The Letters of William Cullen Bryant

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

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Tumults of the Noisy World
1853–1857
(LETTERS 838 TO 973)

Stepping ashore in New York on June 22, 1853, Bryant must have appeared a patriarchal specter, wearing the long white beard he had left unshaven for six months, with his face and high bald forehead scorched by the suns and sandstorms of the Near East. He passed unrecognized by the office clerk sent to meet him, and later at Roslyn by a neighbor for whose mystification he donned a Turkish turban and gown and talked in broken English. He himself was a little disturbed, in reading an article by a German writer on New York journalists, to see himself described as a "little, dry, lean old man," and in writing Richard Dana he remarked wryly, "I do not like to think of growing old." But his appearance belied the vigor of his fifty-eight years. Toughened by travels which might have overborne many a younger man, he turned at once to the repair and improvement of his house and grounds at Cedarmere, and to the growing political contest over the spread of slavery into the new western territories.

In July, when the Pierce administration's organ, the Washington Union, stigmatized the Evening Post as the creature of Abolitionism and read it out of the Democratic Party, Bryant scorned the charge as coming from a "party hack," the servant of an extreme pro-slavery faction. But his sharp criticism of President Franklin Pierce, whose candidacy he had supported grudgingly in 1852, was in truth alienating him from the party in power. When, in January 1854, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois introduced in Congress the Kansas–Nebraska Bill, which would in effect repeal the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by opening the territories to slavery, Bryant cut his paper loose from its ties to the Democratic Party and led it firmly into the anti-slavery cause. He charged that Pierce, in his "mad and wicked adhesion to the Nebraska perfidy," was acting as the "tail of Senator Douglas's kite"; that the proposed measures would result in "Americanizing the heart of the North American continent." We must, he declared, "oppose an impassable barrier to the admission of any more slave states."

The political resurgence of xenophobia and anti-Catholic prejudice, the defeat of which Bryant had celebrated after the New York election of 1845, produced an American, or "Know-Nothing," Party which elected nine state governors and a large minority of congressmen in 1854. Coinciding with the weakening of older party loyalties, this movement appealed, unfortunately, to many northern opponents of slavery. Bryant had been pleased with signs of growing religious tolerance in the Catholic and Moslem countries which he had lately visited, and he was disgusted to find a reversion to prejudice at home, warning his readers not to be "deluded or frightened into a needless crusade against the venerable and harmless hobgoblins, 'Popery' and 'Foreign"
Influence." By 1855 he was convinced that the movement had lost its force in the North, but he was disturbed by indications that it had "struck deeper root" in the South, where a leading newspaper proposed the right of a political party to "lay its plans in secret and to secure them from disclosures by oath."

In the fall of 1855, convinced that the southern-dominated Congress and administration had "ceased to serve the cause of freedom and justice," Bryant turned his attention to the nascent Republican Party. The following July he made what was for him a rare commitment to political activism, when he gave the principal speech at a party rally in Yonkers, New York, proposing as the Republican slogan, "Three Cheers for Freedom and Frémont." His uncharacteristic action was impelled by a physical assault made two months earlier by South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks on Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. Conceding the intemperance of a Sumner speech which provoked the attack, Bryant posed the question "Has the freedom of speech in the United States Senate been put in peril?" If so, he declared, the Constitution has been violated, and "violence is the order of the day; the North is to be pushed to the wall by it." Soon after, his name headed the list of sponsors at a Broadway Tabernacle meeting protesting the attack. The Evening Post, which had been serializing Bigelow's life of Republican presidential candidate John Charles Frémont, took up the cause of Free Soil settlers in Kansas against pro-slavery "Border Ruffians" from Missouri, endorsing appeals from the Emigrant Aid Society for funds to support their struggle. The Post sponsored a prize contest for a Frémont campaign song, and as the 1856 election drew near, Bryant was hopeful of a Republican victory. His disappointment at defeat was tempered by a large plurality of popular votes for Frémont and the American Party candidate Millard Fillmore over those given the winning Democratic candidate, James Buchanan. Frémont carried eleven northern and western states, allowing Bryant to draw the conclusion that "We have at least laid the basis of a formidable and well-organized party, in opposition to the spread of slavery."

Returning in 1853 to a daily preoccupation with politics, Bryant had written Dana, "I am grinding at the mill again, and find it the same dull work as ever." Despite his dependence on the newspaper for a living, he persisted in a hope that he might escape from journalism to a more strictly literary life. He continued to buy land in Illinois; in August 1854, after a visit to Princeton, he had acquired more than one thousand acres of prairie and timber, as well as town lots. But advertising revenues shrank in the 1854 recession, and Cullen went into debt to his brother John. In 1856 he told Dana, "If it had not been that I lost money about two years since I think I should have nearly got myself clear of the drudgery of my newspaper by this time." In poems of the period Bryant's longing for a quieter life is often intimated; it is manifest in the opening lines of "A Rain-Dream" (1854):

These strifes, these tumults of the noisy world, . . .
Oppress the heart with sadness. Oh, my friend,
In what serener mood we look upon
The gloomiest aspects of the elements
Among the woods and fields!

Letters of this time show an almost obsessive concern with his gardens and farm and orchards, never so intense as when, after a winter in Manhattan or travel
abroad, he could get home to Roslyn. In January he requests Chinese sugar millet seeds from the Patent Office in Washington; in the midst of the most severe winter in memory he chafes to take cuttings and make grafts of rare varieties in his pear orchard; in September he writes of digging two hundred bushels of potatoes and harvesting more apples and plums than his family can consume. "My ambition," he tells Dana, "is to have a little fruit for all seasons—strawberries in their time, European grapes in a cold winery, and pears from August to Easter. I am fussing a little with figs and hope yet to eat one of my own raising." He disclaims special skill as a gardener; it is Julia, he says, who "overwhelms me with everblooming roses, verbenas, and a dozen varieties of the clematis." But in more than one letter he discusses the niceties of floriculture, as when he advises Catharine Sedgwick on late-season blossoms and notes one in particular which Thomas Cole had brought him from Sicily a dozen years before: "I never gather it without thinking of him; it is sweet and fragrant, like his memory."

It was probably Bryant's salvation that he could dissociate his work as a poet from that as a publicist. "I am surfeited with politics in my vocation," he replied to John Bryant's urgent suggestion that he attend a Pittsburgh meeting in February 1856 at which a national Republican Party was to be proposed, "and when I go from home I cannot bear to carry them with me." John Bigelow thought that "this separation of his professional from his poetical life must be taken into account in any effort to explain the uniform esteem in which he was always held as a poet by his country people, while occasionally one of the least popular journalists." In the heat of Free Soil struggles Bryant's poems rarely reflected—even obliquely, as in "A Rain-Dream"—his weekday immersion in political contention. With scarcely an exception, those composed between 1849 and 1857 show his sensitivity to his natural surroundings at Roslyn and his deep affection for those who shared them with him: "The May Sun Sheds an Amber Light," "The Planting of the Apple-Tree," "The Voice of Autumn," "The Snow-Shower," "A Rain-Dream," "Robert of Lincoln," "The Twenty-Seventh of March," and "An Invitation to the Country." Yet the variety of activities to which he willingly devoted his evening hours and sometimes his weekends suggest he could not have suffered for long a quiet country retirement.

Biweekly meetings of the Sketch Club during the 1850s found Bryant almost always present when he was in town. From its start as a casual gathering-place for amateur and professional artists and writers twenty-five years before, the club had become the chief incubator for innovations in the city's cultural life. Though still meeting in rotation at its members' homes, it was host to many of New York's civic and professional leaders and notable visitors from abroad. Among those entertained during this period were American artists Frederick Church, Jaspar Cropsey, Félix O. C. Darley, Regis Gignoux, Horatio Greenough, Thomas Hicks, John Kensett, Louis Lang, Emanuel Leutze, William S. Mount, Thomas Rossiter, and Richard Upjohn. British artists included Alfred Derby, Samuel Laurence, and William Guy Wall. Prominent among writers were George Bancroft, Dion Boucicault, Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and William Makepeace Thackeray. Publishers William Appleton and Nathaniel Currier came, as did clergymen Henry Bellows and Jonathan Wainwright, New York governors Washington Hunt and Horatio Seymour, ex-President Martin Van Buren, Judge Charles

Bryant portraits, and landscapes inspired by his poems, continued to appear at National Academy exhibitions. Asher Durand painted his friend in 1853, and after the picture had been engraved for popular subscription gave it as a New Year gift to Mrs. Bryant, who returned “a thousand thanks for making something pleasing of a face which so many have caricatured.” Charles Loring Elliott’s “Bryant” was shown in 1854, Daniel Huntington’s in 1855, and Samuel Laurence’s in 1857. In 1853 Durand painted a “Monument Mountain,” and in 1854 “The Primeval Forest,” suggested by “A Forest Hymn.” That year his “Green River” appeared in Bryant’s Poems, and in 1857 he supplied landscape illustrations for another edition. In 1854 Joseph Mozier sent Bryant from Rome a photograph of his statue Truth, which had been suggested by “The Battlefield.”

Beginning with its first issue in 1855 The Crayon—first American magazine of art criticism—stressed Bryant’s aesthetic affinity with the landscape artists. In the first of several articles on “The Landscape Element in American Poetry,” his imagery was likened to that of such painters as Durand and John Kensett in its “majestic harmony,” its “foreground passages . . . painted to your very feet,” its “fine sense of harmony of color,” and its subordination of parts to a single “great impression.” Durand’s first “Letter on Landscape Painting” urged art students to “Go forth, under the open sky, and list / To Nature’s teachings,” and in later essays he quoted other Bryant verses to make his points. Bryant’s opinions on art were solicited; in 1854 his comparison of Cole and Durand in Graham’s Magazine drew much approval.

Bryant’s concern with civic affairs was evident in his frequent appearances as occasional speaker or chairman at public meetings, as well as in his editorial writing. Often addressing political or literary topics, he also spoke to such subjects as “The Improvement of Native Fruits,” and “Music in the Public Schools.” His early advocacy of a great public playground in New York City was never far from his mind. After the state legislature’s authorization in 1853 of parks in both Jones’s Wood—the site Bryant had first suggested—and the center of Manhattan Island, real estate and other interests had tried to constrict the parkland and dilute what was left with ornate squares and homes for the wealthy. Bryant fought their efforts; “a few speculators and land-jobbers,” he declared in 1854, “beguile the inhabitants of New York one park of seven hundred acres . . . by their persevering, under hand opposition.” With further delay, he warned, “We shall soon be walled in on all sides with brick.” He demanded no less than “the whole of Central Park, unencumbered and uncurtailed.” When in 1856 the city acquired the land, undiminished, Bryant rejoiced in the Evening Post that landscaping could now proceed.

Although his verse composition during this period was slender, Bryant supervised the publication of several new collections, at home and abroad. The Appletons brought out editions in New York and London in 1855 and 1857. In 1854 an authorized volume was printed at Dessau, Germany, the first in a series of “Standard American Authors.”

As 1856 drew to a close, Bryant might have feared for his country’s future,
were it not, he wrote Dana, that "I rarely despair of any thing, ... for it is not in my temperament to do so." Following the Republican defeat he pointed to the future obligations of his new party. "It is the condition of great achievements," he wrote, "that they are slowly accomplished. We have, in fact, but just entered on the threshold of this war." Leaving the Democratic Party cost Bryant at least one old and valued friend, for ex-President Martin Van Buren, angered by his defection, canceled his subscription to the *Evening Post*. But Bryant would have been solaced, certainly, to read words written in extenuation of his editorial course by Van Buren's longtime associate, former Attorney General Benjamin F. Butler: "I regard [Bryant] as one of the brightest luminaries of the age—not only in the department of letters but in that also of politics." And after a series of editorials in March 1857 in which Bryant attacked the constitutionality of Chief Justice Taney's dictum in the *Dred Scott* case denying the status of citizenship to free blacks, he could not have avoided satisfaction had he heard the comment of a Free Soil leader, John Curtiss Underwood: "What a glory it would be to our country if it could elect this man to the Presidency—the country not he would be honored & elevated by such an event."

Precarious as Frances Bryant's health had been for more than two years past, her husband became alarmed late in 1856 when her illness was diagnosed as rheumatic fever. When she seemed to have recovered somewhat by the following April, he was advised, following the custom of that time, to give her a change of air and scene. It was supposed that a long sea voyage might prove especially helpful, so they planned a slow passage across the Atlantic on a sailing packet, followed by about six months on the Continent, to be spent largely in Spain, which none of the Bryants had seen. So, with Julia Bryant and her cousin Estelle Ives, they left New York on May 2, 1857, on the *William Tell*, bound for Le Havre.
Dear Dana.

I thought you would write to me about these days and this morning I was glad to see your well-known hand on the back of a letter addressed to me. When I came to read it, however, there was something in the middle of it which made me wince. I always read over your letters two or three times, but now when I came to that part of your letter which speaks of old age I found myself hurrying over it, without giving myself time to perceive its full meaning, as a sick man bolts an unpleasant draught without taking its full flavor. I do not like to think of growing old, though I try to reconcile myself to it.

I am sorry to hear such bad news about your daughter. My wife had told me of her visit to New York, and of the ineffectual attempt she made to get her to make a little journey to her place on Long Island. I am sure she bears the sufferings of ill-health meekly; and I hope they will be yet mitigated to her. Your son made a most capital answer to Hillard's attack. The first thing I did in the *Evening Post* on my return was to insert the answer with a few words calling attention to it.¹ He will never have occasion to make another reply of that sort to any thing that Hillard may say in public. I would not exchange your son's chance of "success in life," as they call it, for his. There is something taking, after all in courage; if it be not a virtue in itself it is an ornament and grace to the virtues. A certain respect attends the bold and frank man even if he has scarcely another good quality, and a cowardly good man never wholly escapes contempt.

Your letter has one sign of youth in it. You make my absence from America as twelve months, when I was gone but seven months and a week. I went to London, to Paris to Marseilles to Genoa to Leghorn, to Naples, to Malta, to Alexandria and Cairo. From Cairo I went up the Nile in a government steamer as far as the first cataract, visiting the old temples and tombs on my way. From Cairo on my return I made a journey on a camel across the Shuren Desert to Syria. In Syria I saw almost every thing which travellers visit except the ancient town of Hebron. I bathed in the Jordan and in the Dead Sea—passed several days at Jerusalem, visited Nazareth, the Lake of Tiberias, Mount Carmel, Acre, Tyre, Sidon and Beyroot. From Beyroot I crossed Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon to Damascus, returning by way of Baalbec. From Beyroot a steamer took me to Constantinople; I returned to Smyrna and went in a steamer to Athens, crossed the Isthmus of Corinth to the Gulf of Lepanto and took a steamer for the island of Corfu, a beautiful spot where I passed two or three days. From Corfu I went directly by steamer to Trieste, and from Trieste to Venice—then, after a little stay, to look at the pictures and architecture of the Venetian artists I went by land, to Florence and Rome, and from Rome I came to

¹ A reference to a political event or controversy involving Richard Dana and George Hillard.
Marseilles by way of Civita Vecchia and the Mediterranean. I had ten or twelve days in Paris and a day in London from which I ran down to the Isle of Wight and there embarked in the steamer Humboldt for New York. I had a chilly passage of thirteen days and when I got to New York I seemed to find myself in a hot vapor-bath. In my journey across the desert I let my beard grow and found it so convenient to dispense with the trouble of shaving, that I allowed no razor to pass over my face till I got to New York. One of the clerks of our office was sent down to the steamer to look for me and did not know me when he had found me. I went down to my place on Long Island, put on a Turkish turban and gown, and had a long conversation in broken English with a young lady, our next door neighbor, who really thought that I was an Oriental.  

I am afraid, however, that I have come back no younger than I went. I am grinding at the mill again, and find it the same dull work as ever. Was it not singular that the same moment that I got your letter, another was put into my hands enclosing an article about the New York journalists from a Leipsic paper, in which I was described as “a little, dry, lean old man.”  

The pill was sweetened by several compliments, but it had a bitter flavor, after all.

You are at Manchester [Massachusetts], I see. Why will you not come to my place as soon as you return, and prolong your summer for a few days in this climate? I have new walks in my woods, and a seat or two where you may rest in the shade, and two or three little openings that look out from the forest upon the water. Remember me most kindly to my former patient Charlotte and to your sisters if they are with you.

Yrs very truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR ENDORED: X Wm C. Bryant, July / 5th / 58, Ans. July 7th / X

This in ans to mine of July [3rd?].

1. The earlier antagonism between Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and George Stillman Hillard (see Letter 757) had flared up again at the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention on June 25, when Dana made remarks about the conservatism of Boston businessmen which led Hillard to say in print, “The bread that he and I both eat comes from the business community of Boston, and . . . we should not strike at the hand that feeds us.” In reprinting Dana’s reply from the Commonwealth, Bryant commented, “Mr. George S. Hillard—the same on whom Mr. Webster, shortly after he changed his course on the slavery question, pronounced a public eulogium—made an attack upon Richard H. Dana, jun., the nature of which will be sufficiently understood from the reply which we publish.” EP, June 29, 1853.

2. Bryant was accustomed thereafter to amuse his grandchildren by donning this costume (see Life, II, 74), which is now in the Bryant Homestead at Cummington. See illustrations.

3. Both letters and the newspaper article are unrecovered.

4. Ten years earlier Bryant had arranged effective treatment for Charlotte Dana’s chronic eye trouble. See Letters 440, 448, 462.
839. To Richard H. Dana

New York    July 11, 1853

Dear Dana.

I am very sorry that I was not apprized that your daughter was in town when I returned. My wife supposed that she had gone back to Boston long since, or she would have made a point of calling to see her, in one or two journeys she made to town. She came into New York with me on the Monday after I arrived, during the cool days that we had after that terribly hot weather in the midst of which I landed, and if we had thought there was the least chance of her being yet here we should have looked her up. Say to her that my wife is quite quite concerned that she should have appeared so careless about her.

Now as to Mr. Chilton and his scheme of getting a collection of autographs, "with an ultimate view to their publication in fac simile."¹ I have so many applications for my autograph, that I remember none of them except that of a Philadelphian, it was not Chilton, who did not pay his postage, and whose letter I did not answer—and even his name I have forgotten. Sometimes, but not often, they have asked me for autograph copies of some one of my poems. In that case, I send them a few lines of the peom, a stanza perhaps, and excuse myself from giving the rest by alleging want of time. It may be that I have sent Mr. Chilton something in this way, but if I have I have quite forgotten it. If he has any thing of the sort I am quite indifferent about what he does with it—he may publish it or burn it for aught I care. If publishing it will satisfy any body who wants my autograph, and will prevent his writing to me for it, it will do me a service.

I admit that it is not fair in him to obtain a manuscript for such a purpose without communicating his intention, and I have no recollection of any person whatever applying to me for any scraps of verse to be published in that manner. If such a request had ever been made to me, I think I should have remembered it on account of its singularity. Perhaps, however, Mr. Chilton, in confessing an "ultimate view to publication," meant merely that hereafter when we old gentlemen had dropped off he might give the collection to the world as a curiosity. Who he is, I do not know. If the case were my own, I should send him the verses, and let him know that in attempting to get them without informing me that he wanted to put them into a book he had behaved unhandsomely. A grave and gentle rebuke, such as you know how to give, might do him good.

You have, before this time, my answer to your first letter, and if I may judge from the tenor of your second,² must have been astonished at getting the answer so promptly. Don't draw my conduct into precedent, as the lawyers say, and expect me always to be so punctual.

Yrs very truly

W. C. BRYANT.
840. To Daniel Coit Gilman

New York July 15, 1853.

Sir

Be pleased to make my best acknowledgments to the Committee of the Linonian Society of Yale College for the honor they have done me, by inviting me to attend their approaching celebration. It will be impossible for me to have that pleasure, on account of other engagements.

I am, sir,

Yours respectfully

WM. C. BRYANT

1. Daniel Coit Gilman (1831-1908, Yale 1852) was later (1856) the founder at Yale University of the Sheffield Scientific School, of which he became professor of physical and political geography. In 1872 he was made president of the University of California, and in 1875 first president of The Johns Hopkins University. Gilman apparently induced Bryant to join the American Oriental Society, and they corresponded on other matters at least until 1870.

2. This invitation is unrecovered.

841. To Julia S. Bryant

New York July 18, 1853. Monday morning.

Dear Julia

I send enclosed a batch of letters for you. Yesterday we went to church and brought Miss Appleby home with us, and in the afternoon took her to Oyster Bay to see Mr. McCoun and his family. It was the most delightful drive I have had this year; a cool atmosphere, and everything fresh with the shower of the night before. The road by which we returned—through a part of Buckram, was richly embowered all the way with trees, which seem to be twice as tall as they ever were before. Mrs. Holland we found ill and languid, Mr. McCoun well and smiling, Miss McCoun cordial, hospitable and empresse [gushing?]—I have not time to hunt up an English word. We returned by the crimson light of sunset and the white light of the moon.

Your mother, I fear will have a solitary week of it—so you must write. I send with this letter a parcel. My regards to Miss G.

Yrs. affectionately

W C BRYANT

1. Miss Appleby is unidentified.
842.  To Eliza Robbins

New York, July 19, 1853.

... We have had a great time with the opening of the Crystal Palace here, and the banquet the next day; they used to call such things dinners. I went to neither of them. I like more space than you get at such places. I like air and elbow-room, as you find them about the Pyramids, as at Thebes and Baalbec. Do you know they are going to rail in the ruins of Thebes and Denderah and Edfou, and the other old remains in Egypt, and appoint guardians to take care of them? This will take off something from the effect of the ruins, but it will prevent them from being mutilated and disfigured. I meant to have astonished you with a long white beard—the growth of my chin while wandering in the East—and I sometimes asked myself the question whether Miss Robbins would know my face in such a costume. The day I went to Roslyn I put on a turban, a Turkish silk shirt and striped silk gown, which I got at Damascus, and a pair of yellow slippers, and held a fifteen minutes' conversation in broken English with Miss Hopkins, our next-door neighbor, she thinking all the time that I was a Turk. This is egotism, but I think you would have been interested in the people of the East if you had seen what I did. I do not believe in the theory that there is no chance of recovery for nations that have once degenerated. A great change is going on in the East; religious bigotry is wearing out, and by and by religious freedom will be enjoyed in the Turkish dominions to a greater extent than in any other country except the United States. The missionaries have already successfully introduced girls' schools in the north of Syria. Let the example be followed in other parts of the East, and the reign of barbarism will be over. ...


1. Unknown to Bryant, Eliza Robbins had died three days earlier at Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the age of sixty-nine. In an obituary in the _EP_ on July 20 Bryant called her "one of the most eloquent and witty persons we have known; . . . her conversations were the delight of her friends." He concluded, "We pen these few words in profound sorrow at her loss."

2. The Crystal Palace Exhibition, of which Bryant's friend and associate Theodore Sedgwick III was president, opened on July 14 with a parade reviewed by President Franklin Pierce. _EP_, July 14, 1853.

843.  To Frances F. Bryant

New York  Wednesday  July 28, 1853

Dear F.

Julia was here on Monday and expects to go down tomorrow. I was half dead with dispepsia on Monday, but on going up town I called at Rand's and almost before I knew it Mrs. Rand had some blackberries for
me and her husband, and some cracked wheat boiled. The prescription cured me.

