BRYANT'S FIRST CONCERN on his return from Europe, after his newspaper, was to prepare a new collection of his poems, which Carey & Hart of Philadelphia had agreed to publish in elegant dress the following year. Scarcely ashore in Boston, he asked the advice and criticism of Richard Dana, the mentor whose wise counsel he had relied on since the preparation of his first little volume at Cambridge in 1821. The poet assured his friend that there was no one else of whom he would ask such a favor, and said he felt inclined to omit any verses to which Dana took exception. Dana protested in return, "I am more than ever before impressed with the number of the pieces that ascend into grandeur of thought, into the higher order of powers," urging that none of those appearing in earlier collections be left out of this one. Nevertheless, his criticism was painstaking and detailed, and on the book's publication in November 1846 Bryant credited him with having greatly improved it, while Dana hailed it as proving his friend unequalled in his imagery: "There is a perfection in the meanings which your words give to things."

In December 1845 Bryant agreed to serve a third year as president of the American Art Union. As such, it was his sad task soon after the New Year to arrange a retrospective benefit exhibition of the works of Henry Inman, who died in January at the early age of forty-five. Bryant had known the brilliant young portrait-painter as early as 1825, as a fellow member of the Bread and Cheese Club, and later in the Sketch Club, and they had been associated in the infancy of the National Academy, of which Inman was a founder. He had sketched scenes from Bryant's poems, and in 1827 painted the first—and probably the finest—portrait of the poet, and they had worked closely in preparing The Talisman, for which Inman had provided the greatest number of illustrations. Bryant must have felt his death with greater poignancy in recalling Wordsworth's praise six months earlier for the artist and the skillful portrait he had painted of the master of Rydal Mount. The exhibition for the benefit of Inman's family at the Art Union's rooms on Broadway was the first of only two one-man shows held by the society, and was partly responsible for its notable growth in 1846, which justified Bryant's boast at the annual meeting in December, "We claim . . . to have done something to awaken and call forth a genius for Art among our countrymen."

As Bryant resumed charge of the Evening Post he might read in its columns an item from the Philadelphia North American, a widely respected Whig journal, regretting that no more of his letters were to "grace the Evening Post," for his letters from Europe "are the most interesting productions of their sort we have ever read." The writer saw nothing inconsistent in Bryant's now writing more such letters at leisure, for he must have much more
in mind which he had not found time for abroad. Indeed he did, and Cullen told Frances he intended to resume the travel accounts which had left off with his departure from Heidelberg in August. But he was soon caught up in the management of his paper and daily comment on the affairs of city, state, and nation. Almost his first act was to restate his creed, that the "best course for the democratic party" was "always to adopt the right rather than the expedient"; that its principles must continue to be "identified with the permanent interests and sympathies of the mass of the people."

Just then the conflicting claims of Great Britain and the United States to Oregon had reached a precarious balance, and Bryant warned Washington against premature grants of land in the disputed territory to settlers, for "that is a war message," and would shortly put "twenty thousand rifles beyond the Rocky Mountains." As the dispute cooled toward a peaceful solution in the spring of 1846, it was displaced by a greater crisis against which Bryant had long cautioned—war with Mexico. During his absence the annexation of Texas had been all but consummated, while the weak and debt-ridden Mexican government had grown increasingly bellicose. As news reached the President of the first clash between Mexican and American forces, Bryant was still urging conciliation, declaring that "those to whose zeal the annexation was owing should take care that it does not involve us in a harassing and protracted war." And, while he supported the declaration of belligerency on May 13, he restated his belief in "the inconsistency of a war of invasion and conquest with the character of our government and the ends for which Providence has manifestly raised up our republic," urging that American action be confined to a vigorous defense of the border.

Another of Bryant's concerns was reduction of the high and discriminatory tariff duties adopted in 1842; when this was accomplished by passage of the Walker bill at the end of July the Evening Post announced its "unalloyed gratification. . . . The work is done, and the triumph complete. A most unjust law is repealed." And Bryant was intrigued by the prospect of a railway from the East to Oregon, which he saw, not as some did, as a "humbug," but rather as an essential aid to our inevitable intercourse with Asia, "when our steamers shall issue from the Straits of Fuca to trade with Japan and China," and he printed a letter describing graphically the visit of the United States warship Vincennes to Tokyo Bay in July 1846.

The association on the Evening Post with Parke Godwin, never cordial, had been rendered inimical by Godwin's arbitrary assumption of editorial control during Bryant's absence abroad, and although the editor kept his son-in-law on as a news assistant until after he visited Illinois in the summer of 1846, they parted company for a second time that fall, when Godwin gave up what he confided to a friend had been "most repugnant labour" which had lately become "intolerable." In February 1847 Bryant seems to have sounded out John Bigelow about joining the paper as an editorial understudy. The young lawyer, a close associate of the influential Democratic politician Samuel Jones Tilden, was a state prison inspector who had written a series of effective articles for the Evening Post in 1845 on constitutional reform. He was reluctant to join the paper without acquiring a share in its ownership, which he was then unable to afford. Soon he and Bryant became more intimately
acquainted as fellow-boarders in a house on Amity Place, and when, in the fall of 1848, Bryant repeated his invitation, providing means by which Bigelow might be admitted as a partner, it was accepted. In the meantime, Bryant had the effective assistance of an able young Yale graduate, William Tenney, who left the paper at about the time Bigelow joined it.

In the summer of 1846 Cullen and Frances made their second visit together to Illinois, this time taking Julia with them. Departing from their itinerary of 1841, they traveled both ways by Great Lakes steamboats, and Bryant devoted the larger part of his correspondence for the Evening Post to his impressions of the cities and towns and the wilderness settlements along the shores of Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan. His observations of life among the Chippewas and Potawatomis in their villages and missions, of the woodsmen and mining prospectors, and the trading companies, told in detail, provided eastern city dwellers of his time, as they do even today, with absorbing insights into the frontier life of the old Northwest. In October he added to his domestic travel descriptions on a brief journey through northern New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania, and the following summer he described his travels through much of northern New England.

Following his withdrawal from the presidency of the Art Union at the beginning of 1847, Bryant and several of his close associates formed the Century Association, an outgrowth of the Sketch Club, whose limited membership of twenty-one was often inundated with guests at its much-sought-after meetings of artists and writers. The Sketch Club continued for long thereafter to meet in the homes of members, and to entertain visiting celebrities, but rather as an exclusive, if informal, adjunct to its larger offspring, which Bryant would later guide as its president during the final decade of his life.

Bryant’s visit with his family at Princeton, Illinois, in the summer of 1846 marked his last meeting with his mother, for the following winter Sarah Snell Bryant, who had raised seven children to maturity, who had pioneered on two widely separated frontiers, and who could, until in her late sixties, vault from the ground into the saddle of a horse, fell and broke her hip. In May 1847 she died, in her seventy-ninth year, and her second son mourned her in one of his most intimate and touching poems, “The May Sun Sheds an Amber Light.”
567. To Samuel Jones Tilden

New York January 5 1846.

My dear Sir

I am in the thick of the battle with the Bosworth Squad. I want Bosworth's report made to the Assembly in 1844 against the abolishing of the freehold qualification of State Senators.  

It is denied that he is a conservative, and I want to fix the charge upon him by the production of some passages from his report. Can you obtain a copy of it at Albany and send it to me?

The shot let off in the Evening Post on Friday caused a great deal of fluttering among the pigeons. McVean and the other men were seen in close and earnest consultation, the same evening, and the next day McVean told Boggs that he supposed he was one of the men alluded to as the members of the Bosworth Squad. He denied however that he had written any article very lately for the Globe except one concerning the alteration of the constitution,—said that Bosworth would not consent to go to the convention, even if nominated for he had told him so—that he wished the Post had attacked him instead of Bosworth—and &c. &c.

Yrs truly

WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL—Samuel Jones Tilden Papers ADDRESS: Hon. S. J. Tilden / Member of the Legislature / Albany. POSTMARK: NEW-YORK / 6 / JAN / 5 cts POSTAL ANNOTATION: 5 PAID DOCKETED: W. C. BRYANT.

1. Tilden (389.3), then a New York lawyer and state assemblyman, was a Democratic leader in the legislature. On April 2, 1844, in a report to the assembly, Joseph S. Bosworth, a Democratic legislator from New York City, had shown his conservative bias by opposing such reforms as removal of the constitutional property requirement for membership in the state senate. As a result, he had failed of his party's renomination the following year. But on December 19, 1845, after a constitutional convention had been called for the following June 1, Bosworth reversed his stand in a public speech.

2. Bryant's editorials on January 2 and 3 charged that Bosworth and a few disgruntled followers, whom he characterized as the "Bosworth Squad," were trying to discredit the "original friends of reform," such as Governor Silas Wright, Controller Azariah Flagg, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Samuel Young, and to control the choice of delegates to the convention, thereby taking constitutional revision into their own hands. On January 5 Bryant returned to the attack on the Bosworth Squad, and on the 9th he printed damaging portions of Bosworth's 1844 report.


568. To Richard H. Dana  

My dear sir

I promised some time since to send you a copy [of] my poems which should contain every thing in the latest editions. I found among my pamphlets the other day a copy of an English cheap edition¹ which has all of my poems that have been published in a single volume, and as it can be conveniently sent by mail, I have had it put in a wrapper and directed to you. You shall have something better than this shabby pamphlet when Carey and Hart's edition is out.

You will oblige me by letting me know your decision in regard to these poems as soon as you have looked them over. When I first thought of asking your opinion as to which of them should be left out of the new edition, it occurred to me that I would say to you that I would not bind myself to confirm all your nominations. But on talking with you it appeared to me that you were disposed to be very lenient with me and that if you erred you would err on the side of mercy—so I said nothing of what had before been in my mind.

Your friend Hudson's lectures take very well here.—²

Remember me very kindly to your sisters and to your daughter & believe me

Yrs faithfully

WM C. BRYANT


2. Henry Norman Hudson (1814–1886), an Episcopal clergyman and Shakespearean scholar, had lectured on the plays at the Brooklyn Institute early in 1845, and presumably repeated his lecture series a year later. Odell, Annals, V, 164. Hudson was later distinguished as editor of the Harvard Edition of Shakespeare.

569. To Samuel Jones Tilden  

New York January 13, 1846.

My dear Sir

You may recollect that I spoke with you the other day concerning the reappointment of Dr. John Neilson jun.¹ as Notary Public. He has exercised this office for several years past, as notary to the Manhattan Bank, in such a manner as to give perfect satisfaction. I do not recollect when he was originally appointed, but I remember interesting myself in favour of his reappointment under Governor Bouck,² and with success. Dr. Neilson is a man of high probity, and in all other respects of an irreproachable character, and enjoys the good opinion and good will of all who know him.
In the hope that he will be reappointed—as I am sure he will be if Governor Wright understands what sort of man he is—I send you along with this letter some testimonials in his favor obtained from those who know him, and request that you will be so kind as to lay them before the Governor.

Yrs truly
 WM C. BRYANT

P. S. I have called my friend Dr. Neilson because he was bred to the medical profession and for a short time practised. His occupations for some years past have however been in another line and we ought I suppose to call him in plain terms Mr. Neilson.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPI—Samuel Jones Tilden Papers Address: Hon Saml J. Tilden / Member of the House of Assembly / Albany. Enrolled: John Neilson / reappointment as Notary Public / Bryant &c.

1. See 204.1.
2. William C. Bouck (144.3) was governor of New York, 1843–1844.
3. Silas Wright (388.7).

570. To James K. Polk

New York January 29, 1846.

Sir

Will you allow me to occupy your attention for a moment with the subject of the United States Consulship at Florence.

Mr. James Ombrosi, a native of Florence, who in his youth resided for some time in this country was in 1819, appointed a deputy consul of Thomas Appleton the United States Consul at Leghorn. On the third of March 1823 Mr. Ombrosi was appointed Consul at Florence by Mr. [President James] Monroe. For twenty seven years he has discharged the consular duties to the perfect satisfaction of every body. Nothing can exceed his kindness to American citizens arriving at Florence and residing there. His relations to the country and the people of Italy put it in his power to be very useful to them, and he omits no opportunity of making himself so.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany does not formally recognize an American consul at his capital, for the reason, as I understand that if he were to do so, the different powers of Europe which now maintain ministers of high rank at his court, might also content themselves with sending consuls only. He however allows Mr. Ombrosi by courtesy to perform all the functions of consul, which his government recognizes as valid, an arrangement greatly for the convenience of American citizens who have any commercial transactions in Florence.

In 1844 the appointment of Consul at Florence was conferred by Mr. Tyler on Mr. E. Gamage of Charleston. Mr. Gamage learning that the
sovereign of the country would not recognize at his court a *Consul*, declined to go out to Florence and in June 1844 wrote to Mr. Ombrosi to act as Deputy Consul.

The office of consul could be in no better hands than those of Mr. Ombrosi. The emoluments are very small; he takes no fees for examining passports, and half his life is spent in conferring little obligations on the people of our country. I hope the worthy old gentleman will be allowed to retain the office. But as there may be a question whether the appointment of Mr. Gamage has not divested him of any authority to act as Consul, I have written this to solicit on his behalf, and that of many of our countrymen who have experienced his obliging attentions, that a new Commission of Consul may be made out for him.

I am sir with great respect &c.

WILLIAM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. ADDRESS: To / James K. Polk / President of the United States / Washington / District of Columbia


1. Ombrosi served as the American consular representative in Florence from 1823 until his death in 1852, making many friends among American visitors. For a time at least he and Fenimore Cooper were on cordial terms. As a youth of twenty-one on his first visit to Europe, Longfellow found Ombrosi an “excellent kind man” who opened the way for him into the “very first society of Florence”; in 1848 Margaret Fuller, whom Bryant had earlier introduced to Ombrosi (Letter 583), called him an able exception to the advisable rule that United States consuls should be native-born Americans. Cooper, *Letters & Journals*, I, 354, 397, 404; Longfellow, *Letters*, I, 250; Margaret Fuller, letter to New York *Tribune* dated Rome, January 10, 1848, quoted in *The Writings of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Mason Wade (New York: Viking, 1941), p. 438.

571. To George Bancroft

New York January 29, 1846.

My dear sir

I have written to the President on behalf of Mr. James Ombrosi, who for twenty seven years past has exercised the functions of American Consul in Italy a most worthy and obliging man who lived in Worcester during his youth, and remembers your father’s family very well, and whom, I dare say you became acquainted with while abroad.

In 1844 Mr. [President John] Tyler appointed Mr. E. Gamage of Charleston American Consul at Florence. After the appointment was confirmed, Mr. Gamage became acquainted with the fact, that the Sovereign of Tuscany would not acknowledge a mere Consul at his capital while the powers of Europe maintained ambassadors at his court. As he could not go to court he declined going to Florence, and wrote Mr. Ombrosi to act as deputy.
Although not formally acknowledged Mr. Ombrosi is allowed by the government of the country to act as consul in all commercial transactions and his acts are recognized as valid. This is a great convenience to Americans. He does not however examine passports nor is his visa necessary. This does not prevent him from doing every thing in his power tooblige our countrymen, whom he procures to be introduced at court, and performs for them a thousand services. His letters of introduction to eminent Italians always secure a friendly reception to those whom he introduces by that means.

As Mr. Ombrosi was turned out by the appointment of Mr. Gamage, and as nobody else would be likely to fill the place so much to the satisfaction of our countrymen abroad, I feel a strong desire that he should be reinstated. I have been induced to trouble you with this letter because, having as I suppose some personal knowledge of Mr. Ombrosi, it occurred to me that you would take pleasure in doing a kindness to one who has done our countrymen so many.

May I ask of you therefore to second, unless there should be some reason which might render it improper, my application to the President to renew Mr. Ombrosi’s appointment.

Yrs truly
WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: MHS ADDRESS: Hon Geo Bancroft.

572. To Messrs. William H. L. Noble and Others

New York January 29, 1846.

Gentlemen.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the honor done me in electing me a member of the Columbian Institute of Wabash College and to ask you to communicate to the Institute my thanks and my acceptance.

The request which you make in such obliging and flattering terms, that I should furnish a poetical production for the next anniversary meeting of the Institute I am obliged in conformity with [a] rule I have made, to decline. Some time since, for reasons which had I time to state them, would I am sure command your approbation, and which will perhaps suggest themselves to your minds, I adopted the resolution not to write occasional poems—particularly poems for public occasions. Neither will my time or occupations allow of my visiting your country in the ensuing summer, much as I am sure a journey through your fine state would delight me.

I am Gentlemen
with much regard
Yr Obt Servt.
WM C. BRYANT.

1. None of the addressees of this letter has been further identified.

2. Wabash College for men was founded in 1832 at Crawfordsville, Indiana. The letter notifying Bryant of his election to its Columbian Institute, dated January 20, 1846 (Homestead Collection), was accompanied by one from a professor of the college, William Twining, recalling that his wife had once been an acquaintance of the Bryant family; see Letter 316.

573. To Henry W. Longfellow

New York January 31 1846.

My dear sir

I have been looking over the collection of your poems recently published by Carey & Hart with Huntington’s illustrations. They appear to me more beautiful than on former readings, much as I then admired them. The exquisite music of your verse dwells more agreeably than ever on my ear, and more than ever am I affected by their depth of feeling and their spirituality and the creative power with which they set before us passages from the great drama of life.

I have been reading aloud to my wife some of your poems that pleased me most, and she would not be content till I had written to express to you something of the admiration which I could not help manifesting as I read them. I am not one of those who believe that a true poet is insensible to the excellence of his writings, and know that you can well afford to dispense with such slight corroboration as the general judgment in your favor could derive from any opinion of mine. You must allow me, however, to add my voice to the many which make up the sum of poetic fame.

Yours truly

WM C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (final); NYPL–GR (initial draft) ADDRESS: H. W. Longfellow Esq. PUBLISHED: Life, II, 24–25 (with minor changes, under date of January 21).

1. This embellished edition of Longfellow’s poems, appearing late in 1845, was in a format almost identical with that of Bryant’s illustrated edition published by Carey & Hart a year later.

2. While Bryant’s praise was beyond a doubt sincere, it seems likely that he was also anxious to reassure his friend and fellow-poet of the general excellence of his poetic achievement, in the face of Edgar Allan Poe’s obsessive attacks on what that intemperate critic insisted were Longfellow’s faults of didacticism and plagiarism—attacks which had been intensified during 1845 in the Broadway Journal. In reply to Bryant’s letter, Longfellow confessed frankly his own debt to the older poet: “In return, let me say what a staunch friend and admirer of yours I have been from the beginning, and acknowledge how much I owe to you, not only of delight, but of culture. When I look back upon my earlier poems, I cannot but smile to see how much in them is really yours. It was an involuntary imitation, which I most readily confess, and say, as Dante says to Virgil: ‘Tu se lo mio maestro e il mio autore’” (“Thou art
my master, and my author”—Divine Comedy, Inferno, i.85). Longfellow to Bryant, February 5, 1846, NYPL-GR.

574. To Richard H. Dana

New York  April 6, 1846.

Dear Dana.

I should have written long ago to thank you for the criticisms you made on my verses, but you know my infirmity. You have treated them far more mercifully than they deserve. In revising them I have for the most part been guided by what you have said, as you will see when the edition comes out. It was fully my purpose to prune out some of the poems, but I have at length concluded to take your advice, and let them all stand—certainly all which appeared in the larger volume. The word “gushing,” as applied to “tresses,” I did not see how I could alter, and was glad therefore when the reprieve came in another letter— It was just so with the words “thing forlorn” in Mary Magdalen. “Nailed on men the yoke” &c. has the authority of Gray—

“And nailed the yoke of mischief on mankind.”

I do not understand nailing a yoke on, to mean any thing more than riveting it—making it fast with nails—clenching it with iron—it does not necessarily mean nailing it to the creature that wears it. With these exceptions, there is hardly one of your suggestions that I have not followed. On reflection there is another—“wisdom disappeared” may not be quite right but I see no way to alter it.

You cannot think how much obliged to you I am for the trouble you have taken with my book. There is nobody else whom I would have asked to do the same thing. You have shown me faults which I was amazed should have escaped my notice, for example, that passage in the Ages, where I talk about vampyres and their net. Such nonsense I could hardly believe I had written, though the whole passage was verbally in my memory. I was much affected by the general good opinion you expressed of my poems on reading them over with a view to note their faults. I am sure there is no man from whom I should receive the expression of such an opinion with more satisfaction.

You asked me to send you the volume of hymns compiled by Sewall. I had it not by me at the time, it is out at my place in the country, and I supposed you wanted it only on account of what I had written for it. There were but five hymns of my composition in it, and two of them are included in my larger volume.

The poems entitled “Earth” &c, which you speak of as new to you, were added in Harper’s edition published soon after my return from Europe.

I thank you for the publications you sent me. Henry’s sermon is very
well done, and the Plain Word is one of the severest things I ever read. I was amused by the manner in which the younger Danas showed up the Bishop and his doings, in the Churchman.\(^\text{11}\)

The time when you promised to visit me, at my place on Long Island, is at hand. I was out there a few days since, and the crocuses in my dooryard were coming up, the sprays of the willows beginning to show life and the grass to be green in the sunny places. I planted a few trees, and shall go out this week to plant more, and put a few grafts into the wild pear trees. Your visit is a settled thing—and you must let me know a few days before you come out, in order that my wife may have no operation of house cleaning or painting or any such nonsense on hand, when you come. You are not to come alone, you will please to remember. Some of the ladies of your family I am sure, will do us the favor to accompany you, and see how the approach of spring looks in this somewhat milder latitude. Our old house is a roomy one, as your daughter must have told you. My regards to them all— My wife desires to be kindly remembered to her good friends in your house, and joins me in repeating the invitation. It was in fact more to remind you of the promised visit than on any other account that I sat down to write this letter now—but for that reason I might have deferred it a week or two longer.

Yrs truly

WM C. BRYANT

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**Manuscript:** NYPL-GR

**Address:** Richard H. Dana Esq./Boston


1. Answering Bryant's request for criticism of the poems he was assembling for his new edition, Dana wrote two long letters with specific comments. He closed the first with the comment, "Let me say in plain honesty, and without any mere wish to please you, that my looking over your poems afresh has served to raise you higher than ever in my mind. The truth of your language, the felicities of phrase, the eye and feeling for nature, the tenderness and exceeding beauty, were always present with me. But I am more than ever before impressed with the number of the pieces that ascend into grandeur of thought, into the higher order of powers." January 25, 1846, Life, II, 14-15.

2. In his second letter, on February 1, Dana cautioned, "Let me beg you to leave out none of these pieces; depend upon it, if you do, it will cause a feeling of dissatisfaction, and people will call the edition an incomplete edition." *Ibid.*, 15-16.


4. "Mary Magdalen": "Blessed, yet sinful one, and broken-hearted!/The crowd are pointing at the thing forlorn,/In wonder and in scorn!" *Ibid.*, p. 199.

5. A search of Thomas Gray's published poems fails to reveal this verse. Though Bryant was generally credited with a remarkable memory for poetry, it is possible that he was here misquoting the final line in the seventeenth stanza of Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard," which runs "And shut the gates of mercy on mankind." Bryant's own phrase comes in "The Ages," stanza 12: "Till bolder spirits
seized the rule, and nailed / On men the yoke that men should never bear." Poems (1876), p. 8.

6. Bryant had driven oxen when a boy (see Letter 2), and had surely seen them yoked. Perhaps Dana, raised in town surroundings, had not.

7. In "The Past": "... with thee are silent fame. / Forgotten arts, and wisdom disappeared." Ibid., p. 172.

8. The earlier version of this passage in "The Ages" read: "Europe ... / too is strong, and might not chafe in vain / Against them, but shake off the vampire train / That batten on her blood, and break their net." This was changed in the 1847 edition to: "... Against them, but might cast to earth the train / That trample her, and break their iron net." Poems (1876), p. 19.

9. Dana replied, in surprised relief, "It is quite delightful to find fault with you, you take it so patiently, thou least sensitive, or, more definitely, least touchy, of poets." April 22, 1846. Life, II, 17.

10. See 63.1.

11. These publications have not been identified.

575. To Charity Bryant1

My dear Aunt

I was very glad to hear of your health and condition by your letter of the 18th. You say that you have heard nothing from Illinois. I had a letter the other day from mother, and earlier a letter from my brother John.2 She is not in so good health as usual, sleeps very much, and has failed considerably. Her letters, however, are much in her usual manner and show as much interest in the things about her as ever. My brother Austin and his wife are neither in very good health. The rest of the family in Illinois are well.

I am sorry to hear of Miss Drake's illness. The rheumatism of which you speak is a nervous complaint. I would not be thought to make any [impertinent?] suggestion, but could the [rise?] often operating on a delicate and sensitive temperament have any thing to do with it?

