

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FOUNDING OF

THE CENTURY

AND THE

ADOPTION OF ITS CONSTITUTION

JANUARY 13, 1897

NEW YORK  
THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION

1897



THE CLUB-HOUSE, 7 WEST 43D STREET

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# PROGRAMME

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1. PROCESSION . . . *March from "Atbalia," Mendelssohn*
2. INTRODUCTION . . . . . *The President*
3. POEM . . . . . *Richard H. Stoddard*
4. MUSIC . . . . . *"Home, Sweet Home"*
5. ADDRESS . . . . . *Daniel Huntington*
6. POEM . . . . . *Edmund C. Stedman*
7. MUSIC . . . . . *"Auld Lang Syne"*
8. ORATION . . . . . *Parke Godwin*
9. POEM . . . . . *William Allen Butler*
10. SONG . . . . . *"Centuria"*

*VIVAT CENTURIA!*



# CENTURIA

Poem by EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

Music by JOSEPH MOSENTHAL.

1. The bur-then is all that there is of this song, Cen - tu - ri - a! Let it  
 2. Let it sound till the wise and the gentle and brave, Cen - tu - ri - a! Come  
 3. For the pen, lute and gown, and the i - ris-hued sky, Cen - tu - ri - a! Were

sound thro' the halls where our memories throng, Where thy dead and thy liv-ing com-  
 back from the vale where their soft grasses wave, And list to our rev - el and  
 theirs, and are ours while the nights still go by With song, wit and was-sail, and

CHORUS.

min-gled belong; Cen - tu - ri - a, Cen - tu - ri - a, vi - vat Cen - tu - ri - a!  
 join in the stave; Cen - tu - ri - a, Cen - tu - ri - a, vi - vat Cen - tu - ri - a!  
 true hearts anigh. Cen - tu - ri - a, Cen - tu - ri - a, vi - vat Cen - tu - ri - a!

## CENTURIA

---

The burthen is all that there is of this song,

Centuria!

Let it sound through the halls where our memories throng—

Where thy dead and thy living commingled belong;

Centuria, Centuria, vivat Centuria!

Let it sound till the wise and the gentle and brave,

Centuria,

Come back from the vale where their soft grasses wave,

And list to our revel and join in the stave;

Centuria, Centuria, vivat Centuria.

For the pen, lute and gown, and the iris-hued sky,

Centuria,

Were theirs, and are ours while the nights still go by

With song, wit and wassail, and true hearts anigh.

Centuria, Centuria, vivat Centuria!

Then love as they loved when thine eldest was young,

Centuria!

O, the comrades that gossipped and painted and sung!

O, the smoke-cloud that lingers their places among!

Centuria, Centuria, vivat Centuria!

And sing as they'll sing in thy fair years untold,

Centuria,

Strong hearts that shall follow, as tender and bold;

We may fade, we shall pass, but thou growest not old;

Centuria, Centuria, vivat Centuria!



## HISTORICAL NOTE

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THE first suggestions looking towards the establishment of THE CENTURY were undoubtedly made at meetings of the Sketch Club held during the year 1846. Mr. John Durand, in a paper read at the Century Club House in April, 1882, states that in his diary, under the date of March 20, 1846, was an entry of a meeting of the Sketch Club at which was proposed (by whom, unfortunately, does not appear) "a new project, namely, a kind of Artists' Exchange or lounging place, to be located somewhere on "Broadway."

The "new project" evidently found favor, and was doubtless thoroughly discussed during that Summer and Autumn. In December, 1846, as we are informed by Mr. John H. Gurlie in his *Origin and History of the Century*, a definite proposal was presented by Mr. John G. Chapman at a meeting of the members of the Sketch Club for the formation of "an association to be composed of artists and men of letters, and of others interested in promotion of "a taste for the Fine Arts." Thereupon a resolution was adopted, inviting the members to propose the names of such gentlemen as would be likely to co-

operate with them in the formation of such an association.

"At a subsequent meeting," says Mr. Gourlie, "the names of one hundred were presented, and a committee was appointed to call a meeting of the proposed members."

The minutes of the Sketch Club Meetings are hardly more than bare lists of the members present, so that no formal record has been preserved of the resolutions mentioned by Mr. Gourlie. But it appears that meetings were held on December 11th and December 23d, 1846, and these must have been the occasions on which the project took definite shape.

Finally, on JANUARY 13, 1847, the plans of the promoters having been carefully matured, a general meeting of the proposed members was held, at which a name for the association was selected—THE CENTURY—a constitution was adopted, and officers were elected.

It is significant of the intellectual and artistic activity of New York at that time, that in this same winter, although somewhat later, were founded the German Liederkrantz Society (January 19, 1847) and the Academy of Medicine (January 29, 1847).

THE CENTURY having acquired a name, the next thing needful was a local habitation, and at the first meeting the Committee of Management was "directed to obtain Rooms for the Association between Bleeker Street and the Park, and within one block of Broadway to the East or West." The Park of the day was, of course, the City Hall Park, not yet in-





THE OLD HOUSE ON 15TH STREET

vaded by the Post-office or County Court-house. The committee accordingly selected the upper part of No. 495 Broadway, between Broome and Spring streets, for which an annual rent of \$650 was paid. Here the first regular monthly meeting of THE CENTURY was held on Saturday evening, February 6, 1847.

About May 1, 1849, THE CENTURY removed to No. 435 Broadway, where it remained for a year.

From the Spring of 1850 until May, 1852, it occupied rooms at No. 575 Broadway.

From May, 1852, to the Spring of 1857, it occupied the house No. 24 Clinton Place.

Early in 1857 it purchased the property then known as No. 42 (now 109) East 15th Street; and it occupied that house from the Spring of 1857 until January, 1891.

On January 10, 1891, it removed to its new Club House, No. 7 West 43d Street.

The name chosen in January, 1847, was, as already stated, THE CENTURY. By special Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, passed March 7, 1857, THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION was created a body corporate, to consist of the same persons as were then associated as THE CENTURY. On March 29, 1883, the act of incorporation was amended so as to permit the acquisition of additional real estate.



MINUTES OF SKETCH CLUB MEETINGS  
DECEMBER 1846

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Friday evening, Decr. 11, 1846.

Meeting of S. C. at the house of J. G. Chapman,  
62 White Street.

*Members Present*

BRYANT	EDMONDS
COLDEN	FULLER
BROWN	GRAY
CHAPMAN	HUNTINGTON
CUMMINGS	INGHAM
DURAND	LEUPP
VERPLANK	SHEGOGUE
NEILSON	

*Guest*

STROTHERS

Adjourned at usual hour until Dec. 23rd, the regular night of meeting falling on Christmas

J. N. Jr. Secy.

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Wednesday eveg Decr 23, 1846.

Meeting held this eveg at the house of J. Sturges  
Esq. 45 Murray St.

*Members Present*

INGHAM	CHAPMAN
BRYANT	HUNTINGTON



COLDEN  
DURAND  
SHEGOUE  
EDMONDS  
LEUPP  
CUMMINGS  
NEILSON

GOURLIE  
GRAY  
BROWN  
STURGES  
CAMPBELL  
FULLER

*Guests*

L. KNAPP  
HACKLEY  
DUBOURGAL

Mr. Daniel Seymour was unanimously elected a member of the Club.

Adjd at usual hour.

J. N. Jr. Secy

## MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CENTURY

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New York 13th January 1847

A Meeting of a number of Gentlemen engaged or interested in Letters and the fine Arts was holden, pursuant to a notice of which the following is a copy

New York January 9, 1847

Sir

The first General Meeting of the "Association of Gentlemen engaged or interested in Letters and the Fine Arts" will be held on Wednesday next the 13th inst at 8 o'clock P. M. in the Rotunda of the New York Gallery of Fine Arts, in the Park. As a member your attendance is particularly requested.

J. G. CHAPMAN	}	Committee.
JONATHAN STURGES		
A. B. DURAND		
C. C. INGHAM		
A. M. COZZENS		
F. W. EDMONDS		
H. T. TUCKERMAN.		

David C. Colden Esq was called to the chair

D Seymour was appointed Secretary.

