred, though their merits seem to me nearly equal except that there is more of what might be called poetry in your daughters.

With regard to the verses by her, they are pretty. I see nothing in them to correct though it seems to me that the last stanza is rather weak and too much in the commonplace style of hymns. If she had said that the gleaners were to be in brighter fields and where richer harvests ripened—the close would have been more satisfactory.

I cannot answer your enquiry respecting the reviews of Dickens's works. I never read any of them, nor have I had time to look at the later writings of Dickens himself.

I am, sir,
truly yours.

Wm. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Brown University Library.
1. Unidentified.

1875. To Ferdinand E. Field

Newport, R. I. August 19th [1869]

... I have been passing a few weeks at a place to which I shall return in a day or two—I mean Cummington, my birthplace. Here I have repossessed myself of the old homestead and farm where my father and maternal grandfather lived, and have fitted it up and planted a screen of evergreens, from ten to twenty feet in height, back of it, to protect it from the northwest winds—though that is of little consequence in summer—and here I pass several weeks in the warm season. The region is high—nineteen hundred feet above the level of the sea; the summers are cool, the air Swiss-like, and the healthiness of the country remarkable. ... Well, you have got rid of your Irish church establishment. You are waiting, I suppose, to see the English establishment go after it. It is a great day for England—that which sees that old yoke taken from the neck of Ireland, and Gladstone's will be a great name hereafter. ...1

1. See 1821. 2. Field, like Bryant, was a Unitarian.

1876. To Julia W. Howe1

Newport
August 20. 1869.

My dear Mrs. Howe.

Julia and myself must deny ourselves the pleasure of dining with
you on Sunday. Mrs. Paine has invited some of her friends to meet us on that day, and we must therefore remain here.

I am, dear madam, faithfully yours.

W C BRYANT.


1. See 1494.1.


1877. To Julia S. Bryant

Roslyn, Long Island
August 24, 1869.

Dear Julia.

I had a good passage—and a comfortably cool one to New York, the other night. When I went to Sixteenth Street to dine, I found my brother [John] there, and at four we took the boat together. The day was fine and not too warm, and today again—though warmer is very comfortable. We are here in the midst of pears and peaches—a peach tree north of the house, loaded with fine fruit, has to be propped to prevent the boughs from breaking, and the baked sweet apples are in their prime. The workmen are busy about Fanny's house. The south wing has been pulled down, the chimneys have been taken out of the main building, and it stands dismantled and almost a ruin. The cellar for the new part is almost finished.

Mr. Cline's youngest boy is very seriously ill with the dysentery. The father has been to town to see Dr. Gray who could not come out, but sent some medicines. He ordered chicken broth for his diet, but it nauseated the little fellow, and would not remain on his stomach. I suggested a solution of gum arabic sweetened, which he takes willingly and is not thrown up. His parents are quite alarmed for him.—

I am, dear Julia
Affectionately yours

W C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

1. See 1856.1.

1878. To Julia S. Bryant

New York
August 26, 1869.

Dear Julia.

Poor little Otto [Cline] died this morning, at half past four o'clock. At five, Annie Godwin was at the door of my chamber, with the news.
The little fellow suffered, apparently, a good deal during his illness which lasted twelve days. Mr. Cline is a great mourner and so, I hear is Mrs. Cline, for they both doted on him. I would have staid to the funeral, as I think they would have been glad if I had done, but every arrangement had been made for my being in town and going today, so that it would have been very inconvenient to postpone our departure.

Every thing else is going on well. Miss Sands desires me to say that the cherry bounce is made.

Affectionately &c
W. C. BRYANT.

manuscript: NYPL–GR address: Miss Julia Bryant.

1879. To Julia S. Bryant
Cumington Aug. 29, 1869.

Dear Julia

I got your letter last evening.¹ You must have before this received my letter, telling you of the death of poor little Otto whose corpse I saw on Thursday morning, as I was about to leave Roslyn. Mr. Cline went to town that day to order his coffin. There will now be another grave at the Cemetery on which to lay the weekly tribute of flowers.

When John and I reached Dalton on Friday morning, we found Jerry at the station waiting for us with the carriage. The mare has not as you supposed “given out,” but as John says is in much better order than at any time since he has been here; and both the beasts are in their best trim. We had fine weather—the very finest, both at Roslyn and at New York, and on our way hither and since we arrived, but I reached here quite out of order—stomachically—yet I am now better again. Mr. Dawes is just now abed with the cholera morbus. All others are well here. I do not know of any news except that Mrs. Dawes the mother of Mr. Dawes of our place died while I was absent and her funeral took place on the day of our return—Friday, at one o’clock too early for me to attend.² Mr. Clark of Chesterfield came over and preached the funeral sermon—the Mr. Clark whom we saw at Chesterfield. There was a large concourse at the funeral.