I returned to this country by steamer landing at Boston on the 21st of November, after an absence of seven months, during which I had travelled over the greater part of England visited Edinburgh and the southern lakes of Scotland crossed from Ayr to Ireland, landing at Belfast and then going to Dublin, whence I took a steamer for Liverpool and passing across England through London went to Paris, and from Paris to the north of France visiting Brussels and Antwerp in Belgium and Rotterdam the Hague Amsterdam and Utrecht in Holland. At Arnhem in Holland we came upon the Rhine which we followed up to Strasburg visiting its principal cities on the way. We then returned to Heidelberg, took the diligence to Wurtzburg visited Nuremberg, Leipsic Berlin and Dresden. From Dresden we travelled through Teplitz to Prague in Bohemia and from Prague we were conveyed by railway to Vienna. From Vienna we went south crossing the Styrian Alps by way of Gratz and
reached Trieste. Thence we crossed the Adriatic to Venice—went from Venice to Padua, from Padua to Verona and successively to Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples. At Naples we took a steamer on our return north to Genoa, crossed the country to Milan climbed the Alps by way of the Simplon, descended into the Valleys of Switzerland, visited Geneva then crossed France to Paris went to England by way of Dieppe and Brighton, and after a third visit to London passed across England for Liverpool and took the steamer for America on the fourth of November. That is an outline of my travels.

For great men I saw in England, Mr. Samuel Rogers, Thomas Moore Dr. Bowring, Mr. Wordsworth at his residence on the Lakes, Miss Martineau Miss Baillie, Mrs. Howitt Leigh Hunt and many other distinguished men—besides the House of Lords and House of Commons where I heard some of the great men speak. My health was very robust during the whole of my journey except at sea when I was dreadfully sick. I saw a prodigious number of things of which I have no space to speak, met with no accidents. In England I received very great courtesies of attention—Since my return my health has been more vigorous and perfect than when I left. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (incomplete draft).

1. This letter was not sent; see Letter 576.
2. None of these three letters has been recovered.

576. To Charity Bryant

New York, April 30, 1846.

My dear Aunt.

Last evening I sat down to write you a letter and produced one of considerable length, but as it was written to be copied it was too illegible to be sent. Mr. Jewett¹ has called and I have not time to copy it this morning.

I had a letter from mother yesterday dated the 16th of April. She says nothing in it of her health, but only mentions that my uncle Dr. [Thomas] Snell is thinking of a journey to Illinois this summer. Her previous letters have been much in her usual manner, but I learn from John that her health is not so good as it has been, that she stoops more, and is manifestly failing.

I got back to this country in the last of November. I sketched a brief view of my travels last night, which I hope to send you some other time. We are all well; I am at work in town, and my wife at our place in the country. Remember me kindly to Miss Drake, and also to Dr. Drake² who is so civil as to inquire about me.

Yrs truly

WM. C. BRYANT
MANUSCRIPT: Sheldon Museum address: Miss C. Bryant / Weybridge / Vermont.

1. Unidentified.

577. To P. G. Burton¹

New York April 1846

So many applications have been made to me to read poetry in manuscript and such is the tax upon my time and eyesight, in neither of which am I too abundantly provided² that I have for some time past declined reading manuscript except in the case of a personal friend or in the way of my vocation. Your poem however came from such a distance that I was unwilling to do it the discourtesy of sending it back without looking at it and I have therefore read it. I shall tell you frankly what I think of it.

The idea of your poem is a good one and is managed with considerable imagination. The versification however is unskilful, the ear is frequently disappointed in meeting lines not reducible to the measure you have chosen nor indeed to any form of metrical harmony. The style is not suggestive, which in my opinion is a necessary element of true poetry. —You however seem to have strong poetic sensibilities—but these and the power of awakening them in others are very different things.

There is no bookseller here who would give any thing for the poem, even if the merit were much greater than it is. Poetry is never paid for, but when the reputation of the writer is so well settled that there can be no doubt of its success. In general in ninety nine instances out of a hundred the publication of poetry is a losing speculation.

I have thus briefly but I believe fully answered your letter. I hope I have not said any thing which will give you pain. Such was not my intention, I have not meant to speak disrespectfully of your verses but only to point out the deficiencies which appear to me calculated to prevent their success.

Yrs respectfully

W C BRYANT

What shall I do with the poem you sent me?

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft) address: To P. G. Burton.

1. Burton is unidentified; his letter is unrecovered.
2. Bryant could not have intended to imply any impairment in his eyesight; he never wore, or felt the need of, glasses. Bigelow, Bryant, p. 260; Life, II, 198.
578. To James Lawson

Dear Lawson

Your reproaches, though silent, are just. Nothing but sheer forgetfulness prevented me from performing my engagement yesterday.  
Yrs truly,
WM C. BRYANT.

MANUSCRIPT: Davenport, Iowa, Public Museum address: J. Lawson Esqre.

I. The nature of Bryant’s oversight is undetermined, but the likely cause of his preoccupation is plain. Four days earlier President Polk had informed Congress that a state of war “exists by the act of Mexico herself,” and had called for the immediate enrollment of 50,000 troops. On the 13th Bryant declared in the EP that, while we must be prepared to repel invasion, such an inordinate draft of recruits would form a “prodigious army” which “could only be employed for the purpose of invading the territory of the enemy.” This, he warned, would confront Americans with the “inconsistency of a war of invasion and conquest with the character of our government and the ends for which Providence has manifestly raised up our republic.”

579. To Richard J. Arnold

Sir:

The letter from your attorneys to the American Art-Union, having given the Committee of Management to understand that you do not acknowledge the right of the Institution to retain the painting, the Return of Columbus, for the purpose of completing the engraving from it, now in progress, a Committee was appointed, of which I am Chairman, to act in relation to the subject.

The Committee of Management consider the right to retain the picture for that purpose as perfect, it having been distributed expressly subject to that condition. The Committee, nevertheless, desire to proceed amicably in the discharge of their trust, and they cannot fail to see that a legal contest on the subject, in the manner indicated, must be fatal to our going on with the engraving, even if our right should, as we doubt not it would, be sustained in the end. It has, however, been just ascertained, that by no possibility can the engraving be completed in less than three years, or three and a half from this time, and it seemed that in fairness we should frankly state the fact to you, and the object of this communication is to do so, and to ask you to expressly consent or refuse to allow the Committee to retain the picture without molestation till the engraving shall be completed, we paying the premium for you, keeping it insured at such valuation as you may please to put upon it, which is not to be considered as our valuation. The interest of all concerned renders it desirable that we should know without delay your determination,
and as the Committee of Management will meet on Monday next, I shall feel obliged if you will reply in time to enable me to report your answer at that time.²

Please address me by mail.

I am, sir, yours respectfully.

[William C. Bryant]³

MANUSCRIPT: Unrecovered text: AAU Transactions, pp. 11–12.

1. At the annual drawing of Art Union pictures in December 1843 the recipient of this letter, Richard J. Arnold, of Providence, Rhode Island, had received Emanuel Leutze's painting "The Return of Columbus to Cadiz." Cowdrey, AAFA & AAU, II, 231. In 1844 the Committee of Management contracted with an engraver, for $2,500, to complete an engraving of this picture within three years as an annual premium for subscribers. In April 1846 it was learned that the picture's owner was about to sue the Art Union for its return. AAU Transactions, pp. 10–14.

2. Arnold replied on May 29 refusing to leave his picture in the Committee's possession for more than one year longer, whereupon the contract with the engraver was canceled, and instead the Committee ordered engravings for the year 1847 of Daniel Huntington's "The Sybil" and George Caleb Bingham's "The Jolly Flatboatmen"—the second of which was certainly an outstanding choice. Ibid.

3. Although the printed text of this letter is unsigned, it is specifically attributed to Bryant in ibid., p. 11.

580. To Rufus W. Griswold

My dear sir.

I promised to give you the titles of the principal prose articles written by me for the New York Review. They are subjoined together with those I wrote for the United States Review published at Boston the following year.¹

Yrs. truly,

W. C. Bryant.

New York Review 1825[–1826]  
Hillhouse's Hadad  
The Travellers  
Lives of the Troubadours  
A Literary Trifler  
Webster's Address  
Mrs. Sigourney's Traits of the Aborigines  
Count Segur's Memoirs  
Memoir of Col. David Mason  
Disorders of Literary Men  
Scott's Lives of the Novelists

United States Review 1826–1827  
A Border Tradition  
New York Lyceum of Nat. History  
Adventures of a Young Rifleman  
Wharton's Discourse  
Jicotencal  
Notes on Col[o]mbia  
Halleck's Poems  
Otter's Life and Remains of Dr. Clarke  
Elliott's Address  
Miller on Clerical Manners
Ram Mohun Roy's Precepts of Jesus
A Narrative of Some Extraordinary Circumstances
Weddell's Voyage towards the South Pole
A Pennsylvanian Legend
Moore's Life of Sheridan
Bishop Hobart's Sermon
Percival's Phi Beta Kappa Poem
The Subaltern
Occupation of the Oregon Sketches of Corsica
Contributions of Q. Q.
Wheaton's Life of Pinckney.


I. Griswold was then preparing his second anthology, *The Prose Writers of America* (1847). For the initial publication of these critical articles, book notices, and fictional tales, see Vol. I of these *Letters*, 181–253, *passim*.

581. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Wednesday June 24 1846.

My dear Frances.

I learned yesterday that Mr. and Mrs. Dewey went out to Roslyn with the intention of remaining until Friday or Saturday. Hold them fast till Saturday. There can be nothing done, as the man who was to be hanged, said, till I come. If Mr. Dewey is in any embarrassment about his sermon for next Sunday he may have one of mine.

I called at Miss Osborne's which is not in Seventeenth Street, but in the Seventh Avenue, two doors below Seventeenth Street on the west side, the door numbered 88. I left your message, not finding her at home. I learned that she talked of an intention to come out to Roslyn but nobody could tell me when.

The letter from Mr. Ogden came this morning. It was dated the 18th of this month. I shall bring it tomorrow. He tells of difficult pilgrimages made by ladies in the western wilds, to which travelling in the East is nothing, and hints that they are obliged to wear the tight woollen pantaloons or leggins of the Indian women, squaws, he calls them.

The sky today is an English sky—the precise sky of an English summer. The spaces between the clouds have that dim vapoury appearance, that opaque untransparent look that they have in a fine June day in England.

Yrs truly

W. C. B.
582. To John Howard Bryant

New York    July 2    1846

Dear Brother.

You wrote not long since desiring to know at what time I should come to Illinois. At present I think I shall leave here in about ten days. It is my intention to bring my wife and Julia. I am much obliged to you for your hospitality and shall avail myself of it. If I make any material change in the time of coming out I will let you know. We shall take the northern route, through Chicago.

Tell mother that Miss Robbins’s trunk was found. After some months and much negociation she obtained from the railway company a sum of money as a compensation for her loss. Some months after this the trunk was discovered at one of the railway stations, I believe it was at Albany, and restored to her.

My regards to all

Yrs truly

WM. C. BRYANT

583. To James Ombrosi

New York    July 8, 1846.

My dear Mr. Ombrosi.

Allow me to commend to the kind civilities which you are always so ready to pay to strangers from the United States, Mr. and Mrs. Spring, two very good friends of mine, who accompanied by Miss Fuller a lady of extensive literary accomplishments, are making the tour of Europe. You will I am sure, take an additional pleasure on account of their personal merit, in extending to them the attentions with which you always welcome my countrymen.—

[unsigned]
1. See Letters 570, 571.
2. Marcus Spring, a New York merchant and an occasional writer on reform for Horace Greeley's New York Tribune, was, with his wife, Rebecca, a friend and patron of writers, and, in particular, of Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810–1850). Mason Wade, Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius (New York: Viking, 1940), pp. 139–140, 169–172. The Bryants and the Springs had been friends at least as early as 1841, when they traveled west together as far as Cincinnati. Fanny Bryant to Parke Godwin, cJune 2, 1841, NYPL-GR. Margaret Fuller had come to New York from Boston in 1844, after having for two years edited the Dial, literary organ of the Transcendentalists, and been a colorful resident of their socialistic colony at West Roxbury, Brook Farm. As literary editor of the Tribune, 1844–1846, she wrote a series of penetrating social and critical essays, some of which appeared in her two noteworthy books, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), and Papers on Literature and Art (1846). She had met Bryant through his daughter Fanny and her husband, Parke Godwin, who entertained her at Roslyn shortly before she sailed from Boston with the Springs on August 1, 1846. Goddard, Roslyn Harbor, pp. 61–62; Margaret Fuller to Parke Godwin, July 7, 1846, NYPL-GR.

584. To the Evening Post

Steamer Oregon, Lake Huron, Off Thunder Bay, July 24, 1846.

As I approached the city of Buffalo the other morning, from the east, I found myself obliged to confess that much of the beauty of a country is owing to the season. For twenty or thirty miles before we reached Lake Erie, the fields of this fertile region looked more and more arid and sun-scorched, and I could not but contrast their appearance with that of the neighborhood of New York, where in a district comparatively sterile, an uncommonly showery season has kept the herbage fresh and deep, and made the trees heavy with leaves. Here, on the contrary, I saw meadows tinged by the drought with a reddish hue, pastures grazed to the roots of the grass, and trees spreading what seemed to me a meagre shade. Yet the harvests of wheat, and even of hay, in western New York, are said to be by no means scanty.

Buffalo continues to extend on every side, but the late additions to the city do not much improve its beauty. Its nucleus of well-built streets does not seem to have grown much broader within the last five years, but the suburbs are rapidly spreading—small wooden houses, scattered or in clusters, built hastily for emigrants along unpaved and powdery streets. I saw, however, on a little excursion which I made into the surrounding country, that pleasant little neighborhoods are rising up at no great distance, with their neat houses, their young trees, and their new shrubbery. They have a fine building material at Buffalo—a sort of brown stone, easily wrought—but I was sorry to see that few of the houses built of it, whether in the town or country, were new.

We visited the new fort which the government is erecting on the lake, a little north of the town, commanding the entrance of Niagara river. It is small, but of wonderful apparent strength, with walls of prodigious thick-
ness, and so sturdy in its defences that it seemed to me one might as well think of cannonading the cliffs of Weehawken. It is curious to see how, as we grow more ingenious in the means of attack, we devise more effectual means of defence. A castle of the middle ages, in which a grim warrior of that time would hold his enemies at bay for years, would now be battered down before breakfast. The finest old forts of the last century are now found to be unsafe against attack. That which we have at St. Augustine was an uncommonly good sample of its kind, but when I was in Florida, three or four years since, an engineer of the United States was engaged in reconstructing it. Do mankind gain any thing by these improvements, as they are called, in the art of war? Do not these more dreadful engines of attack on the one side, and these more perfect means of protection on the other, leave the balance just where it was before?

On Tuesday evening, at seven o'clock, we took passage in the steamer Oregon, for Chicago, and soon lost sight of the roofs and spires of Buffalo. A lady of Buffalo on her way to Cleveland placed herself at the piano, and sang several songs with such uncommon sweetness and expression that I saw no occasion to be surprised at what I heard of the concert of Leopold de Meyer,¹ at Buffalo, the night before. The concert room was crowded with people clinging to each other like bees when they swarm, and the whole affair seemed an outbreak of popular enthusiastic. A veteran teacher of music in Buffalo, famous for being hard to be pleased by any public musical entertainment, found himself unable to sit still during the first piece played by de Meyer, but rose, in the fullness of his delight, and continued standing. When the music ceased, he ran to him and shook both of his hands, again and again, with most uncomfortable energy. At the end of the next performance he sprang again on the platform and hugged the artist so rapturously that the room rang with laughter. De Meyer was to give another concert on Tuesday evening at Niagara Falls, and the people of Buffalo were preparing to follow him.

The tastes of our people are certainly much changed within the last twenty years. A friend of mine used to relate, as a good joke, the conversation of two men, who came to the conclusion that Paganini was the greatest man in the world. They were only a little in advance of their age. If such are the honors reaped by de Meyer, I shall not be astonished if Sivori, when he comes over, passes for the greatest man of his time.²

The next morning found us with the southern shore of Lake Erie in sight—a long line of woods, with here and there a cluster of habitations on the shore. "That village where you see the light-house," said one of the passengers, who came from the hills of Maine, "is Grand River, and from that place to Cleveland, which is thirty miles distant, you have the most beautiful country under the sun—perfectly beautiful, sir; not a hill the whole way, and the finest farms that were ever seen; you can buy a good farm there for two thousand dollars." In two or three hours afterward we were at Cleveland, and I hastened on shore.
It is situated beyond a steep bank of the lake, nearly as elevated as
the shore at Brooklyn, which we call Brooklyn Heights. As I stood on the
dge of this bank and looked over the broad lake below me, stretching
beyond the sight and quivering in the summer wind, I was reminded of
the lines of Southey:


But it was not only along the line of the shore that these hues pre-
vailed; the whole lake glowed with soft amethystine and emerald tinges,
in irregular masses, like the shades of watered silk. Cleveland stands in
that beautiful country without a hill, of which my fellow-passenger spoke
—a thriving village yet to grow into a proud city of the lake country. It
is built upon broad dusty ways, in which not a pebble is seen in the fat
dark earth of the lake shore, and which are shaded with locust-trees, the
variety called seed-locust, with crowded twigs and clustered foliage—a
tree chosen, doubtless, for its rapid growth, as the best means of getting up
a shade at the shortest notice. Here and there were gardens filled with
young fruit-trees; among the largest and hardiest in appearance was the
peach-tree, which here spreads broad and sturdy branches, escapes the dis-
eses that make it a short-lived tree in the Atlantic states, and produces
fruit of great size and richness. One of my fellow-passengers could hardly
find adequate expressions to signify his high sense of the deliciousness of
the Cleveland peaches.

I made my way to a street of shops; it had a busy appearance, more
so than usual, I was told, for a company of circus-riders, whose tents I
had seen from a distance on the lake, was in town, and this had attracted
a throng of people from the country. I saw a fruit-stall tended by a man
who had the coarsest red hair I think I ever saw, and of whom I bought
two or three enormous “bough apples,” as he called them. He apologized
for the price he demanded. “The farmers,” said he, “know that just
now there is a call for their early fruit, while the circus people are in town,
and they make me pay a ’igh price for it.” I told him I perceived he was
no Yankee. “I am a Londoner,” he replied; “and I left London twelve
years ago to slave and be a poor man in Ohio.” He acknowledged, how-
ever, that he had two or three times got together some property, “but the
Lord,” he said, “laid his hand on it.”

On returning to the steamer, I found a party of country people,
mostly young persons of both sexes, thin and lank figures, by no means
equal, as productions of the country, to their bough apples. They passed
through the fine spacious cabin on the upper deck, extending between
the state-rooms the whole length of the steamer. At length they came to
a large mirror, which stood at the stern, and seemed by its reflection to
double the length of the cabin. They walked on, as if they would extend their promenade into the mirror, when suddenly observing the reflection of their own persons advancing, and thinking it another party, they politely made way to let it pass. The party in the mirror at the same moment turned to the same side, which first showed them the mistake they had made. The passengers had some mirth at their expense, but I must do our visitors the justice to say that they joined in the laugh with a very good grace.

The same evening, at twelve o'clock, we were at Detroit. "You must lock your state-rooms in the night," said one of the persons employed about the vessel, "for Detroit is full of thieves." We followed the advice, slept soundly, and saw nothing of the thieves, nor of Detroit either, for the steamboat was again on her passage through Lake St. Clair at three this morning, and when I awoke we were moving over the flats, as they are called, at the upper end of the lake. The steamer was threading her way in a fog between large patches of sedge of a pea-green color. We had waited several hours at Detroit, because this passage is not safe at night, and steamers of a larger size are sometimes grounded here in the day-time.

I had hoped, when I began, to bring down the narrative of my voyage to this moment, but my sheet is full, and I shall give you the remainder in another letter.


1. Leopold de Meyer (1816–1883), "Imperial and Royal Pianist to the Emperors of Austria and Russia," made his American debut at the Park Theatre in New York on October 20, 1845. Odell, Annals, V, 168. The Vienna-born musician spent the years 1845–1847 in America.

2. On October 12, 1846, the "much-heralded" violinist Camillo Sivori gave his first New York concert at the Tabernacle. "Critics were fiercely divided on the merits and defects of this artist," but "the public, apparently, liked him, as the public has a way of doing, in despite of critics." Ibid., 312.

3. These verses have not been located among Robert Southey's poems.

585. To the Evening Post

Steamer Oregon, Lake Michigan
July 25, 1846.

Soon after passing the flats described in my last letter, and entering the river St. Clair, the steamer stopped to take in wood on the Canadian side. Here I went on shore. All that we could see of the country was a road along the bank, a row of cottages at a considerable distance from each other along the road, a narrow belt of cleared fields behind them, and beyond the fields the original forest standing like a long lofty wall, with its crowded stems of enormous size and immense height, rooted in the strong soil—ashes and maples and elms, the largest of their species. Scat-
stered in the foreground were numbers of leafless elms, so huge that the settlers, as if in despair of bringing them to the ground by the ax, had girdled them and left them to decay and fall at their leisure.

We went up to one of the houses, before which stood several of the family attracted to the door by the sight of our steamer. Among them was an intelligent-looking man, originally from the state of New York, who gave quick and shrewd answers to our inquiries. He told us of an Indian settlement about twenty miles further up the St. Clair. Here dwell a remnant of the Chippewa tribe, collected by the Canadian government, which has built for them comfortable log-houses with chimneys, furnished them with horses and neat cattle, and utensils of agriculture, erected a house of worship, and given them a missionary. "The design of planting them here," said the settler, "was to encourage them to cultivate the soil."

"And what has been the success of the plan?" I asked.

"It has met with no success at all," he answered. "The worst thing that the government could do for these people is to give them every thing as it has done, and leave them under no necessity to provide for themselves. They chop over a little land, an acre or two to a family; their squaws plant a little corn and a few beans, and this is the extent of their agriculture. They pass their time in hunting and fishing, or in idleness. They find deer and bears in the woods behind them, and fish in the St. Clair before their doors, and they squander their yearly pensions. In one respect they are just like white men, they will not work if they can live without."

"What fish do they find in the St. Clair?"

"Various sorts. Trout and white-fish are the finest, but they are not so abundant at this season. Sturgeon and pike are just now in season, and the pike are excellent."

One of us happening to observe that the river might easily be crossed by swimming, the settler answered:

"Not so easily as you might think. The river is as cold as a well, and the swimmer would soon be chilled through, and perhaps taken with the cramp. It is this coldness of the water which makes the fish so fine at this season."

This mention of sturgeons tempts me to relate an anecdote which I heard as I was coming up the Hudson. A gentleman who lived east of the river, a little back of Tivoli, caught last spring one of these fish, which weighed about a hundred and sixty pounds. He carried it to a large pond near his house, the longest diameter of which is about a mile, and without taking it out of the net in which he had caught it, he knotted part of the meshes closely around it, and attaching them to a pair of lines like reins, put the creature into the water. To the end of the lines he had taken care to fasten a buoy, to mark the place of the fish in the pond. He keeps a small boat, and when he has a mind to make a water-excursion,
he rows to the place where the buoy is floating, ties the lines to the boat and, pulling them so as to disturb the fish, is drawn backward and forward with great rapidity over the surface. The pond, in its deepest part, has only seven feet of water, so that there is no danger of being dragged under.

We now proceeded up the river, and in about two hours came to a neat little village on the British side, with a windmill, a little church, and two or three little cottages, prettily screened by young trees. Immediately beyond this was the beginning of the Chippewa settlement of which we had been told. Log-houses, at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from each other, stood in a long row beside the river, with scattered trees about them, the largest of the forest, some girdled and leafless, some untouched and green, the smallest trees between having been cut way. Here and there an Indian woman, in a blue dress and bare-headed, was walking along the road; cows and horses were grazing near the house; patches of maize were seen, tended in a slovenly manner and by no means clear of bushes, but nobody was at work in the fields. Two females came down to the bank, with paddles, and put off into the river in a birch-bark canoe, the ends of which were carved in the peculiar Indian fashion. A little beyond stood a group of boys and girls on the water's edge, the boys in shirts and leggings, silently watching the steamer as it shot by them. Still further on a group of children of both sexes, seven in number, came running with shrill cries down the bank. It was then about twelve o'clock, and the weather was extremely sultry. The boys in an instant threw off their shirts and leggins, and plunged into the water with shouts, but the girls were in before them, for they wore only a kind of petticoat which they did not take off, but cast themselves into the river at once and slid through the clear water like seals.

This little Indian colony on the edge of the forest extends for several miles along the river, where its banks are highest and best adapted to the purpose of settlement. It ends at last just below the village which bears the name of Fort Saranac, in the neighborhood of which I was shown an odd-looking wooden building, and was told that this was the house of worship provided for the Indians by the government.

At Fort Huron, a village on the American side, opposite to Fort Saranac, we stopped to land passengers. Three Indians made their appearance on the shore, one of whom, a very large man, wore a kind of turban, and a white blanket made into a sort of frock, with bars of black in several places, altogether a striking costume. One of this party, a well-dressed young man, stopped to speak with somebody in the crowd on the wharf, but the giant in the turban, with his companion, strode rapidly by, apparently not deigning to look at us, and disappeared in the village. He was scarcely out of sight when I perceived a boat approaching the shore with a curiously mottled sail. As it came nearer I saw that it was a
quilt of patchwork taken from a bed. In the bottom of the boat lay a barrel, apparently of flour, a stout young fellow pulled a pair of oars, and a slender-waisted damsel, neatly dressed, sat in the stern, plying a paddle with a dexterity which she might have learned from the Chippewa ladies, and guiding the course of the boat which passed with great speed over the water.

We were soon upon the broad waters of Lake Huron, and when the evening closed upon us we were already out of sight of land. The next morning I was awakened by the sound of rain on the hurricane deck. A cool east wind was blowing. I opened the outer door of my state-room, and snuffed the air which was strongly impregnated with the odor of burnt leaves or grass, proceeding, doubtless, from the burning of woods or prairies somewhere on the shores of the lake. For mile after mile, for hour after hour, as we flew through the mist, the same odor was perceptible; the atmosphere of the lake was full of it.