Mr. Chapman, from the Committee, presented the following Report and Draft of a Constitution

**Report** "The Committee to whom it was referred to consider and report upon the expediency of forming an Association



of Gentlemen of the City of New York and its vicinity engaged or interested in Letters and the Fine Arts, with a view to their advancement as well as the promotion of social intercourse beg leave to Report

That they have duly considered the matter assigned to them, and are unanimously of opinion that it is a measure both expedient and practicable and promising mutual advantage to its members, as being calculated to draw closer the bonds of social intercourse between those who should be better known to each other and one that may do much to promote the advancement of Art and Letters and which is in accordance with the Progressive Century in which we live:

In devising a Plan to meet the wishes of all some difficulty has been felt and that now submitted will doubtless require amendment. It is therefore submitted to the Present Meeting for its consideration, as a basis upon which a more perfect organization of the Association may be formed

The Committee have prepared a List of upwards of one hundred Gentlemen which they herewith submit. They have selected such as they believed would be most likely to feel an interest in such an Association, as well as to Promote its general object. Many have been doubtless omitted inadvertently, and such may be added to our number hereafter by election. One hundred members have been considered sufficient to place the Association upon a sure footing—That number, it is believed, can be readily obtained or the Committee would have extended their choice over a wider field. It was their wish and intention that each gentleman whose name appears upon the List should have been called upon, but this they regret to say, they have been unable to accomplish in time for the present meeting which has been hastened from the necessity that exists of some early action by the body of members, in order to secure suitable apartments and complete other details necessary to a beginning before Spring

They would respectfully suggest that the Managing Committee to be appointed be authorized to receive subscribers at their discretion until the number of One Hundred is complete; after which all new members should be added by Election

The Committee have not felt themselves authorized to go



beyond the Present Point in the organization of the Association and confidently resign all further charge into the hands of those whom the body of members may be pleased to elect as their official Representatives

New York January 13 1847

JNO. G CHAPMAN  
CHAS. C. INGHAM  
A. B. DURAND  
JONATHAN STURGES  
A. M. COZZENS  
F. W. EDMONDS.

Sec. 1.

**Constitution** The name of the Association shall be "The Century." It shall be composed of authors artists and amateurs of Letters and the Fine Arts, residents of the City of New York and its vicinity: its objects the cultivation of a taste for Letters and the Arts and Social enjoyment.

2.

The officers shall be a Secretary and Treasurer and a Committee of Management of Six—two of whom shall be authors, two artists and two amateurs. They shall be chosen at the annual Meeting by ballot. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be *ex officio* members of the Committee.

3.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep minutes of the meetings of the Associations and of the Committee to notify members of their election to call extra meetings manage the correspondence and keep the records, which records and correspondence shall be open to the inspection of members at all reasonable times

4.

The Treasurer shall collect and under the direction of the Managing Committee disburse, the funds. He shall report at every annual Meeting or oftener if required on the state of the funds and his accounts shall be audited by a Committee of two, to be chosen by ballot at the monthly next previous to the annual Meeting.

5.

The Committee of Management shall have the general charge of the affairs of the association, with power to fill vacancies in their own body. They shall submit an annual Report at the General Meeting, and oftener if required

6.

Every member shall pay an initiation Fee of Twenty Dollars and Twenty Dollars per annum, to be paid Quarterly

7.

The Treasurer shall make no disbursements without the previous order of the Committee to be signified by the approval of one or more members of the Committee, endorsed on the Bill

8.

There shall be a general Meeting of the association on the first Saturday in January of each year at 8 P. M. for the election of officers and the transaction of such business as may come before it. One fourth of the whole number of members shall be a Quorum at all annual monthly and special meetings

9.

Special meetings may be called from time to time by the Secretary under the enactment of the Committee of Management or on the written request of any three members, giving in such case three days notice of such meeting.

10

There shall be a Monthly Meeting for the election of Members and the transaction of business on the first Saturday of every month at 8. P. M

11

Candidates for admission shall be proposed at one monthly meeting and ballotted for at the next ensuing, and during the interval their names and those of the member proposing them shall be put up in a conspicuous place in the Rooms of the Association. All elections shall be by Ballot under the direction of the Secretary and Treasurer. Every name shall be voted for separately and the poll shall be kept open from 8 to 10 P. M. Negative votes to the amount of five per Cent. of the number of votes given shall exclude a Candidate



No games of any kind shall be allowed in the Rooms of the Association, and betting of any kind is strictly prohibited

No book, Journal or paper the property of the Association shall be taken from their Rooms under any pretext whatever

No accounts shall be kept with Members

A Suggestion Book shall be kept at the Rooms in which every member is requested to enter any Complaint as to the management of the Association, and any suggestions or alterations he may desire to make under his signature

The Committee of Management shall exercise the right at their discretion of inviting strangers distinguished in Literature and the Fine Arts who may visit the City to partake of the privileges of the Association during their stay

No alteration or amendment shall be made in these rules except at a monthly or annual Meeting after the proposed alteration or amendment shall have been posted in a conspicuous place in the Club Room for at least fifteen days before hand, and unless it shall be adopted by at least two thirds of the Members voting

Any Member may be suspended from the Privileges of the Association for violation of its Rules or other causes that may be deemed sufficient to warrant such suspension by a majority of three fourths of the members present at a monthly yearly or special meeting — notice being duly given in writing one month previous to the member charged with such violation

Members may Personally introduce Visitors to the Rooms, in which case their names and those of the parties introducing them must be entered in a Book to be kept for that purpose This Privilege may be suspended with regard to any individual Member or Visitor at the discretion of the Committee. It is to be understood that this Privilege is limited to one visit by the same individual unless by consent of the Committee.



**On Motion** The Report was accepted and the Committee discharged

**On Motion** Resolved That the question on the Constitution submitted be taken by sections.

Section 1. was read and adopted

Section 2 having been read

Gen. Wetmore moved to amend the Section by striking out the word "Six" and inserting "Seven"

Lost and the Section as reported adopted

Section 3. was read and adopted

Section 4. was read and adopted

Section 5. was read and adopted

Section 6. was read and adopted

Section 7. was read and adopted.

Section 8. having been read

Mr. Kelly moved to amend the Section by inserting, after the words "January in each year" the words "except when that day is New Years day and then on the first Saturday thereafter"

Carried, and the Section adopted as amended

Section 9. was read and adopted

Section 10. having been read

Mr. Kelly moved to amend by adding the words "except in the month of January"

Carried, and the Section as amended adopted

Section 11, was read and adopted

Section 12, was read and adopted

Section 13, was read and adopted

Section 14, was read and adopted

Section 15, was read and adopted

Section 16, was read and adopted

Section 17, was read and adopted

Section 18, was read and adopted

Section 19, was read and adopted

The question was then put on the whole Constitution as amended and it was unanimously adopted.

On motion of Mr. Edmonds the meeting Proceeded to ballot for officers when the following Gentlemen were elected

Messrs. GULIAN C VERPLANCK  
 JOHN L STEPHENS  
 A B DURAND  
 JNO G CHAPMAN  
 D C COLDEN &  
 CHARLES M LEUPP Committee of Management  
 THOS S CUMMINGS Treasurer  
 D SEYMOUR Secretary

On motion of Mr Sturges

Resolved That the Committee just elected have power to make permanent arrangements for the Meetings of the Association

On motion of Mr Edmonds

The Committee were directed to obtain Rooms for the Association between Bleecker Street and the Park and within one block of Broadway to the East or West

The List of Names Proposed by the Committee was read by the Secretary

On motion of Mr Edmonds it was resolved

That the Gentlemen named in the Committees List be admitted to membership without a Ballot

On motion of Mr Fuller

Adjourned

D SEYMOUR  
 Secy



# LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE CENTURY SINCE ITS FOUNDATION

## *PRESIDENTS*

GULIAN C. VERPLANCK*	. . . .	April 29, 1857, to Jan. 9, 1864
GEORGE BANCROFT†	. . . .	Jan. 9, 1864, to Nov. 2, 1867
WILLIAM C. BRYANT	. . . .	Jan. 11, 1868, to Jan. 11, 1879
DANIEL HUNTINGTON	. . . .	Jan. 11, 1879, to Jan. 12, 1895
HENRY C. POTTER	. . . .	Jan. 12, 1895, to — —

\* The office of President was created by the new Constitution, adopted April 29, 1857. Prior to that time, and from January 13, 1847, Mr. Verplanck's name always appeared first on the list of the Committee of Management.

† Mr. Bancroft, at the regular monthly meeting of The Century held June 1, 1867, "announced his intended absence for some years in Europe, and committed the subject of the vacancy in the office of President to the consideration of the Club." He also wrote a formal letter of resignation, which was not accepted until the meeting of November 2, 1867. The vacancy in the office of President was left unfilled until the next annual meeting.



### *FIRST VICE-PRESIDENTS*

DANIEL HUNTINGTON . . . . .	1868 to 1871
GILBERT N. SPEIR . . . . .	1871 to 1889
HENRY C. POTTER . . . . .	1889 to 1895
JOHN BIGELOW . . . . .	1895 to —

### *SECOND VICE-PRESIDENTS*

LEWIS M. RUTHERFORD . . . . .	1868 to 1869
JAMES W. BEEKMAN . . . . .	1869 to 1870
LEWIS M. RUTHERFORD . . . . .	1870 to 1871
FREDERICK E. CHURCH . . . . .	1871 to 1873
SAMUEL B. RUGGLES . . . . .	1873 to 1874
DANIEL HUNTINGTON . . . . .	1874 to 1879
HENRY W. BELLOWES . . . . .	1879 to 1882
HENRY C. POTTER . . . . .	1883 to 1889
JOHN BIGELOW . . . . .	1889 to 1895
J. Q. A. WARD . . . . .	1895 to —

NOTE. — The offices of First and Second Vice-Presidents were created by an amendment to the Constitution, adopted December 7, 1867. The first incumbents of these offices were elected at the annual meeting held January 11, 1868.