As to Miss Gangloff, you must do as you think best—if you think the voyage necessary for her, or that it will make her less a burden on those who have interested themselves for her you may let her have the money. A note to Mr. King will procure it for her.³

Please give my kind regards to Col. Waring and Mrs. Waring.⁴

Affectionately yours,
W. C. BRYANT.
1. Unrecovered.
2. Mary Burgess Dawes (Mrs. Mitchell Dawes), mother of Frances Dawes and United States Congressman— later Senator— Henry Laurens Dawes (1816–1903) died at Cummington on August 25, 1869, at the age of eighty-nine years. *Vital Records of Cummington*, p. 188.
3. Miss Gangloff is unidentified; Mr. King was apparently the EP’s cashier.
4. Probably George Edwin Waring (1833–1898), formerly the sanitary engineer for Central Park, who, after service as a Union officer during the Civil War, was managing the Ogden Farm near Newport.

**1880. To Julia S. Bryant**

Cummington September 3d. 1869.

Dear Julia,

I got your letter last night¹ and am sorry to hear that you have been ill. My own little incommodities were soon over, and I am back at work again on Homer, finding myself stronger than ever. I hope you are to be here soon. It is so cold that yesterday I had a fire in the library from morning to night and begin to pine for Roslyn. If you do not come back soon I believe I shall take my leave and go to a warmer climate.

On the first Moses Fish² came with his wife. He likes to talk, and in his sphere he seems to have been quite observant, and his talk is not uninstructive—indeed he is much more of a man than his letters seemed to indicate. His wife the native of an island on Lake Champlain is not unintelligent.

I did not tell you that Mr. Olds Louisa’s father³ has been here. He came on Saturday, while I was away, a little unwell, but, in a day or two, was allright again—and liked his quarters so well that he staid nine days, going away last Monday. He is quite stout and florid.

John’s wife is quite cheerful and smiling takes her allowance of food, and seems to grow fat and likes to go every where. We went with her the other day to Windsor Lake in what is called the Bush—an interesting drive, and fell in with a man named Hollis of whom I bought some honey—who asked if I were not Mr. Bryant, and said that some people in his neighborhood would give as much to see Cullen Bryant as to see a bear.

Affectionately yours

W C Bryant

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1. Unrecovered.
2. Probably a son, or brother, of Bryant’s cousin Elisha Fish, of Gilsum, New Hampshire (Letters 465, 472).
3. Bryant’s brother-in-law Justin Olds (520.1).

1881. To George Henry Pierce and John Gordon Gray

[Cummington? cSeptember 10, 1869]

... It is a great compliment that the members of your association have paid me, and one that deserves my particular acknowledgments. I can only thank them for their good opinion and express my sincere hope that their association may flourish and prosper in spite of its name....

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (partial draft).

1. These two young men, not otherwise identified, had written Bryant from Philadelphia on September 7 (NYPL–GR) asking him to compose a poem to be read on October 11 at the first anniversary meeting of a literary society bearing Bryant’s name.

1882. To Fanny Bryant Godwin

Cummington Sept. 14, 1869.

Dear Fanny.

I got your letter\(^1\) last night. I shall follow this very soon, but I send it that you may get your answer as early as possible.

The furnace at Mr. Weston’s in Dalton which you wished me to inquire about is to be seen at H. B. Smith & Co’s No 706 Broadway in New York. I do not recollect whose patent it is, but it is called the “Union Steam and Water Heating Apparatus.” One of them is at Wm B. Ogden’s in Chicago,\(^2\) to whom reference is made.

I have received no letter about this furnace either from Mr. Henderson or Mr. King. When I was in New York and Roslyn I forgot to speak of it.

We are all well. Arthur [Bryant] has been here. He and John go today. Love to all—

Affectionately

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR ADDRESS: Mrs. F. B. Godwin.

1. Unrecovered.
2. See 581.2.

1883. To Samuel B. Garvin

[Roslyn] Sept. 26, 1869.

Dear Sir.