Yesterday Mr. Leupp called to ask me to go with him today to Edmonds's place in Westchester to pass the night.¹ As it rains now it is not likely that he will care to go. I am sorry that you have so bad a week for your carpenters. But perhaps they did not come.

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

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1. The banker-artist Francis William Edmonds (487.1) had a home, "Crow's Nest," on the Bronx River in what was then southern Westchester County, New York.

844. To Frances F. Bryant

New York August 11, 1853.

Dear F.

The carriage goes to Roslyn in the sloop Sarah Elizabeth. I was at the sloop this morning and was told by Captain Multry that it could be conveyed with perfect safety and convenience. He will take off the wheels. I suppose you will get it on Saturday morning. Captain Multry paid me the rent for one quarter $15—¹

This morning I had a note from Mrs. Morton saying that she and Mr. Morton proposed to come to see you on Saturday. I think she will come with me in the boat. Georgine I hear, is still at Presqu' Isle.²

It is frightfully hot—90 and 99 yesterday in the shade, and quite as hot today.

Yrs truly
W. C. B.

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2. The Hudson River home, at Fishkill, of the late William Denning (1768–1849); see 376.1, 505.1. For the Rutledge Mortons and their daughter Georgine, see Letters 406, 412.
others of our friends at Princeton were to come with you. In order that
we may have the house clear for you when you come, I should be glad to
know at what time, or about what time you expect to make the visit.
Please to write if you have made up your mind and tell me how many
of you there will probably be. I need not say that we shall all be glad to see
you and the rest. Give my regards to your wife and sons.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Chicago Historical Society
ADDRESS: John H. Bryant Esqre.

846. To Frances F. Bryant

Friday August 12 [1853]

Dear F.

I wrote to you yesterday that Mr. and Mrs. Morton would come out
on Saturday and that our carriage would be brought to Roslyn in the sloop
Sarah Elizabeth. I write now lest my letter should have miscarried.

We are now almost melted by the heat. This is the third very hot day
and I hope tomorrow will be cooler.

There is another disaster on the Providence and Worcester Railroad.—
Two trains dashed against each other and fourteen persons were killed—

Yours ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR
ADDRESS: Mrs. F. F. Bryant / Roslyn / Long Island.

847. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Monday August 15, 1853.

Dear F.

Fanny writes from Niagara a letter dated August 9th in which she says.

"My dear Mother. We went to Albany on Tuesday morning, dined
there and rested a couple of hours, then went on to Utica for the night;
the next day we reached Niagara before tea rather tired but much better.
This afternoon we take the boat for Montreal. I have enjoyed myself very
much here. We are on the Canada side; my room large and opening upon
a piazza and looking directly on the falls. I only wish you were all here—
Julia for the dancing which they have every evening in the concert room—
you and father for fine fresh air and the views—Willie and Susan for new
ideas. Minna is happy. No New Yorkers here—Mrs. Sarah Jenkins1 the
only person I ever heard of—I forget C. P. Cranch.2 In hopes the chickens
are all well—Love to all Yours affectionately—Fanny Bryant Godwin."3

I found on board of the steamer this morning Webster, who is to
work this week for the Miss Mudges. You know he is a well-digger by pro-
fession, so I talked with him about our well to be dug between Mott's house and Multy's. He says he can come after he has done working for the Mudges and attend to it. He thought it would be cheaper and in many respects better, to line it with brick uncremented than with stone, if the stone had to be dragged to the place. But when I talked further with him I found that he meant brick manufactured expressly for the purpose, in such a shape as to make them form a regular circle when laid. These are to be obtained from West Neck, but he promised to enquire this morning if there are any to be had at Glen Cove. If there are John might go down for them; if there are not it will be cheaper to use stone.

Webster will call on you this week, and tell you when he will come to dig the well. He owes me a trifle, and I think it will be best to employ him. Our men, as I told him, might work with him.

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

P.S. The weather is so cool that I shall expect you this week.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR ADDRESS: Mrs. F. F. Bryant / Roslyn / Long Island DOCKETED:
My letter to my wife / — August 1853 —.

1. Unidentified.
2. Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892), a Unitarian minister who was also a poet and painter, and a friend of Emerson's and of other Transcendentalists.
3. Bryant mistakenly wrote "Fanny Godwin Bryant."
4. Probably James Mott (1788–1868), member of an old Roslyn Quaker family, and a prominent Abolitionist. His wife, Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793–1880), was even more distinguished in the women's rights, as well as the anti-slavery, movements. Godwin, Roslyn Harbor, p. 16.

848. To Frances F. Bryant

New York, Monday September 19, 1853.

Dear F.

All our friends but John and his wife went in the half past eleven train to Springfield. John who has just left me goes in the Stonington boat at five o'clock this afternoon.¹

Gourlie has just arrived[;] he called on me this morning looking in good health and spirits. Durand came with him and is off on a visit to his father.²

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR ADDRESS: Mrs. F. F. Bryant / Roslyn / Long Island.

1. It is uncertain how many of Bryant's Illinois family, in addition to his brother John and wife Harriet, visited Roslyn that summer. See Letter 845.
2. John Durand had left Bryant and Leupp at Paris on June 2 for a visit to Italy with John Hamilton Gourlie (653.1). Bryant, "Diary, 1852–1853."
849. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Thursday Oct. 6 1853.

Dear F.

I have been perfectly well since I came out here. Fanny has had some troubles which I suppose she will tell you of.

This morning Mr. Leupp called with a watch and a note for Julia, which I send you by Mr. Willis. The note I suppose she will answer.

Did you hear that dreadful story of the end of Joanna Miller of Easthampton? She came to New York, took lodgings at a boarding house, some time last winter, and afterwards went under a feigned name to an hotel at the bottom of Broadway where she died. I will tell you the rest when I see you if you have not heard it.¹

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. No reference has been found to this case in the EP.

850. To G. S. McIntosh and others.¹

New York October 21, 1853.

Gentlemen.

I am sorry that you did not apply to a more expert grammarian, but I will answer your question. I have never doubted that the word “inexpert” relates to the pronoun “I,” which would make this to be the construction:—“I, more inexpert, boast not of wiles” &c.

Yours respectfully
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: Iowa State Department of History and Archives


1. The manuscript of this letter is accompanied by an undated newspaper clipping explaining its origin. Three young men had asked their Presbyterian minister John Cowles, of Olean, New York, for a gloss on the syntax of Moloch’s statement to the fallen angels in Milton’s Paradise Lost (II.51–53):

“My sentence is for open Warr: Of Wiles,
More inexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.”

The learned clergyman decided that “inexpert” modified “wiles”; the boys referred it to “I.” So all “agreed to refer [the question] to the great American Poet, William Cullen Bryant, and abide his decision.”
851. To Henry R. Schoolcraft

New York  October 28, 1853.

My dear sir.

I thank you very much for the honor you have done me in dedicating to me the fourth volume of your work. In taking notice the other day of the North American Review, I took occasion to say what I thought of the ill nature and petulance of its attack upon you. But works of merit, if they have already made, as yours have done, a favorable impression on the public, easily recover from any mischief which such criticisms can inflict. You are right therefore in pursuing your course without much attention to animadversions so manifestly cavilling and captious.

I am glad to learn that you are steadily occupied with your work and I anticipate from your labors, contributions to our stock of knowledge respecting the aboriginal inhabitants of our country, the value of which will be enhanced by every year that passes.

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

MANUSCRIPT: HEHL ADDRESS: Prof. H. R. Schoolcraft.

1. In the course of a review of Volumes I–III of Schoolcraft's Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States (Philadelphia, 1851–1853), which appeared in the North American Review, 77 (July 1853), 245–262, its editor, Francis Bowen (1811–1890, Harvard 1833), called these "bulky and pretentious volumes" incomplete and unsystematic: "Indeed, we are compelled to believe that one of the principal objects in getting up the work was to afford a profitable job to the engravers." These volumes, ironically, were profusely illustrated with engravings from the work of the distinguished painter of Indian life, Seth Eastman (1808–1875, United States Military Academy 1829), twenty-six of whose paintings now adorn the Capitol in Washington! A brief notice of the North American Review for October 1853 appeared in the EP on October 15, but Bryant's comments on Bowen's attack have not been located. Nor is there a dedication to Bryant in the copy of Schoolcraft's fourth volume examined for the present edition; perhaps Bryant's reference is to an inscribed volume sent him by the author.

852. To George Bancroft

New York  November 9th. 1853

My dear sir.

A request has been made to me, to which I have readily yielded, that I should either speak with you or write to you concerning the wish of the Ingraham Testimonial Committee, to make you President of an Association which they are organizing. They desire to place it under the auspices of the highest talent and character in our country. Not being able to command time for seeing you today I write this note.
You will perceive, on looking at the constitution of the Society, that its plan is a most liberal and comprehensive one. Many of the most estimable of that class whom the tyrannies of Europe have driven to seek refuge here are concerned in it. It proposes, among other things, to establish for that class and their friends, a Reading Room in this city, to serve as a common centre of information. Your acceptance of the office would do them a special service, and I hope—nay I am sure—that you will give the proposal at least a friendly consideration.  

I am, dear sir,

Yours very truly

WM. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: MHS address: Hon Geo. Bancroft.

1. In the summer of 1853 Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham (1802–1891), a naval officer in charge of the United States sloop St. Louis, had secured the freedom from detention on an Austrian warship at Smyrna, Turkey, of an Hungarian refugee and revolutionary associate of Louis Kossuth's, Martin Koszta, who had lived in the United States and had applied for American citizenship, and brought him to this country. Ingraham's action was supported by Secretary of State William L. Marcy, and widely applauded by Americans. On October 28 the EP reported an “Ingraham Testimonial Committee” which planned to organize a “Society of Universal Democracy,” the object of which would be to “bring together and make better acquainted all men, whether Americans or foreigners, who desire the triumph of universal democracy.” The society would implement its objective by opening a reading room and diffusing full information on parties, platforms, and other political matters, and by affiliating with like-minded organizations elsewhere.

2. It is uncertain whether Bancroft accepted this office.

853. To Cyrus Bryant

New York Nov. 29, 1853.

Dear Brother.

I got the apples all safe, on the 22d, and am much obliged to you and John and Arthur for the trouble you have taken. The fruit, such of it as I have seen and tried is particularly excellent. Thank little Julia¹ in my name for the big pippin.

I would like you to write as soon as you get this and let me know whether I ought to give Kasson's Despatch the notice of which you speak. I paid $2.50 a barrel for the apples delivered at the office; of this $4.20 was for their conveyance on board the steamer Hendrick Hudson.

With regard to Cullen, I think it very uncertain whether the appointment of cadet at West Point can be got for him. If application is to be made to the Secretary of War I think it ought to be made soon, but I cannot flatter myself with having any influence in that quarter. He appoints the supernumeraries, I believe from what states he pleases. Your best way I think would be to get your application backed by Long John and as
many democrats in your part of the country as you can. If you then think that a letter from me to the Secretary would do you any good I would write it to accompany your application. As a general rule my letters have never done any body any good. Sometimes a formidable array of known party men has an effect. It would of all things be important, I think, to be early on the list of candidates.²

If in any thing I can help or advise you, I wish you would let me know.

Remember me kindly to your wife and children. Frances has been quite ill this month with an inflammation of the lungs, but is now again entirely well.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-BFP ADDRESS: C. Bryant Esqre.

1. Cyrus Bryant’s elder daughter, then eight years old.

2. Cyrus’s third son, Cullen, was then fourteen. He was graduated from West Point in 1864 and served in the United States Army until his retirement (as a Lieutenant Colonel?) in 1894. “Long John” is unidentified.

854. To Abraham Hart

New York  December 15, 1853.

My dear Sir.

It is now a year and some months—how many I do not recollect—since I have heard from you.¹ May I ask of you the favor to examine and inform me, how many copies of my poems you have printed since my last draft, and how much I am to draw upon you for?

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.


1. See Letter 779.

855. To Ferdinand E. Field¹

New York  Dec  19, 1853

My dear sir.

I am about to address you on a subject in which if I seem to intermeddle officiously I hope you will at least ascribe my conduct to its right interest, and regard it as an error of good will.

It has grieved me to learn of a serious misunderstanding between you and your brother Alfred which threatens to become a permanent one. He has just read to me the correspondence between you, and asked my advice. I answered that I would write to you immediately.
The malady which caused your brother to make the proposals out of which the misunderstanding has arisen is a serious one as I have every reason to believe, and such as naturally to occasion much apprehension. During my absence last winter his friends here were in great concern about him. He left his place to which both he and his wife were exceedingly attached and came to pass the winter in town. In the spring he took what is the best course in all such complaints, he hired a house in the interior, beyond the influence of the sea-air, which is pernicious in such complaints. To have abandoned his home on Staten Island with which he had taken such pains and which he had made so pleasant, was the strongest proof that could be given of the necessity to which he was reduced. I saw him in July or August—I think the latter—free from cough in consequence of the change of air, and though the cough has since recurred, he is much stronger than before.

In regard to the correspondence which has taken place between you and him, allow me to observe that according to my experience letters are a fruitful source of misunderstanding. Owing to the inadequacy or imperfect choice of the expressions used—to the accidental introduction of things better left out, or the casual omission of things which should have been expressed, they often stand in need of verbal explanations to clear up the writer's whole meaning and to avoid offense. The several plans proposed by your brother in consequence of his ill-health, namely to come to Birmingham for a short residence, or to make a journey to the southwest of this country, were as he declares made with no idea of putting either of them in execution without your entire concurrence. If I had written the letters I might have accompanied them perhaps with a more explicit reference to your will in the matter—yet they were after all, in the strictest sense, but plans "proposed" to you and to which he desired your answer. When he found that you did not agree to them he yielded and pressed them no more. I understand from him that he has never desired nor ever meant to express a desire to change the business relations which exist between you, nor has any thought of taking any step which could be construed into a violation of the articles of partnership without your consent. He has established such a reputation for probity and frankness during his long residence among us that I cannot help taking his word in this case.

The modification of the articles of partnership which you require, to protect you from the danger of such violations of it as you thought you had reason to apprehend, he is perfectly willing to make if minded it were any thing reasonable, and for my part I am sure you would not expect any other. The danger I suppose to be that he might absent himself without your consent from the business of the firm. He is perfectly willing, I have his authority to say, to stipulate against this by subjecting either party who shall transgress in this way to a penalty in money.
I am the more anxious that the difference between you should be amicably adjusted as I regard it greatly for the interest of you both that the firm's business should continue on its present footing. It is now I understand [uncertain?], and if it is [passed?] for a short time in the manner it has been, it seems likely that it will put both you and him at your ease. It is of more importance to him than to you inasmuch as he has a family, and this should make it—allow me to say so—more a matter of conscience on your part to deal liberally and magnanimously with him.

May I take therefore the privilege of an old friend in addressing one whom it has been a great satisfaction with me to regard as one of the most just and fair minded men I have known, to beg you, in the treatment of this unfortunate controversy to abate something even of what may seem to you strictly your right for the sake of continuing a business connection so important to the prosperity of you both—but particularly for the sake of avoiding the loss of good will between two persons whom I know and wish to esteem.

I have not communicated to your brother the contents of this letter except that part which relates to the modification of the partnership. With regard to that may I ask the favor of a reply—addressed either to him or me. If you should deem my interference impertinent you will not I am sure condemn my motive.

My wife sends her best regards.

Yrs truly

W C B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (draft) ENDORSEMENT: My letter to / Ferdinand E. Field / about his affairs with / his brother Alfred.

1. This letter apparently survives only in a much revised and barely legible draft.
2. In the hardware export business; see 384.1.

856. To J. K. Furlong


Sir

The first edition of what I now recognize as my poems appeared in the year 1821.² It consisted of The Ages, Thanatopsis and half a dozen others.

I am sir
respectfully yours

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Pierpont Morgan Library ADDRESS: J. K. Furlong Esq.

1. Unidentified.
2. Throughout his adult life Bryant consistently excluded from his poetic canon the boyish verses printed at his father's instigation in The Embargo (1808), and its
enlarged second edition (1809). He rarely mentioned these, and then only with impatience, even disgust. See *Life*, 1, 75.

857. To F. Hall

New York February 20, 1854.

Sir.

Mr. Bigelow has not yet returned from Hayti, but is expected soon; probably he will return about the first of next month. I am, sir, respectfully yours, W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–Thomas F. Madigan Collection

ADDRESS: F. Hall Esq.

1. Unidentified.

858. To Phillips, Sampson & Co.

New York February 20, 1854

Gentlemen.—

Until I received your letter, I had not heard that Mr. Hart intended to sell the stereotype plates of which you speak. I have not at present the contract at hand, but I consented to it because its terms were such as suited me better than any others, and I am disinclined to change them or give up any power they reserve to me over my own writings.

I am gentlemen respectfully yours W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).

1. On February 18 the Boston publishers Phillips, Sampson & Co. had written Bryant that they noted that Abraham Hart of Philadelphia was advertising a sale of the stereotype plates of the octavo edition of his poems, and wondered what price Bryant would ask for their copyright. NYPL–GR. See Letter 854.

859. To Fanny Bryant Godwin and Julia S. Bryant

New York March 22, 1854.

Dear Fanny and Julia.

We got Fanny’s note yesterday, at the very time when we expected you both back in the steamer. I am glad to hear so good an account of your health and of the pleasant time you have had. By the time you return the severity of winter, I think will be over. At present we are almost in the midst of it. Eight or ten days of very bland sunshiny weather have been
succeeded by nearly a week of the very worst and most disagreeable we have had all the season—piercing cold winds, blowing off chimney tops and filling the air with hurricanes of dust, and in the midst of all I have the influenza.

The babies are all very well, and I hear them romping and laughing half the time in the other room. Your mother and myself have been out but little—but tomorrow we are invited to a great dinner at [Phalens?]. Tonight we shall, if I am well enough, go to the Academy of Design, which opens this day a small but very respectable exhibition of pictures, to close again on the 25th of April. The Academy has sold its building at a large advance in the cost.2 We have an English artist here, a portrait painter, named Laurence, of whom a great deal is said and who has furnished a crayon drawing of Bancroft—a remarkably fine head.3 Elliott has painted me for Dr. Griswold.—4

I could think of forty things more to tell you if I had time, but you will have it all when you get home. Tell Dr. and Mrs. [Samuel Henry] Dickson and the young ladies how much your mother and I thank them for the hospitality to you.

Yrs affectionately

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Fanny and Parke Godwin, with Julia Bryant, were then visiting Savannah, Georgia, for Fanny's health. See Letter 861.
2. The National Academy then occupied galleries on Broadway, near Amity Street.
3. The English artist Samuel Laurence (1812–1864) worked in New York from 1854 to about 1861. DAA. His portrait of Bancroft was shown at the annual exhibition of the National Academy in 1855. Two years later he exhibited a likeness of Bryant there. NAD Exhibition Record, I, 286–287.
4. This portrait, by Charles Loring Elliott (1812–1868), commissioned by Rufus Griswold, was among those at the 1854 exhibition to which Bryant refers. Ibid., 149.

860. To Lyman C. Draper1

New York March 25, 1854
Sir,

I am obliged to the Executive Committee of your [Wisconsin] State Historical Society for the honor they have done me. I perceive that among the ways, pointed out in the circular you have sent me,2 of contributing to the objects of your association, the gift of books by authors is mentioned. I am preparing to get out a new edition of my poems, which I will endeavor to remember to send.

I am sir
respectfully yours

W C BRYANT.
861. To Leonice M. S. Moulton
[New York, cMarch 1854]

... My wife, who has been indisposed lately with a severe cold which now affects her eyes, has commissioned me to answer your letter.

"I feel a strong wish to oblige her," was her remark, when she read your letter. But the cottage is already disposed of. It is taken by Miss Jerusha Dewey, sister of the Doctor; you may perhaps know her.

I do not know whether you would think of the house in which Wilson used to live. Captain Multy is about to move out of it, and nobody has yet taken it. I suppose you know that I have purchased it. It is I believe a pretty comfortable tenement, and I should be happy to do any thing in my power to make it more so, to such a neighbor as you would be. If you would care to hear any thing more about it I would call upon you at any time tomorrow.

We are now alone at 53 Lexington Avenue. Fanny has been much afflicted with neuralgia this winter and three weeks since went off to Savannah with Godwin, where she has much improved in health. We sent Julia with her. It would be an act of charity in you to call on my wife. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin
ADDRESS: L. C. Draper Esq. / Madison / Wis.

1. See 388.1.
2. Unrecovered.

MANUSCRIPT: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin
ADDRESS: L. C. Draper Esq. / Madison / Wis.

1. See 388.1.
2. Unrecovered.

862. To Leonice M. S. Moulton
[New York] Friday morning [cApril 10, 1854].

My dear Mrs. Moulton,

Yesterday afternoon I heard that Mrs. Dana¹ had been to look at the Willis Cottage and did not like it. One of her objections to it was the water in the cellar.

My wife has not been to Roslyn since she saw you. She has recently heard from her children in Savannah, and as they are expected to return in a few days this may make a difference in her plans and render the time of her going to Roslyn uncertain. I wish for my part I was there now. Mrs. Dana says the place is beautiful.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT

1. This house may have been on a parcel of land adjoining Bryant's property which he apparently bought from John Tatterson on May 1, 1852. MS note in Bryant's handwriting, NYPL-GR.
Tumults of the Noisy World

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–Bryant-Moulton Letters.

1. Probably the wife of Charles Anderson Dana (1819–1897), then assistant to Horace Greeley on the New York Tribune, and after 1868 renowned as the owner-editor of the New York Sun. Dana, an early friend of Parke Godwin’s, soon established a summer home at Glen Cove, adjoining Roslyn.

863. To Leonice M. S. Moulton

. . . Coming in this morning from the country I find your note—I answer your questions in their order
Willis’s store is yet open.
Cooking-stoves are to be had at two places in the village.
No stage-vehicle now runs from the Branch to Roslyn. I came in this morning in the stage coach and steamer by way of Flushing. They go twice a day.
Mrs. Bryant will be very happy to have Mrs. Moulton for her guest, of that I am sure. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: Ridgely Family Collection text (partial): Hoyt, “Bryant Correspondence (I),” 68.

864. To Rufus W. Griswold
New York April 26, 1854.

My dear sir.

I have found at Roslyn a few of my brother’s verses pasted in a scrap book. I have copied the accompanying ones, which I hope may answer your purpose.¹

I am sir
Yours truly
W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: New York University Library Address: Dr. R. W. Griswold.

1. These particular verses of John Bryant’s are unidentified, but they were probably among nine of his poems included by Griswold in the revised edition of his Poets and Poetry of America (Philadelphia, 1856), pp. 367–370.

865. To Prosper M. Wetmore?¹
New York, April 26, 1854

. . . I have seen the picture of Washington by Sharples. It is a fine picture and most interesting, inasmuch as it represents Washington in the vigor of manhood, some years before Stuart’s portrait of him was taken. The countenance expresses thought, resolution, sensibility, and a high degree of physical energy.
I regard the discovery of this picture as an event of great importance.²

W. C. BRYANT.


1. Though the recipient of this letter is not identified in the printed text, it seems to have been Prosper M. Wetmore (227.1, 523.1), who was for some time Chairman of the Executive Committee of the New-York Historical Society, and to whom Washington Irving wrote a similar letter. Sharples Portraits of Washington, p. 6; Vail, Knickerbocker Birthday, p. 90.