GULIAN C. VERPLANCK





DANIEL SEYMOUR



DAVID C. COLDEN

### SECRETARIES

DANIEL SEYMOUR . . . . .	1847 to 1850
EDGAR S. VAN WINKLE . . . . .	1850 to 1852
EDWARD SLOSSON . . . . .	1852 to 1855
S. W. GOODRIDGE . . . . .	1855 to 1856
T. BAILEY MYERS . . . . .	1856 to 1857
JOHN H. GOURLIE . . . . .	1857 to 1859
AUGUSTUS R. MACDONOUGH . . . . .	1859 to 1886
JOHN H. PLATT* . . . . .	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">                     Jan. 9, 1886                      to Aug. 21, 1886                 </div> </div>
HORACE W. ROBBINS . . . . .	
HENRY E. HOWLAND . . . . .	<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">                     Sept. 30, 1886                      to Jan. 8, 1887                 </div> </div>
	1887 to —

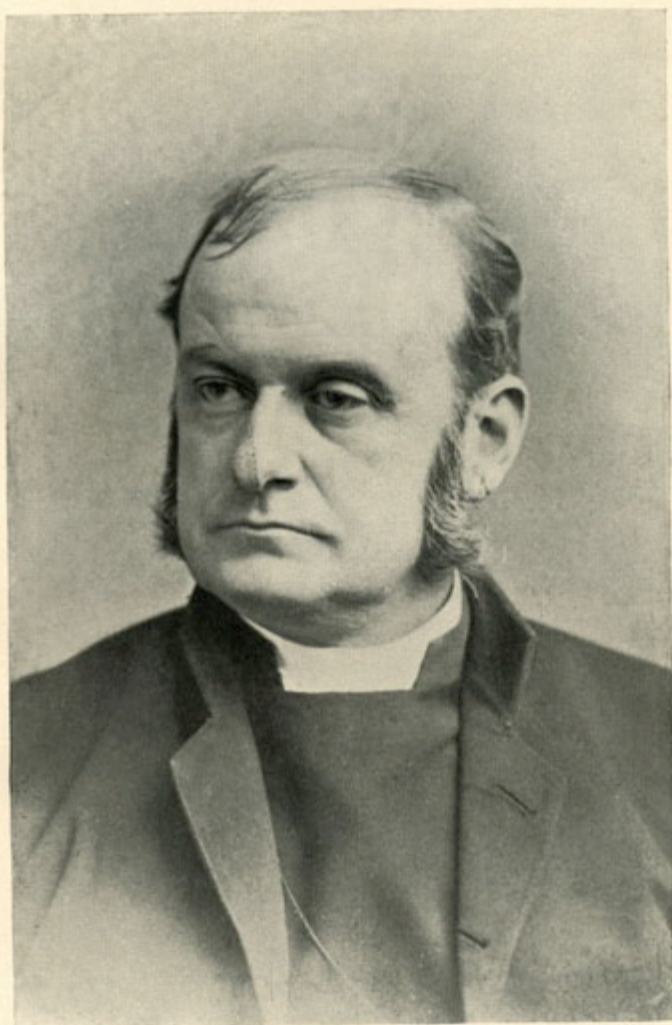
\* Died.



# *TREASURERS*

THOMAS S. CUMMINGS	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1847 to 1849
JOHN H. GOURLIE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1849 to 1851
RUSSEL SMITH	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1851 to 1852
GEORGE G. SMITH	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1852 to 1854
D. WILLIAMSON LEE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1854 to 1856
JOHN PRIESTLEY	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1856 to 1872
CHARLES COLLINS	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1872 to 1881
HENRY A. OAKLEY	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1881 to 1885
ROBERT B. MINTURN*	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	{ Jan. 10 to April 18, 1885
GEORGE L. RIVES	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1885 to 1888
J. HAMPDEN ROBB	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1888 to 1891
GEORGE L. RIVES	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1891 to —

\* Resigned on account of ill-health.



HENRY C. POTTER



## WORDS INTRODUCTORY

BY

THE PRESIDENT

---

BROTHERS OF THE CENTURY: We celebrate this evening the fiftieth anniversary of our existence. It is not a great age, as men measure the life of an institution; and one can imagine the smile of good-natured perplexity with which some one belonging to a civilization older than ours might regard this gathering and these ceremonies. While visiting an ecclesiastical building in Normandy under the guidance of a French abbé, I said, "It is a very ancient structure, I presume?" To which my friend the abbé answered, "Oh no, not later than the fifteenth century," which makes our conception of what is venerable a trifle grotesque.

And yet we do well, I cannot but think, to remind ourselves that this club is fifty years old, and that its first ideals have been, on the whole, so substantially and worthily realized. In the primitive developments of human society there are many incomplete or fragmentary evolutions that serve only to illustrate how fertile is the human mind in its conceptions of associated enterprise. The track of the last fifty years is strewn with the *débris* of these, and they have illustrated every dream—social, literary, artistic, humanitarian—of which the brain of man is capable. Amid them all the CENTURY has lived and grown and greatedened; and to-day she may say of herself, as Mr. John Bright once said of an institution which he declared could not be disturbed in its hold upon the popular heart: "She will live. She cannot be shaken. *She has roots.*"

Those who are to come after me will tell you in what soil

those roots were planted, and by what wise hands they were nurtured. It is our happy privilege to have the founders of the CENTURY represented to-night among us. You see on either hand the Nestors of our fellowship. They illustrate its best tradition. For that best tradition, I maintain, is not that this club stands for a love of art, and the fellowship of artists; for a love of letters, and the brotherhood of literary men; for an association of people of culture, who prize those things that make for intellectual progress and enlightenment, though it does stand for all these things. But that best tradition is that it stands for these ennobled by character, and, most of all, touched and graced by fraternal benignity of intercourse. "What I like best about your club," said a distinguished foreigner, to whom for a little while we gave the freedom of it—"what I like best about your club is what I would call its social atmosphere. I do not think we could reproduce that in my country." And I believe he was right. "The best thing in the CENTURY," said another, "is the *spirit* of the CENTURY." And that tradition we have still, incarnated among us in our honored and beloved seniors. We have distinguished them, as you see, with the badge of *white*, which in their case stands for "the survival of the fittest." Next in rank are our elders of the blue ribbon, whose years are the witness of their temperance in a feverish and often intemperate age, and whose aspiration for the highest and best the blue fitly symbols. You and I, their juniors, wear these crimson badges. It is the color of warfare. Ours it is to strive, and if need be to suffer, for the honor and glory of the CENTURY. May we all be glad to do it, in a fellowship and for a brotherhood that we have learned to hold so dear!



## POEM

BY

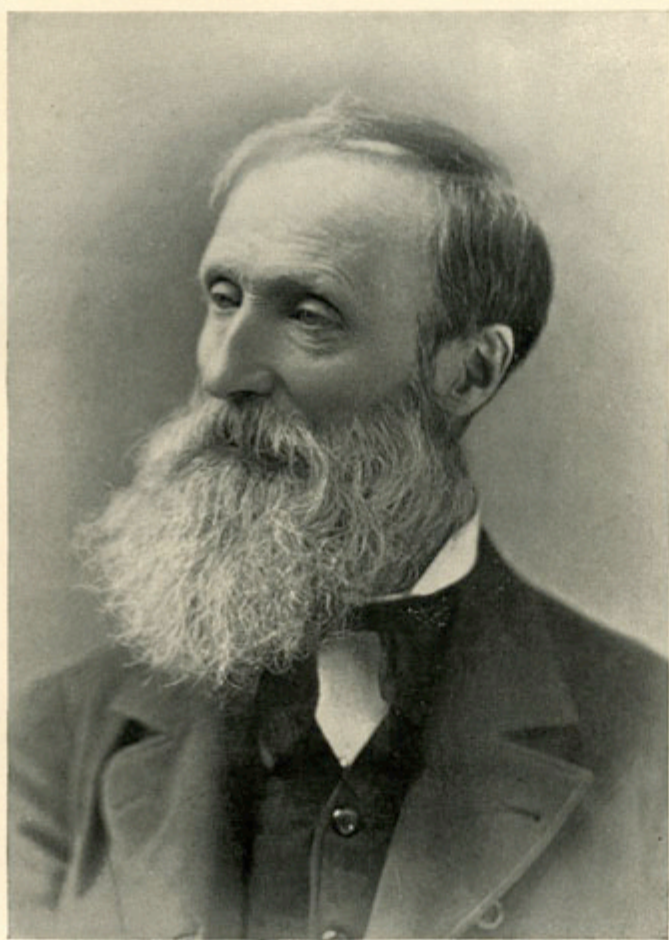
RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

---

CENTURIONS, I was asked to write  
Something that might be read to-night,  
In verse. I rashly said I would,  
But should have added—If I could,  
Knowing that nothing can be worse  
Than bad, nor scarcer than good verse,—  
Verse worth your hearing at this time,  
Which calls for more than bells of rhyme,  
Jingle from whose caps they may,  
Can suitably commemorate,  
And more, much more, than I can say,  
Or you would care to hear so late,  
Remembering better words than mine,  
You loved to listen to lang syne,  
From lips now silent, hearts now cold,  
Young hearts that never could grow old;  
What jests they made, what stories told,  
And what convivial catches trolled!  
Methinks the world was happier then,  
More populous with gentlemen,  
The lords of letters and of art,  
Who, sound alike of head and heart,  
Dared to be jovial! Men like these,  
Choice spirits and good, who understood  
The brave old creed—Live while we live  
(Wise creed, since Life is fugitive,

And has for most more thorns than flowers),  
Founded this merry club of ours,  
This frank and hearty brotherhood,  
This league of lasting amities,  
This commonwealth of worth and wit,  
With all things that pertain to it—  
The CENTURY! What that signifies  
You know, I see it in your eyes,  
Your nods, your smiles, your grasp of hands—  
There's no one here but understands  
This fellow-feeling—my heart's chords  
Thrill with it now, though not with words,  
For I have none that can express  
My happiness, my thankfulness,  
That I am a Centurion,  
I hope a not unworthy one.  
How can I be, the CENTURY  
Has been, and is, so much to me?  
So much that when I come to die,  
I think 'twould ease my parting sigh  
If I could know that some one here  
Would think of me when all was done,  
And say, betwixt a smile and tear,  
He was a good Centurion!