I am sorry to hear that Jacob I. Willis the son of Townsend C. Willis a most worthy neighbor of mine here in the country\(^2\) is in prison
on certain charges of criminal conduct. The father is one of the most strictly conscientious men in this part of the country, a very model of integrity, and exemplary in every respect and he and his wife are heart broken at the disgrace of their son to whom he has always given the best advice and set the best example, but who has been tempted into bad courses by others older than himself.

I write this to ask not only in my own name but that of the people of this neighborhood that in dealing with the unfortunate young man's case, you will in consideration of his youth and of the feelings of his afflicted parents exercise all the lenity you can conscientiously and with a just regard to your public duty.

I am sir
very respectfully yours
W C BRYANT

1. See descriptive note below.
2. Not further identified.


My dear sir.

It is my practice to come to town on Tuesdays and Fridays. On those days I could go to Mr. Hennessy's studio, if it be in town, or he might perhaps come to the office of the Evening Post where there is a well-lighted room in which I could sit. Or will he make some other suggestion, better suited to his convenience. I hope he will not need many sittings, for they are great consumers of time and I am very busy with Homer. Nevertheless I am greatly obliged to the artist for thinking my figure worth putting into one of his clever pictures.¹

The proofreader who overlooks the sheets of my translation is very sharp-eyed and has caught me in certain inaccuracies which have astonished me.

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

P.S. I received a telegram yesterday about the proof sheets of the Breaking of the Truce.² They were sent to Boston the day before.

W. C. B.
1. Irish-born William John Hennessy (1839–1917), a landscape and genre painter best known as the illustrator of many books of poetry, was active in New York between 1856 and 1870. From 1863 he was a member of the National Academy. DAA. It is uncertain whether, as Bryant seems to imply, Hennessy represented him in one of his group pictures.

2. *Iliad*, Bk. IV.

1885.  *To F. P. Bryant*¹

Roslyn  Long Island  N. Y.  
October 1st. 1869.

Dear sir.

The genealogy of the Bryant family—our branch—as far as I can ascertain is this.

Stephen Bryant came over from England; the year is not certain but he was in Duxbury in 1643. Before that he was in Plymouth as early as 1632. He married Abigail Shaw born in the old country—the marriage was about the year 1645. Their children were.

1 Abigail Bryant born [no date] married to John Bryant Jr. of Plymouth
2 John Bryant  "  at Plymouth  7th Apl. 1650
3 Mary  "  "  29 May 1654
4 Stephen  "  "  21 Feb 1657.
5 Sarah  "  "  28 No. 1659.
6 Lydia  "  "  23 Oct 1662.
7 Elijah  "  "  17 Oct. 1665.

Stephen Bryant Jr. married a lady whose surname is not given—her Christian name was Mehitabel. Their children were

1 Stephen Bryant born 1 May 1684
2 David  "  "  at Plym:th 10th Feb 1687
3 William  "  "  2d Feb. 1691.
4 Hannah Bryant born—(no date)
5 Ichabod  "  "  5th July 1699
6 Timothy  "  "  25 August 1702

Ichabod was our ancestor. He married Ruth Staples— I have not the date, lived in Raynham, removed to West Bridgewater. His children were Philip my grandfather, Nathan, Seth—your ancestor—Job, Gamaliel, Phebe Ruth, Sarah, Anna and Prudence. I take these ten names from Mitchell’s History of the families of Bridgewater.

Seth, your great grandfather, according to Mitchell married Elizabeth daughter of Dependence French in 1765. Their children were

Elizabeth born 1766
Ichabod  "  1768
Dependence French  "  1770
Mary          "  1772
Zebeah        "  1774
Seth          "  1778
Olive         1781
Ira           1783

This gives all the information I possess of the origin of our family in this country. Mitchell\(^2\) has some notices of the families of my grandfathers brothers, which I have not copied as they are rather voluminous. What relates to the family before the time of the first Ichabod I take from a letter written by my brother Cyrus a year or two before his death, after making some investigations in the eastern part of Massachusetts. I hope that your curiosity will be satisfied with the particulars which I have given.

I am, sir,
very respectfully yours
W. C. BRYANT.

\(^1\) The addressee, evidently Bryant’s third cousin, has not been further identified.  
\(^2\) Nahum Mitchell, *History of the Early Settlement of Bridgewater, in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Including an Extensive Family Register* (Boston, 1840).

