The Letters of William Cullen Bryant

Bryant, William Cullen, II and Thomas G. Voss.

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Homer Completed
1871
(LETTERS 1970 TO 2033)

Bryant worked throughout the year translating The Odyssey, as occasional selections from his version were published in periodicals to whet the interest of readers. In December, a few days before Christmas, the task he had sometimes feared he might not live to finish was ready for the press. Meanwhile, he was encouraged by notices and the praise of scholars. Professor James B. Thayer of Harvard, offering detailed comments and corrections, called the work a permanent addition to our literature of which one might be proud. The Evening Post's literary editor, John R. Thompson, reviewed it carefully and enthusiastically. And Annie Fields told Bryant that Homer's "singing was unheard by me until you wrote."

Bryant's introduction to the Library of Poetry and Song drew praise from Harvard philologist Francis J. Child. Professor John S. Sewall of Bowdoin was impressed by Bryant's emphasis therein on the importance of a "luminous style" in poetry, and his evident delight on "meeting in recent verse new images in their untarnished lustre, like coins fresh from the mint."

Pressed as always for occasional speeches and writings, Bryant laid aside his Homeric task only on those occasions toward which he felt a particular commitment, such as talks he gave in celebration of Italian unity at a rally in the Academy of Music in January, and at the dedication in June of a statue of Samuel F. B. Morse—the first such in Central Park to honor a living person. The same month also saw publication of his first collection of poetry in fifteen years, adding the contents of his Thirty Poems of 1864. In March he described for a magazine the regimen of diet, exercise, and work habits which had kept him in hearty health well into his eighth decade, in a letter which was reprinted widely and which led John Bigelow to urge on his sons "without qualification the sanitary habits of Mr. Bryant," who, he judged, "had written little if anything destined to exert a more extensive and salutary influence upon mankind."

In May Bryant made what would be his last visit to his Illinois relatives. On the way, he surrendered his stateroom to two Boston ladies who had been put in his care by a fellow journalist, and took instead their cramped space at the rear of the last Pullman car. Here he passed a miserable night "hopping up and down" over the wheels in a car which "flapped from side to side like the tail of a kite." After a week during which he addressed Princeton high school graduates and shook hands with half a hundred admirers who called one evening, he ensured himself of comfort on the return journey by hiring a drawing room in one of "Pullman's palace cars."
As was now his custom, Bryant spent spring and early summer at Roslyn, where he entertained, among others, James and Annie Fields of Boston, and Samuel Tilden. And he saw something of the Swedish soprano Christine Nilsson when she visited the Godwins. He delighted in his garden, while he missed its fragrance, for, as he wrote Christiana Gibson wistfully, the aroma of flowers in a sense of smell once “almost morbidly acute,” was no “little more than a memory.” To Fields, who asked the dimensions of a huge tree which had established itself on his grounds more than one hundred sixty years before, he reported its girth as twenty-four feet and its height as one hundred. On his birthday in a “kindly autumn” in the first, forlorn season of the Civil War ten years earlier, he had watched the “heavy fruit” drop from this “tall black walnut tree,” and mused,

Dreary are the years when the eye can look no longer with delight on Nature, or hope on human kind;
Oh, may those that whiten my temples, as they pass me,
Leave the heart unfrozen, and spare the cheerful mind!

Yet, even among his “luxuriant gardens” and “greenest meadows” in a “most charming month of June,” Bryant confessed to Christiana Gibson, “I find that the banquet of life has lost much of its flavor.”

In July he went to Cummington, where he enlarged his homestead considerably by “committing the folly,” as he put it, of buying his grandfather Snell’s former property farther up the hillside and enlarging the old house which still stood. During a visit from Boston Robert Waterston preached to many of Bryant’s neighbors from an improvised pulpit amidst lumber and shavings in the unfinished addition, while his listeners sat on boxes and sawhorses. Later, when Bryant told the village minister he had hesitated to ask for the loan of his pulpit to a Unitarian, the usually dour Calvinist replied that he was “not easily scared.”

Bryant’s companions on his frequent rambles were again his surviving brothers, John and Arthur. He told his Amherst College professor cousin Ebenezer Snell, who visited the Bryants with his family, of the amusing spectacle Julia and her guests made on an outing in his carriage behind matched chestnut horses driven by his black coachman, who “delight[ed] in fresh white gloves and big silver-plated buttons.”

Back in town, Bryant walked down each morning to his office, and when at Roslyn he came to the city twice a week. When Charles Nordhoff left the Evening Post, in the spring of 1871, Bryant hired as managing editor Charlton Lewis, a lawyer, writer, and former professor of classics at Union College who was also a Methodist minister. Their attack on the city’s corrupt administration got new impetus on July 12 when parading Irish Protestants celebrating the Battle of the Boyne were attacked by Irish Catholics. Tammany police, instead of combating the mob, turned on the marchers. Militia sent by the governor to protect the Orangemen were in turn attacked, and their firing in self-defense caused many casualties. These “Orange Riots” impelled Bryant the next day to call the Tammany Ring the “Head of the Mob,” and
to charge that it "rules by, and through, and for the Mob; and unless it is
struck down New York has not yet seen the worst part of its History." A few
months later the efforts of the Evening Post and other journals had so
effectively exposed the frauds of the Tammany politicians that a good
government ticket under the leadership of Samuel Tilden swept the corrupt
administration from office.

While Bryant was in Cummington in September he had learned of the
deaths of two friends—through coincidence, each by drowning. The London
lawyer and art patron Edwin Field, often Bryant's host in England, sank in
the Thames while trying to rescue a nonswimming companion. West Point
engineering professor, Colonel Dennis Mahan, who had been one of Bryant's
intimate correspondents during the Civil War, threw himself from a Hudson
River steamboat in a fit of depression.

More happily, Bryant added to the many acts of aid he had extended to
practitioners of the performing arts since he had proposed to New York
audiences the dancers Paul Taglioni and his wife in 1838. In 1868 he had
enlisted fellow journalists in the interest of the German actress Auguste von
Bärndorff. In 1870 he had brought to the attention of Edwin Booth a play
by a woman who had written items for the Evening Post. Now he helped
establish in the New York concert world a German immigrant, Leopold
Damrosch, whose sons would carry on their father's name in American
musical history.
1970. To Robert Bonner

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, January 5, 1871.

My dear sir.

If the manuscript poem of which Mr. Parks speaks be a genuine production I have not the slightest objection whatever to any disposition which the possessor chooses to make of it—indeed if he be in want of money as he says, I shall be glad to know that he has turned it to account pecuniarily. As to the story which he has to tell, I can say nothing about it at present, having no idea of what it may be, nor whether it is true or false. I should be willing to leave the matter to your discretion.

Yours truly

W. C. Bryant.

P.S. I ought to say that I have no recollection of having given my verses to any person at any time in “compensation for a plagiarism.”

W. C. B.

Manuscript: QPL.

1. This unidentified Bryant poem, evidently an early one, had apparently been offered for sale in manuscript to the editor of the New York Ledger, by a person who is unidentified, except as in Letter 1971.

1971. To Robert Bonner

The Evening, Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty
New York, Jan. 6th 1871

My dear Sir.

I return you the envelope of Mr. Park’s letter and thank you for your attention in sending it. I remember a Mr. Parks from Sandy Hill who, when I was practising law after a sort in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, came and married a young lady of the place.

Yours truly.

W. C. Bryant.

Manuscript: QPL. Address: R. Bonner Esq. Docketed: Jan 6, 1870 / Wm Cullen Bryant.


1972. To Parke Godwin

[New York?] January 10, 1871.

My dear sir

Can you not give us your speech of Thursday night, much as you will deliver it that we may set it up on Thursday for the paper on
Friday. If we had it tomorrow or early on Thursday it would save us some trouble, as we wish to get as much of the proceedings into the Evening Post as we can.¹

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT


1. This occasion, at which Bryant spoke (see 1966.5) was described at length in the EP for January 13, “Emancipated Italy.” It was held on the evening of January 12 in the Academy of Music. Bryant’s speech, as well as those given by John A. Dix, Parke Godwin, Henry Ward Beecher, Henry W. Bellows, Horace Greeley, and others, was printed in full.

1973. To James Abram Garfield¹

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Jany 15th 1871

Dear Sir.

I take the liberty of giving this note to John A. Parker Esq. a most esteemed and intelligent gentleman and President of one of our most important Insurance Companies, the Great Western.² Th[is?] Company has a pretty large interest in the Alabama Claims and the disposition proposed to be made of them by President Grant in his annual message,³ is the reason of his going to Washington.

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


1. James Abram Garfield (1831–1881, Williams 1856), distinguished as a Union officer in the Civil War, served as a Republican United States Congressman from Ohio from 1863 to 1880. In that year he was elected President on the Republican ticket, but within four months after his inauguration in March 1881 he was assassinated.

2. See Letter 1632.

3. In his annual message to the Congress in December 1870 President Grant urged its members to appoint a commission to buy up and press the Alabama claims against Great Britain (see Letter 1858). Nevins, Fish, p. 427.

1974. To Christiana Gibson

New York, January 16th. 1871.

My dear Miss Gibson.

I was greatly grieved, and so was Julia, to hear of the death of your sister, Mrs. Cunningham Smith, who has been taken from a
family circle, to whose happiness she must have been essential, in the maturity of womanhood, when the judgment is fully ripe and one's example and counsels have most influence. I wonder not that your mother is sad to think that a child of whom she has always thought as one who would long survive her, has passed away before her. I remember her very well as I first saw her, in the prime of her youthful beauty, as fair as a lily, full of cheerfulness and vivacity, and an enthusiast in the art of music, in which your family so much delight. She has now, I trust, found her youth again—nay, a fairer and happier youth, on the further shore of the River of Death, where she awaits the coming of those whom she most loved here. The departure of our friends, I think, tends to strengthen our confidence in the doctrine of the soul's immortality, since it gives us an additional motive for desiring that it may be true.