DANIEL HUNTINGTON

## ADDRESS

BY

DANIEL HUNTINGTON

---

I SHALL not long occupy your attention in regard to the incidents of the early years of our society since its formal organization in 1867. That period will be more fully and graphically illustrated by our eloquent orator, Mr. Parke Godwin, who is so well acquainted with its memorable occasions and illustrious departed members, having himself taken an active part in so many events of our history.

The inquiry has often been made, why the CENTURY was formed at a meeting of the Sketch Club, and what were the character and history of that club?

A number of years ago the Lotos Club celebrated its tenth birthday by a dinner, to which were invited the presidents of all the clubs in this city. I was a guest. Mr. Whitelaw Reid presided. Before going to the table Mr. Reid, doubtless influenced by his love and veneration for the CENTURY, had allotted to me (then president of the CENTURY) the seat of honor at his right. At a little discussion in the anteroom it was claimed that the president of the Union Club was entitled to that chair, on the ground of its greater age. In reply, I said that I willingly yielded the priority to the president of the Union Club, Mr. Evarts, on the ground of his more venerable years personally, but must yet maintain the right of the CENTURY CLUB to an older origin than any other club. Mr. Evarts in his after-dinner speech, in his usual forcible, brilliant, and witty way, enforced the claim of the Union Club; at the same time, by his allusions to the CENTURY, showed plainly that his affections leaned to our



side. In explanation I maintained that the real birth of the CENTURY was in 1802. Few of us can bear witness to this fact, though our beloved friend, General Green, might perhaps do so, if he had not at about that period been in a nursery of war instead of art.

It is worthy of notice that there has been from that early period a continued succession of art life, an influence and spirit handed down to our time, which, though occasionally dormant, has never been absolutely broken.

An association of gentlemen, of whom Mr. Livingston was one, was formed in 1802 for the promotion of the fine arts. The next year a collection of casts was sent to them from Paris by Mr. Robert R. Livingston, our ambassador, for the use of students and for exhibition to the public. This society did not procure a charter till 1808, at which time the officers were Robert R. Livingston, president; John Trumbull—then recently arrived in New York from his studies under Benjamin West in London—was the vice-president; and in the board of directors we find the well-known names of De Witt Clinton, William Cutting, and Charles Wilkes. Later we find the name of Cadwallader Colden as director—whose son was one of the founders of the CENTURY—and Governor De Witt Clinton became the president, delivering an address at the opening of an exhibition of paintings and statuary. This association was known as the American Academy of Art. The city granted them the use of spacious rooms in what was called the old almshouse, where students drew from casts, and Trumbull, Waldo, Vanderlyn, Inman, Jarvis, and many others exhibited their works.

The students became dissatisfied with the cold rooms, the bad light, and the difficulty of gaining admission at regular hours—often finding the doors barred by an ill-tempered janitor—and petitioned for redress. The reform was not granted. They borrowed casts of the Academy, formed a drawing association—in short, it soon became a rebellion. The parent society tried to win them back. They were willing, on condition of being represented. It was a revival of the spirit of '76. Had the old Academy yielded, that fiery set of young artists, with Morse at their head, might have subsided—have gone back to the mater-



nal bosom—and we should have lost the chance of a National Academy of Design, which soon grew out of the Drawing Association; and the Sketch Club, which was the first-born of the Academy of Design, might never have seen the light. Indeed, rebellion flourished. The press espoused the cause of the infant Academy, and on the second year of its exhibition the Sketch Club was formed by a few of the academicians, several authors and lovers of art joining with them.

This slight account of the course of events relating to art since 1802 makes good, so far as the sequence of moral and artistic ideas appears to flow, the claim of the CENTURY CLUB to an ancestral existence of nearly a centennial, as well as an organized and legal life of fifty years.

I hear some one saying, tell us about the Sketch Club. Naturally we would like to know more about our immediate progenitor.

After the close of the second exhibition of the National Academy (held over the baths in Chambers Street), the room was supplied with casts and drawing-boards for the students. Four of the teachers—Morse, Durand, Cummings, and Ingham—were present. The conversation turned to the subject of the recent breaking up of a social club called The Lunch. Mr. Ingham remarked that now there was an opportunity for the artists to establish a club. All consented. Mr. Ingham proposed that those present should constitute themselves the nucleus of one, which should be called the Sketch Club, to consist of artists, authors, men of science, and lovers of art, and that Morse should be its president. Morse declined being president, but highly approved of the idea, insisting that Ingham, as the originator of the proposal, should be the president. To this the others agreed. A meeting was held at Mr. Ingham's house, to which several of the principal artists were invited. They agreed to meet at the members' houses in rotation, and they determined on the nature of the entertainment after the sketching.

John Inman (brother of the artist, and an editor) was made secretary. The only refreshments to be allowed were dried fruit, crackers, milk, and honey. Elections to membership must be unanimous. The first regular meeting was soon held at the



rooms of Thomas Cole. All went off agreeably. Ingham said even the figs, milk, and honey relished for the moment, but that night pangs of remorse wrung groans of repentance from the majority, and shortly an amendment was carried in favor of oysters, sandwiches, and "something hot."

The sketching of subjects proposed by the host of the evening was kept up for several years, but finally abandoned for the more agreeable conversation of the lay members, grave or gay, witty, serious, or humorous, of the authors, artists, professors, poets, or musicians, whose varied talents contributed an ever-changing interest to these social gatherings.

My first knowledge of the Sketch Club was when I was with Professor Morse as a pupil at his house in Greenwich Lane (now Greenwich Avenue). While quietly busy drawing, there was a loud knock at the door, and, without waiting for an answer, a stout, energetic visitor walked in. Morse was busy taking tea-cups and spoons from a closet, but turned quickly and grasped the hand of the man, who called out in a loud, hearty way:

"Morse, this looks devilish like housekeeping."

It was Fenimore Cooper. Professor Morse was preparing for the Sketch Club to meet that evening. Cooper was very intimate with Morse and was a frequent visitor. He would look at our drawings and pictures, sometimes criticise, but always said a genial, encouraging word.

You will be surprised to hear that I was never elected a member of the Sketch Club. It was necessary to be a housekeeper, and though often invited as a guest in early life, my small garret room, with its dormer-window, forbade membership. After having received invitations for one or two years, the secretary was finally ordered to send me the regular invitations to all the meetings, whereupon I held a special meeting at a large studio recently hired, to which they all came, and were so jolly and stayed so late that I was nearly locked out of the house where my garret room was perched on high.

In this way I became one of them by a gradual adoption, without an election.

Verplanck, J. K. Paulding, Bryant, Halleck, Tuckerman, Irving, Charles Hoffman, and many other men of letters were

either members or invited guests, and added greatly to the intellectual feast. And the lovers of art, such as Luman Read, Jonathan Sturges, Leupp, Colden, Cozzens, Hoppin, the Kembles, Robert Kelly, Dr. Bellows, Dr. Dewey, Gourlie, Bishop Wainwright, and a host of others, either as members or guests, gave zest, variety, and freshness to the conversations.

The meetings of the Sketch Club, owing to the desire of the members to invite their special friends to their houses, grew to such dimensions that it was resolved to hire a set of rooms for the purpose; and it was at one of such gatherings in December, 1846, that the club was resolved, or translated, into the CENTURY. The first appointed meeting after this resolution was taken was held in January, 1847; several members were elected, three of whom are now living, *viz.*, Wm. H. Appleton, John Durand, son of A. B. Durand, the founder, and Henry C. Dorr.

This club, therefore, is a development, an evolution of an original art and literary essential germ, planted by Robert R. Livingston in 1802, and has lived, flourished, and expanded, sometimes languishing, oftener throbbing with fresh life, and now, in full, robust, manly strength, is what you have inherited and are building up to an ever-increasing perfection.