"Will it rain all day?" I asked of a fellow-passenger, a Salem man, in a white cravat.

"The clouds are thin," he answered; "the sun will soon burn them off."

In fact, the sun soon melted away the clouds, and before ten o'clock I was shown, to the north of us, the dim shore of the Great Manitoulin Island, with the faintly descried opening called the West Strait, through which a throng of speculators in copper mines are this summer constantly passing to the Sault de Ste. Marie. On the other side was the sandy isle of Bois Blanc, the name of which is commonly corrupted into Bob Low Island, thickly covered with pines, and showing a tall light-house on the point nearest us. Beyond another point lay like a cloud the island of Mackinaw. I had seen it once before, but now the hazy atmosphere magnified it into a lofty mountain; its limestone cliffs impending over the water seemed larger; the white fort—white as snow—built from the quarries of the island, looked more commanding, and the rocky crest above it seemed almost to rise to the clouds. There was a good deal of illusion in all this, as we were convinced as we came nearer, but Mackinaw with its rocks rising from the most transparent waters that the earth pours out from her springs, is a stately object in any condition of the atmosphere. The captain of our steamer allowed us but a moment at Mackinaw; a moment to gaze into the clear waters, and count the fish as they played about without fear twenty or thirty feet below our steamer, as plainly seen as if they lay in the air; a moment to look at the fort on the heights, dazzling the eyes with its new whiteness; a moment to observe the habitations of this ancient village, some of which show you roofs and walls of red-cedar bark confined by horizontal strips of wood, a kind of architecture between the wigwam and the settler's cabin. A few baskets of fish were lifted on board, in which I saw trout of enormous size, trout a
yard in length, and white-fish smaller, but held perhaps in higher esteem, and we turned our course to the straits which lead into Lake Michigan.

I remember hearing a lady say that she was tired of improvements, and only wanted to find a place that was finished, where she might live in peace. I think I shall recommend Mackinaw to her. I saw no change in the place since my visit to it five years ago. It is so lucky as to have no back-country, it offers no advantages to speculation of any sort; it produces, it is true, the finest potatoes in the world, but none for exportation. It may, however, on account of its very cool summer climate, become a fashionable watering-place, in which case it must yield to the common fate of American villages and improve, as the phrase is.


1. The federated provinces of Canada gained their independence from Great Britain only with the British North America Act of 1867.

586. To the Evening Post

Princeton, Illinois, July 31, 1846.

Soon after leaving the island of Mackinaw we entered the straits and passed into Lake Michigan. The odor of burnt leaves continued to accompany us, and from the western shore of the lake, thickly covered with wood, we saw large columns of smoke, several miles apart, rising into the hazy sky. The steamer turned towards the eastern shore, and about an hour before sunset stopped to take in wood at the upper Maneto island, where we landed and strolled into the forest. Part of the island is high, but this, where we went on shore, consists of hillocks and hollows of sand, like the waves of the lake in one of its storms, and looking as if successive storms had swept them up from the bottom. They were covered with an enormous growth of trees which must have stood for centuries. We admired the astonishing transparency of the water on this shore, the clean sands without any intermixture of mud, the pebbles of almost chalky whiteness, and the stones in the edge of the lake, to which adhered no slime, nor green moss, nor aquatic weed. In the light-green depths, far down, but distinctly seen, shoals of fish, some of them of large size, came quietly playing about the huge hull of our steamer.

On the shore were two log-houses inhabited by woodmen, one of whom drew a pail of water for the refreshment of some of the passengers, from a well dug in the sand by his door. "It is not so good as the lake water," said I, for I saw it was not so clear. "It is colder, though," answered the man; "but I must say that there is no purer or sweeter water in the world than that of our lake."

Next morning we were coasting the western shore of Lake Michigan, a high bank presenting a long line of forest. This was broken by the little
town of Sheboygan, with its light-house among the shrubs of the bank, its cluster of houses just built, among which were two hotels, and its single schooner lying at the mouth of a river. You probably never heard of Sheboygan before; it has just sprung up in the forests of Wisconsin; the leaves have hardly withered on the trees that were felled to make room for its houses; but it will make a noise in the world yet. "It is the prettiest place on the lake," said a passenger, whom we left there, with three chubby and healthy children, a lady who had already lived long enough at Sheboygan to be proud of it. Further on we came to Milwaukie, which is rapidly becoming one of the great cities of the West. It lies within a semicircle of green pastoral declivities sprinkled with scattered trees, where the future streets are to be built. We landed at a kind of wharf, formed by a long platform of planks laid on piles, under which the water flows, and extending for some distance into the lake, and along which a car, running on a railway, took the passengers and their baggage, and a part of the freight of the steamer to the shore.

"Will you go up to town, sir?" was the question with which I was saluted by the drivers of a throng of vehicles of all sorts, as soon as I reached the land. They were ranged along a firm sandy beach between the lake and the river of Milwaukie. On one side the light-green waters of the lake, of crystalline clearness, came rolling in before the wind, and on the other the dark thick waters of the river lay still and stagnant in the sun. We did not go up to the town, but we could see that it was compactly built, and in one quarter nobly. A year or two since that quarter had been destroyed by fire, and on the spot several large and lofty warehouses had been erected, with an hotel of the largest class. They were of a fine light-brown color, and when I learned that they were of brick, I inquired of a by-stander if that was the natural color of the material. "They are Milwaukie brick," he answered, "and neither painted nor stained; and are better brick besides than are made at the eastward." Milwaukie is said to contain, at present, about ten thousand inhabitants. Here the belt of forest that borders the lake stretches back for several miles to the prairies of Wisconsin. "The Germans," said a passenger, "are already in the woods hacking at the trees, and will soon open the country to the prairies."

We made a short stop at Racine, prettily situated on the bank among the scattered trees of an oak opening, and another at Southport, a rival town eleven miles further south. It is surprising how many persons travel, as way-passengers, from place to place on the shores of these lakes. Five years ago the number was very few, now they comprise, at least, half the number on board a steamboat plying between Buffalo and Chicago. When all who travel from Chicago to Buffalo shall cross the peninsula of Michigan by the more expeditious route of the railway, the Chicago and Buffalo line of steamers, which its owners claim to be the finest
line in the world, will still be crowded with people taken up or to be set down at some of the intermediate towns.

When we awoke the next morning our steamer was at Chicago. Any one who had seen this place, as I had done five years ago, when it contained less than five thousand people, would find some difficulty in recognizing it now when its population is more than fifteen thousand. It has its long rows of warehouses and shops, its bustling streets; its huge steamers, and crowds of lake-craft, lying at the wharves; its villas embowered with trees; and its suburbs, consisting of the cottages of German and Irish laborers, stretching northward along the lake, and westward into the prairies, and widening every day. The slovenly and raw appearance of a new settlement begins in many parts to disappear. The Germans have already a garden in a little grove for their holidays, as in their towns in the old country, and the Roman Catholics have just finished a college for the education of those who are to proselyte the West.

The day was extremely hot, and at sunset we took a little drive along the belt of firm sand which forms the border of the lake. Light-green waves came to the shore in long lines, with a crest of foam, like a miniature surf, rolling in from that inland ocean, and as they dashed against the legs of the horses, and the wheels of our carriage, the air that played over them was exceedingly refreshing.

When we set out the following day in the stage-coach for Peru, I was surprised to see how the settlement of Chicago had extended westward into the open country. "Three years ago," said a traveller in the coach, "it was thought that this prairie could neither be inhabited nor cultivated. It is so level and so little elevated, that for weeks its surface would remain covered with water; but we have found that as it is intersected with roads, the water either runs off in the ditches of the highways, or is absorbed into the sand which lies below this surface of dark vegetable mould, and it is now, as you perceive, beginning to be covered with habitations."

If you ever go by the stage-coach from Chicago to Peru, on the Illinois river, do not believe the gozing tongue of the agent who tells you that you will make the journey in sixteen hours. Double the number, and you will be nearer the truth. A violent rain fell in the course of the morning; the coach was heavily loaded, nine passengers within, and three without, besides the driver; the day was hot, and the horses dragged us slowly through the black mud, which seemed to possess the consistency and tenacity of sticking plaster. We had a dinner of grouse, which here in certain seasons, are sold for three cents apiece, at a little tavern on the road; we had passed the long green mound which bears the name of Mount Joliet, and now, a little before sunset, having travelled somewhat less than fifty miles, we were about to cross the channel of the Illinois canal for the second or third time.
There had once been a bridge at the crossing-place, but the water had risen in the canal, and the timbers and planks had floated away, leaving only the stones which formed its foundation. In attempting to ford the channel the blundering driver came too near the bridge; the coach-wheels on one side rose upon the stones, and on the other sank deep into the mud, and we were overturned in an instant. The outside passengers were pitched head-foremost into the canal, and four of those within were lying under water. We extricated ourselves as well as we could, the men waded out, the women were carried, and when we got on shore it was found that, although drenched with water and plastered with mud, nobody was either drowned or hurt.

A farm wagon passing at the moment, forded the canal without the least difficulty, and taking the female passengers, conveyed them to the next farm-house, about a mile distant. We got out the baggage, which was completely soaked with water, set up the carriage on its wheels, in doing which we had to stand waist high in the mud and water, and reached the hospitable farm-house about half-past nine o'clock. Its owner was an emigrant from Kinderhook, on the Hudson, who claimed to be a Dutchman and a Christian, and I have no reason to doubt that he was either. His kind family made us free of their house, and we passed the night in drying ourselves, and getting our baggage ready to proceed the next day.

We travelled in a vehicle built after the fashion of the English post-coach, set high upon springs, which is the most absurd kind of carriage for the roads of this country that could be devised. Those stage-wagons which ply on Long Island, in one of which you sometimes see about a score of Quakers and Quakeresses, present a much better model. Besides being tumbled into the canal, we narrowly escaped being overturned in a dozen other places, where the mud was deep or the roads uneven.

In my journey the next day, I was struck with the difference which five years had made in the aspect of the country. Frame or brick houses in many places had taken the places of log-cabins; the road for long distances now passed between fences, the broad prairie, inclosed, was turned into immense fields of maize, oats, and wheat, and was spotted here and there with young orchards, or little groves, and clumps of bright-green locust-trees, and where the prairie remained open, it was now depastured by large herds of cattle, its herbage shortened, and its flowers less numerous. The wheat harvest this year is said to have failed in northern Illinois. The rust has attacked the fields which promised the fairest, and they are left unreaped, to feed the quails and the prairie-hens.

Another tedious day's journey, over a specially bad road, brought us to Peru a little before midnight, and we passed the rest of the night at an inn just below the bank, on the margin of the river, in listening to the mosquitoes. A Massachusetts acquaintance the next morning furnished us with a comfortable conveyance to this pleasant neighborhood.
1. This was achieved in 1852, when the first through rail connection from the east coast to Chicago was opened.
2. A large Indian mound near the present city of Joliet, Illinois.
3. Much of Frances Bryant's wardrobe was watersoaked in this accident. Sarah Bryant later wrote her sister-in-law Charity, "William's wife thinks she had such bad luck she shall never come to Illi again—." November 16, 1846, Sheldon Museum.

587. To the Evening Post

Chicago, August 8, 1846.

You may be certain that in returning to this place from Princeton I did not take the stage coach. I had no fancy for another plunge into the Illinois canal, nor for being overturned upon the prairies in one of those vehicles which seem to be set high in the air in order [that] they may more easily lose their balance. We procured a private conveyance and made the journey in three days—three days of extreme heat, which compelled us to travel slowly. The quails, which had repaired for shade to the fences by the side of the road, ran from them into the open fields, as we passed, with their beaks open, as if panting with the excessive heat.

The number of these birds at the present time is very great. They swarm in the stubble fields and in the prairies, and manifest little alarm at the approach of man. Still more numerous, it appears to me, are the grouse, or prairie-hens, as they call them here, which we frequently saw walking leisurely, at our approach, into the grass from the road, whither they resorted for the sake of scattered grains of oats or wheat that had fallen from the loaded wagons going to Chicago. At this season they are full fed and fearless, and fly heavily when they are started. We frequently saw them feeding at a very short distance from people at work in the fields. In some neighborhoods they seem almost as numerous as fowls in a poultry-yard. A settler goes out with his gun, and in a quarter of an hour brings in half a dozen birds which in the New York market would cost two dollars a pair. At one place where we stopped to dine, they gave us a kind of pie which seemed to me an appropriate dessert for a dinner of prairie-hens. It was made of the fruit of the western crab-apple, and was not unpalatable. The wild apple of this country is a small tree growing in thickets, natural orchards. In spring it is profusely covered with light-pink blossoms, which have the odor of violets, and at this season it is thickly hung with fruit of the color of its leaves.

Another wild fruit of the country is the plum, which grows in thickets, plum-patches, as they are called, where they are produced in great abundance, and sometimes, I am told, of excellent quality. In a drive which I took the other day from Princeton to the alluvial lands of the Bureau River, I passed by a declivity where the shrubs were red with
the fruit, just beginning to ripen. The slope was sprinkled by them with crimson spots, and the odor of the fruit was quite agreeable. I have eaten worse plums than these from our markets, but I hear that there is a later variety, larger and of a yellow color, which is finer.

I spoke in my last of the change caused in the aspect of the country by cultivation. Now and then, however, you meet with views which seem to have lost nothing of their original beauty. One such we stopped to look at from an eminence in a broad prairie in Lee county, between Knox Grove and Pawpaw Grove. The road passes directly over the eminence, which is round and regular in form, with a small level on the summit, and bears the name of the Mound. On each side the view extends to aprodigious distance; the prairies sink into basins of immense breadth and rise into swells of vast extent; dark groves stand in the light-green waste of grass, and a dim blue border, apparently of distant woods, encircles the horizon. To give a pastoral air to the scene, large herds of cattle were grazing at no great distance from us.

I mentioned in my last letter that the wheat crop of northern Illinois has partially failed this year. But this is not the greatest calamity which has befallen this part of the country. The season is uncommonly sickly. We passed the first night of our journey at Pawpaw Grove—so named from the number of pawpaw trees which grow in it, but which here scarcely find the summer long enough to perfect their fruit. The place has not had the reputation of being unhealthy, but now there was scarce a family in the neighborhood in which one or more was not ill with an intermittent or a bilious fever. At the inn where we stopped, the landlady, a stout Pennsylvania woman, was just so far recovered as to be able, as she informed us, "to poke about"; and her daughter, a strapping lass, went out to pass the night at the bedside of one of the numerous sick neighbors. The sickness was ascribed by the settlers to the extremely dry and hot weather following a rainy June. At almost every place where we stopped we heard similar accounts. Pale and hollow-eyed people were lounging about. "Is the place unhealthy?" I asked one of them. "I reckon so," he answered; and his looks showed that he had sufficient reason. At Aurora, where we passed the second night, a busy little village, with mills and manufactories, on the Fox River, which here rushes swiftly over a stony bed, they confessed to the fever and ague. At Naperville, pleasantly situated among numerous groves and little prairies swelling into hills, we heard that the season was the most sickly the inhabitants had known. Here, at Chicago, which boasts, and with good reason, I believe, of its healthy site, dysenteries and bilious attacks are just now very common, with occasional cases of fever.

It is a common remark in this country, that the first cultivation of the earth renders any neighborhood more or less unhealthy. "Nature," said a western man to me, some years since, "resents the violence done
her, and punishes those who first break the surface of the earth with the plough." The beautiful Rock River district, with its rapid stream, its noble groves, its banks disposed in natural terraces, with fresh springs gushing at their foot, and airy prairies stretching away from their summits, was esteemed one of the most healthy countries in the world as long as it had but few inhabitants. With the breaking up of the soil came in bilious fever and intermittents. A few years of cultivation will render the country more healthy, and these diseases will probably disappear, as they have done in some parts of western New York. I can remember the time when the "Genesee Country," as it was called, was thought quite a sickly region—a land just in the skirts of the shadow of death. It is now as healthy, I believe, as any part of the state.


588. To Parke Godwin
Sau[l]t St Mary August 13 1846.

I am here on the outskirts of northwestern civilization. I might return today by the steamboat General Scott which goes to Mackinaw this morning, but I am unwilling to leave the place[, wishing]¹ to see more of it. Perhaps I may take a look at the waters of Lake Superior which is a few miles beyond me.

In consequence, I shall not return quite so soon as I expected when I left New York. I am not aware that there is any cause which makes my return necessary.

I have written four letters for the E. P. I have plenty of matter for another, and should have sent it off this morning but, I only arrived last night, much fatigued and in want of sleep and find it impossible to finish it in time for the boat which goes out for Mackinaw at eight this morning.²

Wm C. Bryant.

P. S. Please let Fanny know that her mother and Julia are well and much entertained with this new region.

W C B.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR ADDRESS (by Godwin): Fanny Bryant Godwin / At the Cottage / Spring Bank / Roslyn / Long Island / Per Isaac / & Mr Julien.

1. Bryant's omission; probable reading supplied.
2. Soon after standing in for his father-in-law at the EP during Bryant's short vacation in the West, Parke Godwin left the newspaper's employ. See 559.4.
To the Evening Post


When we left Chicago in the steamer, the other morning, all the vessels in the port had their flags displayed at half-mast in token of dissatisfaction with the fate of the harbor bill. You may not recollect that the bill set apart half a million dollars for the construction or improvement of various harbors of the lakes, and authorized the deepening of the passages through the St. Clair Flats, now intricate and not quite safe, by which these bulky steamers make their way from the lower lakes to the upper. The people of the lake region had watched the progress of the bill through Congress with much interest and anxiety, and congratulated each other when at length it received a majority of votes in both houses. The President’s veto has turned these congratulations into expressions of disappointment which are heard on all sides, sometimes expressed with a good deal of energy. But, although the news of the veto reached Chicago two or three days before we left the place, nobody had seen the message in which it was contained. Perhaps the force of the President’s reasonings will reconcile the minds of people here to the disappointment of their hopes.

It was a hot August morning as the steamer Wisconsin, an unwieldy bulk, dipping and bobbing upon the small waves, and trembling at every stroke of the engine, swept out into the lake. The southwest wind during the warmer portion of the summer months is a sort of Sirocco in Illinois. It blows with considerable strength, but passing over an immense extent of heated plains it brings no coolness. It was such an air that accompanied us on our way north from Chicago; and as the passengers huddled into the shady places outside of the state-rooms on the upper deck, I thought of the flocks of quails I had seen gasping in the shadow of the rail-fences on the prairies.

People here expose themselves to a draught of air with much less scruple than they do in the Atlantic states. “We do not take cold by it,” they said to me, when I saw them sitting in a current of wind, after perspiring freely. If they do not take cold, it is odds but they take something else, a fever perhaps, or what is called a bilious attack. The vicissitudes of climate at Chicago and its neighborhood are more sudden and extreme than with us, but the inhabitants say that they are not often the cause of catarrhs, as in the Atlantic states. Whatever may be the cause, I have met with no person since I came to the West, who appeared to have a catarrh. From this region perhaps will hereafter proceed singers with the clearest pipes.

Some forty miles beyond Chicago we stopped for half an hour at Little Fort, one of those flourishing little towns which are springing up on the lake shore, to besiege future Congresses for money to build their
harbors. This settlement has started up in the woods within the last three or four years, and its cluster of roofs, two of the broadest of which cover respectable-looking hotels, already makes a considerable figure when viewed from the lake. We passed to the shore over a long platform of planks framed upon two rows of posts or piles planted in the sandy shallows. "We make a port in this manner on any part of the western shore of the lake," said a passenger, "and convenient ports they are, except in very high winds. On the eastern shore, the coast of Michigan, they have not this advantage; the ice and the northwest winds would rend such a wharf as this in pieces. On this side too, the water of the lake, except when an east wind blows, is smoother than on the Michigan coast, and the steamers therefore keep under the shelter of this bank."

At Southport, still further north, in the new state of Wisconsin, we procured a kind of omnibus and were driven over the town, which, for a new settlement, is uncommonly pretty. We crossed a narrow inlet of the lake, a creek in the proper sense of the term, a winding channel, with water in the midst, and a rough growth of water-flags and sedges on the sides. Among them grew the wild rice, its bending spikes, heavy with grain, almost ready for the harvest.

"In the northern marshes of Wisconsin," said one of our party, "I have seen the Indian women gathering this grain. Two of them take their places in a canoe; one of them seated in the stern pushes it with her paddle through the shallows of standing water, while the other, sitting forward, bends the heads of the rice-plant over the sides of the canoe, strikes them with a little stick and causes the grain to fall within it. In this way are collected large quantities, which serve as the winter food of the Menomies, and some other tribes." The grain of the wild rice, I was told, is of a dark color, but palatable as food. The gentleman who gave me this account had made several attempts to procure it in a fit state to be sown, for Judge Buel, of Albany, who was desirous of trying its cultivation on the grassy shallows of our eastern rivers. He was not successful at first, because, as soon as the grain is collected, it is kiln-dried by the Indians, which destroys the vegetative principle. At length, however, he obtained and sent on a small quantity of the fresh rice, but it reached Judge Buel only a short time before his death, and the experiment probably has not been made.

On one side of the creek was a sloping bank of some height, where tall old forest trees were growing. Among these stood three houses, just built, and the space between them and the water was formed into gardens with regular terraces faced with turf. Another turn of our vehicle brought us into a public square, where the oaks of the original forest were left standing, a miniature of the Champs Élysées, surrounding which, among the trees, stand many neat houses, some of them built of a drab-colored brick. Back of the town, we had a glimpse of a prairie approaching within half a mile of the river. We were next driven through a street of shops,
and thence to our steamer. The streets of Southport are beds of sand, and one of the passengers who professed to speak from some experience, described the place as haunted by myriads of fleas.

It was not till about one o’clock of the second night after leaving Chicago, that we landed at Mackinaw, and after an infinite deal of trouble in getting our baggage together, and keeping it together, we were driven to the Mission House, a plain, comfortable old wooden house, built thirty or forty years since, by a missionary society, and now turned into an hotel. Beside the road, close to the water’s edge, stood several wigwams of the Potawottamies, pyramids of poles wrapped around with rush matting, each containing a family asleep. The place was crowded with people on their way to the mining region of Lake Superior, or returning from it, and we were obliged to content ourselves with narrow accommodations for the night.

At half-past seven the next morning we were on our way to the Sault Ste. Marie, in the little steamer General Scott. The wind was blowing fresh, and a score of persons who had intended to visit the Sault were withheld by the fear of seasickness, so that half a dozen of us had the steamer to ourselves. In three or four hours we found ourselves gliding out of the lake, through smooth water, between two low points of land covered with firs and pines into the west strait. We passed Drummond’s Island, and then coasted St. Joseph’s Island, on the woody shore of which I was shown a solitary house. There I was told lives a long-nosed Englishman, a half-pay officer, with two wives, sisters, each the mother of a numerous offspring. This English polygamist has been more successful in seeking solitude than in avoiding notoriety. The very loneliness of his habitation on the shore causes it to be remarked, and there is not a passenger who makes the voyage to the Sault, to whom his house is not pointed out, and his story related. It was hinted to me that he had a third wife in Toronto, but I have my private doubts of this part of the story, and suspect that it was thrown in to increase my wonder.

Beyond the island of St. Joseph we passed several islets of rock with fir-trees growing from the clefts. Here, in summer, I was told, the Indians often set up their wigwams, and subsist by fishing. There were none in sight as we passed, but we frequently saw on either shore the skeletons of the Chippewa habitations. These consist, not like those of the Potawottamies, of a circle of sticks placed in the form of a cone, but of slender poles bent into circles, so as to make an almost regular hemisphere, over which, while it serves as a dwelling, birch-bark and mats of bulrushes are thrown.

On the western side of the passage, opposite to St. Joseph’s Island, stretches the long coast of Sugar Island, luxuriant with an extensive forest of the sugar-maple. Here the Indians manufacture maple-sugar in the spring. I inquired concerning their agriculture.

“They plant no corn or squashes,” said a passenger, who had resided
for some time at the Sault; "they will not ripen in this climate; but they plant potatoes in the sugar-bush, and dig them when the spring opens. They have no other agriculture; they plant no beans as I believe the Indians do elsewhere."

A violent squall of wind and rain fell upon the water just as we entered that broad part of the passage which bears the name of Muddy Lake. In ordinary weather the waters are here perfectly pure and translucent, but now their agitation brought up the loose earth from the shallow bottom, and made them as turbid as the Missouri, with the exception of a narrow channel in the midst where the current runs deep. Rocky hills now began to show themselves to the east of us; we passed a sheet of water known by the name of Lake George, and came to a little river which appeared to have its source at the foot of a precipitous ridge on the British side. It is called Garden River, and a little beyond it, on the same side, lies Garden Village, inhabited by the Indians. It was now deserted, the Indians having gone to attend a great assemblage of their race, held on one of the Manitoulin Islands, where they are to receive their annual payments from the British government. Here were log-houses, and skeletons of wigwams, from which the coverings had been taken. An Indian, when he travels, takes with him his family and his furniture, the matting for his wigwam, his implements for hunting and fishing, his dogs and cats, and finds a home wherever he finds poles for a dwelling. A tornado had recently passed over the Garden Village. The numerous girdled-trees which stood on its little clearing, had been twisted off midway or near the ground by the wind, and the roofs had, in some instances, been lifted from the cabins.