I have little to tell you of what is happening here, and you probably take less interest in it, as the years carry your memories of this country further and further into the past. Last week we had a monster meeting at the Academy of Music to celebrate the Unity of Italy and the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power. There were three times as many people assembled at the doors, as could find entrance. The temper of the assembly was enthusiastic.¹

We have been in New York for a month past. Miss Sands has left us, and Julia is keeping house on her own account. My Iliad meets with so much favor that I am going on with the other epic, the Odyssey.

I am glad to hear that your excellent mother is so well—but you say nothing about your own health, which I fear is not what we wish it were. Please give my kind regards to your mother and sisters and believe me, as ever,

very cordially yours,

W. C. Bryant.

manuscript: NYPL–BPMP address: Miss Christiana Gibson docketed: Mr. Bryant
Jan. 16./71.

1. Bryant's address to this meeting hailed the liberation of the Italian people from an "iron despotism" which had denied them "every one of the liberties which are the pride and glory of our own country—liberty of the press, liberty of speech, liberty of worship, liberty of assembling." See "Italian Unity. An Address Delivered before a Meeting in New York, January, 1871," in Bryant, Orations and Addresses, pp. [353]–358.

1975. To Asher B. Durand¹

New York, Jany 23d 1871.

Dear Mr. Durand.

On Tuesday the 7th of February the Hon. Gouverneur Kemble² will dine with a number of his friends at the Century Rooms in New
York—the hour six o'clock P.M. In behalf of a Committee of Arrangements I write to ask you to do us all the favor of being a guest on that occasion. May we expect you[?] 

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT

1. See 214.1; 487.1.
2. Gouverneur Kemble (1786–1875), president of the West Point Foundry at Cold Spring, New York, was a patron of American artists, and a frequent visitor at meetings of the Sketch Club. He had commissioned one of Durand's best known paintings, "Early Morning at Cold Spring" (1850; see illustration, Volume III), inspired by Bryant's poem, "A Scene on the Banks of the Hudson" (1827).

1976. To Edwin D. Morgan

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Jany 24th 1871

My dear sir.

The bearer is John Somers Smith Esq.¹ not long since United States Consul at Malaga and afterwards at San Domingo, one of the most intelligent and efficient Consuls that we have ever had abroad, and foolishly I must say and wantonly removed. He has just lost his son on whom he depended by a shocking accident, and needs employment. His attention is turned to the Custom House. Is it possible for you to do any thing for him in that quarter?²

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT

1. See 1001.3.
2. It is not certain whether Morgan secured such an appointment for Smith.

1977. To Jerusha Dewey

New York, February 5th [1871]

... I was at the Century Club last night, and saw some very fine pictures, which are hung temporarily in its gallery, and to-day and to-morrow will be open to visitors who bring a card from any of the members. Among them is a beautiful scene on Lake George, by Kensett;¹ another, of the plains of Colorado, with steep, splintered precipices overhanging them, and snowy mountains in sight, by Whit-
tredge; and a spirited children's frolic, by Eastman Johnson, very characteristic and yet exceedingly graceful, as all his pictures are not. I wish you were here to look at them. Mr. David Dudley Field was there; he said he had been engaged in drawing up suggestions for an improved international code, in which, among other things, the practices of war, now so frightfully murderous, should be humanized, and the barbarity of bombardments should be renounced by the common consent of the civilized world. What a pity it is that Paris should ever have been fortified! Mr. Field told me that not many years since the people of Vienna petitioned the government to leave Vienna an open city, without fortifications.

You often ask what books I have been reading. I have been occupied somewhat with James Freeman Clarke's "Steps of Belief," which is a good summary, stated in a popular manner, of the arguments for believing in a God, for being a Christian instead of a Deist, and a Protestant instead of a Catholic. These arguments are given with the greatest clearness, and considerable beauty, and the book ought to be well received by the public, especially the liberal part of the religious world. I have been looking over, also, the "Life of St. Anselm," the Abbot of Bec, in Normandy, who was a great thinker in his day—the eleventh century—and who made the idea of God an argument for his existence. The argument is referred to by Mr. Clarke. Besides these, I have begun to read Dr. Southwood Smith's book on the "Divine Government," which contains the arguments in favor of the universal restoration of all mankind to virtue and happiness—arguments which, I suppose, have influenced the belief of even the most orthodox in Germany, and led Dr. Bushnell to the compromise he puts forth—of a gradual diminution of sensibility to suffering, in the case of the wicked after death, attendant on a gradual weakening of the intellectual principle contained through endless ages.


1. This oil landscape, by John Frederick Kensett (1816–1872), painted in 1869, is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.


3. The genre and portrait painter Jonathan Eastman Johnson (1824–1906), who rarely used his first name, is now best remembered for such homely scenes as Old Kentucky Home (1859), in the New-York Historical Society.

4. The New York lawyer David D. Field (492.4), whose distinguished legal career as a law reformer and codifier of statutes led in 1872 to his Draft Outline of an International Code, and his participation in founding the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations.
5. James Freeman Clarke (833.3), *Steps of Belief; or, Rational Christianity Maintained Against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism* (Boston, 1870).

6. Saint Anselm (1033–1109), Italian theologian and abbot of the monastery at Bec, Normandy, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. In his *Proslogion* (post–1070) he deduced the existence of God from the human notion of a perfect being.

7. Southwood Smith (1788–1861), *Illustrations of the Divine Government* (Glasgow, 1816). There were many subsequent American editions of this work.

8. Probably Horace Bushnell (1802–1876, Yale 1827, Yale Divinity School c.1833). His *The Character of Jesus, Forbidding His Possible Classification with Men* (New York, 1860), was often reprinted.


New York, Feb. 6th 1871
No. 24 West 16th Street.

My dear Doctor

Will you do me the favor to dine with me and a few friends on Friday at six o'clock.

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT.


*The Evening Post*
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Feb 20th 1871

Gentlemen.

Last winter I desired you to send to the Rev'd. Rob't. C. Waterston of Boston a copy of the first volume of my translation of the Iliad and charge it to me. The volume was sent, but when the second volume appeared Mr. and Mrs. Waterston were on a visit to the Pacific Coast. Will you now do me the favor to send him the second volume also, on my account.

Yours truly

Wm. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Marietta College Library ADDRESS: Jas. R Osgood & Co.

1980. *To* T. Usher

*The Evening Post,*
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, March 10. 1871

Dear Sir.

I have caused the printed letter which you sent me to be published in the Evening Post, with a few words recommending it to the attention
of Americans who think of visiting Europe next summer. It will not be possible for me to comply with the invitation which you so courteously repeat in your note, but I doubt not that many of my countrymen will make a point of being present at the interesting ceremonies of the Scott Celebration. The works of Sir Walter Scott find in no country more readers than here, and his memory is not more fondly cherished, even in the land of his birth.

I am sir,
very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UV ADDRESS: T. Usher Esq.

1. See Note 2.

1981. To S. Piper

New York March 13, 1871.

Dear Madam.

I send you what you have paid me the compliment of asking for—a copy of my poems. I have committed it to the mails and hope that it will reach you in good condition. The edition now sent, contains all my poems which have been collected, although there are a few others which, since it was published, have appeared in some of the literary periodicals.

I am, madam,
respectfully yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft) ADDRESS: To Mrs. S. Piper.

1. Probably the wife of the horticulturalist Richard U. Piper of West Groton, Massachusetts. See 959.2; 1606.1.
2. Her request is unrecovered.

1982. To The Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art


Gentlemen.

I take this method of adding my testimony to that of others in favor of appointing Mr. Charles Lanman to the Superintendence of the Corcoran Gallery. Mr. Lanman has various qualifications for this
charge. He has for the last thirty years occupied a portion of his time with the study of art, in which he has always taken a special interest. He has written of artists in various publications and criticized their works and in different ways has acquired the knowledge and taste which would make his services valuable in the direction of a public gallery of the fine arts.

Respectfully &c.

W. C. BRYANT.

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1. Lanman (590.1; Letter 1869), who had held several Washington positions, such as secretary to Senator Daniel Webster and librarian of the House of Representatives, apparently failed of the appointment Bryant suggested, for in 1871 he was made American Secretary to the Japanese Legation, a post he held until 1882. The Corcoran Gallery of Art, founded by a grant from the Washington banker William Wilson Corcoran (1798–1888), was chartered by the United States Congress in 1871.

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New York March 20, 1871.

Gentlemen

I think you ought not to make so great a difference in what you pay me for the Odyssey and the Iliad. One reason for this is, that there are fewer translations of the Odyssey in our language than of the other epic. Another is, that one successful book sells another by the same author. It seems to me therefore that you should pay me two thousand dollars instead of one as was proposed by Mr. Clarke the other day.¹

I send some corrections for the first volume of the Iliad to be made by the printers in the new cheaper edition. I will send the rest soon.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

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1. See Letter 1984 for further discussion of this matter.


New York March 27th 1871

Gentlemen.

I send you with this all the corrections I wish to make in the first volume of my translation of the Iliad. Those for the other volume will
be sent very soon. There will be no need of sending me the proof sheets.