2. The British artist James Sharples (c1751–1811) came to Philadelphia about 1793, and later settled in New York with his wife and two sons, all artists. Although he died in New York, he had apparently taken with him on a visit to England two portraits of George Washington and one of the president's wife which he had painted soon after coming to this country, and there they came into the hands of a private collector. At Irving's insistence, one portrait of President Washington was brought to New York and exhibited at the New-York Historical Society in April 1854. On April 13 Irving wrote Wetmore, "Mr. Bryant and myself are equally anxious . . . that these portraits . . . shall not again leave the country." But, though all three pictures were later shown here, they remained permanently in England. One of the two George Washington portraits is in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Sharples Portraits of Washington, pp. 1–6, passim; DAA; The Concise Dictionary of National Biography, Part 1 ([London] Oxford University Press [1969]), p. 1187.

866. To Fanny Bryant Godwin

[New York] Thursday May 4. [1854]

Dear Fanny,

I have a letter from your mother this morning. She says, "Mrs. Moulton is not willing to part with her sideboard. I wish you or Julia would find one at some of the auction stores."

I write to you because Julia may come out with me. If she stays in town let her see this letter, and if she goes out she might look in at some of the places where such things are sold.

Your piazza—the floor—was to have been painted yesterday if it did not rain—but as it did I presume the painting was postponed. Mrs. Moulton got to Roslyn on Monday and is busy getting together her things. She is to set somebody to clean house for her and go back to town for a servant. "This,"["""] says your mother ["""]makes slow business for me."

Yours affectionately

W. C. B.

P.S. I send the letter—¹

P.S. I have a letter from John. His son Henry—a fine youth—is dead—The disease was consumption—the death was unexpected.²—W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Frances Bryant's letter is unrecovered.
2. John Howard Bryant's son Henry died in April 1854, at nineteen years of age.
867. To Frances F. Bryant  

Dear Frances,

Dr. Dewey has written to me to ask that we and Julia will visit them in June. He will be down he says in about a fortnight, when he will talk with us about the visit. Not a word is said in the letter about Jerusha.

I heard yesterday morning that on Monday afternoon, four men, at work at the Clay Banks in Glen Cove were struck with lightening, one of them it was thought was killed.

On my bureau I find a bill from the Home1 of $3.83 with a handkerchief of Julia’s.

John Durand called yesterday to ask if I had any objection to his father’s portrait of me being engraved. He wants another sitting.2

The children are all well.— Please let John come to the Branch for me on Friday afternoon. I saw Webster yesterday morning. He said there was a Dickinson—a well digger, near Glen Cove whom he would try to get for me.

Ever &c

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Possibly the Home Journal, a popular magazine conducted since 1846 by George Pope Morris (194.6) and Nathaniel Parker Willis (309.3, 665.5).

2. At some time late in 1853 Asher Durand completed duplicate portraits of Bryant, taken in alternate sittings. One was done for the Bryant family and the other for the Century Association. In 1854 the artist’s son John Durand undertook a subscription for an engraving of the portrait, Bryant’s copy of which was sent to the studio of Alfred Jones (1819–1900) in Boston for that purpose. From March to July 1855, the art journal The Crayon, conducted by John Durand and William James Stillman (1828–1901), announced weekly that the engraving would soon be ready for subscribers. But it was not published until 1858, after the artist himself had given it finishing touches with the graver. Catalogue of the Engraved Work of Asher B. Durand (New York, 1895), pp. [3]–11; Daniel Huntington, Asher B. Durand: A Memorial Address (New York, 1887), p. 26; EP, November 13, 1878. See Letters 869, 878; Frances Bryant to Asher Durand, January 1, 1855, NYPL–Asher Brown Durand Papers.

868. To Richard H. Dana  
New York  May 26, 1854.

Dear Dana,

I am just now going into the country to remain till Monday when I set out on a journey to Illinois with my wife.1 It will not be easy for me to do what you ask in regard to the portrait of Coleridge, but I have put the thing into the hands of an intelligent young man in our office, who has promised that he will attend to it.2

I have not read the life of Hartley Coleridge of which you speak, but your recommendation makes me resolve to do so.3
As to my poems with illustrations; that is an idea of my bookseller’s. There is I suppose, a class of readers—at least of book-buyers, who like things of that kind; but the first thing which my bookseller—it is Appleton—has promised to do, is to get out a neat edition of my poems in two volumes without illustrations. The illustrated edition is a subsequent affair, and though I have as great a horror of illustrations as you have, they will I hope hurt nobody. I am not even sure that I will look at them myself.⁴

What you say of the doings of our government I am sorry not to be able to disagree with. It seems to me that never was public wickedness so high-handed in our country as now.⁵

Remember me kindly to Charlotte of whose improved health I am glad to hear. For her throat I am satisfied that the air of the interior is the thing. Did you ever think of it[?] It is becoming a common remedy here.—

Yours ever

W. C. BRYANT


1. No other reference by Bryant to this trip has been found, but the Bryants apparently left New York for Princeton, Illinois, on May 29, and were home before the first of July. On June 10 Cullen bought from his brother John a parcel of land in or near Princeton. David J. Baxter, “William Cullen Bryant: Illinois Landowner,” Western Illinois Regional Studies, 1 (Spring 1978), 11. See also Cyrus to Cullen Bryant, July 16, 1854, NYPL-GR.

2. Dana’s letter which drew Bryant’s responses herein is unrecovered.


4. In 1854 D. Appleton & Co. of New York published an unillustrated edition of Bryant’s Poems in two small volumes, and a larger illustrated edition, with “Seventy-one Engravings from Drawings by Eminent Artists.”

5. The Kansas–Nebraska Bill, then on its way to passage by Congress, and the arrest in Boston of the runaway Anthony Burns under the Fugitive Slave Law two days before this letter was written, turned Bryant and the EP against the administration of President Pierce and the Democratic Party. In one editorial after another during the early months of 1854, Bryant had condemned what he called the “Nebraska fraud being perpetrated by Senator [Stephen A.] Douglas,” which, he said, was “Africanizing the heart of the North American continent” (EP, February 9, 1854). On March 5 he charged, “The President has taken a course by which the greater part of this dishonor is concentrated upon the Democratic Party. Upon him and his administration . . . and upon the Democratic Party who gave the present executive his power of mischief, the people will visit this great political sin of the day.” And, leaving for Illinois at the end of May, he concluded, “If it should become the custom of the long-flourishing republic of the United States to erect statues to the authors of the abolition of slavery, the first should be erected to the authors of the fugitive slave bill, and the second to the authors of the Nebraska bill.” EP, May 29, 1854.
869. To Richard H. Dana

New York, July 14, 1854.

Dear Dana,

John Durand, a son of the artist was my fellow traveller in the East. The other day, I told him the substance of what you had written to me concerning his father’s portrait of me. He expressed a wish that his father might have the benefit of your criticisms, and yesterday called and took a copy of that part of your letter which relates to the picture and said he should send it to his father in the country.¹

Professor Channing, I hope, will publish his book. It would, I think, be well received. All his old pupils want it, of course, and all who have heard of him from his old pupils, so that it would be sure of an introduction to the public, and if only fairly introduced it would be pretty sure to make its own way.² I do not know that Phillips and Sampson are much in the way of publishing books of this kind. Ticknor & Fields, and Little Brown & Co. are, I think, more so. In our city Appleton would be as good a bookseller as he could have. Putnam was a little crippled for a time, but he is now, I believe cautious, and as a matter of course does not publish very extensively.

I have two editions of my poems in press, one in two volumes, and the other a cheap one, in one volume. This morning I have corrected the last page of the first volume. As to the illustrated edition, it is to be slow in making its appearance, and I give myself no trouble about it. It is, I believe, to have wood engravings.

Remember me most kindly to your daughter and sisters. If you do not come this way in a few months I shall be tempted to come to Boston to have a look at you again. . . .³

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR docketed: Wm C. Bryant, July / 14/54.

1. Presumably Dana had seen Asher Durand's portrait of Bryant in Boston, where it had been sent for engraving. See 867.2. Dana's letter is unrecovered.
2. Edward Tyrell Channing’s Lectures Read to the Seniors in Harvard College was published posthumously in 1856. See 54.1; 749.4.
3. Conclusion and signature missing.

870. To Estelle Anna Lewis¹

[cJuly 20, 1854]

. . . I am fond of both the painting of Cole and Durand. Cole has the bolder hand, and, I think, worked with more freedom. He was earlier a painter than Durand, and to this owed, I have no doubt, much of that vigor and confidence which is apparent in all his works. In this respect, however, Durand is constantly improving, as his later works have the most strength. Cole sought always to infuse into his paintings some great moral
or religious idea. I am not certain that he did not sometimes make this design too obvious. This is never the case with Durand, who seems to love art more for her own sake. They were both close observers of nature—men of great industry and an accurate hand. Durand, in general, imitates nature with truest paint; Cole, with the same power, did not always deem its exercise to the same extent necessary or even ancillary to his design.

Both Cole and Durand hold a place among the first landscape painters of modern times; indeed, I think, among the first of any time. If I were to be asked what other painter in that department I would prefer to Durand, I should say—no one. There are no landscapes produced in any part of the world which I should more willingly possess than his.

William C. Bryant

871. To John Bigelow


I gave the first part of Blair's lucubrations as a leader today with some slight changes for the sake of perspecuity.1 As you take the wheel on Saturday,2 I have left the work of editing the second article to you as you will perceive.

W. C. B.

872. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Tuesday July 25, 1854.

Dear Frances.

I have a letter from Ellen1 in which she says.
"The stage that passes through this place leaves Hinsdale Tuesdays Thursday and Saturdays, after the first trains from Springfield and Albany arrive, and reaches Cummington about noon. If you can leave New York Wednesday morning, by the Harlem railway, you will reach Hinsdale at night and can take the stage the next morning; or if you prefer, you can take the evening boat to Hudson, and then the railroad to Hinsdale by way of Chatham, reach[ing] this place at noon. I shall look for you on Thursday noon, and if I do not see you then, shall certainly expect you on Saturday."

I have written to Ellen to expect us on Thursday week.
Do not forget to send for my shoes, and make Henry attend to the well-cover.
Write to me how Miss Dewey gets on. I enclose a letter for her and one for you.

Yours ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.
1. Bryant's niece, Ellen Mitchell (738.1), then living in Cummington.

873. To William L. Marcy
New York July 25, 1854

Dear Sir,

I write this, not to ask a favor, but to make a suggestion. Mr. E. Felix Foresti of this city was sometime since appointed American Consul at Genoa, but the Sardinian government refused to recognize him. He has since visited Washington, where he was kindly received by the President who assured him that the administration intended yet to do something for him.

I wish to say that the fulfilment of this intention, while the recollection of Mr. Foresti’s rejection by the Sardinian government is yet fresh in men’s minds would be creditable to the administration. The world would then see that when our government takes up a worthy man it does not drop him because some European king takes a fancy to object to him. It seems to me that the intention expressed by the President was dictated by a proper regard to national policy and a feeling of what was due to our national dignity.

I have known Mr. Foresti ever since he came to this country, which is about eighteen years. He is a man of more than common merit, highly endowed both by nature and education, and of a solidity of judgment not usual among political exiles. He was bred to the law and held a judicial situation in his native country. He would make a good figure as Charge to one of the South American republics, or in a semi-judicial post or any
situation in which a good knowledge of the general principles of law, or of the law of nations was required.

I am sure that almost any other government would take the course which the President has intimated to Mr. Foresti his design to take, and I am equally certain that it would be generally applauded.⁸

I am, sir,
very respectfully
Your obt servt,
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: LC address: Hon Wm L. Marcy.

1. William Learned Marcy (1786–1858, Brown 1808), a Van Buren Democrat, and a former governor of New York and United States senator, served as Secretary of War under President Polk, 1845–1849, and as Secretary of State in the Pierce administration, 1853–1857.

2. Eleutario Felice Foresti (1793–1858), after being exiled from Italy as a member of the secret revolutionary society, the Carbonari, came to the United States in 1836. He was professor of Italian at Columbia and New York universities from 1839 to 1856, and apparently took office as United States consul at Genoa in the year of his death. See 559.3.

3. Marcy replied to this letter on August 2 (NYPL–GR), "The President was informed some time ago that Mr. Foresti was willing to take the office of Consul at Constantinople & his name was sent to the senate for that appt. The nomination is now pending before that body. I know of no reason why it has not been acted on."

874. To George Bancroft

New York July 26, 1854.

Dear Bancroft.

Mr. Foresti, whom you know very well, is a little uneasy that a promise made him is not yet fulfilled. After he had been appointed Consul at Genoa, and the Sardinian government had refused to recognize him as such, he went to Washington and was told by the President that he should have some other office. The grace and effect of such a thing consists in doing it in season, while the occasion of it is yet remembered. I have written to Mr. Marcy about Mr. Foresti’s case, and the good effect of showing a little spirit &c.

I do not know whether you ever meddle in such matters. If you do, Mr. Foresti would take it as a great favor, should you be inclined to say to the President or to any one who has influence with him a word in his behalf.¹ Besides, you would have the pleasure of obliging a man of great merit. Mr. Foresti would fill with credit any station which requires a knowledge of the law of nations, or of the principles of general law. He is well endowed both by nature and education and is of a more solid cast of mind than most political exiles.
My regards to Mrs. Bancroft and to your sons if they are with you.
Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: MHS.


875. To Julia S. Bryant

[Roslyn, cJuly 30, 1854]

Dear Julia

Ellen says that the stage leaves Hinsdale on Mondays Thursdays and Saturdays in the morning for Cummington. If we leave New York on Wednesday we can reach Hinsdale that night, and setting out for Cummington the next morning can reach it on Thursday noon.

You must be ready therefore on Wednesday next to go on with us to Hinsdale. It is possible that your mother will choose to leave New York on Tuesday and pass the night at Barrington; but if she should not and we should leave this place on Wednesday we shall want you to be ready and at the station with every thing prepared to go on with us.

Yours affectionately
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

876. To Julia S. Bryant

Roslyn, Monday, July 31, 1854.

Dear Julia.

Your mother does not go to town this morning as she expected, and it is possible may not go to day. If she should not she will not be at Great Barrington tomorrow.

She was attacked yesterday with a diarrhoea, attended with considerable debility. If she is better at noon, she may, however, go to New York to day. If not better, you may not see her this week. There is nothing alarming in the complaint, but it will be imprudent to journey till she is stronger.

At all events I wish you to be ready and at the station, on Wednesday prepared to join us, though it is possible we may not come.

Miss Dewey is getting on famously, and looks better than before she was ill.
Remember me kindly to Mrs. Ives and Estelle and all our friends.

Affectionately

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

877. To an Unidentified Correspondent

Saratoga Convention.

New York, Aug. 5th, 1854.

To the Hon.

Sir,

The enclosed Circular will advise you of the object of the Peoples' Convention, to assemble at Saratoga Springs, on the 16th of August, and of the parties with whom the call originated. It appears to be warmly responded to throughout the State, and there is reason to anticipate an assemblage of Delegates representing all parties and shades of opinion, whose deliberations, if wisely conducted, can hardly fail to have an important bearing upon the political destinies of our country.

We know, Sir, that you are not insensible to the magnitude of the issues, which the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, ending the confidence essential to all honorable union, has forced upon the citizens of the free States; and we believe that you appreciate, as we do, the grave occasion which the passage of the Nebraska Act presents for consultation, conciliation and mutual concession between those who, having long been, politically, opponents, are brought near together by the wanton outrage upon rights and principles which they cherish, not as whigs nor as democrats, but as the common heritage of American citizens.

Thus knowing and believing, we beg leave respectfully and frankly to ask what in your opinion will be the wise and proper course to be pursued by the Convention, to ensure among our citizens (who already heartily agree in their judgment upon the bad faith and the insolent aggression of the slave power, aided by northern allies) such an effective unity of action, as will serve to check its extension, rescue the Federal government from its control, and restore the Free States to their rightful position in the Federal Union.

Touching the manner in which this unity of action is to be effected, there will be differences of opinion, and perhaps no slight practical difficulties, resulting from olden ties and associations, which your wisdom and experience (looking beyond the immediate concerns of the day and of the State to the future conduct of the Federal Government, involving the happiness and the honor of our republic,) may teach us successfully to avoid and overcome.

We trust, therefore, that you will be kind enough, at as early a day as you shall find convenient, to favor us with your views on this grave sub-
ject, simply for our own guidance, if you shall so limit them, or otherwise, as we should prefer, with permission to use them as we may think proper.

We have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect,

Your fellow citizens,

[Signed]  
John Jay  
Henry B. Dawson  
William C. Bryant  
J. M. Boyd  
Committee of Correspondence.²

P.S. Since writing above, we have resolved to hold a Mass Meeting in the Park, on Tuesday, the 8th inst. at 6 o'clock, P.M. when we shall feel ourselves both honored and gratified by your presence.³

We trust, under any circumstances, that you will favor us with an early reply to this communication, addressed to James M. Boyd, 95 Maiden Lane, N.Y.

MANUSCRIPT: (printed letter): Illinois State Historical Library.

1. On May 25, 1854, President Pierce signed into law the Kansas–Nebraska Bill, which repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by opening to slavery the western territories north of the 36° 30' parallel from which it had previously been barred. Furor among anti-slavery northerners in both major political parties hastened the dissolution of party loyalties, as Democrats and Whigs splintered into “fusion” and “anti-Nebraska” and “republican” committees and conventions. In July “Republican” parties were organized in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Between January and May Bryant had repeatedly warned against passage of the Kansas–Nebraska Bill, proposed by Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. On February 27, under the caption “The Duty of the People,” he remarked that “Not a word, uttered against the contemplated enormity of the Nebraska bill, is superfluous.” Now, in August, he joined anti-slavery Whigs and radical Democrats in planning an “Anti-Nebraska” convention at Saratoga Springs, New York, called to organize a new party and choose a fusion platform and nominees for state offices. The circular mentioned in this letter is unrecovered.

2. John Jay (1817–1894), grandson of the statesman and chief justice of the same name (1745–1829), was an anti-slavery leader and social reformer. Henry Barton Dawson (1821–1889), an English-born New York businessman and historian, later edited The Historical Magazine, a forerunner of the American Historical Review. James M. Boyd was a hardware merchant doing business at 95 Maiden Lane. Rode's New York City Directory for 1850–1851, p. 58.

3. At this meeting of several thousand people it was adopted as a “permanent principle that slavery shall be no longer allowed in an existing territory or new state.” With Bryant one of those presiding, delegates, including his fellow committee members, were chosen for the Saratoga convention. EP, August 9, 1854. On August 15 the EP announced its own platform for the meeting: “No More Slave States.” But that meeting was adjourned, after much discord, to await the result of the regular Whig convention; when it reconvened on September 26 at Auburn, New York, its delegates endorsed the Whig state ticket. Of this action the EP commented the next day that a statewide anti-slavery sentiment would assure a Whig victory on that single issue; thus the Democrats would be supporting “the representatives of great heresies in our national politics, and a system of waste and corruption in the administration of our state affairs.”
878. To Richard H. Dana

Dear Dana.

Young Durand was in my office, this morning with a letter from our modest friend, his father. He copied from it, at my desire, the enclosed passage, occasioned by your remarks on his portrait of me.¹

With regard to that portrait I omitted to say in my last, that the expenses of the engraving had been, I believe, fully provided for by subscription here, before the picture was sent to Boston. It was sent for because the engraver wished to begin his work.

Yours ever

W. C. Bryant.


1. Neither Asher Durand’s letter nor the passage from it has been recovered.

879. To Orville Dewey

New York, August 15, 1854.

. . . I sometimes almost wish my place was sold, more on my wife’s account than any other; but I am not sure that she would get well any faster anywhere else than there, where we have a pretty genial climate, and sea-bathing, which I think does her a great deal of good. The twelve hours’ railway travel (to Sheffield) of which you speak affrights me; and then your spring is so long in coming, and your winter pounces upon the fields and woods in such a hurry. I think we must stay in these latitudes, though the bribe you offer us to go north is very tempting. Why cannot that series of papers which is to make the world stare be written without my coming to Sheffield?² Try number one, and enjoy their astonishment from your lurking-place. . . . My brother John is here, and I, the printer, am putting in type for him a little volume of his poems.³ I hope there is nothing vulgar or mechanical in being a printer. Horace Walpole, you know, the most fastidious of men, had a press at Strawberry Hill, and printed there the Odes of Gray. . . .³

The world within ten or twenty years past has not been growing any better than I can see, although my excellent neighbor, Joseph Curtis, whose cheerful views of things are a great support to me, sees differently.⁴ One reason why the world makes no more progress in goodness is that we all begin life at the same point; we all set out from the pure natural man at our birth. People overlook that fact, it seems to me, when they talk of the progress of the age, and imagine that the son of a good wise man is, as soon as he is born, as virtuous and enlightened as his father. . . .


1. Dewey had written Bryant from his home in Sheffield, Massachusetts, on May
18, 1854, "Will not you and Mrs. Bryant come to see us in June? Do. It is a long time since I have sat on a green bank with you, or anywhere else. I want some of your company, and talk, and wisdom. The first Lowell lecture I wrote was after a talk with you here, three or four years ago. Come, I pray, and give me an impulse for another course. . . . I shall be down in New York on business a fortnight hence, and shall see you, and see if we can't fix upon a time." Autobiography and Letters of Orville Dewey, D.D., ed. Mary E. Dewey (Boston, 1884), pp. 233–234. Dewey's twelve lectures before the Lowell Institute in Boston were published in 1864 under the title, The Problem of Human Destiny; or, The End of Providence in the World and Man.


3. Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford (1717–1797), operated a private printing-press at Strawberry Hill, his home in Twickenham, England, where, in 1757, he published the two Pindaric odes which established Thomas Gray (1716–1771) as the leading English poet of his day.

4. Joseph Curtis (1782–1856), an improvident manufacturer and a practical philanthropist among New York's youth and underprivileged poor, was at various times director of the House of Refuge, superintendent of public primary schools, and a founder of the Public School Society. He lived in Hempstead not far from Bryant's Roslyn home. See Edward C. Mack, Peter Cooper, Citizen of New York (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pierce [1949]), pp. 132–134; Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Memoir of Joseph Curtis, A Model Man (New York, 1858), passim; Life, I, 336; 942.1.

880. To Frances F. Bryant

[New York] Thursday Aug 24th 1854

My dear Frances.

I send you two letters and enclose one for Miss Dewey.

Bigelow will it is expected, be in town today; but I cannot come out tomorrow as there will be many things to talk over and arrange,—so at least I think

Yours ever

W C B.

Willis called yesterday to tell me the news.—

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

881. To Benson J. Lossing


My dear sir.

I have just returned from a journey, and find your kind letter. It will not be possible for me to accept the obliging invitation it contains. I never deliver public lectures, and if I did, my time is now so much occupied that I could not write one for your Lyceum.

I am, sir,

very respectfully,

Yours.