At length, after a winding voyage of sixty miles, between wild banks of forest, in some places smoking with fires, in some looking as if never violated either by fire or steel, with huge carcasses of trees mouldering on the ground, and venerable trees standing over them, bearded with streaming moss, we came in sight of the white rapids of the Sault Sainte Marie. We passed the humble cabins of the half-breeds on either shore, with here and there a round wigwam near the water; we glided by a white chimney standing behind a screen of fir-trees, which, we were told, had belonged to the dwelling of Tanner, who himself set fire to his house the other day, before murdering Mr. Schoolcraft, and in a few minutes were at the wharf of this remotest settlement of the northwest.


1. President Polk’s veto of an act of Congress appropriating money for the improvement of rivers and harbors, which was greatly desired throughout the North and Northwest. Roy E. Nichols, The Stakes of Power, 1845–1877 (New York: Hill & Wang [1961]), p. 11.
2. Jesse Buel (1778–1839), long a journalist, and the founder of the Albany Argus in 1813, devoted his later life to scientific farming. His writings as editor of the Cultivator, an agricultural journal he founded in 1834, and his Farmer's Companion, published posthumously in 1847, were widely influential.

3. John Tanner (1780–1847?), who had spent thirty years of captivity and residence among the Indians, had recounted his adventures in a narrative published in New York in 1830, and for some years thereafter he was employed as an interpreter by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1795–1864), ethnologist and pioneer in Indian studies, who served as superintendent of Indian affairs for Michigan from 1836 to 1841, with headquarters at Mackinaw. When Schoolcraft's brother James was murdered in the summer of 1846, it was widely supposed Tanner had committed the crime. Although he was hunted by soldiers and bloodhounds, he was never found. Years later a skeleton thought to be his was found in a swamp near Sault Sainte Marie, and some years after that an ex-army officer, a Lieutenant Tilden, is said to have confessed to the crime. A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner . . . During Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior, ed. Edwin James, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1956), pp. x–xv.

590. To the Evening Post


A crowd had assembled on the wharf of the American village at the Sault Sainte Marie, popularly called the Soo, to witness our landing; men of all ages and complexions, in hats and caps of every form and fashion, with beards of every length and color, among which I discovered two or three pairs of mustaches. It was a party of copper-mine speculators, just flitting from Copper Harbor and Eagle River, mixed with a few Indian and half-breed inhabitants of the place. Among them I saw a face or two quite familiar in Wall-street.

I had a conversation with an intelligent geologist, who had just returned from an examination of the copper mines of Lake Superior. He had pitched his tent in the fields near the village, choosing to pass the night in this manner, as he had done for several weeks past, rather than in a crowded inn. In regard to the mines, he told me that the external tokens, the surface indications, as he called them, were more favorable than those of any copper mines in the world. They are still, however, mere surface indications; the veins had not been worked to that depth which was necessary to determine their value with any certainty. The mixture of silver with the copper he regarded as not giving any additional value to the mines, inasmuch as it is only occasional and rare. Sometimes, he told me, a mass of metal would be discovered of the size of a man's fist, or smaller, composed of copper and silver, both metals closely united, yet both perfectly pure and unalloyed with each other. The masses of virgin copper found in beds of gravel are, however, the most remarkable feature of these mines. One of them which has been discovered this summer, but which has not been raised, is estimated to weigh twenty tons. I saw in the propellor Independence, by which this party from the
copper mines was brought down to the Sault, one of these masses, weighing seventeen hundred and fifty pounds, with the appearance of having once been fluid with heat. It was so pure that it might have been cut in pieces by cold steel and stamped at once into coin.* [*See Note, p. 286]

Two or three years ago this settlement of the Sault de Ste. Marie, was but a military post of the United States, in the midst of a village of Indians and half-breeds. There were, perhaps, a dozen white residents in the place, including the family of the Baptist Missionary and the agent of the American Fur Company, which had removed its station hither from Mackinaw, and built its warehouse on this river. But since the world has begun to talk of the copper mines of Lake Superior, settlers flock into the place; carpenters are busy in knocking up houses with all haste on the government lands, and large warehouses have been built upon piles driven into the shallows of the St. Mary. Five years hence, the primitive character of the place will be altogether lost, and it will have become a bustling Yankee town, resembling the other new settlements of the West.

Here the navigation from lake to lake is interrupted by the falls or rapids of the river St. Mary, from which the place receives its name. The crystalline waters of Lake Superior on their way through the channel of this river to Lake Huron, here rush, and foam, and roar, for about three quarters of a mile, over rocks and large stones.

Close to the rapids, with birchen-canoes moored in little inlets, is a village of the Indians, consisting of log-cabins and round wigwams, on a shrubby level, reserved to them by the government. The morning after our arrival, we went through this village in search of a canoe and a couple of Indians, to make the descent of the rapids, which is one of the first things that a visitor to the Sault must think of. In the first wigwam that we entered were three men and two women as drunk as men and women could well be. The squaws were speechless and motionless, too far gone, as it seemed, to raise either hand or foot; the men though apparently unable to rise were noisy, and one of them, who called himself a half-breed and spoke a few words of English, seemed disposed to quarrel. Before the next door was a woman busy in washing, who spoke a little English. "The old man out there," she said, in answer to our questions, "can paddle canoe, but he is very drunk, he can not do it to-day."

"Is there nobody else," we asked, "who will take us down the falls?"
"I don't know; the Indians all drunk to-day."
"Why is that? Why are they all drunk to-day?"
"Oh, the whisky," answered the woman, giving us to understand, that when an Indian could get whisky, he got drunk as a matter of course.

By this time the man had come up, and after addressing us with the customary "bon jour," manifested a curiosity to know the nature of our errand. The woman explained it to him in English.
"Oh, messieurs, je vous servirai," said he, for he spoke Canadian French; "I go, I go."

We told him that we doubted whether he was quite sober enough.

"Oh, messieurs, je suis parfaitement capable—first rate, first rate."

We shook him off as soon as we could, but not till after he had time to propose that we should wait till the next day, and to utter the maxim, "Whisky, good—too much whisky, no good."

In a log-cabin, which some half-breeds were engaged in building, we found two men who were easily persuaded to leave their work and pilot us over the rapids. They took one of the canoes which lay in a little inlet close at hand, and entering it, pushed it with their long poles up the stream in the edge of the rapids. Arriving at the head of the rapids, they took in our party, which consisted of five, and we began the descent. At each end of the canoe sat a half-breed, with a paddle, to guide it while the current drew us rapidly down among the agitated waters. It was surprising with what dexterity they kept us in the smoothest part of the water, seeming to know the way down as well as if it had been a beaten path in the fields.

At one time we would seem to be directly approaching a rock against which the waves were dashing, at another to be descending into a hollow of the waters in which our canoe would be inevitably filled, but a single stroke of the paddle given by the man at the prow put us safely by the seeming danger. So rapid was the descent, that almost as soon as we descried the apparent peril, it was passed. In less than ten minutes, as it seemed to me, we had left the roar of the rapids behind us, and were gliding over the smooth water at their foot.

In the afternoon we engaged a half-breed and his brother to take us over to the Canadian shore. His wife, a slender young woman with a lively physiognomy, not easily to be distinguished from a French woman of her class, accompanied us in the canoe with her little boy. The birch-bark canoe of the savage seems to me one of the most beautiful and perfect things of the kind constructed by human art. We were in one of the finest that float on St. Mary's river, and when I looked at its delicate ribs, mere shavings of white cedar, yet firm enough for the purpose—the thin broad laths of the same wood with which these are inclosed, and the broad sheets of birch-bark, impervious to water, which sheathed the outside, all firmly sewed together by the tough slender roots of the fir-tree, and when I considered its extreme lightness and the grace of its form, I could not but wonder at the ingenuity of those who had invented so beautiful a combination of ship-building and basket-work. "It cost me twenty dollars," said the half-breed, "and I would not take thirty for it."

We were ferried over the waves where they dance at the foot of the rapids. At this place large quantities of white-fish, one of the most delicate kinds known on our continent, are caught by the Indians, in their season,
with scoop-nets. The whites are about to interfere with this occupation of
the Indians, and I saw the other day a seine of prodigious length con-
structing, with which it is intended to sweep nearly half the river at once.
"They will take a hundred barrels a day," said an inhabitant of the
place.

On the British side, the rapids divide themselves into half a dozen
noisy brooks, which roar round little islands, and in the boiling pools of
which the speckled trout is caught with the rod and line. We landed at the
warehouses of the Hudson Bay Company, where the goods intended for
the Indian trade are deposited, and the furs brought from the northwest
are collected. They are surrounded by a massive stockade, within which
lives the agent of the Company, the walks are gravelled and well-kept, and
the whole bears the marks of British solidity and precision. A quantity of
furs had been brought in the day before, but they were locked up in the
warehouse, and all was now quiet and silent. The agent was absent; a
half-breed nurse stood at the door with his child, and a Scotch servant,
apparently with nothing to do, was lounging in the court inclosed by the
stockade; in short, there was less bustle about this centre of one of the
most powerful trading-companies in the world, than about one of our
farm-houses.

Crossing the bay, at the bottom of which these buildings stand, we
landed at a Canadian village of half-breeds. Here were one or two wig-
wams and a score of log-cabins, some of which we entered. In one of them
we were received with great appearance of deference by a woman of
decidedly Indian features, but light-complexioned, barefoot, with blue
embroidered leggings falling over her ankles and sweeping the floor, the
only peculiarity of Indian costume about her. The house was as clean
as scouring could make it, and her two little children, with little French
physiognomies, were fairer than many children of the European race.
These people are descended from the French voyageurs and settlers
on one side; they speak Canadian French more or less, but generally
employ the Chippewa language in their intercourse with each other.

Near at hand was a burial ground, with graves of the Indians and
half-breeds, which we entered. Some of the graves were covered with a
low roof of cedar-bark, others with a wooden box; over others was placed
a little house like a dog-kennel, except that it had no door, others were
covered with little log-cabins. One of these was of such a size that a small
Indian family would have found it amply large for their accommodation.
It is a practice among the savages to protect the graves of the dead from
the wolves, by stakes driven into the ground and meeting at the top like
the rafters of a roof; and perhaps when the Indian or half-breed exchanged
his wigwam for a log-cabin, his respect for the dead led him to make the
same improvement in the architecture of their narrow houses. At the
head of most of these monuments stood wooden crosses, for the population
here is principally Roman Catholic, some of them inscribed with the names of the dead, not always accurately spelled.

Not far from the church stands a building, regarded by the half-breeds as a wonder of architecture, the stone house, *la maison de pierre*, as they call it, a large mansion built of stone by a former agent of the Northwest or Hudson Bay Company, who lived here in a kind of grand manorial style, with his servants and horses and hounds, and gave hospitable dinners in those days when it was the fashion for the host to do his best to drink his guests under the table. The old splendor of the place has departed, its gardens are overgrown with grass, the barn has been blown down, the kitchen in which so many grand dinners were cooked consumed by fire, and the mansion, with its broken and patched windows, is now occupied by a Scotch farmer of the name of Wilson.

We climbed a ridge of hills back of the house to the church of the Episcopal Mission, built a few years ago as a place of worship for the Chippewas, who have since been removed by the government. It stands remote from any habitation, with three or four Indian graves near it, and we found it filled with hay. The view from its door is uncommonly beautiful; the broad St. Mary lying below, with its bordering villages and woody valley, its white rapids and its rocky islands, picturesque with the pointed summits of the fir-tree. To the northwest the sight followed the river to the horizon, where it issued from Lake Superior, and I was told that in clear weather one might discover, from the spot on which I stood, the promontory of Gros Cap, which guards the outlet of that mighty lake.

The country around was smoking in a dozen places with fires in the woods. When I returned I asked who kindled them. "It is old Tanner," said one, "the man who murdered Schoolcraft." There is great fear here of Tanner, who is thought to be lurking yet in the neighborhood. I was going the other day to look at a view of the place from an eminence, reached by a road passing through a swamp, full of larches and firs. "Are you not afraid of Tanner?" I was asked. Mrs. Schoolcraft, since the assassination of her husband, has come to live in the fort, which consists of barracks protected by a high stockade. It is rumored that Tanner has been seen skulking about within a day or two, and yesterday a place was discovered which is supposed to have served for his retreat. It was a hollow, thickly surrounded by shrubs, which some person had evidently made his habitation for a considerable time. There is a dispute whether this man is insane or not, but there is no dispute as to his malignity. He has threatened to take the life of Mr. Bingham, the venerable Baptist missionary at this place, and as long as it is not certain that he has left the neighborhood a feeling of insecurity prevails. Nevertheless, as I know no reason why this man should take it into his head to shoot me, I go whither I list, without the fear of Tanner before my eyes.

1. This entry, and the note which follows, were added to the 1871 edition of LT I:

Among these copper hunters, came passenger from Lake Superior, a hunter of the picturesque, Mr. CHARLES LANMAN, whose name I hope I mention without impropriety, since I am only anticipating the booksellers in a piece of literary intelligence. He has been wandering for a year past in the wilds of the West; during the present Summer he has traversed the country in which rise the springs of the Mississippi and the streams that flow into Lake Superior, and intends to publish a sketch of his journey soon after his arrival in New York. If I may judge from what I learned in a brief conversation, he will give us a book well worth reading. He is an artist as well as an author, and sketched all the most remarkable places he saw in his travels, for the illustration of his volume. On the river St. Louis, which falls into the western extremity of Lake Superior, he visited a stupendous waterfall, not described by any traveller or geographer. The volume of water is very great and the perpendicular descent a hundred and fifty feet. He describes it as [se]cond only to the cataract of Niagara.

This passage was originally printed in the EP as a part of Bryant's letter. Its omission from LT I in 1850, though apparently inadvertent, caused its subject agonizing concern. Charles Lanman (1819–1895) had met Bryant while working for a New York merchant from 1836 to 1845. During this time he studied engraving with Asher Durand and exhibited paintings at the National Academy. Bryant gave his Letters from a Landscape Painter (Boston, 1845) a kindly notice in the EP, and in 1850 Lanman dedicated to the poet his book of western travels, *Haw-ho-noo*; or, Records of a Tourist (Philadelphia, 1850). He apparently took the subsequent omission of the complimentary passage as deliberate, and complained of it. Bryant's letter of explanation, unrecovered, "relieved" him, but, he wrote, "I confess that it still annoys me. No event can ever happen that will prevent me from loving you as a poet, and it grieves me to know that anything has happened to wean your friendship." Lanman to Bryant, September 20, 1850, NYPL–GR. The incident seems to have continued to trouble Lanman. He reminded Bryant of it many years later, drawing the reply, "I do not remember the circumstance to which you refer, but . . . if you will let me know what the passage was which I omitted, and where it came in, I will consider whether it ought to be restored in case a new edition should be published." Bryant to Lanman, August 2, 1869, UVa. See also *DAA; NAD Exhibition Record*, p. 284; Lanman, *Haw-ho-noo*, p. [7].

591. To the Evening Post

Mackinaw, August 19, 1846.

We were detained two days longer than we expected at the Sault de Ste. Marie, by the failure of the steamer General Scott to depart at the proper time. If we could have found a steamer going up Lake Superior, we should most certainly have quieted our impatience at this delay, by embarking on board of her. But the only steamer in the river St. Mary, above the falls, which is a sort of arm or harbor of Lake Superior, was the Julia Palmer, and she was lying aground in the pebbles and sand of the shore. She had just been dragged over the portage which passes round the falls, where a broad path, with hillocks flattened, and trunks hewn off close to the surface, gave tokens of the vast bulk that had been moved over it. The moment she touched the water, she stuck fast, and the engineer was
obliged to go to Cleveland for additional machinery to move her forward. He had just arrived with the proper apparatus, and the steamer had begun to work its way slowly into the deep water; but some days must yet elapse before she can float, and after that the engine must be put together.

Had the Julia Palmer been ready to proceed up the lake I should certainly have seized the occasion to be present at an immense assemblage of Indians on Madeleine Island. This island lies far in the lake, near its remoter extremity. On one of its capes, called La Pointe, is a missionary station and an Indian village, and here the savages are gathering in vast numbers to receive their annual payments from the United States.

"There were already two thousand of them at La Pointe when I left the place," said an intelligent gentleman who had just returned from the lake, "and they were starving. If an Indian family has a stock of provisions on hand sufficient for a month, it is sure to eat it up in a week, and the Indians at La Pointe had already consumed all they had provided, and were living on what they could shoot in the woods, or get by fishing in the lake."

I inquired of him the probable number of Indians the occasion would bring together.

"Seven thousand," he answered. "Among them are some of the wildest tribes on the continent, whose habits have been least changed by the neighborhood of the white man. A new tribe will come in who never before would have any transactions with the government. They are called the Pillagers, a fierce and warlike race, proud of their independence, and, next to the Blackfeet and the C[o]manches, the most ferocious and formidable tribe within the territory of the United States. They inhabit the country about Red River and the head-waters of the Mississippi."

I was further told that some of the Indian traders had expressed their determination to disregard the law, set up their tents at La Pointe, and sell spirits to the savages. "If they do, knives will be drawn," was the common saying at the Sault; and at the Fort, I learned that a requisition had arrived from La Pointe for twenty men to enforce the law and prevent disorder. "We can not send half the number," said the officer who commanded at the Fort, "we have but twelve men in all; the rest of the garrison have been ordered to the Mexican frontier, and it is necessary that somebody should remain to guard the public property." The call for troops has since been transferred to the garrison at Mackinaw, from which they will be sent.

I learned afterward from an intelligent lady of the half-caste at the Sault, that letters had arrived, from which it appeared that more than four thousand Indians were already assembled at La Pointe, and that their stock of provisions was exhausted.

"They expected," said the lady, "to be paid off on the 15th of August,
but the government has changed the time to nearly a month later. This is unfortunate for the Indians, for now is the time of their harvest, the season for gathering wild rice in the marshes, and they must, in consequence, not only suffer with hunger now, but in the winter also."

In a stroll which we made through the Indian village, situated close to the rapids, we fell in with a half-breed, a sensible-looking man, living in a log cabin, whose boys, the offspring of a squaw of the pure Indian race, were practicing with their bows and arrows. "You do not go to La Pointe?" we asked. "It is too far to go for a blanket," was his answer—he spoke tolerable English. This man seemed to have inherited from the white side of his ancestry somewhat of the love of a constant habitation, for a genuine Indian has no particular dislike to a distant journey. He takes his habitation with him, and is at home wherever there is game and fish, and poles with which to construct his lodge. In a further conversation with the half-breed, he spoke of the Sault as a delightful abode, and expatiated on the pleasures of the place.

"It is the greatest place in the world for fun," said he; "we dance all winter; our women are all good dancers; our little girls can dance single and double jigs as good as any body in the States. That little girl there," pointing to a long-haired girl at the door, "will dance as good as any body."

The fusion of the two races in this neighborhood is remarkable; the mixed breed running by gradual shades into the aboriginal on the one hand, and into the white on the other; children with a tinge of the copper hue in the families of white men, and children scarcely less fair sometimes seen in the wigwams. Some of the half-caste ladies at the Falls of St. Mary, who have been educated in the Atlantic states, are persons of graceful and dignified manners and agreeable conversation.

I attended worship at the Fort, at the Sault, on Sunday. The services were conducted by the chaplain, who is of the Methodist persuasion and a missionary at the place, assisted by the Baptist missionary. I looked about me for some evidence of the success of their labors, but among the worshippers I saw not one male of the Indian descent. Of the females, half a dozen, perhaps, were of the half-caste; and as two of these walked away from the church, I perceived that they wore a fringed clothing for the ankles, as if they took a certain pride in this badge of their Indian extraction.

In the afternoon we drove down the west bank of the river to attend religious service at an Indian village, called the Little Rapids, about two miles and a half from the Sault. Here the Methodists have built a mission-house, maintain a missionary, and instruct a fragment of the Chippewa tribe. We found the missionary, Mr. Speight, a Kentuckian, who has wandered to this northern region, quite ill, and there was consequently no service.

We walked through the village, which is prettily situated on a swift
and deep channel of the St. Mary, where the green waters rush between the main-land and a wooded island. It stands on rich meadows of the river, with a path running before it, parallel with the bank, along the velvet sward, and backed at no great distance by the thick original forest, which not far below closes upon the river on both sides. The inhabitants at the doors and windows of their log-cabins had a demure and subdued aspect; they were dressed in their clean Sunday clothes, and the peace and quiet of the place formed a strong contrast to the debaucheries we had witnessed at the village by the Falls. We fell in with an Indian, a quiet little man, of very decent appearance, who answered our questions with great civility. We asked to whom belonged the meadows lying back of the cabins, on which we saw patches of rye, oats, and potatoes.

"Oh, they belong to the mission; the Indians work them."

"Are they good people, these Indians?"

"Oh yes, good people."

"Do they never drink too much whisky?"

"Well, I guess they drink too much whisky sometimes."

There was a single wigwam in the village, apparently a supplement to one of the log-cabins. We looked in and saw two Indian looms, from which two unfinished mats were depending. Mrs. Speight, the wife of the missionary, told us that, a few days before, the village had been full of these lodges; that the Indians delighted in them greatly, and always put them up during the mosquito season; "for a mosquito," said the good lady, "will never enter a wigwam"; and that lately, the mosquitoes having disappeared, and the nights having grown cooler, they had taken down all but the one we saw.

We passed a few minutes in the house of the missionary, to which Mrs. Speight kindly invited us. She gave a rather favorable account of the Indians under her husband's charge, but manifestly an honest one, and without any wish to extenuate the defects of their character.

"There are many excellent persons among them," she said; "they are a kind, simple, honest people, and some of them are eminently pious."

"Do they follow any regular industry?"

"Many of them are as regularly industrious as the whites, rising early and continuing at their work in the fields all day. They are not so attentive as we could wish to the education of their children. It is difficult to make them send their children regularly to school; they think they confer a favor in allowing us to instruct them, and if they happen to take a little offence their children are kept at home. The great evil against which we have to guard is the love of strong drink. When this is offered to an Indian, it seems as if it was not in his nature to resist the temptation. I have known whole congregations of Indians, good Indians, ruined and brought to nothing by the opportunity of obtaining whisky as often as they pleased."

We inquired whether the numbers of the people at the mission were
diminishing. She could not speak with much certainty as to this point, having been only a year and a half at the mission, but she thought there was a gradual decrease.

"The families of the Indians," she said, in answer to one of my questions, "are small. In one family at the village are six children, and it is the talk of all the Indians, far and near, as something extraordinary. Generally the number is much smaller, and more than half the children die in infancy. Their means would not allow them to rear many children, even if the number of births was greater."

Such appears to be the destiny of the red race while in the presence of the white—decay and gradual extinction, even under circumstances apparently the most favorable to its preservation.

On Monday we left the Falls of St. Mary, in the steamer General Scott, on our return to Mackinaw. There were about forty passengers on board, men in search of copper-mines, and men in search of health, and travellers from curiosity, Virginians, New Yorkers, wanderers from Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, and I believe several other states. On reaching Mackinaw in the evening, our party took quarters in the Mansion House, the obliging host of which stretched his means to the utmost for our accommodation. Mackinaw is at the present moment crowded with strangers; attracted by the cool healthful climate and the extreme beauty of the place. We were packed for the night almost as closely as the Potawottamies, whose lodges were on the beach before us. Parlors and garrets were turned into sleeping-rooms; beds were made on the floors and in the passages, and double-bedded rooms were made to receive four beds. It is no difficult feat to sleep at Mackinaw, even in an August night, and we soon forgot, in a refreshing slumber, the narrowness of our quarters.


592. To the Evening Post

Steamer St. Louis, Lake Huron
August 20, 1846.

Yesterday evening we left the beautiful island of Mackinaw, after a visit of two days delightfully passed. We had climbed its cliffs, rambled on its shores, threaded the walks among its thickets, driven out in the roads that wind through its woods—roads paved by nature with limestone pebbles, a sort of natural macadamization, and the time of our departure seemed to arrive several days too soon.

The fort which crowns the heights near the shore commands an extensive prospect, but a still wider one is to be seen from the old fort, Fort Holmes, as it is called, among whose ruined intrenchments the half-breed boys and girls now gather gooseberries. It stands on the very crest of the
island, overlooking all the rest. The air, when we ascended it, was loaded with the smoke of burning forests, but from this spot, in clear weather, I was told a magnificent view might be had of the Straits of Mackinaw, the wooded islands, and the shores and capes of the great mainland, places known to history for the past two centuries. For when you are at Mackinaw you are at no new settlement.

In looking for samples of Indian embroidery with porcupine quills, we found ourselves one day in the warehouse of the American Fur Company, at Mackinaw. Here, on the shelves, were piles of blankets, white and blue, red scarfs, and white boots; snow-shoes were hanging on the walls, and wolf-traps, rifles, and hatchets, were slung to the ceiling—an assortment of goods destined for the Indians and half-breeds of the northwest. The person who attended at the counter spoke English with a foreign accent. I asked him how long he had been in the northwestern country.

"To say the truth," he answered, "I have been here sixty years and some days."

"You were born here, then."

"I am a native of Mackinaw. French by the mother's side; my father was an Englishman."

"Was the place as considerable sixty years ago as it now is?"

"More so. There was more trade here, and quite as many inhabitants. All the houses, or nearly all, were then built; two or three only have been put up since."