1886. To John Rogers\(^1\)

My dear Sir

I thank you for your beautiful and expressive group of the “Fugitive’s Story.”\(^2\) You have succeeded in a higher degree than almost any artist of any age in making sculpture a narrative art, and giving to motionless and speechless figures the power to relate their own adventures.\(^3\)

I am, sir
very truly yours,
W. C. BRYANT

\(^1\) A machinist and self-taught sculptor, John Rogers (1829–1904), a Massachusetts man who settled in New York in 1859, developed a method of casting in plaster from clay or bronze models realistic genre groups based on American fact and fiction, and selling these by subscription in great numbers from a studio on Centre Street, where he employed as many as sixty craftsmen. From 1859, when his “Slave Auction”
was sensationally popular, until the 1890s, he produced eighty groups which enjoyed a sale of over eighty thousand copies. Some of his portrait studies in these, such as that of Lincoln in the "Council of War," were of historical accuracy.

2. On October 11, 1869, in a letter addressed to "Messrs Wm C. Bryant & Co.," Rogers asked that the editor accept an accompanying copy of his group, "The Fugitive's Story." This has been characterized as equally "useful in its way," in fomenting anti-slavery feeling, as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. See Oliver Larkin, Art and Life in America (New York: Rinehart [1849]), pp. 185–186. Rogers had previously, on December 24, 1862, written Bryant presenting another of his sculptured groups. Both of Rogers' letters are in NYPL-BG; no reply by Bryant to the first has been recovered.


**1887. To Orville Dewey**

[Roslyn?] Oct 1869.

My dear friend—Dr. Dewey

I am glad to learn that a Memoir of Miss Catharine M. Sedgwick is to be published.¹ The record of so excellent and useful a life cannot but be interesting and instructive. It is encouraging to know that our poor human nature as it is called—and I do not dispute its title to the epithet—can be cultivated to such a degree of goodness, and maintained in it with so much constancy and uniformity. I became acquainted with her rather early in life and was so fortunate as to be numbered among her friends up to the close of hers. She belonged to a family the members of which did not like many others act as if they thought they were sent into the world to attend to their own personal interests, but remembered that it was their duty to work to the good of others and endeavor to make the world better and mankind happier while they were in it. Of this disposition Miss Sedgwick was an unusual example. I have never known a person of more generous sympathies or a stronger sense of justice or of a more ready and cheerful activity in her benevolences.—

It is not easy for me to speak of her without some egotism. In 1824 I came to New York to try my fortune as a literary adventurer on the invitation of her brother Henry D. Sedgwick, a philanthropist of the right sort—found in every good work and every enterprise by which his fellow men might be benefitted—It was a fortunate transplantation for me, and one of the advantages it gave me was a more intimate acquaintance with his excellent sister. Those who knew her only by her writings, favorably as they must have judged of her and wholesome as the influence of these writings is, knew her only in part. The spirit of these writings was shed in a double measure on her daily life.
I saw her after the malady which was to carry her off had made some progress. Up to the time of her attack she had as it seemed to me that both her mental and bodily faculties were remarkably well preserved and I thought of her as one whom Providence would spare for many years as a pattern of that character which is found in the model of Jesus, and could not help uttering a [mental?] thanksgiving that one so admirably endowed both mentally and morally was likely to be [continued?] for long upon the earth. When I saw her, however, these hopes were at an end. I called upon her with my wife, at the old family homestead in Stockbridge. It was a beautiful summer day, and we found her sitting under a large tree back of the house [four words illegible] while her companion read to her. On that day she seemed to me but little changed save in the decline of her strength. There was the same beaming smile that I had seen for more than forty years; there was the same kind concern for any body whom she knew; there was the same interest in the topics of the day and the same hopeful trust in Providence. I left her however, knowing from what I had heard of her malady that she could not long continue with us, but I knew also that when she should pass the gates of the Life to come she would have less of the dross of our nature to lay down at the threshold than almost any one whom I had [recorded?] among my acquaintance. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (draft) ADDRESS: Letter to Dr. Dewey concerning Miss Sedgwick.

1. This was Life and Letters of Catharine M. Sedgwick, ed. Mary E. Dewey (New York, 1871). Bryant's "Reminiscences of Miss Sedgwick" appeared on pp. [438]–[446].

1888. To James Bradley Thayer1

Roslyn, Long Island,
November 2d 1869.

My dear sir.

I thank you for the friendly interest you take in my translation of the Iliad. Your observation on the famous simile at the end of the eighth book is worthy of particular attention.2 Pope's translation is certainly a jumble—but I have also been sensible of a certain confusion in the original description. The manuscript of my translation is now at the printer but when I get the proof sheet, I shall consider the point you raise more fully.