As to the question of compensation for the Odyssey, I cannot look upon it in any other light than the one in which it appeared to me when I wrote you the other day. In addition to what I then said there are these considerations—You take less risk than when you published the Iliad—inasmuch as the success of that work opens the way for the success of this. Again—it is very likely that those who purchase my version of the Odyssey will be apt to do it soon after it is published—most of them at least—and that after the two years which will belong to you, the sales will be comparatively quite small. You will not therefore, I think, regard me as unreasonable if I adhere to the sum named, $2,000—for the copyright during the two first years.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.


1. Bryant's argument apparently prevailed.

1985. To Daniel Bogart

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, March 30 1871

Dear Sir.

Mr. Pleasanton I perceive does not require returns to be made in detail but allows them to be made in gross, as appears by his letter published in the Evening Post. The Protest is a form adopted by many persons as a matter of safety in case the tax should be decided to be unconstitutional.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: BLR ADDRESS: Daniel Bogart Esq.

1. This letter has not been located in the EP. It may, however, have had some bearing on a meeting reported in the newspaper on the date of Bryant's letter, of an "Anti-Income Tax Association" the day before, urging repeal of the income tax law, imposed as a wartime measure in 1864, which had been due to expire in 1870, but had been extended by Congress in July 1870. Bryant was one of a number of vice-presidents of the association elected at this meeting. In fact, the tax was discontinued in 1872.

1986. To Joseph H. Richards

New York, March 30th, 1871.

Dear Sir:

I promised, some time since, to give you some account of my habits of life, so far, at least, as regards diet, exercise and occupation.
I am not sure that it will be of any use to you, although the system
which I have for many years observed seems to answer my purpose
very well. I have reached a pretty advanced period of life, without the
usual infirmities of old age, and with my strength, activity and bodily
faculties generally in pretty good preservation. How far this may be
the effect of my way of life, adopted long ago, and steadily adhered
to, is perhaps uncertain.

I rise early, at this time of the year about 5:30; in Summer, half
an hour, or even an hour earlier. Immediately, with very little in-
cumbrance of clothing, I begin a series of exercises, for the most part
designed to expand the chest, and at the same time call into action all
the muscles and articulations of the body. These are performed with
dumb bells, the very lightest, covered with flannel; with a pole, a
horizontal bar, and a light chair swung around my head. After a full
hour, and sometimes more, passed in this manner, I bathe from head
to foot. When at my place in the country, I sometimes shorten my
exercise in the chamber, and, going out, occupy myself for half an
hour or more in some work which requires brisk exercise. After my
bath, if breakfast be not ready, I sit down to my studies until I am
called.

My breakfast is a simple one—hominy and milk, or, in place of
hominy, brown bread, or oat meal, or wheaten grits, and, in the
season, baked sweet apples. Buckwheat cakes I do not decline, nor any
other article of vegetable food, but animal food I never take at
breakfast. Tea and coffee I never touch at any time. Sometimes I take
a cup of chocolate, which has no narcotic effect and agrees with me
very well. At breakfast I often take fruit, either in its natural state or
freshly stewed.

After breakfast I occupy myself for awhile with my studies, and
then, when in town, I walk down to the office of the Evening Post,
nearly three miles distant, and after about three hours return, always
walking, whatever be the weather or the state of the streets. In the
country I am engaged in my literary tasks till a feeling of weariness
drives me out into the open air, and I go upon my farm or into the
garden and prune the trees, or perform some other work about them
which they need and then go back to my books. I do not often drive
out, preferring to walk.

In the country I dine early, and it is only at that meal that I take
either meat or fish, and of these but a moderate quantity, making my
dinner mostly of vegetables. At the meal which is called tea, I take
only a little bread and butter, with fruit, if it be on the table. In town,
where I dine later, I take but two meals a day. Fruit makes a consider-
able part of my diet, and I eat it at almost any hour of the day without
inconvenience. My drink is water, yet I sometimes, though rarely, take a glass of wine. I never meddle with tobacco, except to quarrel with its use.

That I may rise early, I, of course, go to bed early; in town, as early as ten; in the country, somewhat earlier. For many years I have avoided in the evening every kind of literary occupation which tasks the faculties, such as composition, even to the writing of letters, for the reason that it excites the nervous system and prevents sound sleep.

My brother told me, not long since, that he had seen in a Chicago newspaper, and several other Western journals, a paragraph in which it was said that I am in the habit of taking quinine as a stimulant; that I have depended upon the excitement it produced in writing my verses, and that, in consequence of using it in that way, I had become as deaf as a post. As to my deafness, you know that to be false, and the rest of the story is equally so. I abominate all drugs and narcotics, and have always carefully avoided everything which spurs nature to exertions which it would not otherwise make. Even with my food I do not take the usual condiments, such as pepper, and the like.

I am sir, truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT
The first of your quotations—one from Book VIII is

"Nay I would that it were so,
Oh archer-king, Apollo, I could bear
Chains thrice as many and of infinite strength,
And all the gods and all the goddesses
Might come to look upon me; I would keep
My place with golden Venus at my side."  

Another from Book VIII is

"But thou art one of those who dwell in ships
With many benches, rulers o'er a crew
Of sailors, a mere trader looking out
For freight and watching o'er the wares that form
The cargo."

I believe this includes more than the passage you have given me.

—The passage from the Vth Book is,

"He had reached the mouth
Of a soft-flowing river
The current's flow and thus devoutly prayed,
"Hear me oh sovereign power, whoe'er thou art.
To thee, the long desired, I come. I seek
Escape from Neptune's threatenings on the sea.
And to thy knees, from many a hardship past.
Oh thou that here art ruler, I declare
Myself thy suppliant. Be thou merciful.
He ceased; the river stayed his current, checked
The billows, smoothed them to a calm, and gave
The swimmer a safe landing at his mouth."

The passage which is quoted from the Iliad you will find in the twenty first book, beginning at line 403. After five lines, there is in the prose version you have sent me a break and then it begins again at the 433d line with the words—"Then the god"

As to the second of your quotations which is from the XI Book here is my version.

Noble Ulysses, speak not thus of death,
As if thou couldst console me. I would be
A laborer on earth, and serve for hire
Some man of mean estate who makes scant cheer,
Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down
To death. Speak rather of my noble son;
Whether or not he joined the war, to take
A place among the foremost in the fight.

I spake; the soul of swift Æacides
Over the meadows thick with asphodel
Departed with long strides, well-pleased to hear
From me the story of his son's renown."

The appellation of Æacides was given to Achilles, as he was a
descendant of Æacies. This is the name given Achilles in the original
of the passage I have translated.

I hope you will be able to make out what I have written though a
little disfigured by alterations.

Yours truly
W. C. Bryant

MANUSCRIPT: Redwood Library and Athenaeum
ADDRESS: John Durand Esq.

2. Bryant, Odyssey, VIII, 199–203.
4. This passage, from Bryant, Iliad, XXI, 403–407, 433–434, is as follows:
   He [the River Scamander god] spake, and wrathfully he rose against
   Achilles,—rose with turbid waves, and noise,
   And foam, and blood and bodies of the dead.
   One purple billow of the Jove-born stream
   Swelled high and whelmed Achilles....

   ........................................

   ... Then the god
   Seized on the river with his glittering fires.
   608 varies somewhat:
   Whether or not he yet has joined the wars
   To fight among the foremost of the host.

Durand's quotations are unrecovered.

1989. To Francis H. Dawes

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, April 4th 1871.

My dear sir.

I have just received from the house of Parsons & Co. of Long
Island¹ notice that they have packed up and sent to Cummington 1250
European Larch trees. I write that you may look out for them. I find that all the trees of this kind are imported, so that it is better to get them here than at Rochester as they would probably be taken more directly to Cummington. Please not forget to let me know when the ground and season will answer for transplanting. . . .

MANUSCRIPT (incomplete): NYPL–GR.

1. See 942.3.
2. The balance of this letter is missing from the manuscript.

1990. To James T. Fields

New York, April 7th [1871]

. . . It grieves me to say to you, as I must, that I cannot do for you what you ask, and that I am not to fill the honorable place in your volume that you designed for me. But I can no more get up the necessary excitements for writing a poem at the present time than I can go back to the days of my youth. I have the Odyssey on hand, which takes up most of my leisure; then there is the “Evening Post,” which I cannot neglect, and other matters, small in themselves, but numerous, the effect of which is to load me with so many petty tasks, and keep me fussing so, that I sometimes feel what used to be called, when people had no scruple about using a Latin word now and then, tedium vitae. So you see that you ask what is as impossible as if you were to wait a few years and ask it of my tombstone.

P.S.—I have a poem, written a few years since, which seemed to me a little languid. My daughter tells me that it will do, and I am about to add it, with some others, to the rest of my poems published by Appleton, to appear by and by in that collection. At her desire I have concluded to send it to you, which shall be done as soon as it is copied; not so much for publication as for your judgment. I shall be gratified if you prefer not to publish it, as I shall then be satisfied that my own judgment was right. . . .


1. Since no letter from Fields at this time has been recovered, it is not certain to which publication Bryant refers.
2. This may have been the verses titled “October, 1866,” which, Godwin says, concluded an intimate memoir Bryant wrote after his wife’s death for his daughters. This was not, as were most of his poems in late years, given periodical publication, but was included in his 1871 and 1876 collections. See Bryant, Poetical Works, II, 265; Poems (1876), pp. 260–262.

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, April 18 1871.

Gentlemen.

The two copies of the first volume of my version of the Iliad have come to hand. You say nothing of the copy of the entire work—the two volumes—in some neat half binding, which I also asked for, or meant to ask for.1 If you have any thing of the sort, will you oblige me by forwarding a copy.