W. C. BRYANT
1. Benson John Lossing (1813–1891), a wood engraver and popular historian, was associated from 1846 to 1869 with William Barritt in the engraving business in New York City. In 1850–1852 he published a Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, and in 1866 The Hudson from the Wilderness to the Sea (reprinted in facsimile in 1972), profusely illustrated with his own drawings.

2. Perhaps to visit Orville Dewey; see Letter 879.

3. Unrecovered.

4. Lossing, a member of the New-York Historical Society, may have extended this invitation for its lecture series, in which he participated. Vail, Knickerbocker Birthday, pp. 135, 345.

882. To John Howard Bryant

New York September 1st, 1854.

Dear Brother.

I wrote you yesterday; but your letter of the 28th of August having this moment arrived I must give you the trouble of reading this. As to the building of another house on the lot where my brick house stands, it is out of the question at present. I have no money to spare, not a penny. The times are what we call hard in New York and threaten to become harder yet and the engagements into which I have entered will take up all my means and require strict economy besides. So I think both the plans— that of building a kitchen to the old house, and that of building a new house on the same lot must stand over. I cannot even consider them at present.

Yours truly,

W C Bryant.

1. Neither letter has been recovered.

2. Built in 1846; see Letter 597.

3. On May 15, 1854, Bryant and Bigelow had bought from their partner, Timothy Howe (503.2), his three-tenths share of the EP properties, committing themselves to pay him $6,685 on demand, and a total of $15,000 within five years. At the same time they took into a full one-third partnership Isaac Henderson, who had joined the EP in 1839, first as clerk and later as bookkeeper (Nevins, Evening Post, pp. 237–238). Though nominally liable for his partners' debt to Howe, it seems likely that Henderson was unable to pay it for the time being. In fact, on November 1, 1854, Cullen gave John Bryant a demand note at seven percent for $1,450, which suggests that John helped him to discharge his first commitment to Howe on the 15th of that month. Note in Bryant's hand, NYPL–GR. See the MS record of semi-annual dividends of the EP, 1828–1849, with a record of shareholders and stock transfers, NYPL–GR.

883. To Henry Kirke Brown

[New York] Tuesday September 12, 1854

Dear Brown

I wrote you a note this morning which by mistake was sent to the
postoffice to let you know that Dr. [Samuel Henry] Dickson and his wife of Charleston are with us at Roslyn.

Will you and Mrs. Brown come and see them and us. Come on Friday or Saturday and stay as long as you can.

Yours truly,
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: Henry Kirke Brown Papers, Yale University Library.

884. To Frances F. Bryant


Dear F.

I put two letters into the post office for you this morning.
Mrs. [John] Gibson will not come out this week. She is at Lake Mahopac and is to stay there another week. The Dicksons are at Hastings.

Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer¹ called on me this morning—a little thin woman, with a very dark complexion and pretty good teeth. She wanted to see the public institutions and I gave her letters² to Simeon Draper³ and Joseph Curtis.

Do not look for the key to Miss Dewey's house, for it is in my pocket.

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Ida Reyer Pfeiffer (1797-1858) was a widely traveled German whose published accounts of her journeys were translated into English and published in numerous British and American editions. Before visiting the Near East in 1852-1853 Bryant had probably read her *Visit to the Holy Land, Egypt and Italy* (London, 1852).
2. Unrecovered.
3. Simeon Draper (1804-1866) was a New York Whig politician and later a supporter of the Seward–Weed faction in the Republican Party. In 1864-1865 he was Collector of Customs for the Port of New York. For Joseph Curtis, see 879.4.

885. To Frances F. Bryant

New York October 11, 1854 Wednesday morning.

Dear Frances.

I have this moment opened a letter from Dr. Dickson, dated October, the day not given but the postmark is the 8th. He found his daughters Sarah and Bell quite sick but the day he wrote they were convalescent. The child's nurse was attacked the same morning and the child had the hooping cough.

The whole city is sad at the terrible disaster which has befallen the steamer Arctic, and, it is supposed, another vessel. Gourlie the first mate, it is possible, may have been saved.¹
Do not forget—if you have not attended to it, to let Wright have his money.

Yours ever

W. C. B.

P.S. I hear nothing yet from Mr. Felt and Dr. Dewey—

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Word had just reached New York that the American steamship *Arctic*, on which Bryant and Leupp had traveled to Liverpool in November 1852, had sunk with great loss of life in the North Atlantic Ocean on September 27, after colliding with another ship in the fog off Cape Race, Newfoundland. Among those presumably lost, besides John Gourlie's brother, the chief officer, were the wife, son, and daughter of the ship's owner, Edward Knight Collins (794.3). See Letter 801; *EP*, October 11, 14, 16, 1854.

2. Probably a Roslyn workman.


886. To Julia S. Bryant

New York Wednesday morning October 18th 1854.

Dear Julia

Your mother is rather better, though she still complains of her stomach.

Susan is getting on very well with the house. She has lots of women to help her.

We hear nothing of Agnes Maxwell. Godwin is detained here longer than he expected, by some matters of business, so I send this by mail.

Yours affectionately

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. See 812.2.

887. To P. P. Wells

New York October 24, 1854.


Dear Sir.

The bearer Mr. Skidmore is a reporter for the Evening Post. I am desirous of obtaining some report of the doings of the coroner's jury called, as I understand in the case of a patient of yours, in which I suppose the Coroner goes beyond the proper functions of his office. Can you do anything to help him to the notes of the examination as far as it has proceeded? If so you will much oblige me by doing so and also by informing him as to the time and place to which the inquest is adjourned. It is my
object, if the proceedings be of the nature I suppose, to make them the subject of some animadversions.³

Yours respectfully
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: UVa.

1. Dr. Wells was a founding member in 1849 of the Hahnemann Academy of Medicine, a development from the New York Homoeopathic Society, of which Bryant was a past president. See 420.6; Leonard Paul Wershub, One Hundred Years of Medical Progress: A History of the New York Medical College Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas [1967]), pp. 16, 43.

2. Skidmore has not been further identified.

3. On October 7 a twelve-year-old Brooklyn child, Agnes Lotimer, had died of convulsions after having been under homoeopathic treatment for two months by Dr. Wells. Though an autopsy performed by two other physicians found no cause for suspicion, the Brooklyn coroner, one Dr. Ball—an allopath—called a jury to inquire whether Wells was guilty of malpractice. Held intermittently for three weeks and reported in detail in the EP, the hearings became a lengthy debate between proponents of the opposing systems of medicine. Among homoeopathic physicians appearing for Dr. Wells were Bryant’s medical associates John Franklin Gray, A. Gerald Hull, and Benjamin Franklin Joslyn. During the testimony Bryant charged, in an EP editorial captioned “An Inquest Extraordinary,” that the coroner was legally unjustified in holding an inquest, but was “wielding the functions of his office against his enemies the homoeopaths.” Although Dr. Ball tried the patience of his jurors in an attempt to refute Bryant’s charge, they declared themselves unqualified to pass judgment on the efficacy of homoeopathic treatment, and found the death due to natural causes. See EP, October 31 and November 6, 1854, and passim.

888. To Susan Fenimore Cooper¹

New York November 17, 1854.

Dear Madam.

I thank you very much for the beautiful volume you have caused to be sent me and for the honor you have done me by inscribing the work to me.² I should have judged, even before I saw it, that nobody could be better qualified for the task of making an anthology of the finest things said by the poets of a country life, than you who have given a proof of the great love you bear it by describing it more charmingly than any other writer. Your book is of the more value, inasmuch as it is made up of poems not found in the ordinary collections and shows that there are yet in the garden of English poetry flowers as sweet as any that have been already gathered.

I am, madam,
with great regard
Your obt servt.
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: YCAL ADDRESS: To Miss Susan F. Cooper.
1. See Letter 730.
2. The Rhyme and Reason of Country Life; or, Selections from Fields Old and New. By the Author of "Rural Hours" . . . (New York, 1854).

889. To Samuel Jones Tilden

New York, November 23, 1854.

My dear sir,

I have called at your office twice to-day on some business of my own. Will you oblige me by letting me know when you are in your office, that I may come and bore you?

Yours truly,

W. C. BRYANT


890. To William J. Stillman

New York December 4th, 1854.

Dear sir.

I send you the poem I promised the other day. You need not give yourself the trouble to send any thing to me in return. I shall want to see a proof. If you can suggest a name for it you will oblige me.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HEHL.

1. Stillman, also writing art criticism for the EP, was then engaged in preparing the first issue of The Crayon.

2. In its first number, January 3, 1855, p. 25, The Crayon carried this poem, to which Stillman attached the title "A Rain-Dream." MS in HEHL. See Poems (1876), pp. 326–330; Stillman, The Autobiography of a Journalist (Boston and New York, 1901), pp. 225–226; DAA. Bryant and Stillman had become acquainted as fellow-passengers aboard the Humboldt, returning from Europe in June 1853. Bryant, "Diary, 1852–1853." For the same number of The Crayon which carried "A Rain-Dream," Stillman had written, under the pseudonym "G. M. James," an article, "The Landscape Element in American Poetry. BRYANT" (pp. 3–4).

891. To Theodore Sedgwick III


My dear sir.

I am sorry to send your article back it is so clever; but I had already and long since, made up my mind not to do in the Evening Post, what the article will do if published. The discourse is very rightly appreciated almost every where—perhaps, the public judgment is a little severe upon it,
and it is hardly worth while to interfere, especially as any thing like your article appearing in the Evening Post may be misunderstood.\textsuperscript{1}

Meantime I am glad you are so far recovered as to be cross and combative.\textsuperscript{2} I should have come to see you; I have thought of doing so again and again, but my wife’s illness made me anxious and took me to Roslyn when I was not obliged to be here, and then I had some perplexities of business which occupied me when I was not at work for the paper. I have all the directions for getting to Owl’s head and back on the same day which my wife, good soul, procured for me, and which I carry about with me in my hat, meaning some day to avail myself of. There is more work for me, somehow, at the office this season than usual, and more care of every sort elsewhere. My regards to Mrs. Sedgwick and the young ladies.

Yours truly

W C BRYANT

\textbf{MANUSCRIPT:} HCL address: T. Sedgwick Esqre.

1. Sedgwick’s article, and the discourse to which Bryant refers, are unidentified.
2. Having given up his law practice and traveled in Europe for his health in 1850–1852 (see Letter 736), Sedgwick had so far recovered as to serve as president of the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1853. The nature of his more recent illness is uncertain.

892. \textit{To J. A. Sessions}\textsuperscript{1}

New York December 14, 1854.

Sir.

Your letter asking me to deliver a lecture before the Association of which you are the Secretary has just been put into my hands.\textsuperscript{2} It is not in my power to accept the invitation you so obligingly communicate, for this reason among others, that I have no time to spare either for writing or delivering public lectures.

Yours respectfully

W. C. BRYANT

\textbf{MANUSCRIPT:} University of Michigan Library address: Mr. J. A. Sessions.

1. Unidentified.
2. Letter unrecovered.

893. \textit{To an Unidentified Correspondent}

New York December 21st 1854.

Sir.

The poem of Thanatopsis first appeared in the North American Review, then a monthly, somewhere about the year 1815; it might be a year or two earlier or later.\textsuperscript{1} My father took the manuscript with him to Boston and gave it to the conductors of that periodical.\textsuperscript{2} It had not at that time
either the introduction or conclusion, which were added, I think, in 1821. The poem was written several years before its publication.  

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

MANUSCRIPT: Chapin Library of Rare Books, Williams College.  
2. See 46.2.  

894. To Fanny Bryant Godwin  
New York December 23 1854.  

Dear Fanny.  

I send you the $2—I owe you in change for the [fine?]—  
With this I send a note from Julia. Will you find the things of which she speaks and send them down by the bearer—  

Yrs ever  
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

895. To Gulian C. Verplanck  
New York December 28th 1854.  

Dear Sir.  

Several of your friends who esteem your personal character, admire your intellectual endowments and place a high value on your public services, unite in a request that you will do them the favor to dine with them at the Rooms of the Century in Eighth Street. Should you accept the invitation, they desire that you will appoint the time according to your own convenience.  

We are sir,  
with the highest  
regard, &c.  
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–Berg  
ADDRESS: To the Hon Gulian C. Verplanck.

1. This invitation to Verplanck, who had served as chairman of the Committee of Management of the Century Association since its establishment in 1847, is in Bryant’s handwriting, with his signature followed by those of thirty-one other members. In 1857, upon the incorporation of the Century as a club, Verplanck became its first president. See Robert W. July, The Essential New Yorker: Gulian Crommelin Verplanck (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1951), pp. 251–252. An accompanying letter of the same date from Charles M. Leupp to Verplanck comments, “The number has been restricted to the capacity of the rooms.” NYPL–Berg.
896. To Andrew H. Green

Dear sir.

I have no copy of any part of the snow shower of which any mere man could make any thing. The manuscript sent to the printer was not returned to me.

I have perpetrated something since in the way of verse, which has been contributed to "the Crayon," and is now in type. I send you a rough draft of it which I happen to have kept.

Yours truly

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Brown University Library
ADDRESS: Andrew H Green Esq. / No. 43 Wall Street
DOCKETED: Letter from / Hon William C. Bryant / 1854.

1. Andrew Haswell Green (1820-1903) was a law partner of Samuel Jones Tilden. In 1857 he became treasurer of the Board of Commissioners for Central Park, which was established that year by the state legislature. Henry Hope Reed, Central Park, A History and Guide (New York: Potter [1972]), p. 17.
2. Bryant mistakenly wrote "1854."

897. To George P. Morris

My dear sir.

I send you herewith a volume which I have not seen noticed in the Home Journal, though I think it not wholly unworthy of one. Will you look at the last poem, if you should not have time to read any of the rest?2

Yours very truly

Wm. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HEHL
ADDRESS: Gen Geo P. Morris.

1. See 194.6; 867.1.
2. Bryant probably refers to the small one-volume edition of his Poems, published by D. Appleton in 1854. The last poem in the volume (pp. 252-254) is entitled "The Conqueror's Grave," written in 1853 and first published in Putnam's Magazine for January 1854. See Poems (1876), pp. 318-320. This seems to be a unique instance in Bryant's correspondence of his soliciting a notice of his own work; he must not have been aware that a month earlier Morris' periodical, in a brief notice of the volume, had commented, "Such an edition—just the one to read aloud from at the family fireside—will be welcomed by the multitudes of admirers of this world-renowned American poet—the first of his class and of the age." The Home Journal, 460 (December 2, 1854), 2.
898. To J. J. Flournoy

New York January 13th, 1855.

Sir.

I return your verses according to your request, with a remark or two concerning them. Being without the sense of hearing, it could only be by a happy combination of observation and ingenuity that you have acquired so good a knowledge of the laws of metre and rhyme as were necessary to the production of your poem. In the last line of the second stanza however the measure is a little imperfect, besides which, the act attributed to Aurora, namely, brushing the dew, does not quite please me. The last line in the third stanza, seems to me not the precise one which you would have chosen were it not for the rhyme. In the last stanza there is also a bad rhyme which I have underscored.

There are one or two other little matters in the poem upon which a verbalist might perhaps pass an unfavorable judgment, but my vocation is not that of criticism. I do not pretend to pass a judgment on the poetry of others. Besides a poet must make himself; no man was ever made a poet by criticism. A true poet by repeated efforts of composition learns at last to perceive in what his writings are deficient—so far at least as respects their literary execution, and there is very little which he can learn from any body else.

I am sir
respectfully yours
W C Bryant.


1. John Jacobus Flournoy (1806–1879), of Athens, Georgia, was a miscellaneous prose writer, and author of about fifteen books and discourses.

899. To Mrs. A. E. McDowell

New York January 13th, 1855.

Madam.

I have been so very busy lately that I have not found time to reply to your letter till now.

Your project is a praiseworthy one and I hope it will succeed. It is not possible for me however to give it any aid in the way you mention. My time is so much occupied that I have little leisure for composition except for my own journal, and when I write at all for other publications it is in fulfilment of some engagement already subsisting. If I held as fluent a pen as some other writers my power of answering such demands would be
much greater, and I should not be obliged to meet them as I now am by constant refusals.

I am, Madam,
with great respect
Your obt Servt."

MANUSCRIPT: Haverford College Library
ADDRESS: Mrs. A. E. McDowell.

1. Neither Mrs. McDowell nor her "praiseworthy" project has been identified.
2. Bryant apparently forgot to sign this letter.

900. To Frances F. Bryant
Dear Frances,

I thought I should hear again from you today, but have been disappointed.

We begin to fear that the snow will blockade you in Berkshire. We have quite a deep snow here and the sleighs make the streets merry, though it is very cold yet. It has been fearfully cold—for two days I could not keep my room at Fanny’s warm. I went to Mrs. Cronkhite’s on Tuesday evening, partly to get warm but did not succeed. Fanny did not go with me. A great many of your acquaintances were there who inquired about you and Julia.

Willie has done coughing, but the business has been taken up by Minna and Annie who cough for half an hour together in chorus.

My own health is perfectly good, except an ugly crick as they call it in the neck, which is wearing off. We begin to think it is about time for you to come home. If we suffer so much by the cold here we infer that you must be nearly killed by it. There is a fine snow falling yet, and the wind drifts it somewhat. As soon as the roads are well open we shall expect to see you. Love to J[ulia]. Regards to all. Yrs ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Bryant’s note. His two earlier letters are unrecovered.
2. Probably Mrs. J. P. Cronkhite; see 812.3.
3. Bryant’s three oldest grandchildren, then five, ten, and seven years old, respectively.

901. To Evert A. Duyckinck New York February 25, 18[55]
My dear sir.

I have not seen the book of which you speak, but if you are willing
to have any thing to do with it, I am confident of its merit. I shall be proud to [see?]² the poems you mention included in the collection.³

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

MANUSCRIPT: Swarthmore College Library ADDRESS: E. A. Duyckinck Esqre.

1. See 471.2.
2. Word omitted.

902. To John Howard Bryant

New York, March 5, 1855

Dear Brother

I have a deed from you and another from Olds, both of them I suppose at Princeton, which I shall be obliged if you would look up and send me. At the same time will you give me a list of my lands in Illinois, which I am a little uncertain about in the many changes which have been made.

The Evening Post begins to look up, though the money does not yet come in. The advertising business may run better. I hope to be able to pay your note next year.¹

[President Franklin] Pierce has done one good thing—the veto of the Collins line bill. I do not think he is pecuniarily dishonest, and probably he now perceives that policy requires him to be on the side of those who are against carelessly squandering the public money.²

My regards to your wife and son. I am every day expecting an answer to my letter. My wife sends her love.—

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT

P. S. My wife says I must tell you that she is better. The rest are all well.


1. See 882.3. There had been a moderate financial depression in 1854.
2. President Pierce had just vetoed a congressional appropriation bill which would have awarded $858,000 to the Edward K. Collins steamship line for carrying mail from New York to Liverpool in twenty round trips during the year. In an EP editorial on March 5 Bryant praised his action, pointing out that during the preceding four years the company had been paid $2,629,000 for carrying mail on which the total postage paid amounted to only $734,000.
To John Howard Bryant

New York March 10th 1855.

Dear Brother,

I have your letter with the receipt and another paper enclosed. With regard to your coming east this summer, there are several circumstances in favor of it, which I did not mention in my last. In the first place, my wife has taken the house at 53 Lexington Avenue for the summer, and you could go immediately to it on your arrival in New York. She has done it on purpose that she might have a place to receive her friends on their way to Roslyn. After this summer it is probable that Fanny and her family will live in the country, and that the house will be let to somebody else. This would be a great saving of expense in going and coming and a great convenience in visiting New York occasionally. As to the cost of living, the times do not make so much difference at Roslyn as in New York. The main part of what is consumed in my family comes from my farm.

Then again we are all alive and well now, and it is convenient for us to receive you. Another year may make a difference in some of these conditions.

It would be therefore, desirable to us and in some respects pleasanter and more convenient for you to come this summer. What I shall do in repairing my house I cannot say. I have a carpenter on the farm of whose services in this way I might avail myself.

Do as seems to you good in regard to coming this season. If you should not we shall be glad to see you hereafter. My regards to Harriet and your son.

Yrs truly
W. C. Bryant

My wife and daughter desire their love to all. My wife I think gets better daily.

W. C. B.

Manuscript: NYPL-BFP.

1. Unrecovered.

To S. N. Holliday

New York March 15, 1855.

Sir

On receiving your letter dated nearly three months since I laid it by with a view of answering it at my leisure, and unfortunately forgot it, till I found it the other day among some of my papers. This is my apology for not answering it sooner.

I cannot give you any information of the occasion which suggested to
my mind the idea of my poem of Thanatopsis. It was written when I was seventeen or eighteen years old—I have not now at hand the memorandums which would enable me to be precise—and I [believe it was composed in my solitary rambles in the woods. As it was first committed to paper, it began with the half-line—"Yet a few days, and thee"—and ended with the beginning of another line with the words—"And make their bed with thee." The rest of the poem—the introduction and the close—was added some years afterward, in 1821, when I published a little collection of my poems at Cambridge.]³

respectfully yours

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Saint Louis Mercantile Library Association Address: S. N. Holliiday Esq.


1. Unidentified.
2. Unrecovered.
3. The manuscript is incomplete; matter in brackets is supplied from a partial text in Poetical Works, I, 329–330.

905. To Charles Gould

[New York] Wednesday March 28 [1855]

Dear Mr. Gould.

I have the Sketch Club at 53 Lexington Avenue on Friday evening. Will you do me and them the favor to meet them?¹

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL.

1. According to the surviving Sketch Club minutes, Gould (Letter 773) did not attend this meeting at Bryant's home on March 30. Information from James T. Callow.

906. To John Howard Bryant

New York, March 29, 1855

Dear Brother

In regard to your coming to the East, we wish you to take your own time. Come as early as you please, we shall be glad to see you and be ready for you. I have lately been passing a week at Roslyn and next week my wife goes down for the summer.

I have hesitated somewhat to accept Mr. Bingham's proposition for this [reason?]¹ When I had the two lots entered I designed one of them for each of my daughters. The lot No. 69 was to be Fanny's as I have made it so by my will. If it is sold the proceeds ought to be secured to her, so that
she could receive the interest. I have therefore concluded to have the place sold for the price you mention and the amount secured to Fanny. The payment of $250 would not be at all desirable, in this point of view. What I wish is that she should have the interest until the money is paid, and then that the principal should either be lent out again or invested for her benefit, in some kind of property the value of which will be certain to increase. So, if Mr. Bingham buys the house and lot let the proceeds be secured to Mrs. Fanny Bryant Godwin of Roslyn, Queens County Long Island—or rather New York, for she is yet in New York—but let me have the papers.²

My wife suggests that if you have more hams and smoked beef—particularly the former, than you have occasion for—and if, moreover, the cost of sending them to New York be not too great—of which you are better able to judge than we—that you should put up a box of them and despatch it to me at New York and I will pay you the price they bear at Princeton. But do not take any trouble about the matter unless they can be sent for a reasonable charge.

Frances desires her love to you all and bids me tell you that she is glad you are coming. She will soon write to tell you so. We are all pretty well. My own health has been uncommonly vigorous since I saw you last. My regards to your wife and son.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT

P. S. We pay 15 cts a pound for hams here. You can therefore calculate whether they can be profitably transported to this place. At my place only two pigs were killed last fall, which makes our supply of hams very small.