I have thought of two difficulties in the way of omitting the lines to which you refer. One that they have been so long recognized as parts of a well known and familiar pass[sage] that readers will expect to see them preserved—the other that the line which immediately
precedes and that which immediately follows the two which you would omit do not unite neatly. In the line before them “the stars appear brightly” or “conspicuously,” and in the line which comes after them “all the stars are seen.” This tautology is rendered less apparent by the intervention of the questionable lines.

I had written thus far when it occurred to me to look at different translations of the Iliad. Voss retains the two lines in his remarkable German version. Hermosilla preserves them in Spanish. The English translations into which I have looked retain them with the exception of that of Professor Blackie. He omits them, and has a note on the passage, in which he gives several early authorities for supposing that they were foisted into the text from another part of the Iliad, and one later authority, Heyne for supposing the two lines in this place “insititiones.” Blackie, however, does not translate the repetition to which I have referred nor does he give any reason for omitting it. I refer to the phrase “all the stars are seen.”

I believe I am indebted to you for some observations in the Daily Advertiser on my version of the Interview of Hector and Andromache, by which I shall endeavor to profit.

I am, sir, very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.


1. James Bradley Thayer (1831–1902, Harvard 1852; Harvard Law School 1856), a law editor, was a professor of law at Harvard post–1874. He made perceptive, constructive comments on Bryant’s translations of both the Iliad and the Odyssey.

2. Thayer’s letter containing this observation is unrecovered.

3. The passage in question, lines 682–686 in Bryant’s translation of the Iliad, Bk. VIII, follows:

   ... As when in heaven the stars look brightly forth
   Round the clear-shining moon, while not a breeze
   Stirs in the depth of air, and all the stars
   Are seen, and gladness fills the shepherd’s heart,
   So many fires in sight of Ilium blazed, ...

4. Johann Heinrich Voss (1751–1826) published his translation of the Iliad into German in 1793. The other translators Bryant names were José Hermosilla (1831), John Stuart Blackie (1866), and Christian Heyne (1862).

5. This meeting is recounted in Bryant’s Iliad in Bk. VI, lines 510–640. Thayer’s criticism in the Boston Daily Advertiser has not been located.

1889. To Eliza Maria Judkins

Roslyn Nov 8th 1869.

My dear Madam—

Your beautiful gift, the autumn leaf reached me here on the evening of my birth day at the close of my seventy fifth year—a mild
and genial day. You have drawn and colored it with a skill really marvelous. I had to pass my fingers over it to be certain that it was not a real leaf fastened to the paper. I value it much and shall dispose of it as you suggest. Please accept, with my thanks, the wish that when the autumn of life shall come to you, it may appear as beautiful in your eyes and those of others as your autumn leaf now appears in mine.

I am Madam
very truly yours
W. C. BRYANT.


1. The Boston artist Eliza Maria Judkins (1809–1887) was primarily a crayon portraitist. DAA. Neither her sketch nor a covering letter has been recovered.

1890. To Joseph Parish Thompson

Roslyn, Long Island
Nov. 10, 1869.—

Dear sir.

Your obliging invitation to meet Father Hyacinthe at your table on Saturday has been put into my hands this evening, and I accept it with much pleasure.

I am, sir,
very truly yours.
W. C. BRYANT.


1. Joseph Parrish Thompson (1819–1879) was principal pastor of the Congregational Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, 1845–1871. From 1848 to 1862 he had been an associate editor of the Independent.

2. Charles Loyson (1827–1912), known as “Père Hyacinthe,” was a religious writer and one of the leading preachers in France when, in 1869, he opposed the calling of the Vatican Council and enunciation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. He was excommunicated from the Catholic church as a result, but continued preaching in his own Paris church, maintaining that he remained a Catholic. See Letter 1897.

1891. To Joseph P. Thompson

New York November 12, 1869.

My dear Sir.

I sent you a note from Roslyn yesterday accepting your kind invitation to meet Father Hyacinthe at dinner on Saturday. Lest it
should not have reached your hands, I write again to thank you and
to say that I accept the invitation.

I am, sir,
very truly yours
W. C. BRYANT.

**manuscript:** YCAL **address:** Revd Dr. Jos. P. Thompson.

1892. To Fanny Bryant Godwin
Roslyn, November 16, 1869

Dear Fanny.