Yours very truly
W. C. Bryant.

Manuscript: NYPL-Berg Address: To J. R. Osgood & Co.

1. According to the publisher's advertisement in the one-volume edition of Bryant's Iliad (1870), there were three editions of the work: (1) two vols. royal 8vo, gilt top, cloth; (2) two vols. crown 8vo. gilt top; (3) one vol. crown 8vo, gilt top, cloth. Each of these was also offered in half calf or levant.

1992. To George Hannah1

New York April 22d 1871.

Dear Sir.

I am sensible of the honor done me by yourself and those for whom you speak, in giving me an invitation to address the Brooklyn Historical Society at its next Annual Meeting.2 I am obliged to decline the invitation for several reasons. One is, that I have hitherto made it a rule not to go out of town to make addresses of any kind, having more occasions of that nature here in town than I can attend to. But a more imperative reason is the want of leisure. As a public speaker my vein is not fertile, and requires a good deal of working to produce any thing. If I were to make an address of the kind you require I should have to meditate it carefully, and for that I have no spare time. I am engaged at present in a literary task of considerable magnitude which is to be completed in a certain time. I[t] occupies me very closely and obliges me to be frugal of my hours. Indeed I am haunted with the fear that, considering my advanced age, I may never finish it. I have promised to make an address at the unveiling of Mr. Morse's statue,3 but that was a debt due to an old and valued friendship.

You will see, therefore, that if I excuse myself from complying with the invitation which has been given me and which you have urged in such obliging terms, I am not acting capriciously, but from reasons which you will admit are not without force.
Meantime I am very glad to hear of the prosperity of your society and hope that its growth will correspond to that of your beautiful city.

I am, sir,
very respectfully yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Long Island Historical Society ADDRESS: George Hannah Esq / Librarian & Secy. &c &c.

1. Although George Hannah was librarian of the Long Island Historical Society (not the “Brooklyn” Historical Society) at this time, the society’s records yield little further information about him. Letter from Clara Lamers, Acting Head Librarian, dated May 28, 1985.

2. This invitation is unrecovered.

3. Bryant’s was the principal address at the unveiling of a statue of Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872), on June 10, 1871, on The Mall in Central Park. This was the first statue placed there, and apparently the only one commemorating a living person. Soon after a proposal which started as a newspaper hoax resulted early in 1871 in a subscription to place in Central Park an heroic statue of William Marcy Tweed, “Boss Tweed” (1823–1878), the notoriously corrupt leader of Tammany Hall, the park commissioners adopted a rule that “no monuments of the living should be erected in the public parks.” See Bryant, Orations and Addresses, pp. [361]–368; Elizabeth Barlow and Others, The Central Park Book ([New York] Central Park Task Force [1977]), p. 39; M. R. Werner, Tammany Hall (Garden City and New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), pp. 198–203; John Bigelow, in The Century Association’s Memorial Statue of William Cullen Bryant; Report of the Memorial Committee ([New York] Century Association Building, 1911), p. [5].

1993. To James T. Fields
New York, April 25th [1871]

... There was no need that you should exhort me to be diligent in putting the Odyssey into English blank verse. I have been as industrious as was reasonable. I understand very well that, at my time of life, such enterprises are apt to be brought to a conclusion before they are finished, and I have therefore wrought harder upon my task than some of my friends thought was well for me. I have already sent forward the manuscript for the first volume. You may remember that I finished my translation of the Iliad within the time that I undertook, and this would have been done without any urging. In the case of the Odyssey I have finished the first volume two months sooner than I promised. I do not think the Odyssey the better part of Homer, except morally. The gods set a better example, and take more care to see that wrong and injustice are discouraged among mankind. But there is not the same spirit and fire, nor the same vividness of description, and this the translator must feel as strongly as the reader. Let me correct what I have already said by adding that there is yet in the Odyssey one
The abundance of strawberries here from the south. A nights good sleep has made me all right again. I expect to return on Monday of week.
after next—so as to be in New York on Monday morning and may come out in the morning—or later in the day.— Kind regards to all—
Your affectionately
W C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR
ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

2. The Earles have not been further identified.
3. Adeline Plummer Bryant, widow of Austin Bryant; see Volume I, 11.

1995. To Julia S. Bryant

Princeton Illinois
Wednesday May 31, 1871.

Dear Julia.

I shall be in New York, as I hope early Wednesday morning of next week, but whether early enough to take the morning train for Roslyn I do not know. So I would have you send up to the station for me that morning, and not be surprised if I am not there.

The weather continues very hot, the mercury at eighty degrees of Farenheit or thereabouts at the middle of the day, and very warm nights—particularly for this region where the nights are ordinarily cool. Last evening, some fifty or sixty persons, some of them ladies, called to see me, and there was great handshaking. On Friday, the commencement of the high school here will take place. John [Bryant] presides, and they say that I must make a little address to the graduates.

I hope to be more comfortable on my journey home that I was in coming hither as I have sent to Chicago for a drawing room in one of Pullman's palace cars. The best places there, to my thinking are not too commodious.

Yours affectionately
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1996. To Mary B. C. [Slade?]¹

Roslyn? ante-June 10 1871.²

Dear Madam.

It is a great honor that you do me in asking me to deliver a public lecture before the young ladies of your excellent institute. But for
various reasons I have made it a rule to decline all invitations to give public lectures. At present it is more important than ever that I should adhere to this rule. I am engaged in a literary task of great magnitude, and have arrived at so advanced an age that I must be frugal of my time if I mean to finish it. I sometimes speak in public, but only on occasions which require me to make very short addresses—such as require comparatively little time for preparation, and even those I avoid as much as I well can. I am to speak at the unveiling of the Morse statue—but I have stipulated for a very brief address—

You see how it is. My answer to all applications like yours is that I have no time to prepare public lectures. It is a sincere excuse, and I must not lose the chance of making it, by making exceptions— I have never made any and cannot safely make one now— . . .

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).

2. Dated through Bryant's reference to his Morse address, delivered on June 10.

1997. To Richard H. Dana  
Roslyn, Long Island,  
June 9th. 1871.—

Dear Dana,

I thank you for thinking so much of me. I am not so far on with the second volume of the Odyssey as Mr. Fields seems to suppose. My translation is only finished to near the middle of the fourteenth book. I do not feel quite so easy in this work as I did in translating the Iliad for the thought that I am so old that I may be interrupted in my task before it is done, rises in my mind now and then and I work a little the more diligently for it, which perhaps is not well. As to my taking part in public matters you, who know me well will readily believe that I never seek occasions to appear before the public—they are all put upon me. I would gladly have made over to somebody else the chance of saying something at the unveiling of Morse's statue, but it was impossible for me to do so—as I thought, without its being supposed that I was not willing to say a good word for an old friend.

What you tell me of Phillips is remarkable but does not much surprise me. The spiritualists do not perceive the ridiculous side of their beliefs, and with the greatest gravity say things which strike those who are not initiated as the drollest things imaginable.  

But the most noteworthy thing is their readiness to believe—I mean the readiness of those who have been the most sceptical in regard to the Christian faith. Robert Owen was a remarkable example of this. After he
became a spiritualist he believed every alleged revelation coming from that quarter, no matter on whose authority. I regard all this as a testimony to the natural, instinctive desire of man to believe, on some evidence or other, in a life beyond the grave. If they will not believe it on the authority of the New Testament, they will snatch at any thing else which satisfies this desire, however poor the substitute.³

I wish you were here at this glorious season. We have had some of the finest weather I ever knew and the country is in its highest luxuriance. We are in the midst of an abundance of strawberries and roses. I went in the latter part of May and beginning of June to Illinois and was fairly stewed in my own perspiration for about a fortnight—all hot days and nights nearly as hot—so that I was very glad to get back again. I suppose that it will be of no use to ask you to come to Cummington where I expect to be in the latter part of July, and yet I escaped the fiery heat of last summer there and felt absolutely no inconvenience from a high temperature. With kind regards to those of your household in which Julia joins me I am, dear Dana,

very truly yours
W. C. BRYANT.


1. Dana’s comments are unrecovered, but for Bryant’s earlier report of Willard Phillips’ fascination with spiritualism, see Letter 1796.

2. The father of Bryant’s friend Robert Dale Owen (1009.6), Robert Owen (1771–1858) was a prosperous British socialist and philanthropist who visited the United States on several occasions, on his first visit establishing at New Harmony, Indiana, a cooperative agricultural–industrial colony (1825–1828). Turning to spiritualism in the eighteen-fifties, he held “millenial” meetings in London.

3. In view of the fact that Bryant’s name has occasionally been coupled with that of Horace Greeley and others as lending credence to spiritualism, his remarks here seem to dispel that misconception.

1998. To an Unidentified Correspondent¹

Roslyn Long Island June 19. 1871

Dear sir.

The manuscript of my address at the Unveiling of the Morse statue is not in such a state that you can put it to the purpose you desire.

If you will give me a little time I will make a copy of it—for I am just now too busy—which you can use.

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HEHL ADDRESS: Illegible.

1. The greater portion of the addressee’s name seems to have been cut from the bottom of this letter, making it unreadable.
1999. To Robert Dodge

Roslyn, June 20. 1871.

My dear sir.

I will try to look up your article written for the E. P. As to the work you are engaged upon I have little time to look at anything which requires deliberation. I am on a literary task which occupies all my times and I have none left even for my friends.

The subscription of which you speak I remember nothing of—a sign doubtless of a decaying memory. I do not remember either the object or the sum I gave—nor any thing else concerning it—but I enclose you ten dollars. Thanking you for your good opinion of what I said of Mr. Morse

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

MANUSCRIPT: Lehigh University Library
ADDRESS: Robt. Dodge Esq. / No. 12 Wall St.