Let us remember that what the Sketch Club was on a small scale the CENTURY was formed to be on a larger field. The purpose to associate men eminent in the various professions and walks of life by the bond of a love for art and literature was a noble one. The sensuous element, good in its place as a promoter of genial good-fellowship, it was intended to keep subordinate to the stimulus of exchange of ideas, and the cultivation of knowledge and taste. Let us maintain this proportion. Let the pleasures of a cheerful conviviality be held in subservience to the higher object, and the society of accomplished men in every branch of learning, art, and letters give a tone of refinement and thoughtfulness to conversation, and add vigor, grace, and charm to our daily lives.



## POEM

BY

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

---

*"Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos?"*

How now are the Others faring? Where sit They all in  
state?

And is there a token that somewhere, beyond the muffled  
gate,

The vanished and unreturning, whose names our memory fill,  
Are holding their upper conclave and are of the CENTURY still?

Is it all a fancy that somewhere, that somehow, the mindful  
Dead,

From the first that made his exit to the latest kinsman sped,—  
Their vision ourselves unnoting, their shapes by ourselves  
unseen,—

Have gathered, like us, together this night in that strange  
demesne?

That the astral world's telepathy along their aisles of light  
Has summoned our brave immortals, this selfsame mortal  
night,

All in that rare existence where thoughts a substance are,  
To their native planet's aura, from journeyings near and far;

And that now with forms made over, and life as jocund and  
young

As when they here kept wassail and joined in the catches  
sung,

They have met in the ancient fashion, and now in the old-time speech  
Are chanting their Vivat Centuria just out of our hearing's reach?

Yes, O yes,—as the pictured ghosts of Huns war on in middle air,  
With a fiercer battle-hunger from the field upflinging there,—  
And since the things we have chosen from all, as most of worth  
Forever here and hereafter, cease not with the end of Earth;  
Since joy and knowledge and beauty, and the love of man to man  
Passing the love of women, the links of our chain began,—  
Yea, even as these are ceaseless, so they who were liegemen here  
Hark back and are all Centurions this night of the fiftieth year!

Yes, the draftsmen and craftsmen have fashioned with a dream's compelling force  
The CENTURY'S lordlier temple, have builded it course on course,  
And the luminiferous ether floods the great assembly hall  
Where the scintillant "C. A." colophon burns high in the sight of all.

The painters have hung from end to end cloud-canvases ablaze  
With that color-scheme from us hidden in the ultra-violet rays,  
With the new chiaroscuro of things that each way face,  
And the in-and-out perspective of their four-dimensioned space.

O, to hear the famed Cantators upraise the mighty chant,  
With their bass transposed to the rumbling depth below our octaves scant,  
And a tenor of those Elysian notes "too fine for mortal ear,"  
Yet tuned to the diapason of this dear old darkling sphere!



And, O, to catch but a glimpse of the company thronged  
around,

The scholars that know it all at last, the poets finally crowned!  
There the blithe divines, that fear no more the midnight  
chimes, sit each

With his halo tilted a trifle, and his harp at easy reach;

There all the jolly Centurions of high or low degree,  
This night of nights, as in early time, foregather gloriously,  
Come back, mayhap, from Martian meads, from many an orb  
come back,

Full sure the cheer they cared for here this night shall have no  
lack;

For they know the jovial servitors have mingled a noble brew  
Of the tipples men call nectarean, the pure celestial dew,  
And are passing around ambrosial cakes, while the incense  
clouds arise.

Of something akin to those earthly fumes not even the Blest  
despise.

And yet—and yet—could we listen, we might o'erhear them  
say

They would barter a year of Aidenn to be here for a night  
and a day;

And if one of us yearns to follow the paths that thitherward  
wend,

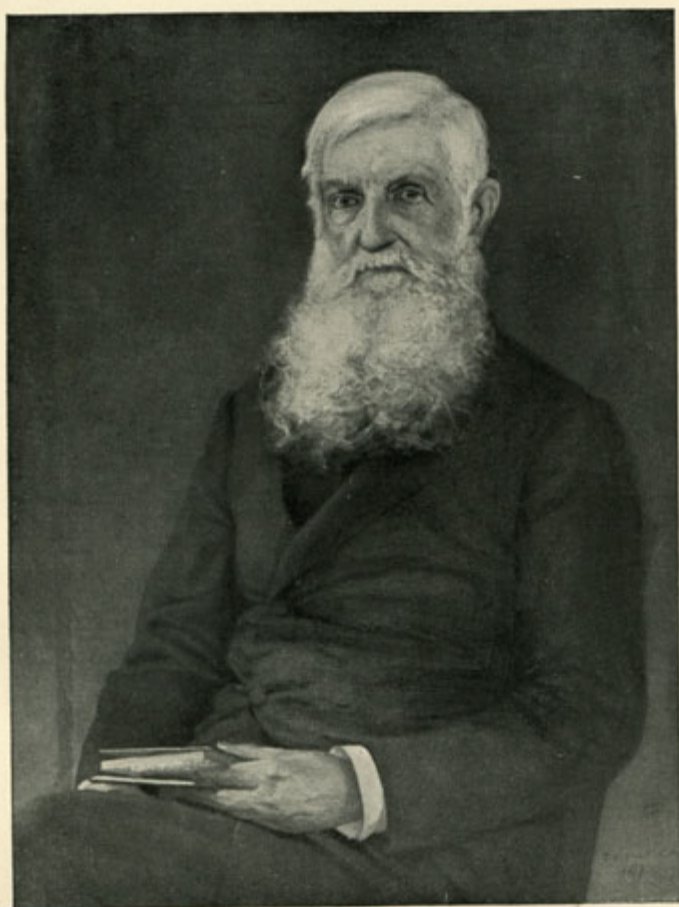
Let him rest content, let him have no fear, he verily shall in  
the end.

Then not for the quick alone this hour unbar the entrance  
gate,

But a health to the brethren gone before, however they hold  
their state;

Nor think it all fancy that to our hearts there comes an an-  
swering thrill

From the Dead that echo our Vivats and are of the CENTURY  
still.



GEORGE BANCROFT



## ADDRESS

BY

PARKE GODWIN

---

MR. PRESIDENT AND BROTHERS OF THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION,—  
Occasions of this kind are occasions of reminiscence, when the mind goes back to the past, to inquire into origins and to compare the aims of the outset with their more or less successful fulfilments. In our case, however, as Mr. Huntington has just said, we go back beyond the fifty years comprised in a semi-centennial. Our association did not spring spontaneously and fully equipped from the brain of its Jove: it had its progenitors and its periods of gestation, and, like Topsy, rather grew than was borned. It grew out of an influence of the time, which was not very wide-spread, but was effective in producing various forms of expression.

More than forty years before the day we celebrate eminent citizens like De Witt Clinton, Edward Livingston, his brother the Chancellor, Dr. Hosack, and Charles Wilkes, a brother of the famous John Wilkes, and others, feeling the need of some counterpoise to the materializing tendencies of a young and nascent civilization, thought they might find it in societies for the cultivation of art and literature. As early as 1802 they founded the New York Academy of the Fine Arts, which, after a rickety infancy, they refounded in 1807, five years later, as the American Academy of Arts. Its first president was Robert R. Livingston, then the Mayor of the city; its next, De Witt Clinton, afterwards Governor of New York; but the chief management of it fell into the hands of Colonel John Trumbull, who had been a soldier under Washington, a diplomatist, and a traveller, and was no mean

artist, as his national pictures in the Capitol at Washington attest. This academy possessed a number of plaster casts, gave lessons in drawing and coloring to students, and for some years was all that we had to show in the way of artistic endeavor. It did some useful work, but only in a small way, as it was ahead of its day. New York itself, though a metropolis, was yet a small metropolis; with its one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, it was no more than a considerable town at the extreme end of Manhattan Island. Its fashionable quarters were about the Battery and Hanover Square, and its habitable parts did not extend beyond Canal Street, named so from a stream that drifted through the centre of it to the river. Beyond this stream were a few scattered farms, some apple orchards, and the wilderness. It was spanned by an old stone bridge, of which I have an indistinct remembrance, but which I am sure I never crossed, for we urchins were fully persuaded that on the other side the red Indian still roamed, with his tomahawk and scalping-knife, and, when he was not there, press-gangs lurked about, which were in the habit of seizing little boys and carrying them off to sea.

With the instruction and discipline of the academy the pupils in the end became dissatisfied, and they finally broke away from it and set up for themselves, first as the New York Drawing Association, and afterwards as the National Academy of the Arts of Design.

This revolt is commonly ascribed to a spirit of independence which had stirred up the boys' insubordination; and that was partly true, but it was owing quite as much to a more general influence that began to make itself felt in the nation. Up to the second decade of the nineteenth century the few artists we had were men who, like West, Copley, Stuart, Malbone, Vandelyn, and, later, Allston and Leslie, went to Europe to find the only sustenance they could get; and our literature was embodied in such works as Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan," Barlow's "Hasty Pudding," certain revolutionary ballads like the "Battle of the Kegs," and Psalms, in the style of Sternhold and Hopkins, appointed to be sung through the nose in churches. But in 1821, a memorable year, by a singular coincidence, Washington Irving put forth his "Sketch Book," Cooper his "Spy," Mr. Bryant a little volume



that contained the first really original and beautiful poems that had been written on this side of the Atlantic, Halleck his "Fanny," Sands and Eastburn their "Yamoyden," Percival his "Prometheus," Hillhouse his dramas, and Miss Sedgwick her "New England Tale." It was in that year, too, that Channing first printed his eloquent moral and religious essays, that Edward Livingston completed his penal codes, worthy of Justinian, and Daniel Webster, like a second Demosthenes, thundered forth in his Plymouth oration.