I think you had better reconsider the direction you gave to stop
the workmen who are now busy on your house, and ask them to begin
work again next March. If it were my case I should let them go on. I
have never stopped them on account of the winter when at work for
me. You may not be able to get them back in March. They will be
disappointed at being sent away, and will not come back at the time
you want them if they can be as well employed elsewhere. They already
receive less wages than are given at other places in the neighborhood.
When you want to go into the house next spring you will not find it
rea[dy if they are not?] continually at work. If [ ? ] your credit be
not enough [ ? ] that came from. Please to re[flect on these?] things
and see whether your directions ought not to be countermanded.—

Affectionately
W C BRYANT.

**manuscript:** NYPL–GR **address:** Mrs. Fanny Bryant Godwin.

1. A corner of the second page of this manuscript letter has been torn off, as
indicated here and below.

1893. To George P. Putnam
New York Nov. 16. 1869.

My dear sir.

I thank the Committee of which you are the Chairman for the
honor they have done me in requesting me to preside at the meeting
of the 23d instant, and address the persons present.¹ I will attend and
preside as well as I am able and will say a few words by way of
introducing the subject of discussion.

I am, sir,
very truly yours.
W. C. BRYANT.
1. This meeting, at which Bryant had been asked to preside by the Art Committee of the Union League Club, was held on November 23 at the Club's theater on East Twentieth-Sixth Street. His speech on that occasion (see his Orations and Addresses, pp. [333]–341), was largely instrumental in raising a subscription fund resulting in the establishment two months later of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with Bryant one of its two vice presidents. Leo Lerman, The Museum: One Hundred Years and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: Viking [1969]), pp. 13–16. Bryant himself contributed one thousand dollars to the fund. See Letter 1938.

1894. To F. Seeger and Others¹

Gentlemen.

I thank you for the honor you do me in requesting me to deliver an address or read a poem at the Inaugural Festival of the friends of the Hahmemann Hospital on the 2d of December. I am obliged however, respectfully to decline a compliance with your invitation.² Poems for public occasions I no longer compose. For preparing an address I have no leisure—being wholly occupied with a certain literary task which is to be finished within a given time.³ I have promised to take part in a public demonstration in favor of founding a Museum of Art in New York, at a meeting called on the 23d of November, and that I consented to somewhat unwillingly, but I am admonished by the inroad it will make on my time, that I must not make any other engagement of the kind until my task is completed.

I am gentlemen
With high respect &c
W. C. BRYANT.

1895. To John William French¹

My dear Sir.

I thank you for the observations you have been so kind as to send me on my translation of the Iliad. “File” for “rank,” in my translation,
is a sad blunder. I am afraid it is too late to correct it for the first edition, which must be already printed off—that part I mean which contains the faulty passage, but I shall attend to the correction in the next edition, should there be any. Your other suggestions also deserve consideration, and I only wish I had had them earlier.²

I am obliged to you also for the kind words at the close of your letter.³ Please present my regards to Mrs. French and believe me

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa address: To J. W. French, D. D.

1. The Reverend John William French (1810–1871) was chaplain and professor of geology, history, and ethics at the United States Military Academy at West Point from 1856 to 1871. Information from Robert E. Schnare, Chief, Special Collections Division, United States Military Academy Library.

2. French had written Bryant from West Point on November 20, 1869 (NYPL–BG), giving high praise to his translation of the Iliad, some or all of which French seems to have seen in manuscript, and making some specific suggestions for emendation.

3. In conclusion, French had remarked on the late Frances Bryant's fine nature, and Bryant's ability to write with a consciousness of her abiding presence, inferred perhaps from Bryant's comment in the opening paragraph of his preface to the Iliad, "To this task of translation, which I began in 1865, I afterwards gave myself the more willingly because it helped in some measure to divert my mind from a great domestic sorrow." French had probably become acquainted with Frances Bryant during her residence in Highland Falls during the summer of 1863. See Letters 1350–1371, passim.

1896. To Edward Everett Hale¹

The Evening Post
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Dec. 3d 1869.

My dear Mr. Hale,

I certainly do not ask you to strike my name from the list of your contributors. I only meant, in my last, to let you know how difficult it is, at present, for me to send any thing to be printed in the "Old and New."

Your plan is an excellent one; you could have no contributors more acceptable to the public, and your periodical must succeed.²

I am dear sir

Truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.


1. The Unitarian clergyman Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909, Harvard 1839), best remembered for his tale “The Man Without a Country” (1863), was the founder
and principal contributor from 1869 to 1875 of the Boston literary and critical monthly magazine The Old and New.