1. See 1383.1.
2. This article has not been identified.
3. No letter from Dodge at this time has been recovered.

2000. To Ferdinand E. Field

Roslyn, July 3d [1871]

... What a fearful experience poor France has had of late! Will her people be sure of a good government hereafter, under any form which it may take, till a generation shall arise which has been educated to the usages which in your country and mine reconcile political liberty with order and peace? I congratulate you on the settlement of the differences between the United States and your country. The treaty is popular here. Our domestic politics are not on so good a footing as we expected when we elected General Grant, but in one respect we shall improve them without being able to thank him for it—I mean in respect to freedom of trade, toward which public opinion is making rapid advances. ...


1. Civil strife and mass executions which followed the surrender of Paris to a German army in January 1871.
2. The Treaty of Washington between the United States and Great Britain, signed on May 8, 1871, submitted to arbitration several disputes between the two countries: over the Northwest boundary of the United States and Canada; fishing rights; and the Alabama Claims.
2001.  To Christiana Gibson

Roslyn, Long Island, July 4, 1871.

Dear Miss Gibson,

Your pleasant letter of the 22d. of May has been lying on the table before me for several weeks, suggesting to me more and more strongly the propriety of returning an answer. I am glad that you have at last accomplished the removal of your family to a part of Edinburgh, where you are sheltered from the harsher airs that sweep through Forres Street. You have made the change on your mother's account, but I hope it will do your health as much good as hers. I congratulate you on having what you have long desired, a garden. The homely occupation of "hoeing peas and thinning turnips" of which you speak, will be relieved by occasionally looking at your flower-beds, breathing their perfumes and gathering occasional bouquets. I wish we had some other word instead of the French interloper bouquet. Pope says nosegay, but the word nose, which forms one half of this latter word, seems to me to vulgarize it somewhat, and it is owing to this, I think that bouquet has come to be substituted for it. To me, however, nosegays are nosegays no longer. The great delight which I once took in the fragrance of flowers, is with me little more than a memory, since my sense of smell, which was once acute—almost morbidly so—is now become very much deadened.

I have little to tell you in return for the news you give me of what you have been doing. This is a very quiet fourth of July in these parts—people in their holiday dresses—men, women and children are silently passing in the streets; the temperature is most agreeable; the sun is shaded by floating clouds; quails—the American quail—are whistling in the fields calling out the familiar name "Bob White." We have Dr. Dickson and his lady of Philadelphia, most agreeable people staying with us—he, brimfull of knowledge and literature, with a very delightful way of communicating his knowledge—and last night Mr. Tilden, whom you know, and Mr. George H. Hall, the clever painter of Spanish subjects, came from town to pass the fourth of July with us. The Godwins have had the Swedish singer, Miss Nilsson, with them for some days—but that musical star is to suffer eclipse. She is to be married ere long to a Frenchman, Mons. Rouzaud, after which she will sing in public no more.

We have had a most charming month of June, temperate and bright up to the present moment, with seasonable showers—with the greenest meadows, the richest foliage on the trees and the most luxuriant gardens. If the rest of the season continues as beautiful it will be something marvellous.
We shall probably go to Cummington sometime after the middle of July, when I hope to make some progress in translating the Odyssey, the first volume of which is already passing through the press. While here I cannot help going to town twice a week, to look to the Evening Post, which takes two days of the six from Homer.

What you say of the present years compared with the past, touches me nearly. Without being unhappy, I find that the banquet of life has lost much of its flavor.

Please give my kindest regards to your mother and sister. Julia sends love to you all.

I am, dear Miss Gibson,
very truly yours,
W. C. BRYANT.

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2002. To A. Austin

Roslyn L. I. N. Y.
July 10th 1871.

My dear sir

If I had read your brother’s book—[Seven? June?] Days at Mount Pleasant—I would cheerfully state any favorable impression it made upon me as respects the author’s views on the subject of education. But I have not even seen the book. It was I think sent to the office of the Evening Post when I was absent at Cummington where it was read by Mr. [John R.] Thompson and favorably noticed in the paper. I will read it as soon as I can get hold of it, and will then be ready to speak of it in the way suggested—in case I should, as I do not say I shall, see occasion to do so. Regretting that I cannot do it now, I am dear sir

truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.
2003. To James T. Fields

Dear Mr. Fields.

According to Dr. Piper who made in 1856 a drawing of the old walnut—black-walnut tree on my place the Circumference at four feet from the ground is—or was at that time twenty four feet, the height one hundred feet, and the circle made by the branches one hundred and thirty feet across. The tree made its first appearance above ground in a corner of a garden in the year 1713, so that it is now nearly one hundred and fifty seven years old.¹

I duly received Mr. [Warner's] book, and thank you for it. It is very droll and amused me greatly.² It is a pity though that his English is here and there so bad. A little overlooking of his work by some literary friend would have made all right.

Kind regards to Mrs. Fields, whose visit to this neighborhood we shall long remember with pleasure.³ Julia desires hers to you both.

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT.

2004. To Francis J. Child

Dear sir.

I thank you for the information contained in the note¹ in regard to the authorship of the poems you have mentioned. I have sent your letter to a gentleman in the publishing office of J. B. Ford & Company
who has the charge of the book in which they appeared that the necessary corrections may be made in the next edition if there should be any. The compilation, strictly speaking is not mine. It was submitted to me by the publishers and I struck out many things and added a considerable number and wrote a preface but it did not occur to me to verify the authorship of the poems you mention. I am glad that you can speak favorably of the "Library" &c. as you must be a good judge of such matters. I have always spoken of your Folk Songs as the best collection of its kind that I had ever met with.3

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

manuscript: UVa.
1. Unrecovered.
2. Family Library. See 1927.1.
3. Child's English and Scottish Ballads (Boston [1857-1858]) was a forerunner to his monumental English and Scottish Popular Ballads of 1883-1898. Although Bryant's letter is unaddressed, its recipient is identified by this reference.

2005. To James R. Osgood

New York, July 15th [1871]

... As I have finished another book of the Odyssey, I forward it today. But do not let your printers tread on my heels. It is disagreeable to be dunned for copy, and I cannot write as well when I have any vexation of that sort on my mind. In a day or two I will send a short preface for the first volume of the Odyssey. You are right in saying that no new one is wanted for the Iliad. . . .

manuscript: Unrecovered text (partial): Life, II, 304.

2006. To Willard Phillips

Cummington
July 29, 1871.

Dear Phillips.

Coming to this place about ten days since, I found your card and that of Mrs. Langdon on my library table. It made me sorry that you had not made your visit a little later in the season, but I was somewhat comforted by the reflection that you must have been in good health, and not disinclined to move about, or you would not have made the journey from Boston at all. I hope therefore at some time or other to see you here again and if Mrs. Langdon comes with you all the better. Here is my friend Dr. Dewey, whose letter is lying before me, and who
is ten years younger than you,\(^1\) stoutly refusing to pay me a visit here, on account of the fatigue and discomfort of a journey from Sheffield where he lives—only forty-six miles from this place.

I am very busy at present and likely to be so for some months to come—busy in translating the Odyssey. One thought is almost constantly in my mind, making me frugal of my time—that at my age there are a great many holes in the bridge, and if I waste any part of my time which should be given to the translation, I may drop through one of the holes before my task is ended. Kind regards to Mrs. Langdon and to the other members of your household whether I have ever seen them or not.

I am, dear Phillips, truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

**MANUSCRIPT:** MHS ADDRESS: Hon Willard Phillips.

1. Phillips was then in his eighty-seventh year.

**2007. To Julia S. Bryant**

Cummington July 30, 1871.

Dear Julia.

We thought that we might get a letter from you last evening, but it did not come. Mrs. Leunggren,\(^1\) desires me to say that she is “getting along [on] very well,” and that I believe is all that is to be said except that it rains more than half the time. I send you with this a letter that has come for you. There is another from Richfield Springs, but that I suppose can wait for your return. I have written to Mr. Waterston, asking him to come with Mrs. Waterston at any time in August after next Friday. Raspberries are plenty; the rains have made them larger than when we came to Cummington. The owners of mowing fields grumble about the showery weather.

Kind regards to Anna\(^2\)

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT.

P.S. I have a letter from Miss Christiana Gibson dated at Crieff from the Hotel on the Knock Hill.\(^3\) She is better for the change of air.

W.C.B.

**MANUSCRIPT:** NYPL—GR ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

1. Presumably the Bryant housekeeper or cook.

2. Julia’s close companion in her later life, her cousin Anna Rebecca Fairchild, daughter of Frances Bryant’s brother Egbert N. Fairchild (1802–1864). See Bryant’s will, in Bigelow, *Bryant*, p. 346.
... I thank you for remembering as you did the sad anniversary of the 27th of July—sad to us who remain; joyful, no doubt, to her friends beyond the dark river. It is celebrated there, I doubt not, in a different manner, with floral decorations also, but with super-Miltonic hymns—poetry sublimated to a degree which this world knows not—and perchance with Lydian measures, trodden by airy feet on the ever-flowery lawns or in the ever-fresh myrtle bowers of Paradise.

You often ask me what books I am reading. Homer, of course, and I am obliged to read him pretty carefully. But I brought with me Craik's "History of English Literature and the English Language," which I have been looking into. It is more lively and entertaining than Warton's "History of English Poetry," though there are several omissions, but, on the whole, it makes a pleasant book. I have also looked into Dr. Noah Porter's "Books and Reading." He is the president of Yale College, just elected with the general approbation of the learned and the unlearned. He is pretty liberal and catholic in his estimate of authors, but he is much afraid of Emerson, whose pantheism he regards as a form of atheism, and advises those, who in reading him find themselves getting astray, to lay him down forever.