It was under this larger influence, I think, that the artists instituted their academy with the ambitious, perhaps instinctively prophetic name, The National Academy of the Arts of Design. But big as the name was, they set out in a humble way. They took a room—was it suggestive?—in the old Almshouse in the Park, and they worked under a wick dipped in whale-oil, which gave out more smoke than light. They had borrowed casts from the former academy, but they had no masterpieces to copy, no living models, especially of the "altogether," which were not then as common as they are now, when they are handed around as *entremets* at bachelor dinners. But even under these disadvantages these students worked well and hard, and made their little academy the nursing-mother of nearly all that has been accomplished since in the same line.

Some of these students got into the habit of meeting at each other's houses, in order to chat and sketch (a few of these sketches I now possess by inheritance), and afterwards attracted to themselves other artists, a few authors, and professional men interested in art and literature. Their assemblies gradually grew into what came to be called "The Sketch Club." They were, from necessity rather than choice, a frugal set, their material entertainments consisting, in addition to the sweet morsels Mr. Huntington has just described, of crackers and cheese and a little mulled wine, or, when the weather was unusually cold, of something that, like the great Rum Das, "had fire in its belly." The aims of this club, as described in one of the early minutes, were "the encouragement of social and friendly feeling," "improvement in the art of sketching," and "the production of an annual, which should be supplied with contributions and illustrated



by the members." That annual never appeared, but the idea was taken up by Verplanck, Sands, and Bryant in 1827, who in "The Talisman" realized what their fellows had only suggested. Some of the newspapers of the day, which then, as now, poked their impertinent noses into all private affairs, insinuated that the gathering was one of gamblers, who took that method of concealing their nefarious practices. In reality it was a gathering of most remarkable men—remarkable not because of what they then were, but because of what they were going to be. Thomas Cole was one of them—a landscape-painter fresh from the rough wilds of the West, who had not yet risen to those imaginative heights at which he infused into the rather illegitimate form of the allegory such rare ideal conception and such gorgeousness of color. Durand was another, still the engraver who interpreted the work of others rather than the landscapist who stole the brightness of the skies to adorn the Kaatskills, and washed them down with the dews of the morning. Inman painted portraits, but not such as those of Dr. Chalmers and Thomas Babington Macaulay, which you may still see in the Lenox Library; Chapman, the Mounts, Ingham, and others confined themselves mostly to the pot-boilers which might be semi-occasionally sold in the market. Of the writers, Washington Irving was not there, as he would have been if he had not gone abroad; Cooper, from his home in the country, looked in from time to time, bringing the breezes of the wilderness or the sea with his portly person; Verplanck was yet the pamphleteer, who, as Abimilech Cody, and as one of the "Bucktail Bards," slashed away at political follies, but had not yet become the popular teacher and writer of that time; Halleck was full of his "Croaker" papers, which ridiculed municipal officers; but the rousing lines of his "Marco Bozzaris" had not yet echoed through the Isles of Greece, and "The Burns," the noblest tribute ever paid to the Scottish poet, was still in the womb. Sands was rather the satirist and practical joker than the genuine humorist that he became, and one of his modes of joking was to write Greek poems and challenge the faculties of the colleges to discover the authorship. Influenced by these, Bryant, though he had printed his little volume, was scarcely known as a poet, and preferred the sparkling mood, writing odes to Fanny Wright, the female apostle



of infidelity and of marriage without forms, or lampoons upon members of Congress, like Tristram Burgess, who had swallowed Lempriere's Classical Dictionary; or else McDuffie, of the fearless voice. In the rear of these stood Charles Fenno Hoffman, who afterwards wrote the song of "Sparkling and Bright," which for years was sung at every convivial table; John L. Stephens, the young merchant's clerk, to whom the buried ruins of Central America, which he afterwards laid bare, were still unknown; and John Howard Payne, the American Roscius, who had delighted both worlds by his wonderful histrionic abilities, but had not yet written the "Brutus" in which the Kembles and Kean did not disdain to appear, or the little opera of "Clari," in which was sung for the first time that little plaintive melody which has since been heard in nearly every household in Christendom—"Home, Sweet Home."\*

At one time the Sketch Club was called "The Twenty-one," and then "The Twenty-five," according to the number of its members, but at a meeting held December 6, 1846, it was proposed by J. G. Chapman that an effort should be made to increase these numbers to one hundred; and, on a motion of Edgar S. Van Winkle, the enlarged society was to be called

\* Of all these men, perhaps the most promising then was Robert C. Sands, who added, as Mr. Bryant more lately said, "the largest gifts of genius to the broadest gifts of the heart." His classical acquisition was rare in an age not fruitful in ripe Latin and Greek scholars, and his acquaintance with the tragedies of Athens was scarcely less familiar than is that of the modern English scholar with the dramas of Shakespeare. In the literature of his own language his reading was unusually broad and varied, and to this he had added an intimate knowledge of the several languages of Europe. But Sands died, too early to have achieved a wide and permanent fame, in the beginning of his thirty-third year, and under circumstances which lend a pathetic tone to the event. The year 1832 had been distinguished from other years by the great number of eminent men who, during its course, had departed this life. Goethe, the greatest of the German poets; Sir Walter Scott, the originator of mediæval romance; Cuvier, the master of geological science; Jeremy Bentham, the law reformer; Champollion, whose readings of inscriptions had opened a new look into antiquity; Adam Clarke, the commentator; the young heir of the greatest of military chieftains, Napoleon; Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and others. In a poem entitled "The Dead of '32" Sands had fitly commemorated these celebrities, when, turning to another subject, he had just written the line, "Oh, deem not my spirit among you abides," when he fell from his chair, and shortly afterwards expired.



"The CENTURY." Accordingly, the next year, in January of 1847, many outsiders having been invited to join in the enterprise, the Sketch Club was transformed into the CENTURY. Those who took part in the proceedings, whom we now call the Founders, were but forty-two in number, of whom eleven were artists, eight or nine authors, four or five lawyers, and the residue men of business who had a taste for art and literature.

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that only two clergymen were included in the number of our founders, Drs. Dewey and Bellows, who, being Unitarians, were, perhaps, not to be counted as within the fold. Their older, more orthodox brethren were, I suspect, kept aloof by the suspicious association of the name club with hot stuff and jollity; but they have since overcome their scruples; and we can now "point with pride," as the politicians say, to the names of Vinton, Wainwright, Storrs, Dwight, Schaff, Brookes, Rainsford, Van Dyke, and Briggs—all of them, as I can avouch as an expert, sound as a nut in the true faith—with the exception, possibly, of Van Dyke and Briggs, who are venturing perilously near to—well, the falling-off place.

The CENTURY, like the Sketch Club, was not a mere club got together to pass the time in chat. It was intended to promote artistic and literary ends. Its first constitution, of 1847, said, "It shall be composed of authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts," whose aim it shall be "to cultivate a taste for letters and the fine arts." Ten years later, in 1857, the Act of Incorporation declared that its purpose was "to promote the advancement of art and literature, by establishing and maintaining a library, reading-room, and gallery of art."

These ends the CENTURY pursued earnestly but with most inadequate means. It had its exhibitions of pictures, it produced papers to be read at its meetings, and, instead of an annual, which had been projected, it kept up a journal, to which the members contributed and of which Gourlie and Cozzens were editors. Some of its papers were afterwards collected in a sparkling little tome called "Prismatics," and it was in it Cozzens gave the first accounts, afterwards expanded in the "Sparrowgrass Papers," of his agricultural experiments, when his cherries cost him twenty-five cents apiece, but "were wuth the money."



But during these earlier years—*i.e.*, from 1847 to 1857—the existence of the society was somewhat precarious, and certainly migratory. It acquired but fifty new members in all that time, and it moved from room to room, generally up three stairs back, as if it had no abiding-place on the earth. It tarried for a while at No. 495 Broadway, next at No. 435 Broome Street, then at No. 575 Broadway again, and finally at No. 24 Clinton Place, in Eighth Street. I first encountered the institution there in the character of a burglar, which I have since dropped. Mr. George William Curtis had lectured one evening at the Lyceum, and at the close, having exhausted himself, if not his audience, he said to me, "Come, let us go round to the CENTURY and take something." I told him that I was not a member, to which he replied that he was; and we hurried around the corner. Curtis mounted the steps hastily, but to his surprise, finding the door locked for the first time, he rang the bell, and the door was opened by a handsome young damsel of some seventeen summers. George exclaimed, "What! nobody in?" "No," she observed, timorously, "they have all gone out." "Come in!" shouted George, and mounted the stairs. As he went up, the young lady descended the steps to the street, too much frightened perhaps to scream, but not too much frightened to look around for some chance Dogberry or Verges that might be itinerant and not asleep on his beat. In a moment down came George, shouting, "Heavens! we are in the wrong house," to which I responded, "Yes, and if we do not get out of it soon we shall spend the night in the lock-up." So we made a rapid escape. That young lady is now, I hope, alive, the grandmother or the great-grandmother of a respectable progeny, to some of whom she has told, doubtless, in moments of confidence, how in her youth she was assaulted by two fierce-looking bandits, who have since expiated their crimes at Sing Sing.