I could easily imagine that Mackinaw must have been a place of consequence when here was the centre of the fur trade, now removed further up the country. I was shown the large house in which the heads of the companies of voyageurs engaged in the trade were lodged, and the barracks, a long low building in which the voyageurs themselves, seven hundred in number, made their quarters from the end of June till the beginning of October, when they went out again on their journeys. This interval of three months was a merry time with those light-hearted Frenchmen. When a boat made its appearance approaching Mackinaw, they fell to conjecturing to what company of voyageurs it belonged; as the dispute grew warm the conjectures became bets, till finally, unable to restrain their impatience, the boldest of them dashed into the waters, swam out to the boat, and climbing on board, shook hands with their brethren, amidst the shouts of those who stood on the beach.

They talk, on the New England coast, of Chebacco boats, built after a peculiar pattern, and called after Chebacco, an ancient settlement of seafaring men, who have foolishly changed the old Indian name of their place to Ipswich. The Mackinaw navigators have also given their name to a boat of peculiar form, sharp at both ends, swelled at the sides, and flat-bottomed, an excellent sea-boat, it is said, as it must be to live in the wild storms that surprise the mariner on Lake Superior.
We took yesterday a drive to the western shore. The road twined through a wood of over-arching beeches and maples, interspersed with the white-cedar and fir. The driver stopped before a cliff sprouting with beeches and cedars, with a small cavity at the foot. This he told us was the Skull Cave. It is only remarkable on account of human bones having been found in it. Further on a white paling gleamed through the trees; it inclosed the solitary burial ground of the garrison, with half a dozen graves. “There are few buried here,” said a gentleman of our party; “the soldiers who come to Mackinaw sick get well soon.”

The road we travelled was cut through the woods by Captain Scott,¹ who commanded at the fort a few years since. He is the marksman whose aim was so sure that the western people say of him, that a raccoon on a tree once offered to come down and surrender without giving him the trouble to fire.

We passed a farm surrounded with beautiful groves. In one of its meadows was fought the battle between Colonel Croghan² and the British officer Holmes in the war of 1813. Three luxuriant beeches stand in the edge of the wood, north of the meadow; one of them is the monument of Holmes; he lies buried at its root. Another quarter of a mile led us to a little bay on the solitary shore of the lake looking to the northwest. It is called the British Landing, because the British troops landed here in the late war to take possession of the island.

We wandered about awhile, and then sat down upon the embankment of pebbles which the waves of the lake, heaving for centuries, have heaped around the shore of the island—pebbles so clean that they would no more soil a lady’s white muslin gown than if they had been of newly polished alabaster. The water at our feet was as transparent as the air around us. On the main-land opposite stood a church with its spire, and several roofs were visible, with a background of woods behind them.

“Here,” said one of our party, “is the old Mission Church. It was built by the Catholics in 1680, and has been a place of worship ever since. The name of the spot is Point St. Ignace, and there lives an Indian of the full caste, who was sent to Rome and educated to be a priest, but he preferred the life of a layman, and there he lives on that wild shore, with a library in his lodge, a learned savage, occupied with reading and study.”

You may well suppose that I felt a strong desire to see Point St. Ignace, its venerable Mission Church, its Indian village, so long under the care of Catholic pastors, and its learned savage who talks Italian, but the time of my departure was already fixed. My companions were pointing out on that shore, the mouth of Carp River, which comes down through the forest roaring over rocks, and in any of the pools of which you have only to throw a line, with any sort of bait, to be sure of a trout, when the driver of our vehicle called out, “Your boat is coming.” We looked and saw the St. Louis steamer, not one of the largest, but one of the finest boats
in the line between Buffalo and Chicago, making rapidly for the island, with a train of black smoke hanging in the air behind her. We hastened to return through the woods, and in an hour and a half we were in our clean and comfortable quarters in this well-ordered little steamer.

But I should mention that before leaving Mackinaw, we did not fail to visit the principal curiosities of the place, the Sugar Loaf Rock, a remarkable rock in the middle of the island, of a sharp conical form, rising above the trees by which it is surrounded, and lifting the stunted birches on its shoulders higher than they, like a tall fellow holding up a little boy to overlook a crowd of men—and the Arched Rock on the shore. The atmosphere was thick with smoke, and through the opening spanned by the arch of the rock I saw the long waves, rolled up by a fresh wind, come one after another out of the obscurity, and break with roaring on the beach.

The path along the brow of the precipice and among the evergreens, by which this rock is reached, is singularly wild, but another which leads to it along the shore is no less picturesque—passing under impending cliffs and overshadowing cedars, and between huge blocks and pinnacles of rock.

I spoke in one of my former letters of the manifest fate of Mackinaw, which is to be a watering-place. I can not see how it is to escape this destiny. People already begin to repair to it for health and refreshment from the southern borders of Lake Michigan. Its climate during the summer months is delightful; there is no air more pure and elastic, and the winds of the south and southwest, which are so hot on the prairies, arrive here tempered to a grateful coolness by the waters over which they have swept. The nights are always, in the hottest season, agreeably cool, and the health of the place is proverbial. The world has not many islands so beautiful as Mackinaw, as you may judge from the description I have already given of parts of it. The surface is singularly irregular, with summits of rock and pleasant hollows, open glades of pasturage and shady nooks. To some, the savage visitors, who occasionally set up their lodges on its beach, as well as on that of the surrounding islands, and paddle their canoes in its waters, will be an additional attraction. I can not but think with a kind of regret on the time which, I suppose is near at hand, when its wild and lonely woods will be intersected with highways, and filled with cottages and boarding-houses.


1. Quite possibly this was John Benjamin Scott (c1801–1859, United States Military Academy 1821), a captain in the 4th Artillery, United States Army, who was stationed at Detroit, 1839–1841, and Buffalo, 1841–1842, during the disturbances on the Canadian border. United States Military Academy Archives, West Point.
2. George Croghan (1791–1849) distinguished himself at Tippecanoe and several battles of the War of 1812, particularly at Fort Stephenson, Ohio, in 1813. Holmes is not further identified.

593. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Monday August 31 1846.

Dear Frances.

The box has arrived from the Sault Ste. Marie, charged with six shillings, having passed through two expresses. I shall bring it when I come out. There is also a volume here from Senator [John A.] Dix, a "public document" directed to Miss Bryant. It is Fremont's Narrative of his Expedition.¹

If you want the Nux Vomica for Mrs. Moulton, it is in the upper part of the Secretary in a tan box—the largest of the boxes. It is liquid.

Every body has been here this morning and I have almost been pulled to pieces by being pulled so many ways at once.

Yrs affectionately

WM C BRYANT.

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

¹. John Charles Frémont, Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843–44. . . . Printed by order of the Senate of the United States (Washington, 1845).

594. To Messrs. Carey & Hart

New York August 31 1846.

Gentlemen.

I have looked over the proofs of the engravings for my poems which you were so kind as to send me, and have left them as was desired at Wiley & Putnam s to be forwarded to you. The illustration of "Oh fairest of the rural maids," turns out better than I feared, though it does not give the idea conveyed in the poem.¹ The "Greek Boy," it seems to me, is extremely faulty in drawing. One of the legs is so strangely drawn that I cannot bring myself to believe that the artist left it so in his design, but am satisfied that it is an exaggeration of the engraver. Thinking it possible that I might be mistaken, I showed the engraving to one of our painters who agreed with me entirely. Can nothing be done to remedy the defect? Covering it up with a bush? or something of that sort?² I fear it will appear to other peoples eyes as distorted as it does to mine.

I admire the genius of Leutze and think many of his designs admirable, that of the poem entitled "Catterskill Falls" for example is highly poetical and extremely graceful. What I have said concerning the Greek Boy I have said by way of suggestion and leave the whole to your judgment.
The printers have all the copy for the poems and I am only waiting to see the proof of the notes to give my last corrections. I send my autograph with the engravings.—

Yrs truly
Wm C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: HSPa.

1. The theme of this early tribute to Frances Bryant (Poems [1876], pp. 116–117) is that which is suggested in the first stanza, "Thy birth was in the forest shades," but Emanuel Leutze (see 531.1) had shown the subject as a farm girl returning from the fields with a bouquet of meadow flowers, and a hay rake over her shoulder. Poems by William Cullen Bryant, with Illustrations by E. Leutze, Engraved by American Artists (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1847), facing p. 135.

2. This drawing, apparently not corrected as Bryant had suggested, seems to give the boy a curiously elongated right thigh. See ibid., facing p. 200. Dublin-born William Humphry (1794–1865), then working in Philadelphia, is credited with the two engravings to which Bryant took exception, as well as most of the others in the book.

595. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Sept. 14, 1846.

My dear Frances.

I arrived here without any accident yet I doubt whether I am much better. Since I took my seat I have been run down with beggar women—a young Italian female with a baby a month old—and Mr. Poe's mother-in-law, who says her son-in-law is crazy, his wife dying, and the whole family starving.¹

In making your arrangements for coming to New York do not forget that the horticultural exhibition at Flushing takes place this week, and that we are to be there.² The days are mentioned in a hand bill which is in the library. Will you look it up. . . .³

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR

1. Though the tale of Maria Clemm's begging in behalf of her daughter Virginia and Edgar Allan Poe during their last, wretched years in New York has often been told, the fact that Bryant, like others of Poe's literary acquaintances, was one of her sources of aid has been overlooked by the biographers of both men. Nor has it been elsewhere noted that the two poets had become acquainted as early as 1837–1838, when they were near-neighbors on a quiet Greenwich Village street, the Bryants living at 12 Carmine Street, and the Poës, with Mrs. Clemm, at number 13½. See 359.3; "Edgar Allan Poe in New York City," Valentine's Manual, ed. Morgan Appleton (New York, 1921), p. 71; A. H. Quinn, Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography (New York: Appleton, 1941), pp. 263–268. See also Maria Clemm to Bryant, February 11, 1850, NYPL–GR.

2. The day after this letter was written Bryant was elected a vice president of the Long Island Horticultural Society, which he had joined six months earlier. G. W.
Huntsman to Bryant, October 15, 1846, and William W. Valk to Bryant, [March 9] 1846[6], Homestead Collection.

3. Conclusion and signature clipped.

596. To Frances F. Bryant

[New York, cSeptember 15, 1846]

My dear Frances.

I think the last day of the Exhibition will not be the most interesting. The samples will be likely to be freshest and most perfect on the first or second day.

It is my intention therefore to come out, if I can, before Friday.

I took Bryonia last night and am much better today—though, the fever having gone off, I am quite weak.

Yrs truly

WM C. BRYANT

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

597. To John Howard Bryant

New York   September 15, 1846.

Dear Brother.

I have your letter concerning the pear seeds—1 I will do my best to get you a supply, but it takes bushels of pears to get a quart of seeds. We will however do our best.

I shall wait till Johnson returns to Washington before sending on the petition.2

In going from Princeton to Chicago I had a conversation with Mr. Olds about building a small brick house upon one of my lots in Princeton, the one north east of his home. He said he would undertake to see to the building of it.3 I think if I do not sell the lot it ought to be done in order to render the property productive. I send a plan of it drawn by Fanny [Godwin] who is an architect by inclination. The outside pleases me, with one exception; but the inside I think may be amended.

I have therefore pasted to her plan a piece of paper showing the . . .4 [sho]uld be made. I want the house a little lar[ger]. . . . I want the door to open into a separate entry . . . to come down to the floor and open on the floor of the piazza. The house should be set well back from the street, as the lot is large enough.

Will you put the plan into the hands of Mr. Olds as I have amended it and confer with him about it.5 I wish the architectural directions in regard to the style to be strictly followed. The frames that surround the windows and doors are not to be planed down, but are to be plain thick and substantial. Mr. Whitmarsh6 into whose hands you will put the plan will understand all about this.
As to the means, the brick can be furnished from your kiln—and the wheat which Galer, if that be his name will have paid before this time on the land he bought of me, and which I have no doubt you will sell readily in the present demand for wheat and rise of the commodity in value, will furnish means to buy timber and boards and pay something to the workmen. As to what remains I must contrive some way or other to discharge it. Perhaps a credit could be obtained till another harvest.

The story of our journeys after we left Chicago you will have seen in my letters published in the Evening Post. Mr. Ogden went with us to the Sault de Ste. Marie, and thence to Mackinaw, and then hearing of his mother’s illness who lives in Delaware County, he accompanied us to Buffalo—From Buffalo we went to Niagara Falls where we staid two days, though we had intended to stay but one; my wife being attacked with a stomach complaint which obliged her to pass one day in bed. From Niagara we went by railway to Lewiston on the Niagara river, where we took a steamboat and coasting the American shore during one afternoon and night arrived the next morning early at Oswego. Here we were transferred to a packet boat on the canal in which we reached Syracuse in the course of the day, took the train, arrived in Albany the morning following, and came to New York in one of the day boats—The next day we found ourselves at our home on Long Island, where the country looked delightfully fresh, and where we found every thing in good order.

Remember me kindly to your wife and boys and to all my friends in Princeton.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-BFP ADDRESS: John H. Bryant Esq. / Princeton / Bureau County / Illinois. POSTMARK: NEW-YORK / 17 / SEP.

1. Letter unrecovered.
2. Bryant was apparently trying to secure for John, through Postmaster General Cave Johnson (1793–1866) of Tennessee, an appointment as postmaster at Princeton. See Letter 613.
3. In 1837 Bryant had bought from his brother Cyrus two town lots in Princeton. It was apparently on one of these that he had asked his brother-in-law Justin Olds to arrange for the construction of a house.
4. Portions have been clipped from the manuscript here, and below where indicated.
5. Fanny Godwin’s “architectural plan” is unrecovered.
6. Probably the house builder.
7. On March 14, 1844, Cullen had bought from John, for $500, 120 acres of land in Concord township, near Princeton. On August 3, 1846, he sold this property to one Jacob Galer, taking in payment $450 in cash and a mortgage for the rest, payable in wheat over the following three years. (Information from Professor David J. Baxter, who is preparing for publication a study of Bryant’s real estate transactions in Illinois.)
8. William B. Ogden (581.2).
9. Bryant’s return from the West had been marked by an editorial in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for September 1 by its young editor, “Walter” Whitman. “The morning
papers,” he wrote, “mention that Wm. Cullen Bryant has returned, well and refreshed, from his long and circuitous tour. We improve the occasion of mentioning this fact, to mention something more. . . . Sometimes, walking across the Park in New York, or along one of the thoroughfares of the city, you may meet a plainly dressed man of middling size, considerably beyond the younger age of life, with rather a bloodless complexion, sparse white hair, and expressive grey eyes. Of this description is William Cullen Bryant—a poet who, to our mind, stands among the first in the world. . . . It is an honor and a pride to the Democratic party that it has such a man to conduct one of its principal newspapers—to be an expounder of its doctrines, and act as one of the warders to watch the safety of the citadel.” Quoted in Walt Whitman, The Gathering of the Forces, edd. Cleveland Rodgers and John Black, 2 vols. (New York and London: Putnam, 1920), II, 261–262. In his turn, the following year, Bryant commented in the EP (November 6, 1847) that the Brooklyn Eagle had “breathed the true sentiments of the democracy on the principle of the Wilmot Proviso, free trade and other important topics.” In 1850–1851 Whitman contributed to the EP several “Letters from Paumanock,” a “Letter from Brooklyn,” and “Something About Art and Brooklyn Artists,” as well as at least two poems. See The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman, ed. Emory Holloway, 2 vols. (New York and Toronto: Doubleday, Page, 1921), I, 236–259; Roger Asselineau, L’Evolution de Walt Whitman (Paris: Didier, 1954), p. 37. Yet we find no reference in Bryant’s letters or other writings to support Whitman’s later accounts of their frequent meetings, and their conversations during long rambles together in Brooklyn and through the Bedford and Flatbush countrysides. See, for example, the New York Tribune, July 4, 1878; Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden, 3 vols. (Boston: Small, Maynard; New York: D. Appleton, M. Kennerley, 1906–1914), II, 79, 532–533; III 21, 424, 514–515. Whitman’s recollections do find some corroboration, however, in a letter from his brother-in-law Charles L. Heyde, a landscape painter (see DAA) written in 1890, in which the artist remarks, “I remember Bryant; you once brought him to my studio in Brooklyn—I can imagine or recall him now, as he sat on the extreme end of my lounge—High Priest of Nature!” Quoted in Faint Clews and Indirections: Manuscripts of Walt Whitman and His Family, edd. Clarence Gohdes and Rollo G. Silver (Durham: Duke University Press, 1949), p. 231.

10. Complimentary close and signature clipped.

598. To Edwin Forrest

New York Sept 22 1846

Dear sir

The undersigned your friend & fellow citizens desirous of expressing to you personally the high estimation they entertain for your public & private character avail themselves of the occasion of your return from Europe to invite you to a public dinner, and request that you will set apart one of the few days you are to remain with us that may be most convenient for you to accept of this slight tribute to your professional excellence and private worth.

We have the honor to be
With great respect
Your obt. Servts
Wm C. Bryant [etc].
1. After an unsuccessful season in Great Britain, during which a growing rivalry with the English tragedian William Macready turned into bitterness and public recrimination (see 655.2), Forrest had returned to open his New York season on September 14, 1846, as King Lear. This letter of invitation, signed by forty-three prominent New Yorkers, was not in Bryant’s hand, but was headed by his signature. Forrest replied on October 2, suggesting Friday, October 16, as a convenient date for him. See Letter 603; *EP*, October 17, 1846; Odell, *Annals*, V, 249.

599. To Richard H. Dana

New York Sept 25, 1846.

Dear Dana.

I found your letter of the 25th of July on my return from the west about four weeks since. It was not too late to attend to your final admonitions about the correction of two or three bad verses.¹

As you have failed to make your visit to my place in the country in the spring suppose you try to repair your fault by making one in the autumn. Our autumn is somewhat milder than yours and now that the harsh east winds begin to come in on your shore, and drive you to town, why should you not try to lengthen the season, and the enjoyment of the country by coming a little further south for a week or two more of sunshine? Write me and tell me you will come.

You ask at what time my poems will be out. The proofs have all been corrected, and I suppose the pages have been stereotyped, and the pressman is at work by this time. But the designer and engraver are I fear slow in their tasks. I grow fastidious in regards to illustrations; there is scarcely one in a score, in the books of poetry that I take up which does not displease me. I have seen eight of those intended for my book and with one or two exceptions cannot say I take much delight in them. I have now ceased to inquire what progress they are making in getting out the book; the booksellers have charge of every thing but the text; and if they make an ugly thing of it, or if the book comes out late, their interest suffers quite as much as mine, and as I can do nothing to prevent either of these results, I give myself no trouble about the matter and think of something else. One of the Cheneys came to New York and took a very fine crayon likeness of me, and his brother engraved it. I think this will be the best thing in the book.² I think very well of the talents of Leutze who makes the designs, but what can be expected of an artist who works to order in that way? What sort of verses should I make if I were to sit down to put his pictures into verse? Worse than I make now I fear.

While every body is saying that you are busy in writing the life of Allston, how has it happened that no allusion has ever been made to that fact, either in your letters or mine, nor in our conversations when we
have met? Am I such an egotist and are you so modest? I have thought a thousand times that I would inquire of you in the very next letter I wrote you what progress you were making with the work and when we might expect to see it, but my letters have generally been written in a hurry and the matter did not come into my mind at the time. Do let me know as much about it, at least as you allow the rest of the world to know.3

I thank you again for the pains you have taken with my poems. Your criticisms have been of great service to me. There are a thousand faults that escape a writer, that escape me at least, in composition, which I yet recognize to be faults the moment they are pointed out to me. There are few however who know what faults in poetic composition are. There is no other man whom I would have asked to do what you have done for me. The greater is your merit in going through the job with so good a grace. If I have sometimes neglected to correct the faults you have pointed out it has been in most cases, because, though I admitted the objection I could not satisfy myself with any alteration that occurred to me.

Remember me kindly to all the Danas and believe me

Yrs faithfully

WM C. BRYANT


1. In the last stanza of "The Crowded Street" Dana objected to the word "predestined" in the passage, "Those struggling tides of life . . . / Are eddies of the mighty stream / That rolls to its predestined end," so Bryant made it "appointed end." Poems (1876), p. 300. In "The Return of Youth," Dana complained, of the line "Thy tongue was prompt the generous thought to speak," "How came it there? It must have been a stray left behind when you cleared your part of Parnassus of the sheep that got in there in your youth from Pope's Pastorals." So the poet rewrote the line to read, "And quick the thought that moved thy tongue to speak." Ibid., p. 291. See Dana to Bryant, July 25, 1846, in Life, II, 17.

2. This portrait, drawn by Seth Wells Cheney (1810–1856) of Boston, and engraved by John Cheney (1801–1885) did not, however, please Dana. After its publication in Bryant's 1847 Poems (facing p. 17) Dana remarked, "I have occasionally seen you with the look that the Cheneys have given you, but it is not characteristic of you—at any rate, not your higher self." Dana to Bryant, December 15, 1846, in Life, II, p. 20. See illustration. Yet Bryant saw just that "higher" quality in others of Seth Cheney's portraits (and perhaps in that of himself). Many years later he remarked that the artist managed to convey the "finest and most elevated expression of which the countenance of his sitter was capable. . . . His best portraits, at the same time that they are good likenesses, have something angelic in their aspect." Bryant, "Fitz-Greene Halleck, Notices of His Life and Writings, Read Before the New York Historical Society, February 3, 1869," in Orations and Addresses, p. 187.

3. Dana did not, however, write a life of his brother-in-law, the painter Washington Allston, who had died in 1843. This was doubtless partly because his friend—as well as Bryant's—Rev. William Ware, undertook to be Allston's first biographer, in
his Lectures on the Works and Genius of Washington Allston, published posthumously in 1852.

600. To Robert Howe Gould¹

New York September 25th 1846.

Sir,

The poem entitled the African Chief of which Mr. Fitzgerald claims to be the author was written by me in the year 1826 and published with the signature of B. in the United States Review of December in the same year.² Mr. Gourlay of Washington, the editor of the African Repository was on a visit to New York sometime in 1826, and suggested to me the story of the chief Yaradee, which he had already related in a previous number of his periodical, as a good subject for a poem.³ On this hint, I wrote the verses, which immediately after their appearance [in] the United States Review he copied into the African Repository with a note concerning their origin. If the testimony of a third person were necessary and if the poem were worth the trouble, I might call on Mr. Gourlay to make my title good.

Since I have published the poem as mine, my reputation is somewhat concerned in this question, otherwise I think I should hardly be inclined to disturb any person in his claim to be the author. Meantime I am greatly obliged to you for the interest you have taken in exposing a very impudent literary theft, though it be but a petty larceny.

Yrs respectfully

WM C. BRYANT


1. Robert Howe Gould, a nephew of Bryant's early law tutor Samuel Howe, was a London publisher with a special interest in American poetry, and the translator into English of Theophile Gautier's Constantinople (London, 1854) and other works. On September 3, 1846, he wrote Bryant (NYPL-GR) that one “M. C. Fitzgerald” had published in the Manchester and Salford Advertiser and Salford Chronicle a poem identical with Bryant's “The African Chief” (Poems [1876], pp. 144–146), and that, being charged with plagiarism, Fitzgerald claimed he had written the poem ten years before and published it in a Cork newspaper. With Bryant's assurance that the poem was his own Gould exposed the fraud in a letter to the Manchester Guardian dated October 23, 1846, which was printed under the caption “Literary Plagiarism.” Undated newspaper clipping in NYPL-GR.

2. United States Review and Literary Gazette, 1 (December 1826), 219–220.

3. Rev. Ralph Randolph Gurley (1797–1872) was for fifty years the Washington representative of the American Colonization Society, editing its organ, the African Repository. See Letter 154.
601. To Rufus W. Griswold

New York September 28, 1846.

My dear sir,

As you are a friend of Mr. Graham, and sometimes have the charge of his Magazine, may I ask you to obtain a piece of information for me. Sometime since I agreed to write verses exclusively for Mr. Graham's Magazine. An engagement of that kind of course does not last forever; and it is reasonable that either party should be at liberty to put an end to it whenever he may see occasion.

In July last I sent Mr. Graham a poem for the Magazine, entitled "The Unknown Way." The October number has been issued, and the poem does not appear in it. At the same time I perceive that the usual list of contributors to the magazine is omitted and [an] advertisement substituted offering prizes for contributions in prose and verse. It has occurred to me that Mr. Graham, as he has a perfect right to do has chosen to secure contributions by a new method, and would prefer to consider such engagements as that made with me at an end.

Will you be so kind as to inquire how this is and inform me. If the agreement subsists no longer will you do me the favor to desire Mr. Graham to send me back the verses.

Yrs truly

WM C. BRYANT


1. In May 1844, Letter 484. Since then three of Bryant's poems had been printed in Graham's: "The Waning Moon" (25 [July 1844], 22); "Paradise of Tears" (ibid. [November 1844], 202); and "Song"—"Oh Stream, forever fresh and full" (27 [July 1845], 43).

2. No reply from either Griswold or Graham has been recovered, but "The Unknown Way" appeared in ibid., 29 (December 1846), 293.

602. To John Sartain

New York September 28, 1846.

Sir.

I have received your letter informing me of the compliment conferred upon me by the Artists' Fund Society of Philadelphia in electing me one of their honorary members. Allow me, through you, to return my best thanks to the society and to say that I accept the honor with great satisfaction.