1. Frances Bryant had died five years before, on July 27, 1866.
2. This was George Lillie Craik (not "Crook," as printed), History of English Literature and the English Language (1861).
4. Noah Porter (1811–1892, Yale 1831), a Congregational clergyman, was president of Yale College, 1871–1886. His Books and Reading; or, What Books Shall I Read and How Shall I Read Them? was published at New York in 1870.
will call forth, of admiration for his genius and of gratitude to Providence for having raised up so nobly endowed an intellect to adorn the literature of the age. In the department of letters in which he achieved his highest fame others have since arisen who by their writings have challenged the admiration of mankind, but none of the authors of these later years have displaced him from his high preeminence. The delighted astonishment with which the reading world received his works, one after another, as they appeared, has subsided to a gentler emotion, but the calm wonder with which we now regard them is likely to last while the language in which he wrote shall endure.

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

MANUSCRIPT: NYHS (final); NYPL–GR (draft) ADDRESS: To the Revd. R. C. Waterston

1. At this meeting, addressed by Emerson, Longfellow, and others, Waterston read Bryant's letter. Life, II, 305 note. Waterston's invitation of August 7 is in NYPL–BG.

2. Bryant delivered an address at the dedication of a statue of Scott in Central Park, New York, on November 4, 1872. See the text in his Orations and Addresses, pp. [389]–393.

2010. To Nestor Corradi

Cummington, Massachusetts.
August 21, 1871.

Dear Sir.

I am unfortunately unable, for various reasons, to be present at the commemoration of the recovery of Rome to the Italian people and the completion of Italian Unity. I must content myself with expressing my earnest hope that the future destiny of that noble race by whom the different regions of Italy are peopled may be as happy as the liberation of her ancient and renowned capital has been fortunate.

I am sir with great respect
Your obt Servant
W. C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft) ADDRESS: To N. Corradi Esq.

1. The portrait and miniature painter Nestor Corradi of New Orleans had opened a studio at New York in 1854. DAA.

2. No invitation to Bryant to address such a meeting has been recovered. Previously, however, in January 1871, he had spoken on a similar occasion in the Academy of Music, which celebrated the entrance of an Italian army into Rome on
September 20, 1870, and its establishment by plebiscite on October 2 as the capital of Italy. See “Italian Unity,” Orations and Addresses, pp. [353]–[358].

2011. To Christiana Gibson

Cummington, Massachusetts,
September 4th. 1871

Dear Miss Gibson,

I was very glad to hear from Crieff again by means of so pleasant a letter as was your last.¹ I knew that sooner or later Dr. Cunningham would gain the battle of the organ, for I saw that the religious mind in Scotland was drifting that way—but I hardly expected to hear of it.² You have done well to go to the dry climate of Crieff which in summer is so charming, and I rejoice that it has, as you say, done you good. You do not say whether you submit to the processes of the watercure, which seem to me a little harsh, but I suppose you yield them what may be called a qualified compliance.

I am here at work upon the Odyssey, of which I have translated eighteen books—three fourths of the whole number. My brother John is with me, and I have had a visit from my other brother Arthur, living also in Illinois. The summer here has been as cool as I found it in Cireff, and my brother and I have had many a long walk over the hills and through the woods. At every step the blackberries tempt us; the brambles are loaded with the glistening fruit, of a finer variety and richer flavor far, than any which grow naturally or are brought to market in the neighborhood of New York. Blackberries are in fact our daily feast, and here they have a long season lasting till October, unless too severe a frost affects their flavor.

Julia just now has left us for a ten days visit to Berkshire, taking with her Miss Fairchild³ and Miss Leupp, the horses and the colored coachman, Jerry Mayhew, a sleek fellow whom we picked up at Roslyn, delighting in fresh white gloves and big silver-plated buttons. Julia made the same visit last summer and found so many friends in Berkshire, and was so well pleased, that she made up her mind to repeat it. Tomorrow I expect Professor Snell of Amherst,⁴ my cousin, who brings his wife and two daughters, to see the place where his father was born and passed his youth. I may as well tell you here of a folly which I have been committing. I have purchased the place adjoining and overlooking this which my grandfather Snell, nearly a hundred years since, reclaimed from the wilderness. It is a remarkably fine place in some respects, having a commanding site with views of even greater extent than this. The carpenters are fitting up the house, so that Fanny may sometimes occupy it.⁵

Mr. Skirving, of whom you speak, was I believe a contributor to
Blackwood. He and Mr. Leupp wrote frequently to each other after we came back from the East. I was glad to hear of him again. In this world where death strikes down men so suddenly, there is—to me at least—great satisfaction in hearing that some one whom we knew and thought well of years ago, is still in life and acting his part among his fellow men. I was greatly—shocked I may say—to hear of the death of Mr. Edwin W. Field of Hampstead, by drowning in the Thames—a man of prodigious mental and physical energy, who seemed almost sure of a long life.

I suppose that by this time you have returned to Morningside, where I hope you have found your dog and the canaries reclaimed from their vagrant habits, your fruit-trees far exceeding their meagre promise in the early season, and your autumnal turnips making amends for the crop that ran to seed. Talking of fruit—here is all New England, which till now was proud of the abundance and quality of its apples, now literally without them. The pear trees are doing their best to make up the deficiency and are loaded with fine pears, but there is hardly one pear tree to five hundred apple trees.

With kindest regards to your excellent mother and scarcely less excellent elder sister, and all others of your family, I am, dear Miss Gibson,

faithfully yours
W. C. BRYANT.

manuscript: NYPL–BPMP address: Miss Christiana Gibson docketed: Mr. Bryant: Sept. 4 / 1871.
1. Letter unrecovered.
2. John Cunningham (Letter 1713). Bryant's reference to the "battle of the organ" is explained in Letter 1714.
3. Anna Fairchild.
5. See 2012.4.
7. See Letter 2024.

2012. To Julia S. Bryant

Cummington Sept. 5. 1871.

Dear Julia,

I got your letter last night¹—Monday evening— I am glad that you have had so pleasant a journey and reception at Lenox. I take for granted that you have had the same fine weather there as we have had here—this is the sixth fine day. We are expecting the Amherst professor and his family this afternoon, and Mrs. Leunggren has been
purveying for them. Tell Laura [Leupp] that the blackberries are finer and more plentiful than ever and we expect to astonish our friends from a less favored quarter of the state with their excellence and abundance.²

There is nothing new going on here. As the Spaniards say, when all is right, No hoy novedad.³ The new road is making progress and we hope it will be done by the time you get back so that you can have a new pleasant walk.⁴ I had a letter from Miss Dewey last evening.⁵ She complains that you do not write to her. Mr. Strong has brought his wife to look at Roslyn—a pleasing, but very quiet person. She says nothing about the place, and Mr. Strong has not yet accepted the call.—⁶

Kind regards to the young ladies. Mrs. Leunggren sends love to all and bids me say that every thing is going on well.

Affectionately

W C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL—GR

ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

1. Letter unrecovered.
3. “No news today.”
4. This was a winding driveway Bryant was building to give access to a new house he was erecting on the hill above his homestead, on the site of—and apparently incorporating within it—an earlier house built about 1806 by his uncle Ebenezer Snell, Jr. See Letter 2018; Only One Cummington, p. 355.
5. Letter unrecovered.

2013. To Julia S. Bryant

Cummington September 6th 1871.

Dear Julia.

I thought you might like to hear of us once more before coming away from Lenox. The weather has been most delightful for the last seven days, this included. Last evening at five o'clock a carriage drove up to our door with four people—my cousin, Professor Snell with his wife and daughters. They are pleasant, cheerful people. This morning they went to see the Snell place and the Cemetery. About one o'clock Mrs. Mitchell came with Jenny and the little Weston boy¹ and dined with us. She goes this afternoon to Plainfield to be at the wedding tomorrow. Our guests from Amherst—tell Miss Leupp—are particularly fond of blackberries. The pears—Roslyn pears—that is of the sort which grows by the corn house came on Thursday evening in
good order, but are going so fast that I think they will be part rotten and the rest eaten, before you get home, which I hope will be on Saturday at furthest.

Kind regards to all
Yours affectionately
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR
ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

1. Bryant's niece Ellen Theresa Shaw Mitchell (Mrs. Clark Ward Mitchell); see 738.1. Jenny and the Weston boy have not been certainly identified.

2014. To Jerusha Dewey
Cummington, September 6th [1871]

... Here we have had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Waterston, of Boston. Mr. Waterston preached on Sunday before last in the new house on the hill, yet unfinished, to a congregation of some fifty persons, assembled at a short notice—a sermon decidedly clever and well thought out, though extempore. The people were all highly delighted, and expressed themselves grateful for the treat he had given them. A few days afterward I saw Mr. Samuels, the orthodox minister in the West Village. He asked why I did not inform him that Mr. Waterston was here and would preach, as in that case he would have offered him his pulpit; and, when I said that I had not expected that, he remarked that he was not "easily scared."...


1. Waterston described this incident in detail in "A Sunday at Cummington," in his Tribute to William Cullen Bryant... at the Meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, June 13, 1878 (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1878), pp. 22–25.

2. Rev. Robert Samuels was pastor of the West Cummington Congregational Church in 1871–1872. Only One Cummington, p. 400. The printed text has "Samuel."