One thing the CENTURY in its adolescence did not overlook, and that was its summer and winter festivals, to which the ladies were duly invited. Louis Lang, in a manuscript record of those days, always winds up by saying "the supper was gay and we had a g-olly time." Being a German, Lang knew nothing, of course, of female beauty, and he does not even pronounce our



ladies handsome, which they must have been, as they were Americans; but he does let out that they not infrequently danced "till daylight did appear."

It must not be inferred, however, from these occasional "high jinks" that life was a sport for all the participants in them. We read with sadness in the early minutes that one poor fellow had to be buried at the expense of the others, having nobody else to bury him; that sometimes funeral ceremonies were held in the society rooms, as there was no place else in which to hold them; and, further, that it was seriously proposed to buy a lot in a cemetery, for the accommodation of families that might otherwise be embarrassed for a final resting-place for their dear ones. It was resolved, once, that to help an associate in his straits, a picture of his should be bought, provided it did not cost more than \$64—which picture is still on our walls. Art was not then in its heyday; no warm summer sun shone upon it; the mellow fruitfulness of autumn did not come to it; but rather the cold snows and withering blasts of winter. I remember a prosperous gentleman, not a millionaire—for there were only two in the nation at that time, Astor and Girard—but who had made his "plum," that is, his hundred thousand, who refused to enter one of our picture-shows (admission, twenty-five cents) on the ground that he did not think it proper to waste his substance on laziness and trumpery.

This slowness of progress in our earlier days was due to the preoccupation of the public mind rather than to its indifference. Those days were a critical period in the history of the Republic. The agitation of the slavery question had grown to a portentous magnitude and intensity. Both the old political parties—the Democratic and the Whig—had resolved against it, as in duty bound, in every variety of indignant phrase. They had frowned fiercely upon it, they had denounced it in furious words, they persecuted its fomenters, and overwhelmed it completely with the eloquence of the Senate and the violence of the mob; and yet it continued and grew. In a little while it split off huge fragments from the older parties—which, under the name of Anti-slavery Whigs and Free-soil Democrats, gradually combined into a single party—since known as the Republican party. As early



as 1854 this party had a candidate of its own, well named "The Pathfinder," who had blazed his trail through the wilderness. Already the Civil War was upon us, in all but the name, and the name soon came, in a convulsion which filled the air with the thunder of cannon, and reddened the fields with the blood of our young manhood, and drowned our desolated homes with the tears of widows and orphans. So momentous was that event that in the suspense and preparation of it all the minor incidents of life gave way to the mighty upheaval.

Even up to our removal, in 1857, to the old frame dwelling-house in Fifteenth Street, which had been purchased and furnished by scrip sold to some of the members, our advancement was more or less adversely affected by the war. We had gained but forty or fifty new members in all the interval. But the location in the growing part of the city, a new act of incorporation which gave concentration and activity to the governing body, and, most of all, the character of the men we chose for the new office of President, and as our representatives before the public, gradually imparted impetus to our upward movement. Our first President was Mr. Gulian C. Verplanck, the scion of a well-known colonial family, connected with the early history of the city, and of great social prominence, and himself no longer the partisan pamphleteer or the Bucktail Bard, but the learned theologian who lectured upon the connection of the Evidences of Christianity with civilization with imposing eloquence; the profound jurist, whose opinions in the old Court of Errors make much of the law under which we now live and thrive; the Congressional statesman, who coped with the leading statesmen and co-operated with Clay, Calhoun, and others in acts of financial legislation which averted a serious crisis; and the accomplished scholar, whose edition of Shakespeare, in its introduction and notes to the several plays, anticipated much of that better German and English criticism which no longer dwells upon words and phrases, but explains the deeper secrets of the greatest of human minds, which in that wonderful "fusion of the impassioned with the philosophical" has made the author the most majestic poet and the most instructive thinker of the world. In this last labor Verplanck was doubtless helped by the more practical renderings

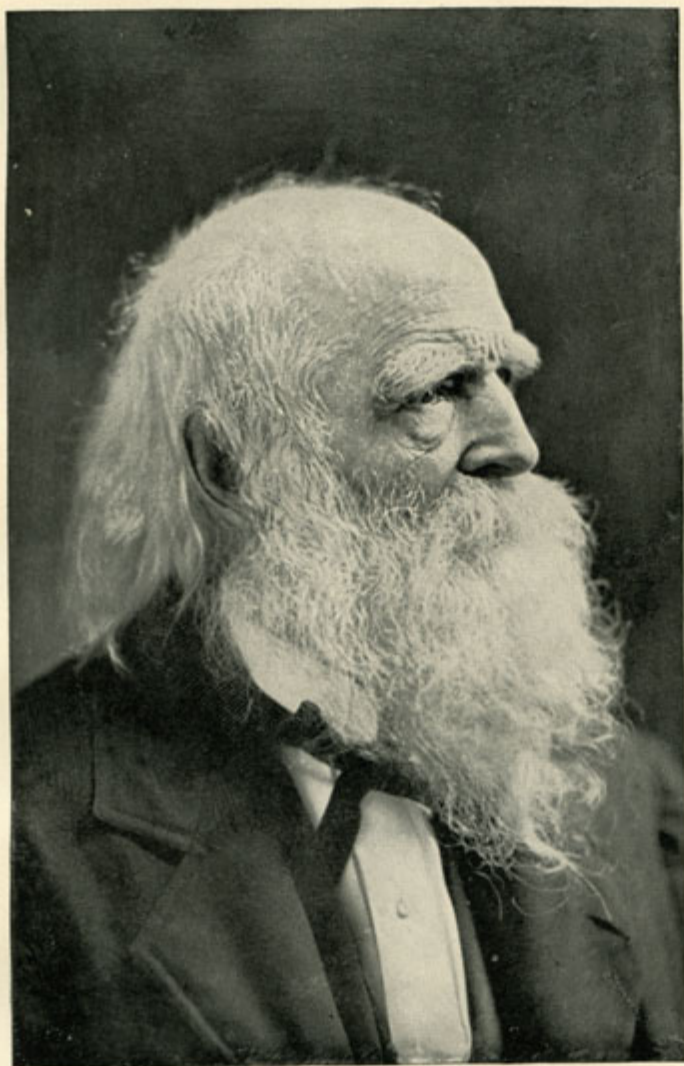


of the great actors he had seen abroad, such as Mrs. Siddons, the Kembles, the elder Kean, Cook, Macready, and Booth.

Verplanck, as President, was superseded and succeeded by another writer of even more note—the earliest and the most elaborate of our national historians, George Bancroft, whose name is connected not only with the history, but with the actual development of the nation. As a member of President Polk's Cabinet, he had been largely instrumental in bringing about the acquisition of Texas and of California, and was the founder of the Naval Academy at Annapolis. As ambassador to Great Britain he had continued the traditions of Adams, Rush, Pinckney, and others, and been honored by the highest literary distinctions conferred by Oxford and Cambridge; while as minister to Prussia and to the German Empire he had made acquaintance with the great celebrities of German scholarship, with Eichhorn, Bauer, Niebuhr, and others, and been honored by the faculties of Berlin and Göttingen. Bancroft, though a man of society, was not on the whole a clubbable man; he carried too many books in his brains for that; and yet, having seen so many eminent men, including Goethe and Byron, his talk was always instructive; and he retained a certain animation of manner, even in extreme old age. I remember to have visited him in Washington when he was in his ninetieth year, and he seemed to me as vivacious then, and as keenly alive to passing events, as he had been many years before, when he was ordering fleets and armies, and taking part in diplomacies of world-wide importance.

Bancroft was followed by one even more illustrious in our literary annals, William Cullen Bryant—the Morning Star of our Song—for many years a literary leader, to whom a later generation of Emersons, Longfellow, Whittiers, and Lowells paid gushing tributes of gratitude and praise, and who lived long enough to become the patriarch, as he had been the pioneer, of American letters. Not only as a poet, but as a publicist, Mr. Bryant wielded a pen of power. He was prominent in the discussions which preceded the Civil War; and he was fortunate enough to see the dreams of his youth turned into everyday realities. He who, as a child, had sung of "the genius of universal emancipation," in his old age celebrated the downfall of the Wrong that "through





WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

the slow-paced years had held the millions fettered." Indeed, Bryant saw nearly every cause for which he had battled triumphant, with the exception of that freedom of trade among the nations which Providence seems to reserve as the initial glory of the millennial era.