I am sir

very respectfully Yours,

WM C. BRYANT.

1. The London-born engraver and painter John Sartain (1808–1897) emigrated in 1830 to Philadelphia, where he was primarily engaged in work for magazines. From 1841 to 1848 he was associated with Graham's, and during that time exhibited specimens of his work at the National Academy, the Apollo Association, and the American Art Union. In 1840 and 1841 he produced the annual engravings given its members by the Apollo Association. DAA; NAD Exhibition Record, II, 111–112; Cowdrey, AAFA & AAU, II, 321.


603. To James Fenimore Cooper

[New York] October 12, 1846

The friends of Mr. Forrest, desirous of showing their Respect and Admiration for his professional genius and private character, have asked him to a Dinner at the New York Hotel on the 16th Octbr. at 7 o'clock & we are instructed to ask the Honor of your presence on that occasion.¹


1. See Letter 598. Cooper replied from Cooperstown that this invitation (signed by Bryant, Theodore Sedgwick III, George F. Thomson, and W. M. Beckwith) had reached him so late that he could not attend the dinner, and added, "My mind has long been made up to attend no more public dinners, if I could well avoid it, but if disposed to depart from a rule prescribed to myself, I am disposed to think it would be done as cheerfully in honor of this gentleman as any other person among us." Cooper, Letters & Journals, V, 172. Bryant presided at the dinner, and in his toast to Forrest remarked, "He has given us another instance of the truth that a great actor may be an irreproachable man; his private life has been an example of those virtues which compel the respect even of that large class least disposed to look with favor on the profession of an actor—such an example as made Hannah More the personal friend of David Garrick." Quoted in EP, October 17, 1846.

604. To the Evening Post

Stroudsburg, Monroe Co., Penn. October 23, 1846.

I reached this place last evening, having taken Easton in my way. Did it ever occur to you, in passing through New Jersey, how much the northern part of the state is, in some respects, like New York, and how much the southern part resembles Pennsylvania? For twenty miles before reaching Easton, you see spacious dwelling-houses, often of stone, substantially built, and barns of the size of churches, and large farms with extensive woods of tall trees, as in Pennsylvania, where the right of soil has not undergone so many subdivisions as with us. I was shown in Warren county, in a region apparently of great fertility, a farm which was said to be two miles square. It belonged to a farmer of German origin, whose comfortable mansion stood by the way, and who came into the state many years ago, a young man.
"I have heard him say," said a passenger, "that when his father brought him out with his young wife into Warren county, and set him down upon what then appeared a barren little farm, now a part of his large and productive estate, his heart failed him. However he went to work industriously, practicing the strictest economy, and by applying lime copiously to the soil made it highly fertile. It is lime which makes this region the richest land in New Jersey; the farmers find limestone close at hand, burn it in their kilns, and scatter it on the surface. The person of whom I speak took off large crops from his little farm, and as soon as he had any money beforehand, he added a few acres more, so that it gradually grew to its present size. Rich as he is, he is a worthy man; his sons, who are numerous, are all fine fellows, not a scape-grace among them, and he has settled them all on farms around him."

Easton, which we entered soon after dark, is a pretty little town of seven thousand inhabitants, much more substantially built than towns of the same size in this country. Many of the houses are of stone, and to the sides of some of them you see the ivy clinging and hiding the masonry with a veil of evergreen foliage. The middle of the streets is unpaved and very dusty, but the broad flagging on the sides, under the windows of the houses, is sedulously swept. The situation of the place is uncommonly picturesque. If ever the little borough of Easton shall grow into a great town, it will stand on one of the most commanding sites in the world, unless its inhabitants shall have spoiled it by improvements. The Delaware, which forms the eastern bound of the borough, approaches it from the north through high wooded banks and flows away to join the Schuylkill between craggy precipices. On the south side, the Lehigh comes down through a deep, verdant hollow, and on the north the Bushkill winds through a glen shaded with trees, on the rocky banks of which is one of the finest drives in the world. In the midst of the borough rises a crag as lofty as that on which Stirling Castle is built—in Europe, it would most certainly have been crowned with its castle; steep and grassy on one side, and precipitous and rocky on the other, where it overhangs the Bushkill. The college stands on a lofty eminence, overlooking the dwellings and streets, but it is an ugly building, and has not a tree to conceal even in part its ugliness. Besides these, are various other eminences in the immediate vicinity of this compact little town, which add greatly to its beauty.

We set out the next morning for the Delaware Water Gap, following the road along the Delaware, which is here uncommonly beautiful. The steep bank is mostly covered with trees sprouting from the rocky shelves, and below is a fringe of trees between the road and the river. A little way from the town, the driver pointed out, in the midst of the stream, a long island of loose stones and pebbles, without a leaf or stem of herbage.
"It was there," said he, "that Gaetter, six years ago, was hanged for the murder of his wife."

The high and steep bank of the river, the rocks and the trees, he proceeded to tell us, were covered on that day with eager spectators from all the surrounding country, every one of whom, looking immediately down on the island, could enjoy a perfect view of the process by which the poor wretch in the hands of the hangman was turned off.

About five miles from Easton we stopped to water our horses at an inn, a large handsome stone house, with a chatty landlord, who spoke with a strong German accent, complaining pathetically of the potato disease, which had got into the fields of the neighborhood, but glorying in the abundant crops of maize and wheat which had been gathered. Two miles further on, we turned away from the river and ascended to the table-land above, which we found green with extensive fields of wheat, just springing under the autumnal sun. In one of the little villages nestling in the hollows of that region, we stopped for a few moments, and fell into conversation with a tolerably intelligent man, though speaking English with some peculiarities that indicated the race to which he belonged. A sample of his dialect may amuse you. We asked him what the people in that part of the country thought of the new tariff.3

"Oh," said he, "there are different obinions, some likes it and some not."

"How do the democrats take it?"

"The democratic in brinciple like it."

"Did it have any effect on the election?"

"It brevented a goot many democrats from voting for their candidate for Congress, Mr. Brodhead,4 because he is for the old tariff. This is a very strong democratic district, and Mr. Brodhead's majority is only about a sousand."

A little beyond this village we came in sight of the Water Gap, where the Blue Ridge has been cloven down to its base to form a passage for the Delaware. Two lofty summits, black with precipices of rock, form the gates through which the river issues into the open country. Here it runs noisily over the shallows, as if boasting aloud of the victory it had achieved in breaking its way through such mighty barriers; but within the Gap it sleeps in quiet pools, or flows in deep glassy currents. By the side of these you see large rafts composed of enormous trunks of trees that have floated down with the spring floods from the New York forests, and here wait for their turn in the saw-mills along the shore. It was a bright morning, with a keen autumnal air, and we dismounted from our vehicle and walked through the Gap.

It will give your readers an idea of the Water Gap, to say that it consists of a succession of lofty peaks, like the Highlands of the Hudson,
with a winding and irregular space between them a few rods wide, to give passage to the river. They are unlike the Highlands, however, in one respect, that their sides are covered with large loose blocks detached from the main precipices. Among these grows the original forest, which descends to their foot, fringes the river, and embowes the road.

The present autumn is, I must say, in regard to the coloring of the forests, one of the shabbiest and least brilliant I remember to have seen in this country, almost as sallow and dingy in its hues as an autumn in Europe. But here in the Water Gap it was not without some of its accustomed brightness of tints—the sugar-maple with its golden leaves, and the water-maple with its foliage of scarlet, contrasted with the intense green of the hemlock-fir, the pine, the rosebay-laurel, and the mountain-laurel, which here grow in the same thicket, while the ground below was carpeted with humbler evergreens, the aromatic wintergreen, and the trailing arbutus. The Water Gap is about a mile in length, and near its northern entrance an excellent hotel, the resort of summer visitors, stands on a cliff which rises more than a hundred feet almost perpendicularly from the river. From this place the eye follows the Water Gap to where the mountains shut in one behind another, like the teeth of a saw, and between them the Delaware twines out of sight.

Before the hotel a fine little boy of about two years of age was at play. The landlord showed us on the calf of the child's leg two small lurid spots, about a quarter of an inch apart. "That," said he, "is the bite of a copper-head snake."

We asked when this happened.

"It was last summer," answered he; "the child was playing on the side of the road, when he was heard to cry, and seen to make for the house. As soon as he came, my wife called my attention to what she called a scratch on his leg. I examined it, the spot was already purple and hard, and the child was crying violently. I knew it to be the bite of a copper-head, and immediately cut it open with a sharp knife, making the blood to flow freely and washing the part with water. At the same time we got a yerb" (such was his pronunciation) "on the hills, which some call lion-heart, and others snake-head. We steeped this yerb in milk which we made him drink. The doctor had been sent for, and when he came applied harts-horn; but I believe that opening the wound and letting the blood flow was the most effectual remedy. The leg was terribly swollen, and for ten days we thought the little fellow in great danger, but after that he became better and finally recovered."

"How do you know that it was a copper-head that bit him?"

"We sent to the place where he was at play, found the snake, and killed it. A violent rain had fallen just before, and it had probably washed him down from the mountain-side."

"The boy appears very healthy now."
"Much better than before; he was formerly delicate, and troubled with an eruption, but that has disappeared, and he has become hardy and fond of the open air."

We dined at the hotel and left the Water Gap. As we passed out of its jaws we met a man in a little wagon, carrying behind him the carcass of a deer he had just killed. They are hunted, at this time of the year, and killed in considerable numbers in the extensive forests to the north of this place. A drive of four miles over hill and valley brought us to Stroudsburg, on the banks of the Pocano—a place of which I shall speak in my next letter.


1. At Stirling, Scotland; see Letter 548.
2. Lafayette College, established at Easton in 1826.
3. The Walker Tariff Bill of July 1846—so named after its sponsor, Democratic Secretary of the Treasury Robert John Walker (1801–1869) of Mississippi—was greeted with joy by proponents of free trade, though sober afterthought soon convinced them that its duties were still quite high. Bryant had taken "unailed gratification" in announcing its passage. It had the effect, he wrote, of supplanting the "most unjust law" of 1842, which was based, he said, on quality, or "over-valuation," with one which provided for an ad valorem system of levying duties, based on actual cost to the importer. EP, July 29, 30, September 3, 1846.

605. To the Evening Post

Easton, Penn., October 24, 1846.

My yesterday's letter left me at Stroudsburg, about four miles west of the Delaware. It is a pleasant village, situated on the banks of the Pocano. From this stream the inhabitants have diverted a considerable portion of the water, bringing the current through this village in a canal, making it to dive under the road and rise again on the opposite side, after which it hastens to turn a cluster of mills. To the north is seen the summit of the Pocano mountain, where this stream has its springs, with woods stretching down its sides and covering the adjacent country. Here, about nine miles to the north of the village, deer haunt and are hunted. I heard of one man who had already killed nine of these animals within two or three weeks. A traveller from Wyoming county, whom I met at our inn, gave me some account of the winter life of the deer.

"They inhabit," he said, "the swamps of mountain-laurel, thickets through which a man would find it almost impossible to make his way. The laurel-bushes, and the hemlocks scattered among them, intercept the snow as it falls, and form a thick roof, under the shelter of which, near some pool or rivulet, the animals remain until spring opens, as snugly
protected from the severity of the weather as sheep under the sheds of a farm-yard. Here they feed upon the leaves of the laurel and other evergreens. It is contrary to the law to kill them after the Christmas holidays, but sometimes their retreat is invaded, and a deer or two killed; their flesh, however, is not wholesome, on account of the laurel leaves on which they feed, and their skin is nearly worthless.”

I expressed my surprise that the leaves of the mountain laurel, the *kalmia latifolia*, which are so deadly to sheep, should be the winter food of the deer.

“It is because the deer has no gall,” answered the man, “that the pison don’t take effect. But their meat will not do to eat, except in a small quantity, and cooked with pork, which I think helps take the pison out of it.”

“The deer,” he went on to say, “are now passing out of the blue into the gray. After the holidays, when their hair becomes long, and their winter coat is quite grown, their hide is soft and tender, and tears easily when dressed, and it would be folly to kill them, even if there were no law against it.” He went on to find a parallel to the case of the deer-skins in the hides of neat-cattle, which, when brought from a hot country, like South America, are firmer and tougher than when obtained in a colder climate like ours.

The Wyoming traveller gave a bad account of the health, just at present, of the beautiful valley in which he lived. “We have never before,” said he, “known what it was to have the fever and ague among us, but now it is very common, as well as other fevers. The season has neither been uncommonly wet nor uncommonly dry, but it has been uncommonly hot.” I heard the same account of various other districts in Pennsylvania. Mifflin county, for example, was sickly this season, as well as other parts of the state which hitherto have been almost uniformly healthy. Here, however, in Stroudsburg and its neighborhood, they boasted that the fever and ague had never yet made its appearance.

I was glad to hear a good account of the pecuniary circumstances of the Pennsylvania farmers. They got in debt like every body else during the prosperous years of 1835 and 1836, and have been ever since working themselves gradually out of it. “I have never,” said an intelligent gentleman of Stroudsburg, “known the owners of the farms so free from debt, and so generally easy and prosperous in their condition, as at this moment.” It is to be hoped that having been so successful in paying their private debts, they will now try what can be done with the debt of the state.

We left Stroudsburg this morning—one of the finest mornings of this autumnal season—and soon climbed an eminence which looked down upon Cherry Hollow. This place reminded me, with the exception of its forests, of the valleys in the Peak of Derbyshire, the same rounded summits,
the same green, basin-like hollows. But here, on the hill-sides, were tall groves of oak and chestnut, instead of the brown heath; and the large stone houses of the German householders were very unlike the Derbyshire cottages. The valley is four miles in length, and its eastern extremity is washed by the Delaware. Climbing out of this valley and passing for some miles through yellow woods and fields of springing corn, not Indian corn, we found ourselves at length travelling on the side of another long valley, which terminates at its southern extremity in the Wind Gap.

The Wind Gap is an opening in the same mountain ridge which is cloven by the Water Gap, but, unlike that, it extends only about half-way down to the base. Through this opening, bordered on each side by large loose blocks of stone, the road passes. After you have reached the open country beyond, you look back and see the ridge stretching away eastward towards the Water Gap, and in the other direction towards the southwest till it sinks out of sight, a rocky wall of uniform height, with this opening in the midst, which looks as if part of the mountain had here fallen into an abyss below. Beyond the Wind Gap we came to the village of Windham, lying in the shelter of this mountain barrier, and here, about twelve o'clock, our driver stopped a moment at an inn to give water to his horses. The bar-room was full of fresh-colored young men in military uniforms, talking Pennsylvania German rather rapidly and vociferously. They surrounded a thick-set man, in a cap and shirt-sleeves, whom they called Tscho, or Joe, and insisted that he should give them a tune on his fiddle.

"Spiel, Tscho, spiel, spiel," was shouted on every side, and at last Tscho took the floor with a fiddle and began to play. About a dozen of the young men stood up on the floor, in couples, facing each other, and hammered out the tune with their feet, giving a tread or tap on the floor to correspond with every note of the instrument, and occasionally crossing from side to side. I have never seen dancing more diligently performed.

When the player had drawn the final squeak from his violin, we got into our vehicle, and in somewhat more than an hour were entering the little village of Nazareth, pleasantly situated among fields the autumnal verdure of which indicated their fertility. Nazareth is a Moravian village, of four or five hundred inhabitants, looking prodigiously like a little town of the old world, except that it is more neatly kept. The houses are square and solid, of stone or brick, built immediately on the street; a pavement of broad flags runs under their windows, and between the flags and the carriage-way is a row of trees. In the centre of the village is a square with an arcade for a market, and a little aside from the main street, in a hollow covered with bright green grass, is another square, in the midst of which stands a large white church. Near it is an avenue, with two immense lime-trees growing at the gate, leading to the field in which
they bury their dead. Looking upon this square is a large building, three or four stories high, where a school for boys is kept, to which pupils are sent from various parts of the country, and which enjoys a very good reputation. We entered the garden of this school, an inclosure thickly overshadowed with tall forest and exotic trees of various kinds, with shrubs below, and winding walks and summer-houses and benches. The boys of the school were amusing themselves under the trees, and the arched walks were ringing with their shrill voices.

We visited also the burying place, which is situated on a little eminence, backed with a wood, and commands a view of the village. The Moravian grave is simple in its decorations; a small flat stone, of a square shape, lying in the midst, between the head and foot, is inscribed with the name of the dead, the time and place of his birth, and the time when, to use their own language, he "departed," and this is the sole epitaph. But innovations have been recently made on this simplicity; a rhyming couplet or quatrain is now sometimes added, or a word in praise of the dead. One recent grave was loaded with a thick tablet of white marble, which covered it entirely, and bore an inscription as voluminous as those in the burial places of other denominations. The graves, as in all Moravian burying grounds, are arranged in regular rows, with paths at right angles between them, and sometimes a rose-tree is planted at the head of the sleeper.

As we were leaving Nazareth, the innkeeper came to us, and asked if we would allow a man who was travelling to Easton to take a seat in our carriage with the driver. We consented, and a respectable-looking, well-clad, middle-aged person, made his appearance. When we had proceeded a little way, we asked him some questions, to which he made no other reply than to shake his head, and we soon found that he understood no English. I tried him with German, which brought a ready reply in the same language. He was a native of Pennsylvania, he told me, born at Snow Hill, in Lehigh county, not very many miles from Nazareth. In turn, he asked me where I came from, and when I bid him guess, he assigned my birthplace to Germany, which showed at least that he was not very accurately instructed in the diversities with which his mother tongue is spoken.

As we entered Easton, the yellow woods on the hills and peaks that surround the place, were lit up with a glowing autumnal sunset. Soon afterward we crossed the Lehigh, and took a walk along its bank in South Easton, where a little town has recently grown up; the sidewalks along its dusty streets were freshly swept for Saturday night. As it began to grow dark, we found ourselves strolling in front of a row of iron mills, with the canal on one side and the Lehigh on the other. One of these was a rolling mill, into which we could look from the bank where we stood, and observe the whole process of the manufacture, which is very striking.
The whole interior of the building is lighted at night only by the mouths of several furnaces, which are kindled to a white heat. Out of one of these a thick bar of iron, about six feet in length and heated to a perfect whiteness, is drawn, and one end of it presented to the cylinders of the mill, which seize it and draw it through between them, rolled out to three or four times its original size. A sooty workman grasps the opposite end of the bar with pincers as soon as it is fairly through, and returns it again to the cylinders, which deliver it again on the opposite side. In this way it passes backward and forward till it is rolled into an enormous length, and shoots across the black floor with a twining motion like a serpent of fire. At last, when pressed to the proper thinness and length, it is coiled up into a circle by the help of a machine contrived for the purpose, which rolls it up as a shopkeeper rolls up a ribbon.

We found a man near where we stood, begrimed by the soot of the furnaces, handling the clumsy masses of iron which bear the name of bloom. The rolling mill, he said, belonged to Rodenbourough, Stewart & Co., who had very extensive contracts for furnishing iron to the nail-makers and wire manufacturers.

"Will they stop the mill for the new tariff?" said I.

"They will stop for nothing," replied the man. "The new tariff is a good tariff, if people would but think so. It costs the iron-masters fifteen dollars a ton to make their iron, and they sell it for forty dollars a ton. If the new tariff obliges them to sell it for considerable less they will still make money."

So revolves the cycle of opinion. Twenty years ago a Pennsylvanian who questioned the policy of the protective system would have been looked upon as a sort of curiosity. Now the bloomers and stable-boys begin to talk free trade. What will they talk twenty years hence?


606. To Horatio Greenough

New York, November 5th 1846.

My dear sir.

At the request of an intimate friend of mine, the gentleman whom you saw with me last autumn,¹ I take the liberty of giving this note of introduction to G. F. Thomson Esq. a resident of this city, and a man of the highest respectability of character.² It may be in your power to give him some valuable suggestions, as a stranger in your country of the fine arts, and any civilities you may show him in that or any other way will be worthily bestowed and duly appreciated.

Yrs truly

WM.C. BRYANT
manuscript: Century Association address: H. Greenough Esq / Florence.

1. Charles Leupp.
2. See 524.1; Cooper, Letters & Journals, V, 173.

607. To Messrs. Carey & Hart

New York November 13, 1846.

Gentlemen.

The stereotypers Messrs. Johnson & Co.\(^1\) sent me in September a copy of the title page of my poems which I deposited and have the certificate of the Clerk of the Southern District. It did not occur to me at the time that the copy right which I took out would include the illustrations; but I perceive that it does, and I therefore comply with your desire to state that they are your property and that so far as they are comprehended in the copy right I have obtained I hold the right in my name for your use. I shall deposite the copy with the Clerk and see that the fact is duly endorsed on the certificate. I understand you that you will forward the copies to the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institute.

In regard to the stereotype plates of my poems, I learned after talking with you that our clerk in whose hands I placed them to dispose of for old type metal had already sold them to a type founder, Mr. Connor on the express stipulation that they should be broken up immediately. I shall enquire without delay if this has been done. If it has I think it is the best way of disposing of them. They are not well arranged and the alterations I have since made are considerable.\(^2\)

Yrs truly

WM C. BRYANT

Manuscript: HSPA address: To Messrs Carey & Hart—.

1. Laurence Johnson, a wood engraver, established a stereotype foundry at Philadelphia in 1825, and by 1846 this had become the firm of L. Johnson & Co. DAA. They printed the plates of Bryant's 1847 Poems.

2. These were apparently the plates of the 1839 Harper edition of Bryant's Poems; see Letter 499. It is uncertain whether he had bought these from the Harpers, or secured their release in some other manner. The type founder referred to was probably James Conner & Son, at the corner of Ann and Nassau streets. Doggett's New York City Directory, for 1845–1846.

608. To Orville Dewey

New York, November 17, 1846.

Dear Domine:

I hope that is familiar enough to satisfy you, and it is respectful, too, at least the initials are so, for they make D. D., which, as theology is the
highest of sciences, is, of course, the highest of honors.\textsuperscript{1} My wife and I were very much amused with your letter;\textsuperscript{2} it was as if you had fairly shaken off all care when you left New York, and, like a colt just turned into

"fresh fields and pastures new,\textsuperscript{3}"

were taking a good frisk about the premises before settling yourself to anything serious. May the old fellow—Care, I mean—the same who, according to the proverb, killed a cat with its nine lives, fail to overtake you in your new abode; or, if he should, may you, in doubling to come back where you ought to be, throw him off the track, and leave him behind forever.\textsuperscript{4} . . . How could you mention the word politics? You boast in the postscript that you have written a letter without a word of politics; but that very word politics has spoiled all. What if you should pay a visit—a parochial visit, let us suppose—to a gentleman whose son has been unfortunately hanged the week before, and, just as you were taking your leave, should tell him, as a proof of your considerable forbearance, and delicate beyond the ordinary standard of good breeding, that in your whole conversation you have not said a syllable about halters. You know very well that we Democrats of the State of New York have been beaten in the late election—beaten small, ground to powder in the strife of politics,\textsuperscript{5} and yet you mention the very word that revives all our sorrows. Pray leave us a little space alone with our grief. Respect the sacred anguish of those who are smitten with a recent calamity. Have you not yet learned that on such occasions silence is the most expressive token of sympathy? It is ill tickling a green wound, as any surgeon will tell you.

There! I have written you a letter made up of nothing. A whipped syllabub, baked dry to prevent a collapse. I hope it will suffer no damage on its way to Washington. It is a strange thing for me to write a letter when I have nothing to communicate. It seems as sheer a waste of time as reading a novel. The news of New York—the small news I mean—which does not find its way into the newspapers, you doubtless have had from other correspondents. Perhaps they have not told you that in this region the skies have wept ever since the unfortunate issue of the late election. "Sad drops," as Milton calls them,\textsuperscript{6} shed almost without intermission; a fortnight's storm, with the sourest of east winds. I have been, and am, at my place on Long Island, planting and transplanting trees, in the mist; sixty or seventy; some for shade; most for fruit. Hereafter, men, whose existence is at present merely possible, will gather pears from the trees which I have set in the ground, and wonder what old covey—for in those days the slang terms of the present time, by the ordinary process of change in languages, will have become classical—what old covey of past ages planted them?\textsuperscript{7} Or they will walk in the shade of the mulberry, apricot, and cherry-trees that I have set in a row beside a green lane, and think, if they think at all about the matter—for who can tell what the great-
grandchildren of ours will think about—that they sprang up of themselves by the way. . . .


1. In 1839 Orville Dewey had been granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Harvard University.
2. Unrecovered.
4. Dewey, then president of the American Unitarian Association, was acting pastor of a small congregation in Washington, D.C., during the year 1846–1847, though still nominally minister of the Church of the Messiah in New York.
5. In November 1846 Governor Silas Wright failed of re-election through the defection of the "Hunkers"—conservatives—in his own Democratic Party, though many of the reforms he had advocated were incorporated in the new state constitution adopted that fall. See "The Administration of Silas Wright," EP, October 26, 1846.
6. Cf. Milton, Paradise Lost IX.1002–1004:
   "Sky loured, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
   Wept at completing of the mortal Sin
   Original. . . ."
7. Three years later this thought was the theme of Bryant's poem "The Planting of the Apple Tree" (1849). See Poems (1876), p. 323.

609. To Messrs. Carey & Hart

Gentlemen.

I have received the engravings and a copy of my poems for which I am greatly obliged to you. The volume is certainly a most beautiful one. I have attended to the depositing of the copy in paper covers with the Clerk of the District.