W. C. B.


1. The printed text has “occasion.”


907. To Frances F. Bryant

Wednesday afternoon April 11, 1855

Dear Frances,

I send you inclosed a letter from Adeline.¹ You will see it is full of matter. I also send a little note to Dennis.²

Mr. Evangelides called this morning to inquire whether you were at home; he was desirous to see Mrs. Brown.³ I shall try to see Mr. [Alfred?]
Field before I come out. If the weather continues as cold as it is now I shall probably not come out till Saturday. If it grows warm I may—I do not care to go to Flushing if it is very cold. I have seen nobody yet, nor have I heard any thing of consequence since I came to town.

Yours ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Mrs. Austin Bryant.
2. Probably a workman on Bryant's Roslyn property.
3. No other indication has been found that Christos Evangelides (Letter 830; 832.4) visited the United States at this time. Mrs. Brown is unidentified.

908. To Richard H. Dana

Dear Dana.

My wife and I were very glad to get your letter. The account you give of the consequences of Charlotte’s accident interested us greatly. We had heard nothing before so particular or so much to be depended on. I do not wonder that your own health was in the end affected. As the milder weather comes on, I hope you will both find yourselves the better for it. Considering the nature of the accident it was a mercy that she survived. The effect on her nervous system, I suppose, continues after the other consequences have passed away and will be comparatively slow in leaving her.¹

If it should appear to you that a softer temperature at this season would be of advantage to either of you, you must remember that we have a place on Long Island where you will both be welcome guests. My wife has not been so well as usual for some months past, but is in a good way, and is gradually coming up to the old mark. She is not now as strong as formerly, but even in that respect she is gaining. She had a nervous attack last autumn, which left her very weak, unable to bear noise, or much talk of any kind, and disagreeably affected by any appearance of haste. She gave up the care of the household for a little while, but it is now again in her hands; though we try to prevent her from encumbering herself with too many matters at once, and to moderate her zeal for keeping every thing in order.

I cannot review Mr. Wallace’s book. I am not deep enough in the philosophy of art to do it satisfactorily to myself, and then I write no more reviews, except for very strong and pressing reasons. I have spoken to Godwin, who has something to do with Putnam’s Magazine, and he has promised to see if he can find some suitable person to write a review of the book, and I will speak to Stillman of the Crayon about it, when I next see him.²
Remember me most kindly to your daughter and sisters, and believe me

as ever, truly yours,

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR ENDORSED: Wm C. Bryant Ap. 20th / 55 Ans. May 20th

1. The nature of Charlotte Dana’s accident is unknown.
2. Art, Scenery and Philosophy in Europe, by Horace Binney Wallace (1817–1852, Princeton 1835), published posthumously at Philadelphia in 1855, was reviewed in The Crayon, 1 (June 13, 1855), 371–372, probably by William James Stillman (890.1). In 1853 Parke Godwin had become an associate editor of the new Putnam’s Magazine.

909. To Evert A. Duyckinck

Roslyn May 28, 1855

My dear sir.

I have as you will see made some corrections of the press and one or two corrections of fact in the proofs you have sent me.1 Perhaps I should have said more of Dr. Bliss, if so, you can supply the deficiency. He was of so generous a temper as often to yield his own just rights in order to meet the expectations of authors for whom he published. I was glad to be able to repay in some degree his kindness to me by obtaining for him an office in the custom house, after he had lost the greater part of his property by unfortunate speculations in real estate.2 This, I think is the only public office that I was ever able to obtain for any body during a pretty long political life.

Theophilus Parsons was the editor of the Literary Gazette when I first began to write for it,3 but it passed afterwards into the hands of James G. Carter,4 who was much interested in the subject of public education and took an active part in the introduction of normal schools into this country. I think the first we had were in Massachusetts. Of Mr. Parsons I can tell you nothing. I never saw him but once and had little communication with him. With the exception of the part he took in conducting the Gazette, I only know that he published not very long since a volume of Essays of a religious character. He is a Swedenborgian, as you doubtless know.

The facts in the notice of John H. Bryant which appears in Griswold’s Poets of America were furnished him by me. I could not well add any thing of importance to them without communicating with my brother, which I shall be able to do soon, as I expect him in the second week of June. If that will do, I will get something out of him at that time and send it to you. Meantime my daughter has copied one of his poems, which I enclose with this.5

The anecdote related in your note concerning Thanatopsis and the
Inscription is not quite exact. I did not send the poems to be published in the North American Review, nor was the stratagem of ascribing one of them to my father one which I should have practised. They were taken to Boston by my father, without speaking to me on the subject. He had found them among the papers left by me at Cummington while I was in another part of the state. In receiving them from him the conductors of the Review must have misunderstood him in regard to their authorship. I recollect very well that they were surprized when I told them that I wrote both. The beginning of Thanatopsis—that is to say the first sixteen lines, and the conclusion, that is to say the last fifteen were written by me in 1821, when I prepared my little collection of poems for the press. The close of the Inscription was added at the same time.

I am sir
very truly yours
W. C. Bryant

Manuscript: NYPL—Evert Augustus Duyckinck Collection Address: E. Duyckinck, Esq.

1. Proofs of the biographical article on Bryant in the Cyclopaedia of American Literature. See 901.2.
2. See Letter 489.
3. See Letter 94.
5. Manuscript unrecovered.

910. To Catharine M. Sedgwick

New York, July 16th [1855]

... Enclosed I send you a memorandum of yours which was found among some loose papers on our library-table at Roslyn. You must have missed the receipt for beer, at a time when nothing fermented, of a liquid kind I mean, can be bought and sold.¹ We must go back to what we can make in our households. It is to be hereafter with drinks as it would be with tissues if all the cotton and woollen mills were stopped by law, and we were obliged to wear linsey-woolsey and other homespun cloths. The ferment will, I suppose, cause the planting of large apple-orchards again, and we shall hear the creak of the cider-mill with the return of the autumnal frosts; but, in the mean time, bushels of currants must be squeezed, and the beer-tub—shall I call it vat, for dignity’s sake?—must take its old place among household furniture. I wish I could tell you how the receipt succeeds. I compounded some beer after it on Saturday, but I must wait till Saturday next before it is fit for drinking. The season is too warm for the happiest cerevisial fermentation. March and October, you know, are the accepted seasons in the old world—but why is October made to correspond to March?

I see you have the clematis grandiflora among the names on your
memorandum. If you want a flower which blooms later, more abundantly, and almost as splendidly, put down the *clematis Sieboldii*. It is just now in season. The flowers are remarkably persistent; they open before they are half grown, and you see the petals broadening and lengthening from day to day, growing more flower-like and delicate in texture, and brighter in color, for ten days together, or more—quite unlike most of the tribes which prepare their beauty in secret, and open when they have attained their full perfection, and then in a few hours are withered. There is something unsatisfactory about those flowers which fade so soon after they unfold. I can overlook the fault only in the *marvel of Peru*; the *mirabilis*, noon-sleep—the Spaniard calls it Don Pedro; it grows wild in Cuba, naturalized, I suppose. The Don is welcome to drop his blooms of one morning, he repairs the waste so liberally, and comes out upon you with such glory and wealth of compensation the morning after. I have a variety of that flower, the perfumed sort, of which I must gather some of the seeds and send you. It was brought by Cole, the painter, from Sicily, and I have had it in my garden ever since; I never gather it without thinking of him; it is sweet and fragrant, like his memory.

The visit which you and your brother made to us is one of the pleasant memories of Roslyn. We often speak of it, and wish, for your sakes, the weather had been finer, and, for our own, that your visit had been longer.\(^2\) I begin to think that railways, after all, are not the great things that some people pretend; they are smoky, noisy, giddy, dull, clumsy means of going from place to place. If we could only drop in upon you some afternoon, and return the same night or early the next morning, that would be something to talk of. My wife is quite as well as when you were here; too much like Martha—cumbered with many things.\(^3\) If I could only untwist the legs of that wretch Care from her neck and pitch him into—our pond, I would celebrate the event, perhaps, in a poem. I wonder if there is any medium between too much care and not enough to keep the mind in wholesome activity. I think that Sindbad, when he shook off the Old Man of the Sea, made thorough work of it, and walked, thereafter, without any burden on his shoulders.

Roslyn is as fresh as May. The season has been showery, but, on the whole, agreeable—indeed, quite so. Every other day a shower, or, if not a shower, a mist going up in the night to water the earth, and disappearing with the sunrise. The children, who are quite well, are revelling among the latest cherries and the earliest gooseberries, both prodigiously fine this season. We have all of us gone through with "Christie Johnstone" and "Peg Woffington," and find that they deserve all you and your brother said of them.\(^4\) The pleasure they gave us is one of the obligations under which your visit laid us. . . .

1. A New York State anti-liquor law, passed in 1855, was declared unconstitutional soon afterward by the courts.
2. Catharine Sedgwick and her brother Charles had visited the Bryants at Roslyn some time that spring. Charles's letter of appreciation, dated June 11, is in Life, II, 81-82.
4. Novels by Charles Reade (1814-1884), both published in 1853.

911. To Henry W. Longfellow

New York July 25, 1855.

My dear sir,

Professor A. Walchner with whom I believe you have had some correspondence, has desired that I should write you a line concerning a work which he wishes to submit to your inspection. If you could aid him in this matter you might render a material service to a worthy and accomplished man, who has a large family dependent on him for bread, and whose success in this country, I am sorry to say has not been equal to his merits.¹

I am sir
faithfully yours
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HSPa ADDRESS: Prof. H. W. Longfellow.

1. Friedrich August Walchner (b. 1799), Darstellung der geologischen Verhältnisse des Mainzer Tertiärbeckens und seiner Fossilen, Fauna und Flora [Karlsruhe? 1850?]. No reply to this letter has been recovered. Longfellow was then summering at Newport, Rhode Island, and working under pressure to prepare his long poem “The Song of Hiawatha” for publication in November. But only a little over one-third of Longfellow’s letters written during the period 1854–1856 have been recovered. The Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ed. Andrew Hilen, 4 vols. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966–1972), III, 406, 487–489.

912. To Henry D. Gilpin¹

New York July 26, 1855.

Dear sir,

The bearer of this note is Mr. Weyman Law Reporter for the Evening Post. The object of his visit is to obtain an early copy of the decision of Judge Kane in the case of Passmore Williams which is looked for here with a good deal of interest.² If in any way you could facilitate his object you would confer a real favor on the conductors of the Evening Post and in particular on

Yours faithfully
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: UVa ADDRESS: Mr. Gilpin / Philadelphia.

who had been a United States attorney in eastern Pennsylvania, and briefly Attorney General in Martin Van Buren's cabinet, had retired from politics in 1841 to become a cultural leader in Philadelphia. Earlier, he had been editor of the Atlantic Souvenir when Bryant had contributed poems to that gift annual in 1825–1826. See Letter 118.

2. When a North Carolina slaveholder, Colonel John Hill Wheeler (1806–1882), had passed through Philadelphia on his way to New York to take ship for Nicaragua the previous year, having been appointed United States minister to that country, a female slave he was taking with him had been advised by one Passmore Williamson of her right to freedom in a free state, and assisted to escape. Williamson was later arrested and charged with her abduction. When he was found guilty before federal judge John Kintzing Kane (1795–1858, Yale 1814), the EP attacked the decision as "a denial of the constitutional power of Pennsylvania to pass laws excluding slaves from her territory," and warned its readers, "There is a plan to force slavery upon the free states as well as upon the territories, and we must meet and repel it at once." EP, July 26, 28, 31, 1855.

913. To Frances F. Bryant

Tuesday evening  July 27  1855.

Dear F.

Yesterday Mr. John Durand called to say that he would like to come out to Roslyn tomorrow. Immediately I despatched a note¹ to Mr. Leupp to ask him to come also. He told me last evening he determined to come as soon as he got my letter, but on going home he found Gideon Lee² at his house, which may possibly make it uncertain whether he comes.

Yours ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Unrecovered.
2. Charles Leupp's father-in-law and business partner; see 487.1.

914. To Rufus W. Griswold

New York  July 28, 1855.

My dear sir.

My brother is about making a collection of his verses for publication. He has no perfect copy of the poem entitled the Traveller's Return, which I sent to you the other day and of which I afterwards had a proof from you.¹ Can you oblige me by letting me have a proof of it or a copy in some other form.

Yrs truly

W C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: HCL ADDRESS: Dr. R. W. Griswold.

915. To Messrs. Dix & Edwards  
August 24, 1855.

Mr. Bryant has at present nothing finished of the sort mentioned in the note of Messrs Dix & Edwards, and is so much occupied with other matters that he could not have any thing ready in season for the October number of the Magazine.¹

[unsigned]

MANUSCRIPT: HCL.


916. To Messrs. Childs & Peterson  
New York Aug. 29, 1855.

Gentlemen.

The specimen of Mr. Allibone’s Critical Dictionary of Authors¹ which you sent me has given me a high idea of the industry exactness and various reading of the author. I think it promises to be one of the most valuable works of reference which have been produced in the present century. The plan appears to me excellent, though difficult, but the difficulty has been happily overcome by the author’s extraordinary research.

Truly yours,

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HEHL 
ADDRESS: To Messrs Childs & Peterson.


917. To Frances F. Bryant  
[cSeptember 1, 1855.]

Dear Frances.

If you find the papers please put them in my little drawer on the right hand—but do not give yourself much trouble about it. The Horticultural meeting at which I speak takes place on the 25th of September¹—Be at home before that time.²

Your brother Egbert [Fairchild] is here in town and says he must go back today. He promised to come in again this morning but has not yet called.

Yours ever

W. C. B.
P. S. I wrote you yesterday that I had found your box. On Monday I mailed two letters for Egbert junior.

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. At this meeting of the New York Horticultural Society, actually held on September 26, 1855, in the rooms of the Mercantile Library, Bryant spoke on "The Improvement of Native Fruits." This was printed in the EP on September 27, and in Bryant's Orations and Addresses, pp. 269-282, where it is misdated 1856.

2. Frances was then visiting relatives in Ogdensburg, New York.

918. To Julia S. Bryant

New York Sept 3d 1855

Dear Julia,

I think it would be well to give Henry the bellows of which you spoke and tell him to blow off the sulphur from the grapes.

But I write this note to ask you to say to Dennis that I wish him not to take any of the heap of barrilla ashes for the wheat land. I want to keep it all for a top dressing.

I will write to you again when I have seen Mr. [Mulin?].

Yrs affectionately

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

919. To Frances F. Bryant

New York September 3d 1855. Monday morning

Dear Frances.

I have just come to town from Roslyn where I left every body well and every thing in good order. I have put Edward Setton into the cottage, finding the place so much run over by people who had no business there, that I thought it better to take the risk of one tenant than of forty. Dennis and Henry understand all about him and will have an eye on him. Henry takes to gardening with a good deal of zeal, and I doubt not that I shall find him immediately quite as serviceable as Kropf. Julia has packed up the pear marmalade for the Fields, and this morning it was ready to be put on board of the boat. Jessie is back at the cottage. Fanny and the children are well. The country is as green as ever, and yesterday after a hot morning came a smart little shower of rain which was followed by so fresh and bright an evening, that we all wished you were with us to walk out and look at it and enjoy the grateful airs from the west.

The new edition of my poems to be published by Appleton is now out, and he has sent me a check for $476.00. I shall now be able to send out a few more copies to my friends.
I hope you will not find the climate too cool for you on the St. Lawrence. Here the temperature is very agreeable, though cool for the season. I hope likewise that you will adhere to your resolutions of being prudent in regard to what you eat and drink. You may not be able to get all the kinds of fruit that we have at Roslyn, but there will be no want of apples I suppose, and stewed apples in the morning are as wholesome I think as any thing that you could take. Make all the haste you can to be well and strong and let me know often how you get on, and how you occupy yourself.

I shall send you the Evening Post daily till I hear from you that you are on the point of returning. Rachel the tragic actress begins her performances this evening. You must contrive to be back before they are ended.

Remember me kindly to your brothers and their families.

Yours ever

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Not further identified.
2. Evidently an earlier gardener.
3. Presumably this was to be shipped to some members of the Field family in England.
4. Ann Jeannette (Cairns) Willis (1828–1858), Mrs. Richard Storrs Willis. See 791.1. She was the eldest of three daughters of William and Ann Eliza Cairns (795.1).
6. The celebrated French tragedienne Rachel (1821–1858) performed in New York from September 3 to November 17, 1855. Her last performance on any stage was given in Charleston, South Carolina, the following December, when she caught a cold which resulted in her death from tuberculosis two years later. Odell, Annals, VI, 447–450. Though it is uncertain whether he saw Rachel perform in New York, Bryant had enjoyed her performances at Paris in 1845 and 1849. See his "Diary of a European Tour, 1845," October 27, NYPL-GR; and "Diary, 1849," September 8.

920. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Wednesday morning, Sept. 5, 1855

Dear Frances.

I was truly rejoiced to hear from you this morning,¹ that you had made so pleasant a journey, and reach Ogdensburg² in such good health. You may be disappointed that I do not send you the velvet bows for which you write; but I cannot have them without going to the house, and that will take time that I cannot spare. This afternoon I am engaged to go to Pell's place at West Point,³ from which I return on Friday morning, and the same day go out to Roslyn with Rosetta Morton whom Julia has invited. [George W.?] Morton will either go out that day or the next. So you see you must wait till the beginning of next week.
I send you two letters which have just been put into my hands, along with one from Victoria [Gibson] for Julia. My own health is excellent. I will write again on Friday.

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Letter unrecovered.
2. Here, and in Letter 923, Bryant mistakenly wrote "Ogdensburgh."
3. Alfred Pell owned property at Buttermilk Falls (later Highland Falls) near West Point, on which he was building a summer home. Bigelow, Retrospections, I, 163.

921. To Frances F. Bryant

New York September 13th 1855—Thursday.

Dear Frances,

This is my fourth letter. From you I have received two.¹ On Tuesday afternoon I left the Battery in a steamer for Mr. Spring's place at Perth Amboy.² Edward Spring was on board a handsome youth, and the Revd. Mr. Longfellow.³ Both Mr. L and myself had engaged to meet Mr. Spring at his counting house, he at half past two and I at a quarter to three, but neither of us found him in and went to the steamboat without him. Our passage took two hours, and was quite a pleasant one. I was glad to renew my acquaintance with the shores of the strait between Staten Island and New Jersey, along which you may remember we once passed in our way to Mrs. Griffith's.⁴ We landed at the town of Perth Amboy, and crossed the peninsula or cape on which it stands to the other side where it is washed by the mouth of the Raritan. Here the company have their buildings in a pleasant situation, about a mile and a half from the place where I landed. Edward showed me the grounds, which look barren and neglected, and were infested with swarms of mosquitoes. At six o'clock Mr. Spring arrived in the last boat, having been delayed in consequence of forgetting that we were to leave in the three o'clock boat. We took tea in Mr. Spring's house, in which Mrs. Spring's father, Mr. Buffum is lying very ill, and probably near his end.⁵ After tea several of the people from the great stone building in which so many families live came in, and sang a hymn at Mr. Buffum's particular request. Mr. Spring then took me over to see the building, which I will not weary you with describing. It gives each family all its rooms on one floor. I saw nothing attractive either in the place or their mode of living. Luckily, my bed-chamber was not infested with mosquitoes as the parlor was, though the doors and windows were protected by netting, and I passed a comfortable night. Mrs. Spring desired a great deal of love to you.

I find that I have not expressed myself so as to give you a very distinct idea of the place. I will try to do that when I see you. If you should think
of visiting it, I would wait till the mosquito season is over, besides that at present while Mr. Buffum is so ill, the visit would hardly be as pleasant as at another time.

It is very hot here at present; yesterday, the day that I came up in the morning from Perth Amboy was hotter still—a melting day. Julia had heard nothing from Estelle [Ives] when I left—I think—or had heard that she could not come at present—at all events she told me that she did not expect her now.

Is it not time for you to come home[?] I am expecting every day that the cool weather will set in—it will be sure to do so before you have time to get back. I hear from Fanny today that the plums are nearly gone and I shall have to betake myself to the baked apples.—

My regards to your brothers and their families.

Yours ever

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Neither recovered.


3. Edward, then eighteen years old, was the son of Marcus and Rebecca Buffum Spring. Samuel Longfellow (1819–1892, Harvard 1840), youngest brother of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, had been minister of the Unitarian Society of Brooklyn since 1853.

4. The writer Mary Griffith (326.9).

5. Arnold Buffum (1782–1859), Quaker anti-slavery lecturer, and first president of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, in 1832.

922. To Cyrus Bryant

New York—or rather Roslyn—September 15th, 1855.

Dear Brother.

I have been careless about answering your letter,¹ and have no apology to make for it except that the question you put required some reflection and consideration and it was more convenient to put off the reply than to make it on the spot as I should have done.

If I were you I would have but two colors. I would have the window blinds and the cornice of the same color. If I had the body of the house painted A according to the samples in Downing's book or B. I would paint the cornice and blinds C. D it strikes me is not a bad color and if I adopted that I would have the cornice and window blinds F.² I do not for my part think that a house with cornice and window blinds of the same color looks
ill; though perhaps that would be more suitable for a house of wood in which but one material is used. In a brick house it may be well to distinguish the wooden cornices doors, window frames and blinds by another color.

You wrote to me some time since inquiring about a table for a study or library. The one I had in view and concerning which I spoke to you is of this form. It should be about two feet and seven inches in height four feet or four feet and two inches in length and about three feet wide on the top. In the middle is an open space for the knees to go under the table with one drawer over it on each side and the ends are occupied each with a double pile of drawers from the floor to the top. At one end might be a sliding leaf to be drawn out when you want to enlarge the top of the table, or when more than two persons want to write at it. At the other end might be a leaf to let part way down, behind which large engravings or maps might be kept. I have thus given you the dimensions of the table, and its plan as nearly as I can.

There is another matter on which you have desired information; our ancestry. On the Bryant side I can go back no further than Ichabod Bryant our great grandfather, who came from Raynham to West Bridgewater in 1745 and died in 1759. His wife was Ruth Staples, but who was her father or where she came from I cannot find. Ichabod Bryant lived in Titicut a parish formed out of a part [of] South Bridgewater and a part of Middleborough. I find that there were Stapleses in Titicut.

I find by the History of Scituate—Dean's— that John Bryant, a house carpenter and "an active and useful man," was a freeman of Scituate in 1639. He married Mary Lewis daughter of George Lewis of Barnstable in 1643. Her sons were John, Samuel, Benjamin, Joseph, Jabez, Thomas Daniel and Elisha. The son John, a lieutenant, in the militia, I suppose, had five sons, John 3d, Jonathan, David, Joshua and Samuel. The other son, Benjamin's family went to Chesterfield. Thomas became a squire, and was the father of Peleg Bryant and of the Revd Lemuel Bryant, of Quincy "a man of extraordinary powers and singularities." Whether this John Bryant senior was our ancestor I have not been able to discover.

Our grandmother Silence Howard, wife of Philip Bryant was the daughter of Dr. Abiel Howard, of West Bridgewater, who was the son of Major Jonathan Howard who died in 1739. He was the son of John Howard who came from England and settled first in Duxbury in 1643, and next in West Bridgewater in 1651. He lived in Miles Standish's family when young. He died about 1700.