2. In a letter dated November 30, 1869 (NYPL–GR), Hale had described his plan for the new magazine, and expressed the hope that Bryant would contribute to it. As far as has been determined, Bryant made no verse contribution to this periodical, but see 1904.3.

1897. To Leonice M. S. Moulton

New York December 10, 1869.

... Your letter came to my hands in due season and I am glad to learn from it that you are pleasantly situated in Switzerland and surrounded with objects of interest. One so observing as you are cannot fail to lay up from what is daily presented to your mind, much that you will afterwards review with pleasure. The present visit to Europe, in company with those whom you love, will make you amends for the annoyances and discomfort of the earlier visit.

I came to town yesterday for the purpose of hearing a lecture in the Academy of Music from Father Hyacinthe,1 who is passing here a few weeks of respite from his controversies with the Church of Rome, which he quarrels with but does not abandon, hoping yet to aid in its reformation. The lecture was for the benefit of the French Benevolent Society, and was heard by a crowded audience in which were many clergymen of the Protestant denominations and a few of the Roman Catholic persuasion. The audience, although the lecture was in French and the Father speaks no other, was enthusiastic and clapped vehemently when any liberal sentiment was uttered or any thing said which seemed to have reference to the abuses of the Latin church, or its denial of freedom of thought. Father Hyacinthe is quite short and plump; he speaks with great fluency and animation becoming warmed with his subject as he proceeds, and pouring forth what seems to be the inspiration of the moment, although he never speaks without previous careful and earnest preparation. I dined in his company the other day. He is exceedingly liberal—he denied that the Church of Christ is confined to the Romish communion and said that a Quaker, though never baptized yet holding to Christ as the founder and teacher of his faith, and imitating him in his life was as much a member of the church universal as a Roman Catholic. He returns to his work at the end of this month, and will be in Europe about the time when the fermentation which the proceedings of the Oecumenical Council2 are expected to cause, will occupy the attention not only of the religious but the secular public.

Apropos of religious matters, have you heard of the revival of religion in Roslyn. It is external merely, but I hope the washing of the
outside of the cup and platter will be symbolic of the inner cleansing of which there is need enough. The Roslyn chapel, through the exertions of Mrs. Clapham has been erected into a Church separate from the one at Manhasset, and is provided with a separate minister, Mr McNulty, from Ireland. The Methodist church through the agency of Mr. Wilson principally has been transformed into a comfortable and pretty building with convenient seats carpets and cushions. The Presbyterian church has been painted and is to have a new carpet. The church at Manhasset has undergone a complete renovation, is quite pretty without, and glows within with brilliant colours and gilding, after the mediaeval pattern, like the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. So if we are not good Christians in our neighborhood and the contiguous parts of Long Island it will not be for want of attractive places of worship. I do not hear, however, that the number of the worshippers has increased quite in proportion to the improvement in their accomodations, though Mr. Wilson boasts that of a Sunday evening the congregation in the Methodist church amounts to a hundred and fifty.

The country for three or four days has been buried in snow, and the sleigh bells are jangling merrily. We have had a chilly autumn, no Indian summer and a premature winter. I have been busy with my translation of Homer's Iliad, the end of which is now not far. One volume will appear soon the other in the Spring, or earlier. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: Ridgeley Family Collection text (partial): Hoyt, "Bryant Correspondence" (II), pp. 197–198.

1. See 1890.2.
2. The Twentieth Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church was convened at the Vatican in 1869.
3. This Roman Catholic chapel was built by means of a subscription, organized by Mrs. Thomas Clapham, wife of a wealthy Roslyn boat builder, and contributed to by Bryant and other non-Catholics. Goddard, Roslyn Harbor, p. 105.

1898. To George H. Bryant

My dear sir.

Your friend Mr. William C. Bryant, has more reason to complain than I have. It was a clever production, his Agricultural Talk to the Indians, and it would be a great wrong to him, were it ascribed to me, as it is very possible it may be. I think he will make his mark yet, and if he means to have credit for all that he does, he must be careful to distinguish W C Bryant of Buffalo from W. C. Bryant of New York.
You speak of the book entitled "The Bryant Homestead" as if it was mine. It is the work of a lady of this neighborhood. It is splendidly got up with beautiful wood engravings. The text is in places clever and lively, and in others very peculiar and eccentric. It is not such a thing as I should have written,—but why should I say that, when I am not likely ever to make a parade before the public of my own affairs.