2015. To Orville Dewey
Cummington September 11th 1871.

Dear Doctor.

It is a very fine thing to be a mountain, for then you are not obliged to go to Mahomet, but Mahomet must come to you. It is my lot, I perceive, to play the part of Mahomet, since the mountain will not stir from its place. I am only an example of the great law by which the little gravitates to the large. Hold a stone over the edge of a precipice and then open your hand and the stone falls down to the earth—the earth does not fall upward to the stone. Wherefore it may
be inferred that the man who said to his wife "Please sew my coat to this button," used the wrong phrase, and should have said "Please sew this button to my coat."

I want to see you and as there can be no hope of either getting you to this place, or to Roslyn, I must try to see you at Sheffield, on my way to New York, should it be convenient to you to receive me, and should nothing occur to make [it] inconvenient for me to stop in my descent to a lower latitude. I am busy with the Odyssey, and how am I straitened till" the task be "fulfilled!" I think I have quoted rightly. The shadows of the hills and trees are growing fearfully long, and the sun, though shining pleasantly, yet, seems not far from the vapors that dim the horizon's edge. I sometimes say to myself, "what if he should set before my task is finished!" So you see I am naturally enough frugal of my days, and though I take care not to work too hard—for life at my age is a brittle thing and will not bear to be rudely tossed about, yet it makes me uneasy to miss a single day.

I am glad to know that the memoir of Miss Sedgwick is through the press. I am now certain of reading it at some time or other, in doing which I promise myself much pleasure.

We have had Mr. and Mrs. Waterston with us—an eight days visit—think of that! What a case—an example I mean—of self sacrifice, which ought to make you, who so selfishly stay at home, consider whether you are not letting others go far beyond you in the practice of that greatest in the catalogue of virtues—However that may be, I hope to see you, if that should be convenient for you, about the last week of this month, but will write further to say when I am coming, if to come should be in my power. Mean time commend me to the kind remembrance of your wife and all others of your amiable household very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.

manuscript: NYPL–GR address: Revd Dr O. Dewey.

1. Cf. Bacon, Essays, "Boldness": "Mahomet made the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled: Mahomet called the hill to come to him again and again; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said, 'If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill.' " Dewey had apparently again declined an invitation to Cummington. See Letter 2006.

2. The source of this quotation is obscure.

3. In reply to this letter, Dewey wrote on September 12: "Dear and Venerable,—For it seems you grow old, and count the diminishing days, as a bankrupt counts his ducats. I never heard you say anything of the sort before, and have only thought of you as growing richer in every way." Autobiography and Letters of Orville Dewey, D. D., ed. Mary E. Dewey (Boston, 1884), pp. 315–316.

4. See 1887.1.
2016.  To James B. Thayer

Cummington  September 12th  1871.

My dear Sir.

I thank you for the trouble which you have so kindly taken in communicating the fact of the two omissions which I have made, of passages in the Odyssey—leaving them untranslatable. The omissions were accidental certainly.¹ I have not the first volume of the Greek here to verify them, and shall be obliged to postpone repairing my fault till I return to New York and Roslyn. It vexes me very much that I have been guilty of this blunder. I thought that I was very exact, and had taken great pains to avoid such accidents—but the truth is that I was always in danger of making blunders of one sort or another from my youth up.

I am glad that your general opinion of the work is so favorable. I have tried to make the translation readable, and not wholly to lose one characteristic of Homer, that of being a good story-teller.

Meantime I shall very thankfully receive any suggestions which it may occur to you to make, as you are looking over my translation. It cannot but have faults, I am certain. It has been with me a solitary task. I have not consulted a living soul in regard to the rendering of a single line or even word in it, and it is all the more likely to be faulty on that account. I hope I have not omitted any other passages than those which you have done me the favor to mention.

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


1. Addressing Bryant on September 8 (NYPL–BG), Thayer reported that he had written a notice of Bryant's translation of the Odyssey for the Boston Daily Advertiser, and had found that two passages, one of seven and the other of fifteen lines, had been omitted. He added that the omissions were obviously accidental.

2017.  To Leonice M. S. Moulton

Cummington  September 18th  1871.—

Dear Mrs. Moulton.

I am glad to learn that your landlord is liberal enough to freshen the interior of your dwelling with paint and wall-paper. It implies, I think, that he wishes to keep you as a tenant.¹

The verses that you sent me I had already seen—those I mean of Mr. Waterston; he brought them to me himself—made us an eight days visit, and preached in a large unfurnished house near us, to the
great acceptance of a considerable audience. But the slip of paper
pasted in your letter,\(^2\) concerning the Reverend Abraham Jackson,
seventy eight years old, and Mrs. Rachel Allen, of seventy four, was
quite new to me, and when I handed your letter to Julia to read, was
not understood. She thought they were dead, and innovently asked
what I could know about them, that you should send me their names
and ages. But I told her that I was sure that they were only married—
though the slip did not say so and though it was true enough that
people were apt to die when as old as this couple were.

The first volume of the Odyssey, to which you refer so kindly, is
now published, and I am, if any thing, better satisfied with the
translation than the one I made of the Iliad.

You speak of the coolness of the season, and fires on the hearth
at evening and morning. Here it has been, at one time, absolutely
cold—but we have none of the hickory coals you speak of. The tree
does not grow here naturally—neither that, nor the oak, nor the
chestnut. We burn beech, yellow birch, and the sugar maple, best of
all.

Kind regards to Mr. Moulton and the professor. . . .\(^3\)

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**MANUSCRIPT:** NYPL—Bryant—Moulton Letters

**ADDRESS:** Mrs. L. M S. Moulton / care
of J. W. Moulton Esq. / Roslyn / Queens Co. Long Island / N. Y.

**POSTMARK:** Cummington West Village MASS / SEP / 18.

1. The Moultons were apparently then occupying a cottage on Bryant's property.
2. Unrecovered.
3. John Ordronaux (1033.5). The complimentary close and signature have been
cut from this letter.

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**2018.** To Robert C. Waterston

Cummington Sept. 23d 1871.

Dear Friend

Julia and I were very glad to learn, first from your letter,\(^1\) and
next from that of Mrs. Waterston, that your visit to the northwestern
corner of our state, was so pleasant. I only wish that you could have
 lingered a little longer in Williamstown—the scenery of which, if you
could have explored it a little further, you would have found, not only
beautiful, but of a largeness and diversity of beauty, which entitle it to
be called magnificent. The fine weather began just as you left us,—the
weather which was meant, I doubt not for your visit to Cummington,
only you made your visit a little too early to allow the two blessings to
coincide. Long before this the cool—I should have written cold—
nights, and the keen air of the mornings must have sent you back to
Chester Square.
But you and your better half did not take every thing with you when you left Cummington. You left a pleasant memory, not only with us, but with our good neighbors, who speak of the religious services which you were so obliging as to hold at the new house on the hill, as a “treat,” and I must confess, I quite agree with them. Another summer we will hope to see you again on these hills. If the season had not been a cool one on the Atlantic coast, you would have found the refreshment of a visit to this hill country much greater.

We are on the eve of flitting. My brothers have both left me, and we go either Monday or Tuesday, if that be the good pleasure of Providence. The new house is nearly half plastered, and the new road is made to it—a pretty winding way—a sauntering, loitering road, creeping sideways up the slopes and humoring the undulations of the surface, and now and then passing through a thicket of trees. I have seen all my improvements in a good way, and now I must go back to Roslyn, where the autumnal climate is more genial and where the summer sunshine and summer flowers linger later than here. By the way, what bad lines those are in Goldsmiths Deseret Vallyngue,

"Where smiling Spring her earliest visit paid,  
And parting Summer’s lingering blooms delayed”

Observe the cacaphony—“ing ing ing ing” and observe what is worse, the tautology of the second line. “Smiling,” too, in the first line, is a trivial epithet, and has no business there.

But I did not begin this letter with any expectation of ending it with a critical disquisition. I will do what is better, by way of conclusion—that is, by commending myself to a place in the kind remembrance of my good friend Mrs. Waterston, to whom Julia sends her best love.

Yours very cordially

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYHS ADDRESS: Revd Robert C. Waterston.

1. Unrecovered.
2. Arthur and John Bryant, Cullen’s surviving brothers, then customarily visited him at Cummington each summer. See Life, II, 324–325.

2019. To James B. Thayer

Roslyn, October 3d [1871]

... I have your criticism of my work in the Boston “Daily Advertiser.” You treat my version of the Odyssey very tenderly, and I am glad that
you found in it so much to commend, besides owing you so many thanks for commending it with so little reserve.¹ In the particular of vivacity, which you hint might have been attained in a greater degree by a careful attention to the effect and force of the particles in the original Greek, it is very likely that one more familiar with the niceties of that language than I am might have been more successful in transferring their import in some way to our language; but I found an obstacle in my way—the necessity of adopting paraphrases, which seemed to me difficult to reconcile with the Homeric rapidity of narrative.

I shall be glad at any time to receive the suggestions of which you speak, and which I am sure will be valuable. . . .


1. Sending a copy of this notice, Thayer had written in an accompanying letter from Boston on September 28 (NYPL-BG), “The new Iliad & Odyssey are a great & permanent addition to our literature.”

2020. To George Bancroft

Roslyn, Long Island,
October 9th. 1871.

My dear Mr. Bancroft.