I give the Snell genealogy. Thomas Snell from England settled in West Bridgewater in 1665, and was probably the largest landholder in the town. He married Martha, daughter of Arthur Harris. His son Josiah married Anna Alden a grand daughter of Hon. John Alden who came
over in the Mayflower in 1620, and by her had Zechariah Snell who was one of the early settlers of North Bridgwater and father of Ebenezer Snell our grandfather.

The Packards run thus. Samuel Packard with a wife and one child came from Windham in England and settled in Hingham in 1638 whence he came to West Bridgwater where he died in 1684. His son Zacheus married Sarah Howard daughter of the first John Howard & was the father of Abiel Packard our great grandfather, who married Sarah Howard, daughter of John Ames.

The Revd James Keith a Scotchman educated at Aberdeen came over in 1662 aged 18 years and was the first minister of Bridgwater. He married Susannah Edson daughter of Deacon Samuel Edson, and his daughter Mary Keith became the wife of Ephraim Howard, a son of the first John Howard. By Ephraim Howard she had a daughter Jane, who married Nehemiah Washburn, and became the mother of Silence Washburn, wife of Dr. Abiel Howard our great grandfather.4

If you want any further information as to the family pedigree I will give it so far as it can be collected from Mitchells History of the Families of Bridgwater.5 I am sorry not to be able to go as far with the Bryants and Stapleses as I can with the others.

I think I have now fully discharged a duty which has long lain as a burden of my conscience. I hope you will make some allowance for one who is very busy and hates to write. Tell me if I have omitted any thing and I will supply it. My best regards to your wife and children.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT.

Postscript. I find after all that I have not answered your question in regard to the composition of the colors. I have no doubt, for my part, that lampblack and yellow ochre, in being added to the zinc, would give you all the colours you have in Downing. In the three first, there would I think be a little lamp black and ochre; in the last three only yellow ochre. The Ohio paint, mixed in a small proportion, gives a colour that is not disagreeable. I had my bridge and my grape house painted with zinc and yellow ochre, the color of new wood. The best way is first to mingle the paint in small quantities and paint a board or shingle with it, letting it dry, as an experiment. I did this in painting my bridge and grape house.

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: Presbyterian Historical Society ADDRESS: C. Bryant Esq.

1. Unrecovered.
2. A[ndrew] J[ackson] Downing, in Cottage Residences; or, A Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas, and Their Gardens and Grounds . . . , 4th ed. (New York, 1853), p. 16, offers "specimens . . . of six shades of color highly suitable for the exterior of cottages and villas." A, B, and C were gray; D and F were "drab or fawn."


923. To Frances F. Bryant  
[No. 5]  
New York  Monday  September 17th  1855.

Dear Frances,

I rejoice to hear so good an account of your health, and considering the favorable effect it has had upon your spirits I am really glad that you made the visit to Ogdensburg. When you think you have gained all the benefit from it that might be reasonably expected we all hope that you will come back with as little delay as possible. I have just come in from Roslyn and have found your third letter here.\(^1\) At Roslyn every thing is going on pretty well. The men are getting in the potatoes—a much larger yield than we have had since the potato disease made its appearance—we shall have nearly 200 bushels. The orchard gives a liberal supply of fine large apples and we have yet more plums than we can dispose of without sending them to the neighbors. Frances the cook is to leave us tomorrow. The reason for not keeping her word, given by her, is that she cannot get on with Mary. I tried hard to make peace, and Mary promised every thing, but the cook was inexorable, declared that she would not live in a place where so many stories were told and insisted on going off before the end of her month and without notice. Do not give yourself any trouble about the matter nor hurry yourself to come home, on that account. Shall I try to find somebody else?

Mr. Tilden came down to Roslyn on Saturday and came in this morning. He is as you know a candidate for the office of Attorney General of the State.\(^2\)

They are talking of a branch railway from Hem[p]stead Branch to Glen Cove with a station at Roslyn back of Mr. Schenck's. The people in Glen Cove are very eager to have it made, and I was told had subscribed or engaged to subscribe $40,000 and Alderman Charlick has promised to get as much more at Roslyn. Whether there is a prospect of doing any thing I cannot yet tell.—\(^3\)

I send this to Ogdensburg, inasmuch as I am not sure of your being at Rochester or Bloomfield. If you have left Ogdensburg I suppose they will send it after you.

Yours ever,

W. C. BRYANT.
924. To Frances F. Bryant

Roslyn  Sept 30, 1855

My dear Frances.

Now that I know from your letter to Minna precisely when a letter is likely to reach you I write again. I sent off on Tuesday last a letter from Fanny for you to Ogdensburg and shortly afterwards got one from you informing me that you were at Rochester, though you did not say how long you would be there. We are all as impatient to have you back again as you can be to get home. For my part I find Roslyn a dull gloomy sort of place, which it never seemed to me before. Yet every thing goes on well, and the weather has been uncommonly pleasant. The grapes have ripened well; the golden chasselas was ripe the earliest. We nearly stripped the vines—there were two of them and sent off baskets of the clusters to our neighbors. Mr. Cairns seemed quite surprized and talked immediately about having a cold vinery of his own; but I found in the course of the conversation that he was afraid of two things—thieves and poultry. A vine fence however he thought, after some discussion, would protect the grapes from both. Mr. McCoun brought over a carpenter last Thursday to take the measure of our grape house. Julia was absent at the drawing lesson.

I got off both the speeches last week without any accident, except that in the speech before the Horticultural Society I forgot a few things, was obliged to pause a moment, and finally went on without them, copying Bonaparte's example who when he encountered a fortress which was not easy to take left it behind him and conquered the country beyond. I sent to you copies of the Evening Post containing reports of both of them. The banquet at the Crystal Palace was a splendid affair, but both that place and the exhibition room in the Mercantile Library, I found bad for speaking in; it required immense powers of voice for one to make himself heard.¹

Last Sunday John Durand came down; this time I am fortunately alone. On Tuesday Fanny goes to town to make arrangements for letting the house, and to get servants. I go into town tomorrow and hope not to return without you. Fanny wants Mrs. Sutphen to leave the house, but Julia and I—Julia went in, on Wednesday, to be present at the Horticultural Exhibition and the Crystal Palace affair—told her that she might stay till you come back, at least.² Mr. [Joseph] Curtis now and then becomes possessed with the notion that you have got back, and comes over to offer you the hospitality of his table. A kind old gentleman. Remember me kindly
to Mrs. Tobey and to Mr. F[rederick] A. Tobey and his wife and the rest of the family and tell Mr. Tobey that I wish he would bring down his wife to see how the farms on Long Island look and give us the benefit of his western skill and experience.

Yours ever
W. C. BRYANT.

P.S. Monday mng. Oct 1, 1855. I have just come to town and get your letter. I find also Mr. Thayer at the office who has just left Col. Kinney at Nicaragua. I do not think of any thing to add—except that Mr. Dewey was at the Crystal Palace and preached here yesterday—and that we all wish to see you back.

Yours ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. On September 26 Bryant delivered his address on the improvement of native fruits before the New York Horticultural Society at their exhibition in the rooms of the Mercantile Library. See 917.1. On the following evening, at a “Book Publishers Festival” in the Crystal Palace attended by authors, artists, and publishers, he took as his theme the “promise of American authorship, given by the appearance of Cotton Mather,” which “has never been redeemed until now,” and wondered why no one had written the “Lives of Eminent Booksellers,” epitomized, he thought, by the career of his own early publisher, Elam Bliss, “an upright, generous man of a munificent spirit and every moral quality that could dignify his vocation.” EP, September 27, 28, 1855.

2. This tenant of Frances Bryant’s rented house at 53 Lexington Avenue, Mrs. Sutphen, is otherwise unidentified. See Letter 903.

3. Unrecovered.


5. Colonel Henry L. Kinney, a Texan promoter whose exploits Thayer had been covering for the EP, was attempting to set up an independent American colony on a vast tract in Nicaragua to which he had a dubious claim. He was soon pushed aside, however, by the greater filibustering adventures of William Walker (1824–1860), who made himself president and dictator of that central American country in 1856–1857, and was finally court-martialed and executed in Honduras in 1860. Nevins, Ordeal, II, 373–374, 405–508.

925. To A. G. Carll


Dear sir.

I have been called upon by John T. Diossy Esq. of Richmond county, who asks me what I know of Mr. Rider, the member of Assembly from Queens County, who is talked of as a candidate for State Senator to be nominated by the Republicans. I could tell him very little of Mr. Rider, but what I had heard of him I could say was favorable. Could you oblige me so far as to say whether he is right on the slavery question, and likely
to hold his views firmly and not allow himself to be tampered with? Your answer might be directed to me if you prefer it; but I would rather that you would write directly to Mr. Diossy at No. 1, Nassau Street in this city, as he is anxious to have the information at the earliest moment.

Yours very truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Haverford College Library
ADDRESS: A. G. Carll Esq.—

1. Unidentified.
2. John T. Diossy was a bookseller, with a residence at 149 West 38th Street. *Trow’s New York City Directory*, p. 229.
3. James Rider (1806–1876), of Jamaica, Long Island, a banker, was a member of the New York State Assembly in 1855, and of the State Senate, 1856 and 1857. *New York Times*, May 1, 1876; Franklin B. Hough, *The New-York Civil List from 1777 to 1857...* (Albany, 1857), pp. 299, 144. Rider’s views on slavery have not been determined.

926. To Frances F. Bryant

New York, Nov. 13, 1855

Dear Frances,

On arriving here I found several notes from Mrs. Cyrus Field¹ which I forward, though you will get them too late. I shall look in a moment this evening and make an apology. I have also a letter from Frederick Tobey informing me that he has sent us three barrels of apples and a [pot of butter?]. I have also a letter from Cyrus [Bryant]—all well there.

The Club meets on Friday night at Mr. Leupp’s² so I shall not come till Saturday.

Yrs ever
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Mary Bryan Stone Field (1817–1891), the wife of Cyrus West Field (1819–1892), a brother of David Dudley Field (492.4), who was a paper merchant until 1852, when he retired from that business to promote the development of an Atlantic cable.
2. This meeting of the Sketch Club was held on November 16 at the home of Charles Leupp on Madison Avenue and Twenty-Fifth Street. Information from James T. Callow.

927. To William Makepeace Thackeray¹

[New York, cNovember 13–14, 1855]

My dear sir

I called at the Clarendon today to ask you to come to a little club of artists and their friends who meet on Friday night at Mr. Leupps in Twenty fifth Street corner of Madison Avenue where I am staying. Mr. Leupp would have called to give you the invitation himself but he is suddenly called out of town. Your friend Mr. Laurence will be there and has prom-
ised me if you are at leisure to call for you. We meet at 8 o’clock and are generally on the ground early.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft) ADDRESS: Mr. Thackeray.

1. In the fall and winter of 1855–1856 the English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863) made a second lecture tour of the United States.

2. Samuel Laurence (see 859.3), who had settled in New York City in 1854, had painted or drawn crayon portraits of many British and American literary men, including his friend Thackeray, as well as Bryant, Bancroft, Longfellow, and Lowell. DAA; NAD Exhibition Record, 1, 286–287. He was an occasional guest at meetings of the Sketch Club.

3. Neither Laurence nor Thackeray attended the Sketch Club meeting on November 16. Information from James T. Callow. Bryant apparently renewed his invitation some weeks later, for on January 29, 1856, Thackeray wrote him to regret that a lecture engagement in Philadelphia would prevent his accepting an invitation to dine with Bryant that evening. Letter in NYPL–GR.

928. To Cyrus Bryant

New York November 15, 1855.

Dear Brother.

I got your letter day before yesterday. By good luck I have got two slender tubers of the *dioscorea*, one of which shall be yours. I think you will have to plant it in pots as soon as you get it, to be sure of keeping it through the winter—cutting it in pieces of two inches and a half in length, and laying horizontally under an inch of earth. Send for it as soon as you please.

Yrs truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: BCHS.

1. Unrecovered.

929. To William Gilmore Simms

New York November 16 1855.

My dear sir.

James H. Hackett Esq. with whose histrionic reputation you are well acquainted, visits Charleston in company with his son, and will hand you this letter. His amiable character and engaging social qualities have gained him a large circle of friends here, and I take the liberty of commending him to that kindness which I have myself experienced at your hands.

I am sir

very truly yours

W. C. BRYANT.
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LETTERS OF WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYHS ADDRESS: Wm Gilmore Simms Esqre. / Charleston / South Carolina
ENDORSED (by Hackett): Not in the city / whilst I stopped there / Dec 1855—.

1. Bryant mistakenly wrote “A.”
2. Bryant had known the veteran stage comedian James Henry Hackett (1800–1871) since he had headed a prize committee in 1830 which chose for Hackett James Kirke Paulding’s play The Lion of the West. This had given Hackett one of his most popular roles, that of Colonel Nimrod Wildfire. See Vol. I, 260; Odell, Annals, III, 502.

930. To Christiana Gibson

New York Nov. 25, 1855

My dear Miss Gibson

It was very ill-natured of the doctor to keep you another season in Edinburgh when your friends were dying to see you here. Do not let the winds of that lofty capital blow you away before the return of Spring. Is it certain that your physician’s prescriptions will be more effectual than the society of your friends in America would be? What is it that the author of the Proverbs says “doeth good like a medicine”?¹ You see that moral influences were recognized, thousands of years since to be as potent over the health as the drugs of the apothecary. I hope you have fallen into the hands of a sensible man, who knows that medicines very often do more harm than good. If you come back mended in health, we shall be glad to have spared you so long.—

[unsigned]

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).

1. Prov. 17:22; “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

931. To Thatcher T. Payne¹


Dear Payne,

I have, I think, no engagement which will interfere with my coming to your house, this evening, though I shall be obliged to traverse a good deal of space between this and eight o’clock. I should be glad to see your family again as well as to meet Dr. Palfrey,² and if I do not find myself over fatigued I will come.

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: UVa.

1. See 126.2.
2. John Gorham Palfrey; see 482.4.
To Charles Mason

New York, January 13, 1856

My dear sir,

In the distribution of seeds of the Chinese Sugar millet—or sugar cane—I hope to be remembered. If I am not mistaken, there are seeds of this plant at the Patent Office, which are to be sent to persons in different parts of the country, and being myself somewhat of a farmer on Long Island, I shall be obliged if you will send me a parcel. I have also a brother in Illinois who is a nursery gardener by profession, and who has written to me to procure him seeds of the plant. May I ask you, therefore, in your distribution to send a parcel to

Arthur Bryant
Princeton
Bureau County
Illinois,

and another to

W. C. Bryant
New York

and greatly oblige

Your friend
W. C. BRYANT.


1. Mason had substituted briefly for William Leggett as an EP editor during Bryant's absence abroad in 1834; see 312.4.
2. From 1853 to 1857 Mason was United States Commissioner of Patents at Washington. No reply to this letter has been recovered.

To John Howard Bryant

New York January 28, 1856.

Dear Brother,

I leave it to your judgment to make such an arrangement with regard to the land I wrote you about, as you think best. As you observe I do not mean to be at any expense in fencing it. They may have it for four or five years if they want it—but unless you should see reason to judge otherwise, I think five years would be long enough. It is not very likely that I shall want to sell before that time—and if I do, I must wait.

The letter answering the inquiries made by Mr. Bigelow, came early to hand, and I gave it to him that he might do as he pleases in regard to the land. He informs me that there is a kind of family quarrel about it which may perhaps prevent any thing from being done.
You speak of cold weather in Illinois. We have had cold weather too; this is the thirtieth day of sleighing in this city—a most extraordinary thing for New York, where the snow generally lies but a short time. Not only has there been sleighing but good sleighing, a deep solid bed of snow which has been no where worn out or melted down to the pavement. At this moment it is snowing very fast, and it looks very much as if the January thaw, the inevitable January thaw—would be pretermitted this year. Just now I am staying with my family in town, the Long Island railroad being now and then obstructed by the snow, but I shall get down there as soon as I can to cut scions from the Seekel pear trees, and make arrangements for grafting a few of my grown trees with the Aremberg, the Winter Nelis and the Paradis d'Automne—or rather Autumn Paradise. I am concerned that the tree from which you took cuttings is not the muscadine—it wants the musky flavor and perfume. I cannot see that it was ever grafted or budded and think it must be a natural fruit—the Roslyn pear it might be called.

We are getting on finely in politics. The Emigrants' Aid Society at present occupies a good deal of the public attention.\(^3\) Subscriptions are collecting, with the intention of increasing its funds to $200,000 which is all that is wanted, but this fact I believe they do not mean to publish in the newspapers. Whenever they build a hotel they receive half the town lots which become the property of the association. Within four years they estimate that the funds will amount to two millions, which will be enough to people all New Mexico and Western Texas after Kansas shall have been admitted as a free state. Mr. Pierce's message on Kansas has done a great deal of good in creating a feeling favorable to the emigration scheme.\(^4\) Pierce and his confederates are sinking deeper and deeper every day.

I am glad to hear so good news of your wife and son. Their visit to the eastern states probably did them both good. Remember me very kindly to both.

Yours truly

W. C. BRYANT.

**Manuscript:** NYPL-BFP.

1. Letter unrecovered.
2. No record of Bryant's leasing Illinois land at this time has been found.
3. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was formed in February 1855 to promote organized anti-slavery migration from the northeastern states to Kansas Territory. Its chief promoter was the Massachusetts educator and legislator Eli Thayer (1819–1899), later a United States congressman.
4. In a special message on January 24 President Pierce attacked the emigrant aid groups for acts which, he said, antagonized the people of Missouri, "whose domestic peace was thus the most directly endangered," and he called the Free State movement in Kansas "revolutionary." Nevins, *Ordeal*, II, p. 417.
934. **To Fanny Bryant Godwin**

New York  
Jan. 31, 1856. Thursday morning.

Dear Fanny.

Your mother as I understood her last night has concluded not to come out to Roslyn this week. She saw Mrs. Cairns last evening who said that you were desirous that she should remain in New York awhile for the sake of rest and recreation, and the extreme cold that we now have, has I think made her more willing to stay. I shall not come till she does.

We are all well. Julia was out at a party last night at Mr Fields and the night before at Miss Kirklands. We have an invitation to Mrs. R[obert] Sedgwicks on Saturday evening, and to Mrs. Butlers (Susan Sedgwick's) on Tuesday.

I send you ten dollars which I wish you to give to Dennis—He said he wanted some money—and please help me to remember that I have paid it to him so that I may charge it when I come to Roslyn.

Love to the children—

Yrs affectionately

W C BRYANT

**MANUSCRIPT:** NYPL-GR  
**ADDRESS:** Mrs. F. B. Godwin.


935. **To John Howard Bryant**

New York, February 15, 1856.

... I cannot go to Pittsburg. I do not like public meetings. I do not like consultations. I am surfeited with politics in my vocation, and when I go from home I cannot bear to carry them with me. If I were not a journalist, perhaps the case would be different. Then we have such a frightful winter, and I am anxious to seize the first moment of milder weather to see to some things at my place at Roslyn. The travel on the railways is often obstructed, and the ferries are choked with ice. That the consultations at Pittsburg will be among honest men is probable enough, but I am not a very firm believer in the honesty of parties. All parties include nearly all sorts of men, and the moment a party becomes strong the rogues are attracted to it, and immediately try to manage it. If they want its help for no other purpose, they want it to get into office, or perhaps simply to become notorious, which satisfies some people's ambition.

As to Kansas, I am not sure that there will not be some blood shed. But, blood or no blood, I am quite certain that it will be a free State. The whole city is alive with the excitement of the Kansas news, and people are subscribing liberally to the Emigrants' Aid Society. The companies of emigrants will be sent forward as soon as the rivers and lakes are opened—in March, if possible—and by the first of May there will be several thou-
sand more free-state settlers in Kansas than there now are. Of course they will go well armed. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: Unrecovered text *(partial)*: Life, II, 88–89.

1. In an unrecovered letter, John Bryant had apparently urged his brother to attend a meeting at Pittsburgh on February 22–23 of Free Soil and anti-slavery leaders from most of the northern states. John was one of several delegates from Illinois to this convention, at which a national Republican Party was brought into being. Edward Magdol, *Owen Lovejoy: Abolitionist in Congress* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press [1967]), pp. 135–140.

936. *To Frances F. Bryant*

New York March 3d 1856.

Dear Frances.

The waggon went smoothly enough this morning till we got a little beyond the Williams place. After that, in getting through the deep snow we came to two places where the road was in such a state that we had to get out to prevent it from being overturned. I would not come out if I were you till I heard that the snow in these places had been shovelled out or thawed away.

Mr. Culver has just called, and brought a request from Mrs. Hopkins\(^1\) that you should come up with him tomorrow. I have sent word that I could not let you go [to Great Barrington] till the weather became milder, when I knew it was your intention to come. He gave me an account of Mr. Henderson's\(^2\) illness. He was failing for some time but did not seem to suffer much—he said he was well enough. He went however to see Mrs. Clark, the clairvoyante or spiritual doctress. She described his case, he said exactly, but he would not take her medicines—roots and herbs—regularly. She told him he was in danger of epilepsy. At length, some eight or ten days before his death, he became so ill that he was obliged to keep his room and soon afterwards became deranged. Dr. Parks was employed, and after a few visits gave him up. Mrs. Clark was then employed and somewhat relieved him; his derangement, however, continued. He did not recognize James when he came; Charles was not there. He often refused to take medicines, except when little Jessie gave them to him. A short time before his death he seemed for a very few hours to suffer great agony; afterwards he became easy and soon dropped away without a struggle. The disease Culver thinks was principally about the kidneys, the loins and small of the back were discolored; Culver calls it mortified. Before he was confined to the room he had for a long time appeared differently from usual; he did not seem to care to live. At table, he had no appetite and would sometimes say grace twice over. These are all the particulars I can now remember from Mr Culver's somewhat unconnected account.

Ralph Taylor has quite recovered from his very dangerous illness, in
which he was near dying. He employed both Dr. Collins and Doctress Clark, but he took only the medicines of the female practitioner. Jessie Culver has been quite ill, but is now well again. Charles Hopkins is particularly well. The rest of our friends in Barrington are as well as usual.  

John Baltz was here this morning and I paid him his note. He wants to raise money on a mortgage which he has on his place at Newark. I gave him a letter to Charles Taylor.  

I enclose some letters. I would send Henry as soon as possible to see his German. Let me know whether I am to come out next Sunday.

Yours ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Frances' sister Mina, Mrs. Charles W. Hopkins (38.5).
2. Allen Henderson, husband of Frances' sister Esther (38.4).
3. James and Charles were Allen Henderson's sons. Ralph Taylor had been Bryant's roommate during his early years in Great Barrington; see 95.3. Others named in the foregoing paragraphs have not been further identified.
4. Charles Taylor was at one time a Great Barrington storekeeper. Baltz is not further identified.

937. To Frances F. Bryant

Office of the Evening Post
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty.
New York, April 7 1856

Dear Frances.

I sent a telegraphic message to Rochester this morning as soon as I arrived and I get no answer though it is nearly three o'clock. I shall write by mail as soon as I get one.

Fanny has been here. She has engaged the Irishman, but can get no girl. The boy is well.