As regards the cheap edition I think I should be satisfied with the ten percent of which you speak, but that might depend on the number of copies and perhaps other circumstances, to be considered when the time for issuing the edition should arrive.¹

I want some copies to give away. I suppose I might obtain them here, but I want one to be bound in a particular manner, and I cannot obtain the sheets here. If you will send me seven copies done up, and one in sheets with a bill, I will remit you a check for the amount by return of mail—or if you will have the eighth copy bound for me, elegantly in calf, and lettered on the side with these words

The Manhasset Lyceum
to
J. F. Schroeder D. D.²

I will take it as a great favor besides discharging the bill at sight.

Yrs truly,

Wm C. Bryan.
MANUSCRIPT: HSPa ADDRESS: To Messrs Carey & Hart.

1. In 1849 Carey & Hart published an identical reprint of the 1847 edition, without illustrations and with a simpler binding.

2. Rev. John Frederick Schroeder (1800–1857) served as assistant rector of Trinity Parish, New York, from 1823 to 1839. Thereafter he held pastorates in Flushing, Long Island, and in Brooklyn. Manhasset, at the head of Manhasset Bay on Long Island Sound, was the nearest village of any considerable size to Roslyn.

610. To Richard H. Dana

New York December 12, 1846

Dear Dana,

I have sent you by Express, Harnden's I believe, a copy of my poems published by Lea & Blanchard. You will see I have amended most of the places you have noted as faulty. Where I did not, it does not follow that I did not think your criticism just, but it may be that I could not please myself with any alteration that occurred to me.

Your remarks I keep, that I may have the advantage of them in another edition. There are some lines that are yet to be amended, as I hope.— The expression I want may come into my mind at some luckier moment.

In the poem called "The Waning Moon," will you correct with your pen the line

"Even while your glow is on your cheek,"

by changing the last "your" to "the"?

Accept the book as one which you have helped to make better than it would have been but for you.

Yrs faithfully

Wm C. BRYANT


1. William Frederick Harnden (1812–1845) began a pioneering parcel service between New York and Boston in 1839.

2. It is not surprising that Bryant mistook the name of the firm then publishing his poems. Mathew Carey (1760–1839) and his son Henry Charles Carey (1793–1879), together with Mathew's son-in-law Isaac Lea (1792–1886) and his son Henry Charles Lea (1825–1909), and in association with Abraham Hart (1810–1885), published books under various combinations of their names and that of William A. Blanchard during the first half of the nineteenth century, Bryant's Poems (1847), as well as those of Longfellow and Nathaniel Parker Willis, bore the imprint of Carey & Hart, while Cooper's novels published during the 1840s usually bore that of Lea & Blanchard. See Lyle H. Wright, American Fiction, 1774–1850: A Contribution Toward a Bibliography, rev. ed. (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1948), pp. 65–77, passim; Lehmann-Haupt, The Book in America, pp. 126–127, 232–233; Cooper, Letters & Journals, III, 91.

611. To Horace Francis Clark

New-York, December 16, 1846.

Dear Sir:—

I return my best thanks to the Nominating Committee of the American Art-Union, for the compliment implied in offering me the nomination of President of that Association for the ensuing year.²

The difficulty of finding time for the duties of that office, owing to the residence of my family for the greater part of the year in the country, is so great, that I cannot with propriety retain it any longer. I must therefore decline the nomination of which the committee have been so obliging as to ask my acceptance.³

I am sir, very respectfully

Your ob't serv't

WM. C. BRYANT.


1. Horace Francis Clark (1815–1873), a New York lawyer and banker, was the son-in-law of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794–1877), with whom he was later associated in railroad speculations.

2. Clark, chairman of the committee, had written Bryant on December 15 notifying the Art Union's president of his unanimous nomination for a fourth year in that office. AAU Transactions, p. 23.

3. At the annual meeting of the Art Union on December 18, 1846, Bryant reported to its members, "The season which now closes is altogether the most brilliant which the Institution has known." Membership had risen during the year from 3,233 to 4,457; 145 works of art had been bought from 65 artists, at prices ranging from $15 to $600, for an average price of $83. Cowdrey, AAFA & AAU, I, 249. In reporting the president's inability to serve another year, the Nominating Committee expressed gratitude "eminently due to Mr. Bryant" for his service and the "peculiar commendation to public confidence and favor which [the Art Union] has derived from his distinguished name, and the signal purity of his character." AAU Transactions, p. 24.

612. To Justin H. Olds

[New York, cJanuary 7, 1847]

Dear Sir.—

John wrote me that there was wanted fifty or sixty dollars to buy timber for the house you have undertaken to build for me.¹ I enclose the money which as I understand will be all that you will have occasion for, as the money to pay the workmen will be raised from the sale of the wheat, and this sum is all I can afford in cash to put into the building.—

As to the plan— I do not want to build a house for the sake of making a handsome one but for the sake of making the property productive. I should therefore prefer such a small cheap building as you speak of in your letter²—one room a bed room and a pantry, with perhaps a
leanto, a story and a half high, and size 16 feet by 22—but I should wish the external finish and style to be after the plan I sent you—projecting roof brackets and a little piazza. Or if you can do it without calling on me for any more money—let the plan be somewhat after that which Mr. Whitmarsh has given, but so constructed as to accommodate two families. I like Mr. Whitmarsh's plan very much.—

I have not answered your letter before because I have been very busy, and have besides thought it better not to decide in a hurry what I would do.—

We are all well—Julia is at school in town—Fanny and her child are quite well—and my wife is with me here in town—She sends her love to you all—remember me to Louisa and mother.

[unsigned]

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (draft).

1. See Letter 597.
2. Unrecovered.
3. The Bryants' first grandchild, Minna Godwin, was born in 1845.

613. To John Howard Bryant

[New York, cJanuary 7, 1847]

Dear Brother—

I have heard nothing from Cave Johnson the Postmaster General yet though I wrote him a good long letter drawn up with great care and as persuasively as I could write.¹ I think he is too much occupied with smelling out frauds at the post office to attend to any thing he ought, and I suspect he does not much like me on account of what I have thought myself obliged to say on the various parts of the post office question. If I can think of any body on whom I should be willing to put such a job I will get him to call at the post office and see what has been done in regard to my application.

Your verses—those last sent—are some of them very [clever?] and two or three a little [terse?]. I shall look them over and send them to Graham. The others I have not sent yet—but they shall go you may be sure. —I have had some trouble in getting any thing of Graham for myself by asking him for it and I had at last to make a draft on him for the money which he did not think proper to protest.—

I have written to Mr. Olds about the house and sent 60 dollars which I told him was all I am willing to put into the house. I do not build for the sake of setting an example of architectural beauty—though I should insist that the cottage should look well— I have therefore written that it ought to be a cheap single house or a house for two families—but not the latter if I must send out more money—inasmuch as I want all I can save to pay my debts here—
As to the wheat I would have it kept till next spring by all means—the transportation will then I hope be less costly and the price in your part of the country higher—

[unsigned]

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL–GR (draft).

1. See Letter 597. Bryant's letter to Johnson is unrecovered.

614. To Frances F. Bryant

New York    Thursday    April 15 1847.

Dear Frances.

I have not seen Judge Edmonds¹ yet—but I shall do so today or tomorrow. Your note of last night came to the office this morning and I am very glad that you are doing so well. I hope you will keep as quiet as you can.

There will be some things on board of the Congress,² which you will please to ask John to attend to. I have written to Prince for some trees,³ and desired that they might be ready on Monday morning for John to bring to Roslyn.

You have seen, I suppose, how we have been whipped in the election. Every body whom I see is glad of it, our candidates were so bad.⁴

Yrs truly

W. C. B.

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

1. John Worth Edmonds; see 492.4.
3. William Robert Prince (1795–1869) of Flushing, Long Island, son and grandson of nurserymen who had pioneered in developing new varieties of fruit and grape stock, wrote Prince's Manual of Roses (1846) and many articles on horticulture.
4. In the New York City election on April 13 the Democratic candidate for Mayor, J. Sherman Brownell, lost by a "considerable majority" to his Whig opponent, W. V. Brady, and the Whigs also won twelve of the eighteen contests for the board of aldermen. The EP complained on April 14 that Brownell had been forced on the Democrats by the "corrupt system of nominations which prevails in New York."

615. To Frances F. Bryant


My dear Frances.

Yesterday I went to Mrs. Elwell's⁴ and told her what I would give for the rooms, which she consented to take, without a syllable of expostu-
lation. Afterwards I packed up my duds, and this morning, a little before nine o'clock, I had a spring cart at 30 Warren Street, and saw the greater part of my things placed on it. I suppose they are at No. 4 Amity Place before this time.

I found a letter from Aunt Charity at the office yesterday morning which I answered last evening. She was anxious to know the state of mother's health, which as you know I was able to inform her concerning. Aunt is well—that is as well as usual, and Uncle Drake though not well is rather better than when I saw her last at Weybridge.

I have just cut out from a newspaper an article dated Cleveland, Ohio, the writer of which says that a lady of his acquaintance gets rid of the curculios on her plums by giving them switchel. She hangs on the trees bottles of molasses and water, which attract and drown the insect in great numbers, and her trees bear abundantly, while those on which no such expedient is tried bear nothing.

Mr. Leupp made fifty thousand dollars last winter—but this, I suppose, is not a thing to speak of.

I hope you are not cumbering yourself with much serving. Choose the good part, with Mary, do not overwork the body, and be careful to feed the soul.

Yrs affectionately
W. C. B.

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

1. Since about November 1845 the Bryants had lived, while in town, in the home of Vice Chancellor William T. McCoun, at 30 Warren Street. As was now his custom, Bryant took lodgings for his own use during the week, joining Frances and Julia at Roslyn on weekends. Here, in widow Mary Elwell's boardinghouse at 4 Amity Place, he had as fellow-boarder John Bigelow, who in December 1848 became his partner and fellow-editor on the EP. Margaret Clapp, Forgotten First Citizen (Boston: Little, Brown, 1947), p. 52.

2. Neither letter has been recovered.

3. Sarah Snell Bryant, living with her daughter Charity Louisa Olds in Princeton, Illinois, had broken her right hip in a fall on January 12, 1847. On May 6, the day after this letter was written, she died at Princeton, in her seventy-ninth year. Charity and Justin Olds to Charity Bryant, May 9, 1847, Sheldon Museum; Letter 617.

4. Since childhood Cullen and his brothers had habitually referred to their Aunt Charity's lifelong companion, Sylvia Drake, as "Uncle Drake"—though not, of course, in the hearing of either spinster!


6. Cf. Luke 10:42—"... and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
616. To Frances F. Bryant

My dear Frances.

I slept last night in my new lodgings, and very soundly and comfortably. The rooms both appear considerably smaller than those I have left but the air better, and the street is very quiet.

You were probably a little disappointed in not seeing Julia last night, but I suppose she will give you a satisfactory. Yesterday I went out with Mr. Leupp and Mr. [Francis] Edmonds to see the high bridge over which the Croton aqueduct is to pass. The height of the arches is sixty feet or more and they are so broad that vessels may pass under them. The old aqueducts of Rome are nothing to this work in respect of height and massiveness—though they are longer.1

Tomorrow I come out to Roslyn. Dr. Bliss called yesterday and I asked him to go with me but he is afraid of the cold weather.2 I hope you are taking good care of your self.

Yrs truly

Wm C. Bryant

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

1. High Bridge, which carries the old Croton Aqueduct across the Harlem River from The Bronx to Manhattan, New York City, was completed in 1848.

2. Bryant's old friend and early publisher, a bachelor then living at the City Hotel on Broadway near Trinity Place, died the following year at the age of sixty-nine. Arthur Ames Bliss, Theodore Bliss, Publisher and Bookseller: A Study of Character and Life in the Middle Period of the XIX Century (Northampton, Massachusetts: Northampton Historical Society, 1941), p. 6; Cooper, Letters & Journals, II, 151.

617. To Charity Bryant

Dear Aunt.

I came into town this morning after an absence of three days at my place in the country, and heard the sad news of my mother's death. A newspaper directed to me arrived yesterday with an obituary article concerning her, together with a letter to me which the people of the office supposed related to the same event. They sent them both out to me as they supposed, but they did not reach me, so that I have no particulars to give, and shall not learn them till I go again into the country.

But I had a letter from John the latter part of last week preparing me for her approaching end. It was dated May 3d with a postscript of the 4th. He tells me that "the neck of the thigh bone was broken near where it enters the socket of the hip-joint" and that the doctor who was at first called said there was no fracture, so that nothing was done for some weeks, and then it was so late that the setting of the leg would have
caused great pain, and mother was unwilling that it should be done. "She suffered" says John's letter "much pain through the winter. For the last few weeks she has been easier. She has never been able to get on or off the bed without assistance since she was hurt. She was at one time so that she mended stockings, wrote in her dairy and read a little. For the last two weeks she has been quite ill, has become quite emaciated and looks wild and haggard. I do not think she will live very long. Probably the next news you hear from us will be of her death, as her strength is failing very fast and her mind seems in a great measure gone."

Again he says near the close: "I have just been to see mother. She is failing very fast. I asked her how she was; she answered that she was very sleepy, and did not incline to say anything more. She is now too weak to sit up and notices what is passing but little."

The postscript of May 4th says, "Mother is about the same this morning. She may live some days, possibly weeks."

The close of her life I infer was nearer than my brother thought when he wrote, and must have occurred within two or three days.

You speak of her submission to the divine will as a consolation to her friends. It is so undoubtedly, but a greater consolation, I think, is to be derived from her blameless and useful life, which it pleased Providence to prolong to so late a period. I could wish that she had been spared the physical suffering of the last months of her life, but that, I doubt not, had its uses in fitting her for that new state of being on which she has entered.

I suppose you will have letters from Illinois giving you a more perfect account than I have been able to collect from the letters that have hitherto reached me, but I recollected the anxiety you showed in your last letter, to have news of my mother's health, and thought it possible that you might not get letters from Illinois immediately.

Remember me kindly to Miss Drake and believe me

Yrs affectionately

Wm C. Bryant

MANUSCRIPT: UTEX ADDRESS: Miss C. Bryant / Weybridge / Vermont. POSTMARK: NEW-YORK / 20 / MAY POSTAL ANNOTATION: PAID.

618. To John Howard Bryant


. . . It is a mitigation of the calamity to think she was spared to us so long; that her life was blameless and useful; and that, although some of her last days were embittered by physical suffering, she was always satisfied with the lot assigned her by Providence. To have lived in benevolent work and contentment, and, for the most part, in health, the full number of years allotted to the human race, may be accounted as singularly fortu-
nate. We have reason to be grateful that such was the case with our mother. . . . ¹


619. To Rufus Bryant¹

New York June 14, 1847.

Sir

I have written to the Navy Department concerning your case, and received the answer which I enclose. You will see that your discharge is directed. ²

The draft on the Bank of Commerce I reinclose to you. ³ I am sorry that you should imagine that I would accept anything for writing a letter to the department.

Yrs respectfully

WM C. BRYANT


1. Evidently this letter never reached its intended recipient, who has not been identified as related to Bryant, since it was returned to the sender after ten years in the Dead Letter Office.

2. Bryant enclosed a letter written to him on May 27, 1847, by John Young Mason (1799–1859), Secretary of the Navy, in response to one he had sent Mason. In this Mason wrote, "Your letter of the 16th is received and Com⁹ Perry has been ordered to discharge Rufus Bryant, and to send him to the United States on the first public vessel returning." NYPL–GR. Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794–1858), then in command of American naval forces operating off the east coast of Mexico, negotiated the first United States treaty with Japan in 1854.

3. This bank draft, and Rufus Bryant's letter enclosing it to Bryant, are unrecovered.

620. To John Franklin Gray¹

New York June 14, 1847.

My dear sir

The bearer of this letter is John Stark Esq. ² a gentleman of education and talent, who desires to obtain the place of Professor in the Free Academy which is to be established under the law lately passed. ³ Allow me to ask of you as a member of the Board of Education, who have I am informed the appointment of Professors in the new institution, a
friendly consideration of such testimonials of Mr. Stark's qualifications as will be laid before you.

Yrs truly
WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYSL ADDRESS: To Dr John F. Gray.

1. Bryant's physician; see Letter 444.
2. Unidentified.
3. Bryant's recommendation came only a week after New York City voters had approved the establishment of their first public institution of higher learning. The Free Academy opened in 1849 at the corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-Third Street. After 1866 this was called the College of the City of New York, and eventually it became a unit of the City University of New York. The prime mover in founding the Free Academy was Townsend Harris (1804–1878), president of the Board of Education, 1846–1848, and in 1855 consul-general to Japan.

621. To Frances F. Bryant

My dear Frances,—

I forgot to ask you to make the girls now and then give a little water to the Illinois gooseberry plants under the willow. The weather is so very dry that I fear they may die.

I have a letter—a very kind one—from Rogers the poet, acknowledging the receipt of my volume. You are mentioned in it.¹ I have also a note from Mrs. Fuller at Rome, asking the Evening Post in exchange for a Roman paper, the Contemporaneo.² She says the Springs are well, and desire to be remembered to you and Fanny and Julia.

Yrs affectionately
W. C. BRYANT

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

1. In his letter of June 24, 1847 (cited previously in 541.1), Samuel Rogers wrote, "Pray remember me very affectionately to one I have never seen—to one I must love, from what I have read about her." Life, II, 24 (there misdated 1846). The source of Rogers' image of Frances is evident in a letter he wrote Bryant the next year: 'Pray present my respects to your partner in life. Though we have never met, I know her well. Described as she is by you in 'The Future Life,' I think I could single her out from among a thousand.' Letter dated November 12 [1848], ibid., 36–37. See Poems (1876), pp. 262–264.

2. Margaret Fuller held Bryant in high regard, both as poet and as journalist. In her Papers on Literature and Art, published in 1846 before she sailed for Europe, she placed him at the head of American poets, remarking that "his poetry is purely the language of his inmost nature, and the simple lovely garb in which his thoughts are arranged, a direct gift from the Muse. He has written nothing that is not excellent, and the atmosphere of his verse refreshes and composes the mind, like
leaving the highway to enter some green, lovely, fragrant wood" (II, 130–131). And, writing to him from Rome on May 22, 1847, she reported that when the editor of Contemporaneo, "the organ of the present liberal movement in the Papal States," asked her to suggest exchanges with American newspapers, "I told him I thought yours, with the Nat'l Intelligencer and Tribune would give a fair representation such as [he might?] wish to see of the state of things in the U. S. & I thought that you from your knowledge of foreign languages and foreign affairs would take pleasure in receiving his paper." NYPL–GR.

622.  To Charity Bryant

New York, July 22, 1847.

My dear Aunt.

I think of going next week to New Hampshire leaving this place on Monday or Tuesday, and hope in a few days afterwards to be at Wey­bridge. If we should drop in upon you at that time I hope it will not be inconvenient for you to receive us. My wife and youngest daughter will accompany me. They are now in the country or perhaps they would send some message of their own. My regards to Miss Drake.

Yours affectionately

WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: Sheldon Museum ADDRESS: Miss C. Bryant / Weybridge / Vermont POST­MARK: NEW-YORK / 22 / JUL POSTAL ANNOTATION: 5 cts. / PAID.

623.  To the Evening Post

Portland, July 31, 1847.

I left Boston for this place, a few days since, by one of the railways. I never come to Boston or go out of it without being agreeably struck with the civility and respectable appearance of the hackney-coachmen, the porters, and others for whose services the traveller has occasion. You feel, generally, in your intercourse with these persons that you are dealing with men who have a character to maintain.

There is a sober substantial look about the dwellings of Boston, which pleases me more than the gayer aspect of our own city. In New York we are careful to keep the outside of our houses fresh with paint, a practice which does not exist here, and which I suppose we inherited from the Hollanders, who learned it I know not where—could it have been from the Chinese? The country houses of Holland, along the canals, are bright with paint, often of several different colors, and are as gay as pagodas. In their moist climate, where mould and moss so speedily gather, the practice may be founded in better reasons than it is with us.

"Boston," said a friend to whom I spoke of the appearance of comfort and thrift in that city, "is a much more crowded place than you imagine, and where people are crowded there can not be comfort. In many of the neighborhoods, back of those houses which present so
respectable an aspect, are buildings rising close to each other, inhabited by
the poorer class, whose families are huddled together without sufficient
space and air, and here it is that Boston poverty hides itself. You are more
fortunate on your island, that your population can extend itself horizon-
tally, instead of heaping itself up, as we have begun to do here.”

The first place which we could call pleasant after leaving Boston was
Andover, where Stuart and Woods, now venerable with years, instruct the
young orthodox ministers and missionaries of New England. It is
prettily situated among green declivities. A little beyond, at North
Andover, we came in sight of the roofs and spires of the new city of
Lawrence, which already begin to show proudly on the sandy and sterile
banks of the Merrimac, a rapid and shallow river. A year ago last Febru-
ary, the building of the city was begun; it has now five or six thousand
inhabitants, and new colonists are daily thronging in. Brick kilns are
smoking all over the country to supply materials for the walls of the
dwellings. The place, I was told, astonishes visitors with its bustle and
confusion. The streets are encumbered with heaps of fresh earth, and piles
of stone, brick, beams, and boards, and people can with difficulty hear
each other speak, for the constant thundering of hammers, and the shouts
of cartmen and wagoners urging their oxen and horses with their loads
through the deep sand of the ways. “Before the last shower,” said a
passenger, “you could hardly see the city from this spot, on account of the
cloud of dust that hung perpetually over it.”

“Rome,” says the old adage, “was not built in a day,” but here is a
city which, in respect of its growth, puts Rome to shame. The Romulus
of this new city, who like the Latian of old, gives his name to the com-
munity of which he is the founder, is Mr. Abbot[t] Lawrence, of Boston,
a rich manufacturer, money-making and munificent, and more fortunate
in building cities and endowing schools, than in foretelling political
events. He is the modern Amphion, to the sound of whose music, the
pleasant clink of dollars gathered in many a goodly dividend, all the
stones which form the foundation of this Thebes dance into their places,

“And half the mountain rolls into a wall.”

Beyond Lawrence, in the state of New Hampshire, the train stopped
a moment at Exeter, which those who delight in such comparisons might
call the Eton of New England. It is celebrated for its academy, where
[George] Bancroft, [Edward] Everett, and I know not how many more of
the New England scholars and men of letters, received the first rudiments
of their education. It lies in a gentle depression of the surface of the
country, not deep enough to be called a valley, on the banks of a little
stream, and has a pleasant retired aspect. At Durham, some ten miles
further on, we found a long train of freight-cars crowded with the chil-
dren of a Sunday-school, just ready to set out on a pic-nic party, the boys
shouting, and the girls, of whom the number was prodigious, showing us their smiling faces. A few middle-aged men, and a still greater number of matrons, were dispersed among them to keep them in order. At Dover, where are several cotton mills, we saw a similar train, with a still larger crowd, and when we crossed the boundary of New Hampshire and entered South Berwick in Maine, we passed through a solitary forest of oaks, where long tables and benches had been erected for their reception, and the birds were twittering in the branches over them.

At length the sight of numerous groups gathering blue-berrys, in an extensive tract of shrubby pasture, indicated that we were approaching a town, and in a few minutes we had arrived at Portland. The conductor, whom we found intelligent and communicative, recommended that we should take quarters, during our stay, at a place called the Veranda, or Oak Grove, on the water, about two miles from the town, and we followed his advice. We drove through Portland, which is nobly situated on an eminence overlooking Casco Bay, its maze of channels, and almost innumerable islands, with their green slopes, cultivated fields, and rocky shores. We passed one arm of the sea after another on bridges, and at length found ourselves on a fine bold promontory, between Presumpscot river and the waters of Casco Bay. Here a house of entertainment has just been opened—the beginning of a new watering-place, which I am sure will become a favorite one in the hot months of our summers. The surrounding country is so intersected with straits, that, let the wind come from what quarter it may, it breathes cool over the waters; and the tide, rising twelve feet, can not ebb and flow without pushing forward the air and drawing it back again, and thus causing a motion of the atmosphere in the stillest weather.

We passed twenty-four hours in this pleasant retreat, among the oaks of its grove, and along its rocky shores, enjoying the agreeable coolness of the fresh and bracing atmosphere. To tell the truth we have found it quite cool enough ever since we reached Boston, five days ago; sometimes, in fact, a little too cool for the thin garments we are accustomed to wear at this season. Returning to Portland, we took passage in the steamer Huntress, for Augusta, up the Kennebeck. I thought to give you, in this letter, an account of this part of my journey, but I find I must reserve it for my next.


2. Abbott Lawrence (1792–1855) founded the city of Lawrence in 1845. He was first a Boston importer and later a textile manufacturer, and in 1835–1837 and again in 1839–1841 a Whig member of Congress. The early free trade beliefs of this mer-
chant turned manufacturer gave way to an advocacy of a high protective tariff. As a leading Whig, he suffered a setback in the moderate Walker Tariff of 1846.

3. Amphion, son of Zeus and Antiope, was taught such skill on the lyre by Hermes that when, later, as king of Thebes, he was fortifying the city, the stones were moved by his music to form themselves into a wall. The quotation is unidentified.

4. Phillips Exeter Academy, opened in 1783, was endowed by John Phillips (1719-1795, Harvard 1735), a wealthy land speculator.