This note will be brought to you by Mrs. C. Wheeler,¹ who with her two daughters and a son-in-law, a chemist, is to visit Berlin, I believe with the expectation of making it a residence for a short time, and of ere long being joined by her husband, a retired New York merchant. Mrs. Wheeler is a person of cultivated mind and agreeable conversation, and is held in high esteem by a large circle of friends. I venture to commend her to those attentions which as the representative of our country you are ever ready to show to your fellow citizens and especially to persons of such merit as the bearer of this note.²

I am, dear Mr. Bancroft,
very truly yours,

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: DuU address: A son Excellence / George Bancroft, / Ministre des Etats Unis, / Berlin, Prusse.—

1. Possibly Mrs. Candace Wheeler, to whom Bryant wrote on January 31, 1876, regarding a fair for the benefit of the Young Women’s Christian Association. See letter 2362.
2. From 1867 to 1874 Bancroft served as United States minister to Berlin.
2021.  

To William Dean Howells

New York  October 10th. 1871.—

My dear sir.

It is a compliment to be asked to contribute to the Atlantic Monthly, of the value of which I am fully sensible, but I am at present quite unable to send you any thing for several reasons—one of which is that I have nothing ready written, and another, that I am so closely engaged with the Odyssey, that I have no time to write any thing.²

I am, sir,

very truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

Manuscript: HCL.

1. Although the recipient of this letter is not named in the text, it may be conjectured that it was William Dean Howells (1837–1920), who had become editor-in-chief of the Atlantic Monthly earlier in 1871.

2. This invitation for a contribution to the magazine has not been recovered. But see Howells to Bryant, August 18, 1873 (NYPL–GR), asking for a series of autobiographical articles for the Atlantic.

2022.  

To Messrs. James R. Osgood & Co.

New York, October 17th. 1871.

Gentlemen.

I mail, this day, to your address, the manuscript of my translation of the Twenty first Book of Homer’s Odyssey. Will you do me the favor to let me know whether it comes to your hands?

Yours very truly.

W. C. BRYANT.

Manuscript: NYUL Address: To Messrs. J. R. Osgood & Co.

2023.  

To James B. Thayer

New York  October 27th 1871.—

My dear sir.

I should have thanked you before this for your manuscript of suggestions relating to my translation of the Odyssey but I have been so busy with the work as almost to neglect every thing else. When I am more at leisure I shall sit down to see what can be done to mend my lines according to the lights you have given me. Your animadversions
seem to me very valuable, and you have laid me under a real obliga-
tion.\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{quote}
I am, dear sir,
truly yours.
W. C. Bryant.
\end{quote}

\textit{Manuscript:} HCL address: J. B. Thayer Esq.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item On October 14 Thayer had sent Bryant what Godwin describes as an “almost word by word” comparison of Bryant’s translation with the original Greek. Life, II, 310. Thayer’s accompanying letter is in NYPL–BG.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}

2024. \textit{To Alfred Field}

Roslyn, November 20th [1871]

[Dear Mr. Field,

Ever since the news was brought to us of the sad death of your brother Edwin I have meant to write to you to express my sorrow and my sympathy with the members of his family in England.\textsuperscript{1} I have no excuse for not doing that earlier save that I was engaged in an engrossing literary task which tempted me to put off writing to you from day to day till I am quite mortified to see how long I have delayed it.]\textsuperscript{2}

The death of your brother, a man of such high and noble aims, so able, so active, so public-spirited, and singularly energetic and efficient in whatever he undertook, is a public calamity. Those who knew him in this country feel that, although it is England that loses in him one of her most useful citizens, no such man can pass away without his loss being felt by the civilized world, since nothing can be done for the good of the human race in any country without the world at large being in some way the better for it—by the influence of example, at least, if nothing more. As for myself, I have been so much in the habit of connecting my idea of him with my visits to your country, when so many years of activity were apparently before him. I was deeply touched by the testimony, so warmly expressed, which your wife in her letter to my daughter\textsuperscript{3} bore to your brother’s worth. The consolation of his friends under this calamity lies in the reflection that his life, up to the moment of its close, was crowded with good deeds and useful services. That it was so prematurely closed [was?] we know the appointment of a wisdom which we cannot question. Mea-
sured by the good he did, his life was a long one—longer than that of thousands who have died of old age. . . .\textsuperscript{4}
Homer Completed

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (incomplete draft) TEXT (partial): Life, II, 311, and draft manuscript.

1. On July 30, 1871 Edwin W. Field and his law clerk Henry Elwood were drowned when their sailboat capsized on the Thames. Though both were good swimmers, they became exhausted supporting another clerk who could not swim, yet was saved by their efforts. *Warwick [England] Advertizer*, August 8, 1871.

2. Matter between brackets is from the draft manuscript.

3. Letter unrecovered.


Gentlemen.

I have sent you by mail the manuscript of my translation of the twenty third book of Homer's Odyssey. Please advise me of its reaching you— The last book is partly done, and will be sent before long.

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT.


Gentlemen.

I should take it as a favor if you could have the printing and the proofreading, so far as I am concerned, of the second volume of the Odyssey completed within the month of December—as I am thinking of making a journey in December. I should be glad also if the contract could be executed about this time. The last book is more than half done.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.


New York, December 7th [1871]

. . . I have sent you by mail the twenty-fourth and concluding book of my translation of Homer's Odyssey, together with the table of contents for the second volume. . . .
1. Godwin contrasted this "bald announcement" with William Cowper's "beautiful words" prefacing his translation of Homer [eighty] years earlier: "And now I have only to regret that my pleasant work is ended. To the illustrious Greek I owe the smooth and easy flight of many thousand hours. He has been my companion at home and abroad, in the study, in the garden, and in the field; and no measure of success, let my labors succeed as they may, will ever compensate to me the loss of the innocent luxury that I have enjoyed as a translator of Homer." Life, II, 311. But Bryant—who had said of Cowper's diction in his Homer that "The greater part is in such stilted phrase" that "all the freedom and fire of the old poet is lost" (Letter 1338)—commented more soberly in his own preface, "I have found this a not unpleasing employment for a period of life which admonishes me that I can not many times more appear before the public in this or any other manner; . . . . This gentler exercise of the intellectual faculties [gentler than that of original composition] agrees better with that stage of life when the brain begins to be haunted by a presentiment that the time of its final repose is not far off" (Odyssey, I [iii]).

2028. To Robert Bonner

New York
Dec 9th 1871.

Dear Sir.

It struck me after Mr. Bartlett¹ left me yesterday that a passage from my version of the Odyssey might answer your purpose—that part I mean which is not yet published, the second volume not being yet out, and now passing through the press. The publishers would not object, provided their name were mentioned. It might be prefaced thus: "From the Manuscript of W. C. Bryants Translation of the Odyssey, now in press and to be published by J. R. Osgood & Co."² But I only mention this that you may consider whether this would be what you want. Please let me know.

Yours truly
W. C. Bryant.

1. Perhaps this was William O. Bartlett, later an editorial writer on Charles A. Dana's New York Sun. See Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940 (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 376.
2. Evidently this provision did not suit Bonner; see Letter 2029.

2029. To Robert Bonner

New York, Dec 14th. 1871.

My dear sir.

I am obliged to return your Cheque, which you will find enclosed. I have a letter from J. R. Osgood & Co.¹ in which they say:
"It really seems to us that no publication ought to be made from the Odyssey without a statement of the fact that it is a part of the translation to be published by us."²

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UTex address: Robert Bonner Esq.
1. Letter unrecovered.
2. Although no reply from Bonner has been recovered, this stipulation was apparently unacceptable to him.

2030. To an Unidentified Correspondent

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, December 16. 1871

Dear Madam.

I cannot positively say that the ancestors of our family, the Bryants came from England, but that is the tradition. I have heard my father say that the first of the Bryants in the Old Colony came from the West of England, and I remember that my grandfather, Dr. Philip Bryant a brother of Job Bryant, once said in my hearing that his ancestor of that name came to Plymouth in the second ship that came over. The name of this first Bryant was Stephen. If I had some papers at hand relating to him, I could give you more information respecting him, but they are at present not within my reach, being at some distance from me, in my house in the country. Stephen Bryant was a very early settler in the Old Colony, and the ancestor of a numerous class of descendants. When I was in England I found the name Bryant very common there. I found them in Somersetshire, where there were a great many towns and parishes bearing the names which are given to townships in the Old Colony, such as Taunton Bridgewater, Kingston &c. &c. The strong probability is therefore, that the first Bryant was from England.

I am Madam,
respectfully yours.
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Homestead Collection.

2031. To George H. Bryant

New York December 18th 1871.—

My dear sir.

When you wrote me concerning a volume of my poems about a year since, I was about getting out a new edition. It has since come out
and as the holidays are not far off I send you a copy as you then hinted. It is not long since it was got out after an incubation of many months. Will you please let me know of its coming to your hands.

Yours very truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa ADDRESS: Geo H. Bryant Esq.

2032. To Theseus A. Cheney

New York, December 19th 1871.

Dear Sir.

I have none of the autographs of the persons whom you name, except that of Mr. [George] Bancroft, of whose letters and notes I have several, one of which I might send for your collection, if I had it at hand, but they are all in the country at my place, to which I do not intend to return at present. When I am again at Roslyn, if I can remember it, I will send you a note of Mr. Bancroft's.


I am, sir,

truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: CU ADDRESS: Dr. T. A Cheney.

2033. To George H. Bryant

The Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty,
New York, Dec'. 30 1871.

Dear Sir.

It was careless in me not to inform you by what conveyance the volume of my poems was sent to Buffalo for you. It was the American Merchant's Union Express. You will no doubt find the parcel at their office in your city, if you will send for it.

I am, sir,

truly yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

P.S. I have not yet come upon the coat of arms belonging to Sir Guy Bryant

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa ADDRESS: George H. Bryant Esq.