Ever yours

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

938. To Frances F. Bryant

Office of the Evening Post
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty.
New York, April 9th 1856. Wednesday morning.

Dear Frances.

I can get no answer to the message I sent on Monday—though I have often sent to the Telegraph Office, and have directed the message to be
LETTERS OF WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

repeated. I can only suppose that the message has been sent to the house of Dr Tobey and that it is not understood—they probably do not understand what is to be done in order to reply.

Dennis is reengaged, and will bring you this.

I have just heard from the telegraph office that the second message was sent yesterday afternoon and that perhaps I may get an answer today.

Yours ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

939. To Frances F. Bryant
Dear Frances,

Half an hour ago I received the enclosed telegraphic despatch from which you will see that what we feared has come to pass.

About the same time the letter from Mrs. Hopkins which I also send was brought me.¹

Yours ever.

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. The telegram and letter, neither recovered, apparently reported the death of one of Frances Bryant’s near relatives in western New York state.

940. To Julia S. Bryant
New York Wednesday morning April 16 1856
Dear Julia

Will you send word to the Miss Hopkins’s¹ that Mr. [Joseph] Curtis was buried yesterday afternoon. I was at the funeral. A discourse was preached by Mr. Bellows in his church to a crowded audience. After the services, the people present defiled down the middle aisle to take a last look at their friend, and went out at the side aisles.

Mr. Curtis died of a congestion of the brain on Saturday evening.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. The Bryants’ next-door neighbors at Roslyn.

941. To Frances F. Bryant
New York April 22, 1856.
My dear Frances.

I came into town this morning and got your note of Saturday.¹ Julia got yours yesterday. I am glad to learn that you had so pleasant a time in
travelling to Great Barrington and that you find the roads in such a condition that you can easily go from place to place. If you have had such weather, however, as we have had for the last three days you must be almost under water. Sunday and Monday and this morning it rained copiously; the cisterns are full again, and the green grass in some places almost begins to wave in the wind.

My building materials arrived on Saturday. Next week, Tuesday or Wednesday Mr. Wood begins. Henry remains at Fanny's with a little increase of wages. Fanny has got a new girl with whom she thinks she will be satisfied, an Irish cook who has lived in Connecticut. Twalmley has gone home till his lame foot is healed and then he is to call on me. Edward is hard at work in the garden, which begins to look decently. The peas are out of the ground, and are growing well.

As for the human beings at Roslyn they are all doing well. Mr. Stevens has had one or two persons to look at his place, but I have not heard that any body has bought it. Mr. Cairns improves, it is thought slowly. The children are all well.

I think I shall come on Saturday; it will not do to be absent longer, if I go to Roslyn on Tuesday as I think I ought. My regards to all our friends in Great Barrington.

Yours ever

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Unrecovered.

942. To Julia S. Bryant
    New York  April 24. 1856  Thursday afternoon.

Dear Julia

I find that the type of the article respecting Mr. Curtis has been distributed, so that it cannot go into the weekly. It was the fault of Mr. Weyman, who thought the news local. I have sent Miss Jenny [Hopkins] however, the copy of the daily containing it.

I enclose you the letter of your mother. Keep a look out for the Concord Grape from Parsons.

Yours ever

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. An EP obituary of April 15 remarked of Joseph Curtis (879.4), who had died on the 12th, "His activity of mind, which was extraordinary, was devoted to the noblest end—the good of his fellow-creatures. . . . He was one of the few persons we have known, whom age did not make less hopeful." See Letter 940.

2. See Letter 912.

3. Probably Samuel Bowne Parsons (1819–1906), of Flushing, Long Island, a
nurseryman who later successfully imported Italian honey bees and Valencia oranges into the United States.

943. To Edwin D. Morgan and Others

New York April 28th 1856.

Gentlemen

It may not be in my power to be present at the meeting at which you have done me the honor to request my attendance, but I fully agree with you as to the importance of a combined effort to assert the rights of the great body of American citizens against the encroachments of an oligarchy—a class of proprietors who seek to subject all other interests, even the most sacred and dear to their own.

Even if the question were merely whether we should stand by our old neighbors—our friends and kinsmen, who have lately left us for a new home west of Missouri, the occasion would be a fitting one to call forth all our zeal and unite all our strength. If we desert them in their hour of need, we shall be justly branded as cold-hearted, selfish and cowardly. No nation in the history of the world was ever so faithless to the obligations of humanity as to be indifferent to the fate of the colonies it had planted. With the republics of antiquity it was a matter of course to answer the calls of their colonies with instant sympathy and aid. England would cover herself with infamy, if she were to allow one of her colonies, appealing to her for protection, to be brought by force under the sway of an absolute government. In the present case the call made upon us is for a species of succor which will cost us no sacrifice, the cheap and peaceful aid of our votes. The votes of the great, prosperous, and powerful North are all that is required to deliver the settlements on the Kansas from the combination of fraud and violence formed to wrest from them their rights and compel them to submit to laws which their representatives never enacted. We raise committees, we organize a system of charity, when our benevolence is appealed to by the people of a foreign country in distress. Ought we to do less for our own countrymen? Let us organize the entire region of the free states, with such aid as we can obtain from the just and well disposed of the slave states, into a great association for breaking up the conspiracy against the rights of our countrymen and kindred at the West who look to us for help. Every generous feeling allies itself with the sense of justice in favor of the cause in which you are engaged.

I am gentlemen
with great regard
Your obedient Servant
Wm. C. Bryant.

1. Edwin Denison Morgan (1811–1883), a New York banker, and president of the Hudson River Railroad, was Republican governor of New York, 1859–1862, and from 1863 to 1869 a United States senator. The other addressees were John Bigelow; Anthony J. Bleecker (1799–1884), a real estate auctioneer and a founder of the Republican Party; William Maxwell Evarts (1818–1901, Yale 1847), a lawyer and prominent Republican who became Secretary of State under President Rutherford B. Hayes; Charles C. Leigh is identified in Trow's New York City Directory, p. 490, as a crockery merchant located at 232 Bleecker and 183 Spring streets.

2. This was a large public meeting held on April 29 in the Broadway Tabernacle, the purpose of which was "to oppose the measures and policy of the present national administration for the extension of slavery over territory embraced within the compact of the 'Missouri Compromise,' and in favor of repairing the mischiefs arising from the violation of good faith in its repeal, and of restoring the action and position of the federal government on the subject of slavery to the principles of Washington and Jefferson." Bryant's letter was one of a number read at this meeting. See EP, April 29, 30, 1856.

944. To Frances F. Bryant

New York May 14. 1856 Wednesday mng.

Dear Frances.

I went to the wedding yesterday after writing the leader in yesterdays paper and was in time. The house is three doors from Mr. Willis's and Mr. Sullivan who lives there is a partner of Wilson G. Hunt's. I made a sort of acquaintance with him on board one of the steamers returning from Europe. His wife is a buxom fresh coloured lady from New Jersey, and a particular friend of Miss Brittain's on which account the marriage took place there. There were thirty or forty people present and Dr Hawks performed the marriage ceremony. After the service there was a lunch and punch—as well as champagne. Of the ladies some wore their bonnets and some did not, all were in long sleeves. Dr Gray and all the family were there great and small. Mrs. Cornelius Lawrence was present and pelted me with a storm of invitations to come to her place, and not to be frightened from coming by any "suspicions" or any thing of the sort. Daniel Lord and his wife were there, Regina Morton, a Mr Tuckerman, not whom you know, &c. There were many inquiries about you. Dr. Hull was sorry you could not come. I made all sorts of apologies.1

The bride is pretty with a well developed figure, though small, fresh cheeks, plenty of soft brown hair and I think hazel eyes. She did not seem much flustered. Dr Hull looked thin and hollow cheeked. I will tell you the rest when I see you.

Yrs ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. The principals in this wedding were apparently a Miss Britain, not otherwise identified, and Dr. Amos Gerald Hull, Jr. (1810–1859). See 405.4. The guests who can
be identified are Wilson G. Hunt, a reform candidate for mayor of New York who was defeated by Fernando Wood, a Democrat, in 1854, and was later a promoter of the Atlantic Cable; Rev. Francis Lister Hawks (656.2); the wife of former mayor Cornelia Lawrence (314.1); Daniel Lord (1795–1868), a New York attorney who had represented John Jacob Astor (1763–1848). The Bryants were acquainted with the critic and essayist Henry Theodore Tuckerman (1813–1871), who had written A Memorial of Horatio Greenough (New York, 1853); the wedding guest was probably his cousin Frederick Goddard Tuckerman (1821–1873), the poet.

945. To Frances F. Bryant

Office of the Evening Post,
41 Nassau Street, cor. Liberty.
New York, May 21, 1856. Wednesday morning.

Dear Frances.

I was at Mrs Gibson's last evening. They had received Miss Christiana's letter, and seemed pleased to hear that she was to remain with you for a few days. Mrs. Gibson bid me tell you that she thanked you for the care you were taking of her. They were all quite well. 

No hoy novedad [No news today], as the Spaniards say. I called also on Mrs. Robert Sedgwick, who has made a visit to Mrs. Channing her sister—a visit of seven weeks. She found her in a sort of stony apathy of inconsolable grief, and succeeded a little in bringing her to a more cheerful temper. ¹

I must come out on Friday. Next week Bigelow wants to be absent and I must be here every day

Yours ever

W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

¹ Edward Channing (Letter 947) had died on February 7, 1856.

946. To Frances F. Bryant


Dear Frances.

I send you a little letter from Ellen [Mitchell] enclosed.

Mr. Bigelow did not get home till today. I have written a letter to Mr. Alden telling him that I cannot come to Easton at present. ¹ I suppose you have heard that Ogden Butler son of Mr. Charles Butler is dead.² His disorder was a consumption; the scrofulous complaint in the hip seemed to be translated to the lungs and its progress was rather rapid. His funeral took place last Sunday. I send this by Mrs. Willis who goes out tomorrow, though I suppose it possible that you may come in today. Next Wednesday evening is the Annual Strawberry Festival of the Century, when those
must be here who can. I have some other news for you but I suppose you
will hear it before I come home, and I had rather not write it.

Yours truly
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. Joseph Alden (1807–1885), then teaching at Lafayette College in Easton, Penn-
sylvania, was later the president of Jefferson College, 1857–1862, and principal of the
state normal school at Albany, New York, 1867–1882. In 1877 Alden published at New
York Studies in Bryant. A Text-Book, with an introduction by Bryant. Bryant’s letter
to Alden is unrecovered.

2. Ogden Butler, son of the lawyer and railroad builder Charles Butler (1802–
1897), and nephew of Benjamin Franklin Butler (§74.1), died at the age of twenty-seven.

947. To Richard H. Dana

Dear Dana,

My English acquaintanceship is not very extensive, and I am more
scrupulous about giving a letter of introduction to an Englishman than
to one of my own countrymen. Cooper once said to me that he would give
nobody a letter to an Englishman. We Americans are quite too apt to ad-
dress letters of introduction to persons whom we scarcely know, and the
English, knowing that we have this infirmity, are perhaps inclined to hold
us to stricter rules in this matter than they would hold their own country-
men.

Nevertheless I send you a letter for your son,1 which may answer for
an introduction to the courts of law, and perhaps to other persons of dis-
tinction—a letter to Mr. Edwin Field a lawyer of large practice in London,
with whom I became acquainted through his brother, an excellent friend
of mine, and who gave me while in England some letters that were quite
useful to me. Through him I became acquainted with Mr. Crabbe Robin-
son, the friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge and a man of uncommon
conversational powers. I shall never forget a pleasant day passed with Mr.
Edwin Field, Robinson, Fripp an artist, and a young Puseyite clergyman
whose name I have forgotten at a pleasant village on the Thames.2

I am sorry you do not find it convenient to pass the summer at your
place on the sea-shore. If it were not for my occasional retreats to the coun-
try I do not know what would become of me. If you cannot go to your own
place, will not you and your daughter think of coming for a short time to
mine[?] We will not insist on either of you knowing any thing of the last
new book. I am sure I rarely do—unless it be the book of your friend
Channing which I have read—or rather parts of it for I have not finished
the volume—with much satisfaction. It is very sensible and just; he was a
good thinker, and yet I did not find so much warmth and earnestness of
manner, so much of the power of carrying along the reader in spite of himself as I expected. The biography is exceedingly well done.  

For the political state of the country, I acknowledge that it is bad enough, and yet I do not despair of it— I rarely despair of any thing, in fact; for it is not in my temperament to do so. It looks very much, at present, as if the administration at Washington, and the party that supports it were about to meet with a signal overthrow in the elections. If their conduct be wicked, it is a comfort to me that there are so many who condemn it.

I am not much absorbed in farming. The man whom I have on my place goes rather deeper into it than I wish he would. My ambition is to have a little fruit for all seasons—straw berries in their time, European grapes in a cold vinery, and pears from August to Easter. I am fussing a little with figs and hope yet to eat one of my own raising, but I have not succeeded yet. Julia is an anthomaniac, and overwhels me with ever-blooming roses, verbenas, and a dozen varieties of the clematis. But gardening is merely my recreation, and does not withdraw me from literary pursuits. If it had not been that I lost money about two years since I think I should have nearly got myself clear of the drudgery of my newspaper by this time. At present, I have no desire to leave the field till I see what is to be the result of the November election.

You have an excellent practice of filling your sheet when you write a letter. My brain is not so "forgetive" as yours I believe, and after writing a while I can think of nothing more to set down. It wants the stimulus of a reply to set it in motion again. So you must be content with three pages in lieu of four, for this time at least. Re ...  

MANUSCRIPTS: NYPL–GR (draft and final) ENDORSED: Wm C. Bryant, June / 23rd / 56.—

Ans. 21.

1. Letter 948.
2. See Letter 545.
3. Edward Tyrell Channing, Lectures Read to the Seniors in Harvard College (Boston, 1856). Richard H. Dana, Jr., contributed a biographical memoir to this posthumous book.
4. Conclusion and signature missing.

948. To Edwin W. Field

[New York June 23? 1856]

My dear sir

The bearer of this letter is Richard H. Dana jr. author of a work which has been very extensively read on both sides of the Atlantic, "Two Years before the Mast." He is the son of my friend Richard H. Dana the poet, and is himself one of the most distinguished advocates of Massa-
chusetts. He desires while in England to see something of your courts and of those who are distinguished in the profession of law. He has some hereditary claim to be interested in this subject, as his grandfather was . . .

May I ask you to give him such assistance in his . . .

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).

1. A portion of the manuscript is missing here. Young Dana's grandfather was Francis Dana (1743–1811, Harvard 1762), chief justice of Massachusetts, 1791–1806.
2. Several versions of this fragmentary sentence conclude the very rough draft.

949. To Frances F. Bryant

New York June 25, 1856. Wednesday—

Dear Frances,

Mr. [Isaac] Henderson tells me that blinds are made here and fitted on for five and sixpence a foot—which is sixpence less than they cost at the Branch. But the maker he says, would probably not send out to Roslyn a workman to fit them on—and something might be deducted for that. I shall inquire.— If I had the measure I might perhaps engage them immediately.

Yours ever

W. C. B.

P. S. I send this by Mr. Moulton to his wife who goes out I suppose to-morrow.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

950. To Calvin Durfee

New York July 4th 1856.

Dear sir.

It is with great reluctance that I ever consent to write verses for particular occasions, on account of the difficulty and in some cases the impossibility of producing any thing with which I am satisfied. Moreover I have arrived at that time of life when it seems to me that I ought to leave such tasks to youthful poets who may be supposed to be more easily moved by casual impulses. My poetic vein also, owing I suppose to disuse, is become more capricious and unmanageable than formerly.

In regard to the hymn which you have done me the honor to ask me to write, I have done as I sometimes do on such occasions; I have considered whether there is any thing to be said which I could say well, without taking more trouble than I have now leisure to take. It is not my fault if I have arrived at a negative conclusion. I must rely therefore on your good nature to excuse me. The subject certainly admits of poetic treat-
ment—but you know what merely middling things all such verses are apt to be even when from the pens of clever writers.²

I am sir

with much regard yours,

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: WCL ADDRESS: Calvin Durfee Esqre.

1. Calvin Durfee (1797–1879) was secretary of the Society of Alumni of Williams College.

2. In 1859 Bryant wrote for Durfee an account of his life at Williams College in 1810–1811, which was published in Durfee’s History of Williams College (Boston, 1860), pp. 106–108. See Life, II, 86–88. In 1863 he contributed to the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the class of 1813, in which he had been briefly enrolled, verses entitled “Fifty Years,” published after Bryant’s death in Poetical Works, II, 327–330.

951. To Julia S. Bryant

Roslyn July 29 1856 Tuesday morning.

Dear Julia.

I am glad that you find a sojourn at Florence so much to your taste, and particularly that you have taken so kindly to early rising, and exercise before breakfast. I have now no doubt that you will come back in better health, and if the old proverb be true wiser than you went “Early to rise,” you know, &c. I only wish that Fanny were more contented with the place, but perhaps she is by this time accustomed to wheaten grits for breakfast. There is no doubt in my mind that the diet prescribed by Dr. Munde¹ is the best for her.

We are getting on very well here. I am passing a few days at Roslyn superintending the draining of the marsh about our little sheet of water and looking to the carpenters, who are now pulling down the old wood house while I write. With the kitchen part they have got on quite well, and the problem of getting out of the main building into it from the second story and from the kitchen part into the garret is happily solved.

Since you left us we have had no rain—at least until now while I am writing, when a very penurious shower is falling which does not promise to continue long. The grass in many places has become withered and crisp and every green thing languishes. The sky has been thick with a dull dust colored haze, and the weather for a good part of the time quite hot. I hope the few drops we have this morning betoken that the draught is at an end.

Your mother I take for granted has written you all about the burning of Mr. Robert Stuart’s house.² The other Stuart was sorely bested with the asthma while here and has taken quite a prejudice against the Roslyn climate. He went away on Saturday morning.

If you are all pleased with your sojourn at Florence and think it is
do you good—Fanny I hope is converted ere this—suppose you stay a few days longer—a week if it suits you, beyond the fortnight.

Your flowers have been a little neglected I fear during your absence, but they have not suffered much. The grapes are growing as fast as they can and I think will ripen earlier than last year.

Love to Fanny and Ellen if they are with you.

I am dear daughter—
affectionately yours

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR
ADDRESS: Miss Julia Bryant.

1. A German physician who conducted a water-cure sanitarium in Florence, near Northampton, Massachusetts.

2. Naval Lieutenant Robert Stuart, Jr. (d. 1863), and his bride of 1855, the former Ellen Elizabeth Cairns (1826-1893), occupied a house her mother had built for them on Hempstead Harbor, “Locust Knoll,” near Bryant’s Cedarmere. Goddard, Roslyn Harbor, pp. 33-34; Cairns Family Genealogical Chart, prepared by Helen Marlatt, Bryant Library, Roslyn. The “other Stuart” is unidentified.

952. To Julia S. Bryant

Roslyn August 2d 1856.

Dear Julia.

Your mother got your letter yesterday. We are glad to know that the bathing and air of the place agree with you so well. Stay as long as you think it is doing you good, and you are contented. I wish you had told us about Ellen—whether she submitted to the water treatment.¹ I am in great haste and cannot write you a long letter. We are all well—Dennis has been sick, but your mother and I have cured him. Mr. Kline² brought back his Johnny quite ill—we cured him also—we or nature. Your mother has had a languid time with pain in her limbs and is better. The whole world is about us, attracted to Cedermere by wages—high wages too—hammering, pounding plastering, ditching. I am glad tomorrow is Saturday. Fanny’s children also all well—except that some of them have a troublesome influenza. Your mother sends love.

Yours affectionately

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. In the mid-nineteenth century Northampton and its neighboring village Florence were noted for their water cures, numbering among their patients Harriet Beecher Stowe and Major Thomas Jonathan Jackson—later Confederate general “Stonewall” Jackson. Northampton, Massachusetts ([Northampton Chamber of Commerce, 1966?]), p. 10.

2. Probably George B. Cline, a Roslyn schoolteacher who became Bryant’s estate steward in 1858. See Bigelow, Bryant, pp. 265-266.
953. To Catharine M. Sedgwick

[Roslyn] August 8, 1856

I did not hear till yesterday of the calamity which has overtaken your family in the loss of your brother. I should rather say has overtaken us all—for it is the common misfortune of all who knew him.¹ Your letter which I did not receive till the 2d of August, just after I had sent off a letter to him gave me reason to fear a fatal termination of his disease; and one from Mr. Dewey which came to my hands at the same moment contained some strong expressions of concern on his account.² But the death of those we love and wish to keep with us almost always has the effect of a terrible surprise, even though we are prepared for it by their gradual decline. He seemed the very man who should be spared to the latest term of human life, to show how beautiful and lovely old age might be. One can scarce imagine a spectacle more delightful than the serene evening of such a life as his—the day of existence on this sphere drawn to a midsummer length, ending in a genial sunset—and as the truly good grow better as they grow older, the graces of his character heightened to the last.

But this was not to be and it seems almost a profane intermeddling with such a grief as this at such a time to suggest any thoughts which tend to reconcile the mind to such a dispensation. Yet I may be allowed to say that the very virtues which make his friends grieve are the source of their consolation, when we think that the more we have lost in him, the more he is sure to have gained. If few have lost so much as you, for that very reason few have the occasion of being so largely comforted.

I was very much struck not very long since at the answer of one to whom the prospect of life seemed uncertain, and whom I was endeavoring to console with the hope of a happier state of existence— "It will be no heaven to me!" she answered, ["if my friends are not there." ] She was one who if she departed then must leave those who were dearest to her behind. The delights of the next life I am sure are not selfish; they must be social. ["I go to prepare a place for you," said our Saviour to his disciples—³ The good who depart before us have all this office, it is they who will make a great part of the heaven for which we hope. Every passage of those we love into the next life prepares it for our reception if we are worthy to follow them.

I hope I commit no impertinence in addressing you these words—so little words. My wife bids me write, and I trust to her instincts in a matter in which my own natural reserve might have dictated a silence which if less demonstrative would have been equally full of sympathy. Meantime she desires me to say to you how deeply she takes part in this sorrow.

I am dear [friend?] very truly yours

W C B.⁴
I. After a long illness, Charles Sedgwick had died at his home in Lenox, Massachusetts, on August 3, 1856. Life and Letters of Catharine M. Sedgwick, ed. Mary E. Dewey (New York, 1871), p. 364.

2. None of these three letters has been recovered.


4. A short postscript is illegible.

954. To Julia S. Bryant

Roslyn August 11th, 1856. [Monday]¹

Dear Julia.

Your mother has had frequent headaches of late, in consequence, I think, of her many cares, and I think your being here would be a sensible relief to her. It would allow her to make her escape for a short time from all the noise and clatter we have constantly about us. Moreover, the carpenters will be ready in a few days to begin upon your room, and we want you to decide what changes shall be made. We have thought therefore that it would be well for you to come home, at the end of this week. Please bring Dr. Munde's bill with you and thank him in your mother's name and mine for the attention he has paid to your case.²

The workmen employed on our house are getting on very well. In some respects we have been obliged to change the original plan, and in some respects we perceive now that we might have planned better than we have. On the whole, however, we are satisfied—I am for my part very well satisfied with the alterations we have made in the old part of the building and with the new part. It is more convenient than most houses, and in some respects more convenient than any I ever lived in. There are yet huge piles of rubbish lying about it, which are growing larger rather than smaller.