I am, sir,
very truly yours,
W. C. BRYANT.

1. Unidentified.
2. William Clement Bryant of Buffalo, New York, president of that city's common council in 1867, and at one time president of the Buffalo Historical Society, wrote books and articles on the American Indians, including a life of the Mohawk chief Joseph Brant (1742–1807), Captain Brant and the Old King (Buffalo, 1889). His name has occasionally been confused by scholars with that of William Cullen Bryant.

1899. To Messrs. Fields, Osgood & Co.
New York, December 16th [1869]

... A friend of mine, and a very clever man, has asked me to obtain for him, as soon as they can be had, the sheets of the first volume of my translation of the *Iliad*, that he may make a careful review of them for some literary periodical. There was no prompting of mine in the matter, for I never in my life even hinted to any friend that I should like to see a notice of anything I had written; but, if you will send me the sheets, I will put them into the hands of the gentleman who makes the request. ...¹


1900. To Samuel Gridley Howe¹

[New York, December 18, 1869
Office of *The Evening Post*]

... A Monk of Mt. Athos, bearing the name of Christophorus is here asking money to be expended by his monastery in the support of
orphan asylums, schools and other benevolent institutions. I am told that a note from you has appeared in the Boston papers cautioning people against him. May I ask of you a copy of it for publication here? . . .


1. Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876, Brown 1821, M.D. Harvard 1824), a Boston reformer and pioneer in the education of the blind, was the husband of Julia Ward Howe (1494.1). As a young man he had participated in the Greek revolution of 1827–1829, and had recently revisited Greece.

2. A community of about twenty Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Macedonia, northeast Greece. Christophorus has not been further identified.

3. No reply from Howe has been recovered.

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**1901. To Christiana Gibson**

New York, Christmas Eve, 1869.

My dear Miss Gibson,

I wish you with all my heart a merry Christmas and a cheerful New Year's day, the beginning of a year of serene and sober happiness, but as Christmas and the first day of the coming year will be past long before you get this, the wish is rather a prayer, than a compliment. I got your letter of the 9th, for which I thank you, yesterday, and was sorry to learn from it that my excellent friend, your mother, had been so much a sufferer. I hope she was fully recovered before your letter reached me, and that the holidays will find her able to be as merry as the rest of the world. I hear, with a sort of selfish distress, of the sufferings of people in the decline of life; they seem like a menace of what I must expect. I shrink from the thought of passing to the new life along a path in which Pain is to be my principal companion, and there is nothing which makes such rigorous demands upon our exclusive attention as pain. I therefore ask for myself and for my aged friends that, when our time comes we may

— "be with ease

Gathered, not harshly plucked." —

You speak of the inclement season. Here also we have had a premature winter and an autumn less quiet and beautiful than usual, but today has been like one of the finest days of an Italian winter—a sky of spotless blue, a flood of golden sunshine, a bland temperature, and all the winds laid except a gentle breathing from the west. I thought I might finish my translation of Homer today, but the old Greek is refractory, and not to be managed so easily as I supposed, and just twenty-six lines of the text of the Iliad lie over. But my work will not be ended when those are translated. There will be the proofs
of the second volume to be corrected—I have corrected those of the first, and then I must carefully revise the whole for a second and cheaper edition. . . .


1. Unrecovered.
2. Quotation unidentified.
3. In Life, II, 282–283, Godwin added here the third paragraph of Bryant’s letter to Christiana Gibson dated July 11, 1870, the rest of which he did not print. The conclusion of the present letter is missing from the manuscript.

1902. To Robert Bonner

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Dec. 30 1869

My dear sir.

Mr. Horatio J. Perry our late Secretary of Legation at Madrid, and now in that city, has written to me desiring that I would ask you to send him at that place the New York Ledger for a year and send him the bill which he will immediately remit through Baring Brothers & Co. or you or your business agent may draw at once for the amount on Baring Brothers & Co specifying on the face of the draft that it is for one years subscription to the Ledger and he has written to Barings to honor the draft and charge to his account. But he desires that the numbers sent shall commence with the first chapter of Jarilla, or else, that the back numbers be sent and added to the yearly charge. The story of Jarilla in the original Spanish is the work of Mrs. Perry a Spanish lady.¹

I am, sir,
truly yours
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: QPL address: Robert Bonner Esq.

1. See Perry to Bryant, December 15, 1869, NYPL–BG; 1779.1.