624. To the Evening Post

Keene, New Hampshire, August 11, 1847.

We left Portland early in the afternoon, on board the steamer Huntress, and swept out of the harbor, among the numerous green islands which here break the swell of the Atlantic, and keep the water almost as smooth as that of the Hudson. "It is said," remarked a passenger, "that there are as many of these islands as there are days in the year, but I do not know that any body has ever counted them." Two of the loftiest, rock-bound, with verdant summits, and standing out beyond the rest, overlooking the main ocean, bore light-houses, and near these we entered the mouth of the Kennebec, which here comes into the sea between banks of massive rock.

At the mouth of the river were forests of stakes, for the support of the nets in which salmon, shad, and alewives are taken. The shad fishery, they told me, was not yet over, though the month of August was already come. We passed some small villages where we saw the keels of large unfinished vessels lying high upon the stocks; at Bath, one of the most considerable of these places, but a small village still, were five or six, on which the ship-builders were busy. These, I was told, when once launched, would never be seen again in the place where they were built, but would convey merchandise between the great ports of the world.

"The activity of ship-building in the state of Maine," said a gentleman whom I afterward met, "is at this moment far greater than you can form any idea of, without travelling along our coast. In solitary places where a stream or creek large enough to float a ship is found, our builders lay the keels of their vessels. It is not necessary that the channel should be wide enough for the ship to turn round; it is enough if it will contain her lengthwise. They choose a bend in the river from which they can launch her with her head down stream, and, aided by the tide, float her out to sea, after which she proceeds to Boston or New York, or some other of our large seaports to do her part in carrying on the commerce of the world."

I learned that the ship-builders of Maine purchase large tracts of forest in Virginia and other states of the south, for their supply of timber. They obtain their oaks from the Virginia shore, their hard pine from North Carolina; the coverings of the deck and the smaller timbers of the large vessels are furnished by Maine. They take to the south cargoes of
lime and other products of Maine, and bring back the huge trunks produced in that region. The larger trees on the banks of the navigable rivers of Maine were long ago wrought into the keels of vessels.

It was not far from Bath, and a considerable distance from the open sea, that we saw a large seal on a rock in the river. He turned his head slowly from side to side as we passed, without allowing himself to be disturbed by the noise we made, and kept his place as long as the eye could distinguish him. The presence of an animal always associated in the imagination with uninhabited coasts of the ocean, made us feel that we were advancing into a thinly or at least a newly peopled country.

Above Bath, the channel of the Kennebec widens into what is called Merrymeeting Bay. Here the great Androscoggin brings in its waters from the southwest, and various other small streams from different quarters enter the bay, making it a kind of Congress of Rivers. It is full of wooded islands and rocky promontories projecting into the water and over-shading it with their trees. As we passed up we saw, from time to time, farms pleasantly situated on the islands or the borders of the river, where a soil more genial or more easily tilled had tempted the settler to fix himself. At length we approached Gardiner, a flourishing village, beautifully situated among the hills on the right bank of the Kennebeck. All traces of sterility had already disappeared from the country; the shores of the river were no longer rock-bound, but disposed in green terraces, with woody eminences behind them. Leaving Gardiner behind us, we went on to Hallowell, a village bearing similar marks of prosperity, where we landed, and were taken in carriages to Augusta, the seat of government, three or four miles beyond.

Augusta is a pretty village, seated on green and apparently fertile eminences that overlook the Kennebeck, and itself overlooked by still higher summits, covered with woods. The houses are neat, and shaded with trees, as is the case with all New England villages in the agricultural districts. I found the Legislature in session; the Senate, a small quiet body, deliberating for aught I could see, with as much grave and tranquil dignity as the Senate of the United States. The House of Representatives was just at the moment occupied by some railway question, which I was told excited more feeling than any subject that had been debated in the whole session, but even this occasioned no unseemly agitation; the surface was gently rippled, nothing more.

While at Augusta, we crossed the river and visited the Insane Asylum, a state institution, lying on the pleasant declivities of the opposite shore. It is a handsome stone building. One of the medical attendants accompanied us over a part of the building, and showed us some of the wards in which there were then scarcely any patients, and which appeared to be in excellent order, with the best arrangements for the comfort of the inmates, and a scrupulous attention to cleanliness. When we expressed a
desire to see the patients, and to learn something of the manner in which they were treated, he replied, "We do not make a show of our patients; we only show the building." Our visit was, of course, soon dispatched. We learned afterward that this was either insolence or laziness on the part of the officer in question, whose business it properly was to satisfy any reasonable curiosity expressed by visitors.

It had been our intention to cross the country from Augusta directly to the White Hills of New Hampshire, and we took seats in the stage-coach with that view. Back of Augusta the country swells into hills of considerable height with deep hollows between, in which lie a multitude of lakes. We passed several of these, beautifully embosomed among woods, meadows, and pastures, and were told that if we continued on the course we had taken we should scarcely ever find ourselves without some sheet of water in sight till we arrived at Fryeburg on the boundary between Maine and New Hampshire. One of them, in the township of Winthrop, struck us as particularly beautiful. Its shores are clean and bold, with little promontories running far into the water, and several small islands.

At Winthrop we found that the coach in which we set out would proceed to Portland, and that if we intended to go on to Fryeburg, we must take seats in a shabby wagon, without the least protection for our baggage. It was already beginning to rain, and this circumstance decided us; we remained in the coach and proceeded on our return to Portland. I have scarcely ever travelled in a country which presented a finer appearance of agricultural thrift and prosperity than the portions of the counties of Kennebeck and Cumberland, through which our road carried us. The dwellings are large, neatly painted, surrounded with fruit-trees and shrubs, and the farms in excellent order, and apparently productive. We descended at length into the low country, crossed the Androscoggin to the county of York, where, as we proceeded, the country became more sandy and sterile, and the houses had a neglected aspect. At length, after a journey of fifty or sixty miles in the rain, we were again set down in the pleasant town of Portland.


### 625. To the Evening Post


I had not space in my last letter, which was written from Keene, in New Hampshire, to speak of a visit I had just made to the White Mountains. Do not think I am going to bore you with a set description of my journey and ascent of Mount Washington; a few notes of the excursion may possibly amuse you.

From Conway, where the stage-coach sets you down for the night, in
sight of the summits of the mountains, the road to the Old Notch is a very picturesque one. You follow the path of the Saco along a wide valley, sometimes in the woods that overhang its bank, and sometimes on the edge of rich grassy meadows, till at length, as you leave behind you one summit after another, you find yourself in a little plain, apparently inclosed on every side by mountains.

Further on you enter the deep gorge which leads gradually upward to the Notch. In the midst of it is situated the Willey House, near which the Willey family were overtaken by an avalanche and perished as they were making their escape.\(^1\) It is now enlarged into a house of accommodation for visitors to the mountains. Nothing can exceed the aspect of desolation presented by the lofty mountain-ridges which rise on each side. They are streaked with the paths of landslides, occurring at different periods, which have left the rocky ribs of the mountains bare from their bald tops to the forests at their feet, and have filled the sides of the valley with heaps of earth, gravel, stones, and trunks of trees.

From the Willey house you ascend, for about two miles, a declivity, by no means steep, with these dark ridges frowning over you, your path here and there crossed by streams which have made for themselves passages in the granite sides of the mountain like narrow staircases, down which they come tumbling from one vast block to another. I afterward made acquaintance with two of these, and followed them upward from one clear pool and one white cascade to another till I was tired. The road at length passes through what may be compared to a natural gateway, a narrow chasm between tall cliffs, and through which the Saco, now a mere brook, finds its way. You find yourself in a green opening, looking like the bottom of a drained lake with mountain summits around you. Here is one of the houses of accommodation from which you ascend Mount Washington.

If you should ever think of ascending Mount Washington, do not allow any of the hotel-keepers to cheat you in regard to the distance. It is about ten miles from either [of] the hotels to the summit, and very little less from any of them. They keep a set of worn-out horses, which they hire for the season, and which are trained to climb the mountain, in a walk, by the worst bridle-paths in the world. The poor hacks are generally tolerably sure-footed, but there are exemptions to this. Guides are sent with the visitors, who generally go on foot, strong-legged men, carrying long staves, and watching the ladies lest any accident should occur; some of these, especially those from the house in the Notch, commonly called Tom Crawford's, are unmannerly fellows enough.

The scenery of these mountains has not been sufficiently praised. But for the glaciers, but for the peaks white with perpetual snow, it would be scarcely worth while to see Switzerland after seeing the White Mountains. The depth of the valleys, the steepness of the mountain-sides, the variety of
aspect shown by their summits, the deep gulfs of forest below, seamed with the open courses of rivers, the vast extent of the mountain region seen north and south of us, gleaming with many lakes, took me with surprise and astonishment. Imagine the forests to be shorn from half the broad declivities—imagine scattered habitations on the thick green turf and footpaths leading from one to the other, and herds and flocks browsing, and you have Switzerland before you. I admit, however, that these accessories add to the variety and interest of the landscape, and perhaps heighten the idea of its vastness.

I have been told, however, that the White Mountains in autumn present an aspect more glorious than even the splendours of the perpetual ice of the Alps. All this mighty multitude of mountains, rising from valleys filled with dense forests, have then put on their hues of gold and scarlet, and, seen more distinctly on account of their brightness of color, seem to tower higher in the clear blue of the sky. At that season of the year they are little visited, and only awaken the wonder of the occasional traveller.

It is not necessary to ascend Mount Washington, to enjoy the finest views. Some of the lower peaks offer grander though not so extensive ones; the height of the main summit seems to diminish the size of the objects beheld from it. The sense of solitude and immensity is however most strongly felt on that great cone, overlooking all the rest, and formed of loose rocks, which seem as if broken into fragments by the power which upheaved these ridges from the depths of the earth below. At some distance on the northern side of one of the summits, I saw a large snow-drift lying in the August sunshine.

The Franconia Notch, which we afterwards visited, is almost as remarkable for the two beautiful little lakes within it, as for the savage grandeur of the mountain-walls between which it passes. At this place I was shown a hen clucking over a brood of young puppies. They were littered near the nest where she was sitting, when she immediately abandoned her eggs and adopted them as her offspring. She had a battle with the mother, and proved victorious; after which, however, a compromise took place, the slut nursing the puppies and the hen covering them as well as she could with her wings. She was strutting among them when I saw her, with an appearance of pride at having produced so gigantic a brood.

From Franconia we proceeded to Bath, on or near the Connecticut, and entered the lovely valley of that river, which is as beautiful in New Hampshire, as in any part of its course. Hanover, the seat of Dartmouth College, is a pleasant spot, but the traveller will find there the worst hotels on the river. Windsor, on the Vermont side, is a still finer village, with trim gardens and streets shaded by old trees; Bellows Falls is one of the most striking places for its scenery in all New England. The coach
brought us to the railway station in the pleasant village of Greenfield. We took seats in the train, and leaving on our left the quiet old streets of Deerfield under their ancient trees, and passing a dozen or more of the villages on the meadows of the Connecticut, found ourselves in less than two hours in this flourishing place, which is rapidly rising to be one of the most important towns in New England.


1. This widely-publicized tragedy provided the theme of Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale "The Ambitious Guest."

626. To T. F. Youngs¹

New York Tuesday Sept. 7, 1847.

My dear sir.

I called this morning at your counting house in South Street, to make an inquiry respecting the lead pipes which bring water to your house at Oyster Bay. As your brother could not tell me when you would probably be in town, I have taken this method of communicating with you.

You use I am told a pipe with a bore of half an inch. What I wish to know is—whether this answers your purpose—whether it delivers sufficient water, whether there is any inconvenience attending it—and if so how it is remedied. Will you also inform me of the distance from which the water is brought, and what is the thickness of the pipe—or in other words what it weighs to the yard? I am thinking of laying down a lead pipe at Hempstead Harbor for the purpose of conducting water from a spring to my daughter's cottage,² and therefore wish to avail myself of your experience in the matter. If there is any other information in your possession not comprised in the questions I have put, you will oblige me by communicating it.

Yrs. truly

W C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: HCL ADDRESS: T. F. Youngs Esq.

1. Thomas F. Youngs, a merchant at 41 South Street, New York City, listed his residence as "L. Island." *Doggett's New York City Directory, for 1845–1846.*

2. In 1844–1845 Bryant built a two-story brick cottage on his Roslyn property for his daughter Fanny Godwin and her husband, which they named "Golden Rod." It stands between the harbor and an ornamental fresh water pond, about one hundred yards south of the Bryant house, Cedarmere. Goddard, *Roslyn Harbor,* pp. 61, 70.
627. To Horatio N. Powers

New York September 15, 1847.

Dear sir

I will not deny that I am much pleased to learn that what I have written is so favorably estimated by such readers as yourself. If my verses have any merit, it is owing, in a great measure, I think, to the sincerity of the emotions they express.

You must have been greatly pleased with your visit to Berkshire, if you had never seen it before. The earth has few spots so beautiful as that valley of the Housatonic and its surrounding mountains. Even if the poem which drew you to that region was of little value, you had the reward of your journey in the charming scenery to which it introduced you.²

I am sir with much regard
Yrs.
WM C. BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-Berg ADDRESS: H. N. Powers Esq / Amenia / Schenectady / N. Y.

1. Horatio Nelson Powers (1826–1890), an Episcopal clergyman who held pastorates in Davenport, Iowa, and in Chicago, was an amateur poet and an avid admirer of Bryant's verses. He wrote a poem for the festival at the Century Club in New York honoring Bryant on his seventieth birthday in 1864, and also gave the principal speech at a celebration of Bryant's eightieth anniversary at the Chicago Literary Club in 1874. See The Bryant Festival at "The Century," November 5, M.DCCC.LXIV. (New York, 1865), pp. 49–51; Bigelow, Bryant, pp. 226–227, 237.

2. No letter from Powers at this time has been recovered. The poem referred to was probably Bryant's "Green River" (1821), or "Monument Mountain" (1824). See Poems (1876), pp. 31–35, 89–93.

628. To Frances F. Bryant


My dear Frances.

A note came to hand yesterday at the moment our papers were sent out to the railway station at Brooklyn, from Mrs. Morton enclosing one for you. I had just time to send it with the papers, but none to write to you.

Mrs. Morton goes up to Presqu'Isle on Friday and expects you on Thursday. I hope you will be able to come. Make the leisure if you have it not. I will go up myself and make the ascent of the mountain with Mr. Downing and Dr. Hull.¹ I am sure the carpenters must have finished their work by this time—if not perhaps they can work a day without you—and if they cannot do this, perhaps they may be told to come some day next week—Come at all events if you care to make the visit at all. If
you set about it in earnest I know you can arrange matters so as to come. I sent the two poems to Graham yesterday, accompanied with a threat of more soon.\textsuperscript{2} Last evening I called on Mrs. Reed your Washington friend,\textsuperscript{3} who is at 34 East Twentieth Street. She will be in town for the rest of the month. She made many inquiries about you and desired many compliments.

I need not have been in a hurry to return on Monday, for I found Mr. Tenney here.\textsuperscript{4}—Dr. Gray is desirous that I should go to Newburgh the latter part of this week.

Yrs affectionately

W C B.

\textsc{manuscript: NYPL-GR address: Mrs. Frances F. Bryant / Roslyn / Long Island / fwd. by Mr. Julian.}

1. It is uncertain how early Bryant became acquainted with the extraordinarily talented and influential landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–1852) of Newburgh, New York. In 1838 Downing married Caroline DeWint (1815–1895) of Fishkill, directly across the Hudson River, who was an early schoolmate of Fanny Godwin’s, the ceremony being performed by William Ware, at whose New York church the Bryants and DeWints had apparently been fellow-communicants. “Cedar Grove,” the country home of Caroline’s father, John Peter DeWint (1787–1870), at Fishkill Landing was near Presque Isle, the estate of William Denning (376.1), which the Bryants occasionally visited. In 1841 Bryant gave a cordial notice to Downing’s first and widely popular book, \textit{A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening}, and in 1845 to his \textit{The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America} (EP, September 30, 1841, and July 3, 1845). The earliest evidence of an intimacy between the two men seems to be an 1846 letter in which Downing sends some plants Bryant has requested, and asks his friend to give further publicity to his book on fruit trees, then in its sixth edition. He continues, “This is not all the demand I wish to make upon your time. The rest is that you would come up and make me a visit here in one of the ‘leafy months’—or at least come up and drive with me this summer.” Letter dated April 11, 1846, NYPL-GR. Dr. A. Gerard Hull, the Bryants’ physician (see 405.4), was a near-neighbor of Downing’s at Newburgh. (The editors are indebted to Mr. Arthur Channing Downs, Jr., for some of the above information about the DeWint family.)


3. Unidentified.

4. William Jewett Tenney (1814–1883, Yale 1832) had been assisting Bryant on the \textit{EP} for several years. Bryant, \textit{Reminiscences of EP}, pp. 389–340. Leaving Bryant’s employ in 1848, he soon afterward joined the staff of D. Appleton & Co. where for thirty years he was a leading book editor, and from 1861 to 1883 the editor of \textit{Appleton’s Annual Cyclopedia}, as well as a history of the Civil War and a grammatical analysis.
629. To Frances F. Bryant

New York Tuesday October 19th, 1847

My dear Frances.

Mr. Rand feels rather better today. His goods are through the Custom House without payment of duties. I wish you would tell John to say to Lewis that after his second month expires, which will be on the 20th. or 22d. of this month, I think the latter, we shall have no further occasion for a hired labourer.

At Newburgh, I saw a fence and a barn painted with coal tar. It is too dark a colour, almost black. Mr. Downing told me that this defect was removed by adding yellow ochre. I shall get a cask—

Mrs. Moulton, I hear, has returned. I shall call and see her—there is a payment of interest due about this time.

The whole city is astir with the great Washington Monument Procession.2

Yrs affectionately
W. C. BRYANT

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

1. After nearly fourteen years abroad, mostly in London, John Rand returned to this country in October 1847, and soon established himself in New York as a portrait painter. Callow, Kindred Spirits, p. 71; DAA.

2. The cornerstone of the Washington Monument was laid in the National Capital on October 19, 1847, with celebrations held throughout the country.

630. To an Unidentified Correspondent

[New York, cNovember 7, 1847?]1

My dear sir.

You are one of the few whose good opinion I value—Not that as a journalist I am indifferent to the good opinion of the [many?].

I thank you for the kind [thoughts?] which you were pleased to express of the manner in which the Evening Post is conducted. There are few to whose good opinion I am quite indifferent—but there are not many whose good opn I value as I do yours. Such things console me in the midst of the disgusts I frequently experience in political controversies when I see by what low motives politicians are often governed and to what unworthy expedients they will often resort. It requires a temperament naturally tenacious of hope to prevent these disgusts, as one advances in life from becoming too much a permanent mood of the mind. I see however when I take a large survey of things that all these things are set right in the long run—the false qualities in the account somehow balance each other and the state of man is a state of progress. In looking over the political history of New York as written by J. D. Hammond2 it seems to me that the further you go back the more corrupt you find our politicians.
Your praise would make me vain of my conduct of the Evening Post, if I had not known its defects, and if I were at proof on that question. As a journalist I have no ambition. It is merely my determination to fulfil its duties conscientiously and to do no mischief if I can do no good. It is a contentious kind of life and though I take great interest in questions of public policy constant debate is ungrateful to me. Enough of myself.

The aspect of the political world is at present rather confused. What will come of it all, is a question often asked of me, particularly by professional politicians. I am sure I do not know—my view is that if we keep ourselves in the right we shall come out right. Of that we should be satisfied, and it is enough to banish all uneasiness. What has taken place in New York will I am sure have a wholesome result.  

Accept my thanks again for your very kind letter and believe me very truly

Yrs  
W C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR (draft).

1. This undated draft letter lies between two others on the same sheet, the first an unidentified fragment dated October 28, 1847, and the second a draft dated November 30, 1847, to Bayard Taylor (Letter 632). Its tone and content suggest that its intended recipient was a public man Bryant held in high regard, but with whom he was not intimate. Around this time he had letters from George Bancroft, James Gillespie Birney, and Martin Van Buren, but there is nothing in their contents to invite such a response.


3. A factional split at the Democratic state convention in September 1847 between Hunkers and Barnburners, or radicals, resulted in Democratic defeat in November. See *EP*, November 4 and 5, 1847.

631. To Frances F. Bryant  

New York Nov. 30 [1847]  
Tuesday morning.

My dear Frances.

I saw Mr. Moulton yesterday and gave him your letter. He said he should send it to Mrs. Moulton at Troy, though he expected her in a very few days.

Mr. and Mrs. Hicks did not come out in the stage yesterday morning, so I could not give your message.

Yesterday it was bitter cold and the night colder yet—it was midwinter weather. The gutters this morning are filled and the streets slippery with ice. I think you ought to be glad to come in.

I was at the meeting last evening; it was a great affair, a crowded
and highly respectable looking audience. My seat as one of the Vice Presidents gave me the best opportunity to hear every thing.

Au revoir
W. C. B.

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

1. This was evidently a conference among radical New York Democrats opposed to the extension of slavery to the new territories won in the Mexican war. Among its leading participants, in addition to Bryant, were Theodore Sedgwick III and David Dudley Field; their discussion concerned the advisability of proposing a separate presidential ticket in 1848, around which the proponents of free soil might rally. See Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, p. 463; EP, December 2, 1847. Bryant's reluctance at this time to see the formation of a third party is expressed in Letter 634.

632. To Bayard Taylor

New York Nov. 30, 1847.

Dear sir.

You must have thought me uncivil in not answering your letter earlier. The truth was I did not know what to advise, and day after day went over, till I was ashamed to look at the date of your letter to see how many had elapsed.

With regard to your coming to New York there is no doubt that a residence here, to one whose character and habits are formed, like yours, is of great advantage in point of intellectual improvement. The intellect is incited to greater exertions, is invigorated by collision with other intellects, and finds more abundant aliment. But they who live by their pens here, do not I believe find it a very easy life in general. Either they are very laboriously occupied, for the most part without a very liberal compensation—or find occupation uncertain and its rewards scanty.

The greater number of them I believe write for the magazines, a thing of which you have some experience. When they have acquired some reputation, they often venture upon a volume; you have experience in that way too. The newspaper press furnishes the steadiest income, but its places are few, and always full, and there is a crowd of competitors ready for casual vacancies. I know of none such at present.

Such is an outline of the literary chart of New York. If you conclude to try its navigation I shall be happy to render you any service in my power.

Yrs. truly
W. C. BRYANT.

1. In the fall of 1847 Bayard Taylor (1825–1878), later renowned for his travel books, was a young Pennsylvania printer who had been encouraged by Rufus Griswold to publish a volume of verses (Ximena, 1844), and by Nathaniel Parker Willis to undertake the travels in Europe which produced the letters to newspapers and magazines which he gathered in 1846 in Views Afoot, dedicated to Willis. That popular essayist also advised Taylor to ask the help of various editors in finding a position in New York. And although one of the most discouraging replies to his letters came from Horace Greeley, he came to the city late in 1847 and found work on Greeley's Tribune, writing also for the Literary World. His letter to Bryant is unrecovered. See Henry A. Beers, Nathaniel Parker Willis (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin [1885]), p. 298; Henry Luther Stoddard, Horace Greeley: Printer, Editor, Crusader (New York: Putnam [1946]), pp. 69–70.

633. To Richard H. Dana

New York December 27 1847

Dear Dana.

I should have answered your letter1 earlier, as it was a business letter, but the person on whom I relied to tell me about Baker & Scribner2 could not always be found when I was at leisure to look for him. This morning I hear that they are perfectly responsible persons. The father of one of them, I am told, Scribner, is rich. From what I learn respecting them, I should not suppose that you need expect much liberality in their dealings, but they are able, and the probability is, willing to perform their engagements. As the world goes this is as much as we can expect from booksellers, taken in the gross.

When I was in Boston I really did not know that a visit to your place—what do you call it?—on the shore, could be reached so easily as you represent it. It had not been my intention to make any stay in Boston, but I could not make the journey to Boston in the train connect with the journey out— I was just five minutes too late to get from one station to the other—and so I staid another day, and if your account of the speed of your conveyances be correct, I might I suppose have made you a visit without losing any time. But I could not well have taken another day; as it was, although I saw Portland and went up the Kennebec as far as Augusta, and reached the White Mountains, and went up to Mount Washington and passed a night at Franconia Notch, I was obliged to leave one of the objects of my journey unaccomplished which was to pay a visit to an aunt of mine living in Vermont whom I have not seen for several years. When I got upon the Connecticut I found the modes of conveyance so slow and those which take you east and west—the direction I was going—so infrequent, that I was obliged to give up going to Weybridge in Vermont where my aunt lives, and having already exceeded my leave of absence, make the best of my way home again. I think you will allow that I have made a tolerable apology for not coming to your place at—what is the name, again?
I am glad to hear that there is a prospect of your coming before the world of readers again. You who go up stairs two steps at a time, and defy age and that grim follower who walks close behind him—defy them in such brave terms—owe something yet in the way of good thoughts to the times which have produced you. Let us have then the good things of your store, both old and new. Remember me kindly to your sisters and your children—

Yrs truly

WM C BRYANT

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL-GR endorsed: W. C. Bryant Decr / 27 / 47.

1. Unrecovered.
3. In 1850 Baker & Scribner brought out an enlarged edition in two volumes of Dana’s Poems and Prose Writings, which had first appeared in 1833.