When you return do not come by Great Barrington. Fanny says the route is both circuitous and expensive, and will be perplexing to you on account of being obliged to change cars so often at the intersections of the railways, where the baggage must be changed from one conveyance to another. If you wish to go to Barrington it would be better to go thither immediately from New York.

Your mother sends her love. . . .³

¹ The brackets are Bryant's.

² The nature of Julia's illness is undetermined.

³ Conclusion and signature missing.
955. To Alfred B. Street

Roslyn, Long Island, August 11, 1856

... Your invitation is most kind and there is no man in Albany from whom I should be prouder to receive such an offer of hospitality. But I am confined to these latitudes, repairing my house, building a new kitchen, making drains, reclaiming a marsh and making basins for my springs. At this time every moment I can spare from the paper must be given to the superintendence of my workmen at my place in the country. . . .


1. Alfred Billings Street (1811–1881), a lawyer and poet, was the director of the New York State Library at Albany. The nature of his invitation is undetermined.

956. To Messrs. Dix & Edwards

New York Sept. 2 1856

Gentlemen.

If the bundle of papers which I sent yesterday to Mr. Curtis is still with you, please allow Mr. Rakemann, the bearer, who is one of the Committee to adjudge the prize to the author of the best Frémont Song, to look at them.1

Yrs truly

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL Address: Messrs Dix & Edwards.

1. In May 1856 the EP had printed an account by John Bigelow of the life of John Charles Frémont (1813–1890). After the nomination of that soldier-explorer in June as the first Republican candidate for the presidency, Bryant brought the EP to his support in what was for him a rare political speech, at a Republican rally in Yonkers, New York, concluding with the slogan, "Freedom and Frémont." During the summer the EP offered two prizes of $100 each for the best campaign songs in English and German. The winning English contribution, by the painter-poet Thomas Buchanan Read (1822–1872), appeared in the EP on October 6. George William Curtis (1824–1892), then an editor of Putnam's Monthly Magazine, was a reformer active in the anti-slavery movement. He had introduced Bryant at the Yonkers meeting as one "known to our country-men as the first of our citizens in every respect," one whose line from "The Battlefield," "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again," expressed a "sentiment worthy to be the watch word of freemen in all time." EP, May 19 and 24, July 12, October 6, 1856; Nevins, Evening Post, pp. 231, 252. Rakemann is unidentified.

957. To Julia S. Bryant

Great Barrington Friday afternoon September 26th 1856

Dear Julia.

I shall leave this place tomorrow for New York, having delivered my speech.1 Your mother with Major Hopkins and your aunt expects to fol-
low me on Monday—so that you will have them all on Tuesday. I write that you may have every thing ready.

There has been an immense throng here—eight thousand people at the fair, and every thing has passed off well. Mrs. Henderson is very infirm, but apparently slowly improving. Estelle [Ives] cannot come now.

Yours affectionately

W C BRYANT

P.S. Willis and his wife expect to come to Roslyn on Tuesday.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Bryant spoke at the annual fair of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, to which he had addressed several odes during his residence in Great Barrington in 1816–1825. See 39.3. His 1856 speech apparently was not preserved.

958. To John Howard Bryant

New York, October 14, 1856

Dear Brother

As soon as I received your last,1 I caused its contents to be communicated to our Fremont Committee. Its account of the politics of Illinois was confirmed by other letters in their possession. They said they should immediately take measures to send speakers into your state, which I believe has been done.

We expect a favorable report from Pennsylvania to-morrow. The Buchanan men here are desponding, and it seems to be thought that if the State election goes against them, the Presidential election will go against them also. I do not think that certain, however, though it is probable.²

There is good hope of New Jersey. If the means can be provided of getting the Fremont voters to the polls, we stand the best chance of the two. They have a practice in New Jersey of providing conveyances for the voters at the expense of the general election fund of the party to which they belong. The Buchanan men will lose no votes for want of money to pay the carriage hire of those who vote.

New York we regard as perfectly safe for Fremont. The Fillmore party—their agents and leaders at least—brag high, but they either know better or are grossly deceived themselves.³ Both they and the Buchanan party—their active men and journalists at least make common cause against the free-soilers, though I think they will not come to a formal coalition; the mass of each party not being at all prepared for it. Such a measure would ruin them both. They would be glad to come to an understanding, I fully believe, but the people are in the way.

We are keeping up the contest with the best hopes of success. A very large class of persons who never took any interest in elections before are zealous Fremonters now—among these are clergymen and Quakers and indifferents of all sorts. These men will swell the vote for Fremont in the
choice of electors; but will not make much figure at the previous State elections.4

The season thus far has been beautiful with us. I have had a tolerably fair supply of apples, both in quantity and quality. My dwarf pear trees have produced pretty well. Our Vicar of Winkfield was loaded. My two Urbaniste trees were quite fruitful, and so was my Bon Chretien fondante and Louise Bonne de Jersey. The Portugal Quince was full of fruit. In all respects the year has been a fruitful one with us on Long Island.

I am sorry to hear so bad an account of your pear trees. If in the dry weather you had wet the mulching with a pailful of water to each tree, and put stones, if you could find them on the mulching, if not sticks, the moisture would have been retained a long time.

Remember me kindly to all. We are all pretty well.

Yrs truly

W C Bryant


1. Letter unrecovered.

2. In June 1856 the new Republican Party nominated as its first presidential candidate John Charles Frémont; earlier that month the Democrats had chosen as their candidate James Buchanan (1791–1868, Dickinson 1809) of Pennsylvania, a former senator, Secretary of State, and minister to Great Britain.

3. Former President Millard Fillmore (1800–1874) of New York was the presidential candidate of the Native American, or “Know-Nothing,” Party, composed chiefly of disgruntled former Whigs with an anti-foreign and anti-Catholic bias.

4. In the national election on November 4, Buchanan received 174 electoral votes; Frémont, 114; and Fillmore, 8. But Buchanan’s popular vote fell short of the combined tally of his opponents by more than 375,000; thus he became a minority president. Nevins, Ordeal, II, 510. On the next day the EP commented editorially, “If we have not carried the United States, . . . we have at least laid the basis of a formidable and well-organized party, in opposition to the spread of slavery—that scheme which is the scandal of the country and of the age.”

959. To Frederic Tudor1 New York Oct 23 1856.

Dear sir

Through our common friend Dr. Piper2 I have received your very kind invitation to visit your place at Nahant.3 His account of it—to say nothing of the picture he drew of its amiable inmates, had raised in me a strong curiosity to see a spot which you have made beautiful in spite of Nature—if perhaps I should not rather say by a skilful turning of Nature—a curiosity which my wife shares with me. She has desired me when I acknowledge your civility, to return her thanks to you and Mrs. Tudor, and to say for her as I do for myself that only the lateness of the season and some engagements at home prevent us from accepting the invitation at
present. We have never yet seen Nahant and since your hospitable invitation includes another season we hope to have that pleasure hereafter.

I am sir

yours very truly

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (draft) ADDRESS: Frederick Tudor Esq.

1. In 1806 the Boston businessman Frederic Tudor (1783–1864) had pioneered in shipping ice to the West Indies, eventually establishing a highly lucrative worldwide trade. He was a younger brother of William Tudor (1779–1830), a politician, author, and founder and first editor in 1815 of the North American Review.

2. Dr. R. N. Piper of West Groton, Massachusetts, was a horticulturalist and amateur artist who later wrote articles on fruit culture for the EP. Piper to Bryant, March 3, 1866, and Bryant to Piper, March 9, 1866, NYPL-GR. See also Letter 997.

3. A resort on the Massachusetts seacoast north of Boston.

960. To Cyrus Bryant

New York October 31, 1856.

Dear Brother.

You ask me to transfer the Evening Post, which is now sent to Mr. Daniel Bryant, to yourself.¹ I have directed it to be stopped from going any more to him; but if you want it I think you can afford to take it. That he does not agree with its political views, is certainly a very good reason why he should not take much interest in reading it, as it is at present conducted, and if Buchanan should be elected, which God forbid, it will probably be less to the taste of Buchanan's friends than it now is. I have many personal friends who will not touch the paper.

Yours truly

W C BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-BFP ADDRESS: C. Bryant Esqre.

1. Bryant probably refers to his father's cousin, but it is uncertain where Daniel Bryant was living at this time.

961. To Frances F. Bryant

New York November 6th, 1856.

Dear Frances.

I called on Mrs. Robinson last evening. Her husband has been ill with a remittent fever of the typhoid type, and is still quite weak, so that he scarcely goes out.¹ Accordingly, neither she nor Mary can come out at present to Roslyn. I saw the young lady, and gave her a particular invitation, but her mother cannot dispense with her company yet. I have ordered the candles and isinglass—so you will send for them. I shall not come home till Saturday evening.
Mr. William Appleton has returned from Europe, after an absence of five months. He has seen he says the design for the new illustrated edition of my poems, which is to be out in July next—I do not suppose he has seen all—they are, he says very fine—he thinks finer than Longfellows. The landscape sketches furnished by Durand are used in them and the American character of the scenery is well preserved. Laurence's head of me is to be the portrait.3

Yours ever
W. C. B.

Manuscript: NYPL–GR.

1. Edward and Therese Robinson; see 399.2.
2. In 1838 William Henry Appleton (1814–1899) and his father, Daniel (1785–1849), had founded the firm of D. Appleton and Company, Bryant’s principal publishers from 1854.
3. See 927.2. The edition referred to here was Poems by William Cullen Bryant. Collected and Arranged by the Author. Illustrated with Seventy-one Engravings. From Drawings by Eminent Artists (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1856). This was printed in London by R. Clay.

962. To Samuel H. Dickson

New York Nov. 17 1856

Mr dear sir

Your letter of the 9th. instant with its enclosure came safely to hand.1 I wish you had waited a day or two longer that you might have informed me of the arrival of the wine and how you found it. The trouble I have taken in the matter is very little, indeed it is not so much as I ought to have taken, for I might have written earlier to Mr. Hammett to inquire what had become of the lagrima which I ordered.2 My excuse for not doing so is that in his first letter to me Mr Hammett spoke doubtfully of its being sent immediately for want of opportunity.

If none of us have written to you for some time past it is not because we have “forgotten” you and yours, as you express it. We often talked of you, and with the deepest sympathy, when one of your family was called from you. We heard of you through the Dewey family, and their account of you all seemed like renewing the pleasant intercourse of former days. Dr Dewey with his wife and Miss Mary passed a few days with us on their return to the north.

My wife would be the happiest creature in the world could she accept your kind invitation for Wednesday evening, but unfortunately she is in the country confined with the inflammatory rheumatism. My own engagements will prevent me from being present.

I am dear friend
very truly yours
W C BRYANT
MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Letter unrecovered.
2. Probably Henry Pinckney Hammett (1822–1891), a South Carolina cotton manufacturer. It was probably his cotton mill near Augusta which Bryant visited in March 1849, and described in Letter 671. On December 6, Dickson replied (NYPL-GR) that he had received the wine.

963. To Parke Godwin

New York Dec 2 1856

Dear sir

Mr Titus¹ has just called to say that the Superintendent of Public Instruction will probably be removed, and to ask if you would like it. The salary he thinks is $2500—the duties may or may not be laborious; neither he nor I know.²

Mr. Titus's office is 34 Liberty Street, where he will be day after tomorrow.

Yours truly
W. C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR address: P. Godwin Esq.

1. Probably Jacob Titus; see 766.6.
2. Godwin did not take this position; see Letter 969.

964. To Messrs. Childs & Peterson


Gentlemen,

The merits of Dr. Kane's recent work are so universally acknowledged, that it seems superfluous to praise it.¹ It is a record of one of the most daring, and so far as the interests of science are concerned, one of the most successful enterprises of modern times, and is written in a most interesting manner—a manner which gives the reader a high idea of the intellectual and moral qualities of the author.

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

MANUSCRIPT: Indiana University Library address: Messrs. Childs & Peterson.

1. Elisha Kent Kane (1820–1857, M.D. Pennsylvania 1842), Arctic Explorations (Philadelphia, 1856). This was Kane's account of his hazardous experiences, as leader of the second Grinnell Expedition (1853–1855), which contributed to a fuller exploration of northern Greenland than had previously been made.
965. To Julia S. Bryant

New York January 16, 1857

Dear Julia,

I got your letter of this morning. The letter for Josephine I mailed to Mrs. Josephine M. Stewart, care of David Stewart Esqre. Baltimore, Maryland, which I am sure will reach her.¹ When you write to a lady always address the letter to her by her own name if you know it—and then though you direct it to the care of the wrong person she will be apt to get it. Whether her husband be John or David Stewart I am uncertain, but as they are brothers, if the one gets it who is not the lady's husband, he will be very sure to send it to her.

The Long Island Rail road has been somewhat obstructed by snow, and when your mother went out a fortnight since she was detained several hours. Since that time it has been clear I believe as far as Farmingdale. The ferries have been much obstructed, and the boats delayed by ice, particularly the South Ferry, so that persons who took the cars had to go by way of Fulton Ferry. Yesterday your mother, after putting it off a day or two on account of the cold weather, went down to Roslyn taking with her the woman who lived at Mrs. Miller's, and whom she designs for Fanny. Tomorrow I shall follow, with the intention of remaining till Tuesday.

I am glad that you are so well entertained at Barrington and so studious besides. Tell Mrs. Ives from me that she must keep a tight rein over you and hold you firmly to your studies, so that if you take any thing from the time you should give them on one day you may a little more than make it up the next—the little more being a voluntary penance for the negligence.

There was a gay time at the Century on the evening after you left—and a very stupid one I am told last evening at the Academy of Music, when they danced for the benefit of the poor children—a cold crowded comfortless room—a chilly jam and that was all. Adele Hoyt² was married yesterday—I forget to whom, but it was some young man, who is now out of the market.

Give my best regards to Mrs Ives and Ma'amselle, and to Julia³ and all our friends in Barrington.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR.

1. Leonice Josephine Moulton Stewart (1834–1922) was the wife of John Stewart (1826–1901), a Baltimore merchant. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph White Moulton. Hoyt, “Bryant Correspondence (1),” 69.
2. Probably a daughter of Jesse Hoyt (230.6).
966. *To Julia S. Bryant*


Dear Julia.

Your mother is very ill with an attack of acute rheumatism. For some time she had suffered a good deal from a sensation of extreme chilliness which was succeeded on Thursday night by fever and severe internal pains. I was at home, at Roslyn, blockaded by the snow. We did not know what to make of it at first—some of the symptoms resembling those of lung fever, but on Sunday night it declared itself as a decided rheumatic complaint. I came in on Monday morning in an open sleigh, saw the doctor the next morning, and on Tuesday took out his prescription. I found her suffering still more than when I left her. She cannot move herself in bed, and cannot be moved without excruciating pain. It seems to me the most painful of diseases. This morning I left her very little better, though she had slept during the night after two sleepless nights. I regard the sleep as a favorable symptom.

I think therefore you had better return with as little delay as may be. Your mother will come to town as soon as she is well enough, but in the meantime she is much better there than here. I shall go to Roslyn again tomorrow after seeing Dr. Gray. Susan is taking care of your mother, but I doubt not your presence would be a comfort to her; though much company—or rather much prattle, tires her.

The only news I can tell you of Roslyn is that Stuart has returned, that Mr. and Mrs Cairns are in town at a house in Broadway where they can see every thing that passes from the windows, that Roslyn harbor is sheeted with ice from side to side, and the streets for a month past have been merry with sleighs. Fanny gets letters from her two children at Eagleswood¹ who seem quite contented. The two youngest have the prevalent influenza and the mother also has a touch of it. I have engaged Dennis for another year—the other arrangement fell through. Dennis is to live in the Cottage where Edward now is. Mr. Stevens did not care to engage it.

Please give my kind regards to Mrs. and Miss Ives and Julia Fairchild and all our friends at Barrington. I think your mother would have been glad to get letters from you oftener—but I hope the time which you would have given to writing letters has been passed in study.

Yours affectionately

W. C. BRYANT.

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1. See 921.2.
967. To Fanny Bryant Godwin

New York  March 31, 1857

Dear Fanny.

I will do what I am able but I think you ought not to allow yourself in too strong hopes of success. Mr. Godwin must first send in his name, as a candidate, and I will speak to such of the Trustees as I happen to know.

Since I began to write this note Dr. [Henry James] Anderson has called. The subject was new to him and he said, that he thought that nobody could fill the Professor ship better than Godwin—but he added "you know the prejudices of these people—the Trustees." He expressed himself highly favorable to the appointment.¹

Yours ever,
W. C. B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR.

1. See Letter 969.

968. To Benjamin F. Butler¹

New York  April 17th, 1857.

My dear sir.

I have lately got out an edition of my poems carefully revised, the first perfectly accurate one I think which has appeared. Will you do me the favor to accept the accompanying copy. The subject of the last poem in the second volume may perhaps interest you if the verses should not.²

Yours very truly
WM. C. BRYANT.


1. See 374.1.

969. To Alexander W. Bradford¹

New York  April 23d 1857.

Dear sir.

Among the persons who have made application to the Board of Trustees of Columbia College of which you are a member for the Professorship of History, is Parke Godwin Esqre. I wish to say in his behalf, that he is addicted by a strong inclination to historical studies, that he is remarkably diligent and persevering in literary pursuits, that he is a man of more than ordinary facility and clearness in the communication of knowledge, and that I know of nothing in his character or mode of life which would be
inconsistent with the dignity of the station he aspires to fill, or that would obstruct his usefulness in discharging its duties.  

I am, sir,
with great respect
Yours &c
WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: Boston Public Library ADDRESS: To the Hon. A W Bradford.

1. Alexander Warfield Bradford (1815–1867), a lawyer, was New York City surrogate, 1848–1858.
2. Godwin failed of this appointment, which went to Francis Lieber (217.2). See Parke Godwin to Frances Bryant, May 22, 1857, NYPL–GR.

970. To John Howard Bryant

Great Barrington April 24th 1857

Dear Brother.

I think any way in which it is most for your convenience to arrange the matter of the Bingham notes will suit Fanny. I told her that you would take the whole amount $2,750 and send her your note for it. But if it be more for your convenience to do as you propose in your letter of April 15th, will you take the trouble to write to her yourself on the subject?

I am sorry to hear such bad news of Austin’s health but he has naturally a strong constitution, and I hope will get happily over it.

The weather in our neighborhood has not been as severe as with you, but it has been uncommonly cold, and exceedingly inconstant. My early potatoes, however, were planted the last week of March and have been above the ground more than a week. The European violets in my garden have been out for four weeks. Our wheat is very little winter-killed. A few cherry trees have been split by the extreme cold, as was the case last winter—but the splitting of the cherry tree does not seem with us as it does with you, necessarily to occasion the death of the tree, though I have no doubt it makes it short lived. [I] perceive that it is only the very free growing varieties of the cherry tree that are subject to split with us—the marvello and the duke kinds do not split in such winters as we have. Some of the duke varieties produce delicious fruit.

I am here with my wife on a visit to see her sisters previous to our sailing for Europe. She wrote a letter to you which went in the mail ten days since, I think. The notes of Bingham I sent some time since. My wife is pretty well recovered from the attack of rheumatism she had last winter and I am in hopes that the sea voyage will give her strength which she yet wants.

Remember me kindly to all.

Yours affectionately and truly
W. C. BRYANT
MANUSCRIPT: Mrs. Mildred Bryant Kussmaul, Brockton, Massachusetts ADDRESS: John H. Bryant Esq.

1. See 906.2.
2. Unrecovered.
3. Cullen's elder brother had just entered his sixty-fifth year.
4. Word omitted.

971. To Richard H. Dana

Great Barrington April 24th, 1857.

Dear Dana,

I am here with my wife on a visit to her sisters, before sailing for Europe, to which I am to take her and Julia very shortly. Her health has not been so good as usual for the last two years, and last winter she suffered dreadfully with an attack of acute or inflammatory rheumatism. I am in hopes a sea voyage will give her strength, and therefore we go in a sailing packet, that there may be a fair trial of its effect. I write this as a kind of farewell letter, as I cannot take leave of you personally. May I not hope to hear from you sometimes when abroad? Your letters are among the very pleasantest I receive here, but in a strange country they will be more welcome still.

I am rejoiced to hear that Charlotte has so far recovered. The gradual improvement which has been going on in her case, seems to make it not improbable that she may wholly get over the effect of her accident.

Your attack on the word "commence" quite delighted me. "Commence" is the torment of my life; I can hardly help rebuking roughly any body who uses it in my hearing. If it be a young person I am pretty sure to give a short lesson. Trench's book, of which you speak so favorably I have looked into. I like all his books.

The lady whom you met at the concert was Miss [Christiana] Gibson a very good friend of our family. She has a great veneration for eminent men, and counts it among the lucky accidents of her visit to Boston that she fell in with you. I shall see her before sailing and will then explain the matter of your seeming inattention to her. The forgetfulness of names is so frequent an accident with me that I no longer consider it awkward as you call it. It is an infirmity of which I am no more ashamed than I am of my grey hairs.

I shall let you know, if I do not forget it in the hurry of departing, how to address your letters to me abroad—but if I do not and you will send them to the office of the Evening Post with a desire that they may be forwarded to me I shall get them duly. My best regards to your daughter.

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


1. Probably Richard Chenevix Trench (1807–1886), The Study of Words (1851).
972. To Ellen S. Mitchell

[April 1857]¹

Dear Niece

I write to trouble you with a matter in which I am sure you will take some interest. I would have written directly to your husband if I had not forgotten all but his middle name and surname.

The headstone of my father's grave is broken and lies on the ground. I wish to have a new headstone or footstone—massive and solid and with a new inscription. What I wish is that your husband should engage some suitable person in Dalton to cut the stone and put it up in a solid and durable manner so that the frosts will not displace it. I should be glad if he would make a bargain with this person to do it within a reasonable time and let me know the terms. I will send the money immediately.²

I wish to do this because I am going with my family to Europe this spring—as early as the beginning or middle of next month—and I would be glad to have the matter put in turn before I go.

My wife who has been ill this winter with the inflammatory rheumatism accompanies me as well as Julia. We may be back in six months or may stay longer.

In the hope of hearing soon from your husband I am

affectionately yrs

W C Bryant.


1. See Bryant's endorsement on this draft letter.
2. Accompanying this letter is a draft in Bryant's hand of the inscription later placed on Peter Bryant's gravestone in the Bryant Cemetery at Cummington. See 58.3, and the illustration in Volume I.

973. To James T. Fields¹

New York May 1, 1857.

My dear sir.

I had hoped to have sent you a copy of Thanatopsis before this, but I have been too busy to write it off. You shall have it, if I send it from Europe for which I sail tomorrow.

Yours truly

W. C. Bryant

MANUSCRIPT: Wellesley College Library ADDRESS: James T. Fields Esqre.

1. This is the earliest recovered letter in a long correspondence between Bryant and James Thomas Fields (1817–1881), who was later (1861–1870) editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and whose Boston firm of Ticknor and Fields published Bryant's translations from Homer in 1870–1871.