May I not add, in speaking of our chiefs, that in more recent times we have endeavored to follow this line of distinguished precedents by the choice of Mr. Huntington, who, by his connection with the Academy of Design, and by his own merits, is a leading representative of our early school of art; and of Dr. Potter, who, raised to the highest dignity by his own Christian denomination, is no less honored and beloved by all denominations, as the liberal citizen and the upright man?

Under the auspices of these earlier chiefs the CENTURY attained its apogee, and for thirty-five years, in that old frame dwelling-house in Fifteenth Street, held its position as the most prominent club in the city; and when by increase of members it became necessary for us to remove to this more sumptuous edifice, the heart of many an older member beat sadly because we could not bring with us, along with the furniture, the old walls that had witnessed our pleasures and our triumphs. It was there that we had continued and enlarged those exhibitions of pictures which, since adopted by other clubs, have done so much towards diffusing a taste for the finer arts throughout the community, and in raising the public estimation of those men whose lives are devoted to the expression of beauty. It was there that we began the collection of books which, though never a library in the completest sense, yet enticed to its shelves the generous gift of Larry Graham—those magnificent and costly volumes which are only within the reach of the purses of kings. It was there that we received as guests or as visitors many distinguished personages from abroad, like W. E. Forster, the colleague of Gladstone; like Lord Houghton, on whose estate still stands the little church whence the Pilgrims made their way to Holland and ultimately to these shores; like Charles Dickens, in the height of an unparalleled popularity; like Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Matthew Arnold, Charles Kingsley, Dean Stanley, and Stanley the traveller; and, among artists, like Munkacsy, Herkomer, and Constant; and, among men of science,



like Tyndall, and Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, all of whom it was an honor to know, and all of whom carried back to their homes a larger notion, not merely of American hospitality, but of American culture.

It was, of course, in that old building that we held those monthly meetings which one of our members, Mr. Macdonough (would he were with us to-night !) has thought of distinction enough to be celebrated in the pages of a popular magazine (the *Century*). Mr. Macdonough contends that those meetings were a perfect exemplification of cultivated democracy, where the very atmosphere excluded pretension and sham, and the variety of tastes invited and furnished the most liberal interchanges of thought.

The talk always ranged, he says, over the broadest fields, from Hindoo codes to the latest cases in courts; from Michael Angelo to *Punch*; from the Decalogue to the newest guesses of science; from Gladstone's politics to the morning editorials; from Calvinism to Darwinism, and from cosmogonies to conundrums. Hardly a question that human reason could solve which did not get its answer, or at least a keen surmise, from some one there. Was some apt quotation or curious literary fact needed, Bayard Taylor, or Colonel Porter, or Charles Astor Bristed was on hand to give it. Verplanck and Slosson were there as the critics of new and old plays or of new and old authors. If you wanted light on a scientific theory, there were Renwick, and Craven, and Yeomans to supply the want. Cross the room, and Samuel J. Tilden or John Van Buren would inform you as to the oldest political secrets, and Clarkson Potter or Chester A. Arthur as to the newest. That spirited talk going on yonder as to the deepest philosophical problems is between Francis Lieber and Roelker, steeped in German metaphysics.\* Mr. Macdonough might have added that there too, hid away in a corner, whither his own shyness had driven him, was one who nightly encountered the plaudits of thousands, Edwin Booth, telling Barrett, or Hackett, or Lester Wallack of the early days when he carried Shakespeare to the Antipodes or to the mining camps of California, where the audience was in the habit of emphasizing its conflict-

\* I cite Mr. Macdonough's article from memory, not having it before me as I write.



ing opinions of the play or the players by the discharge of pistols.

It was in those old rooms that we continued the hilarious observances of Twelfth Night which have left such agreeable impressions on our memories. Following out a Middle Age precedent which had converted a solemn religious observance into a popular festival, we decorated our walls with holly and green moss; we hung them with antlers and armor and the skins of beasts; we chose our King, the lineal descendant of the legendary three Kings of the East; we chose our Queen, who, being an American woman, possessed by nature every right and title to sovereignty, and needed no crown but her own loveliness. Our pompous herald, with tabard and trumpet, proclaimed the ascendancy of our monarchs over all the monarchs of the earth; and then, preceded by the Court jesters and fools and the boar's head, made their stately way to the supper-table. How finely we caricatured each other in ways that made it seem as if the almshouses and the prisons had emptied themselves of their contents. And had we not our gladiatorial combats, between little men and big ones, the former hoisted up on a table in order to reach their opponents, which, like many more recent pugilistic rivalries, had more of vociferous talk in them than of real pummelling?

All this, you will say, was nonsense, arrant nonsense, and so it was; it was none the less salutary. "And because thou art virtuous shall there be no more cakes and ale?" It relieved men of the burden of business, shook off the cares of commercial crises, and, for a night at least, rendered those who were despondent and overlaid buoyant with happiness. Nonsense, we should always remember, is a sort of sparkling salt which freshens and preserves the life which too much monotony would corrupt. In a world where the dark night always follows day, in which black thunder-clouds often blot the sunshine, where we walk not always on the velvet turf, but on prickles and thorns, where so many sorrows and disappointments and pains lie in ambush, where so much of the music, and the poetry even, is written in the sad minor key, and our religious beliefs open the future, like the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, into vast and endless circles of hell-



torment; the sense of the ludicrous is the most beneficent of providential gifts. It is true that La Rochefoucauld says that we cherish a secret contempt for those who make us laugh, and that may be so of certain sorts of French wit, which produce the crackle of thorns under a pot. But, nevertheless, the instincts of our race have regarded the jokers as benefactors. Aristophanes, who tickled the ribs of all Greece, survives as freshly as the tragic *Æschylus*; Lucan and Horace, of Roman literature, are more often read than Virgil; Pulci, Berni, Goldoni, and Boccaccio have come down to us in the train of the more solemn Dante. The one book that overtops all Spanish literature is that which tells of the amiable Don and his stupid Sancho; the coarse gibes of Rabelais smote the fabric of monkish superstition with as strong a blow as that of the iron-handed Luther; Molière has a hold on the vitality of France far beyond that of any of his graver contemporaries, and our own Shakespeare, whom we worship with all our minds for his Lears, Othellos, and Hamlets, we yet love to the bottom of our souls for his Beatrices and Rosalinds. Their flashes of merriment, like flashes of lightning, supposed to burn up the mephitic gases of the air, destroy the germs not only of intellectual but of moral and social disease; for, as modern science teaches us, the nerves, which are the seat of all feeling, grow and strengthen under the incitement of what is pleasant to them, while they wither, stagnate, and die at the touch of pain, even though it be the pain of mere dejection and hope deferred.

But those moments when we gave our hearts a holiday of wild and tumultuous merriment did not deaden them to the more serious aspects of life. How could they, when the grim monster of the scythe was so often tapping at our portals? Ah, yes! for us, as Wordsworth writes,

"Like clouds that rule the mountain summit,  
Or waves that own no curling hand,  
How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land!"

Therefore I have always thought it a useful custom of ours to keep the worthy members in remembrance, by the eulogies of friends, which are marked by all the sincerity of truth

and all the eloquence of sorrow. The best of us, I fear, are soon forgotten by the world at large. In a year, a month, a week perhaps, our names are no more heard amid the din of traffic and pleasure. Beyond our immediate families, no one cares for us more than he cares for "the wind that blew a hundred years ago." Is it not well then that here, as in a sanctuary, we should endeavor to perpetuate whatever in the lives of our departed brothers justifies commendation? We are all made better, I think, when we learn, as we do through these memorials, of the disinterested and lofty virtues of many who have gone before us. It is edifying to be told of the universal learning, the genial temperament, the broad public usefulness of our first secretary, Daniel Seymour. It is pleasant to be told of one of our founders, Robert Kelly, that he took an active part in nearly every great public movement which was undertaken in order to lift our city into the higher realms of municipal life; that he was among the founders of the Free Academy, of the New York University, of the Society Library, of the Commission of Emigration, of the Board of Education, and of those houses of refuge, on the Island, which, to use his own figure, have surrounded the city with a beautiful girdle of beneficence. It is pleasant still to read in the charming memorial of Thomas Hicks, of that early master among our sculptors, Thomas Crawford, who in penury and exile made himself first the pupil and then the companion and peer of Thorwaldsen; who excited the admiration of Europe by the exquisite productions of his chisel; who, at a later day, wrought the colossal statue of Washington, at Richmond, which is among the best representations we have of the Father of his Country; and who, at a later day still, put up on the dome of the Capitol that figure of America which holds out the emblems of peace to forty-six industrial States, and yet, with the helmet on her head and the spear in her hand, shows that she is ever ready to meet the world in arms. Is not our patriotism kindled anew when we read of the devotion of our noble Wadsworth, the child and the master of opulence, who could resist its seductions and the whispers of political ambition to take on him an onerous military burden, and, in the end, to leave his body on the battle-field, pierced by many deadly wounds, but whence it was dragged,



amid thunder and smoke, by the five brave men to whom we have voted our medals and honors? Again, in the same line, is it not edifying to read of the young Colonel Porter, the favorite of cultivated society, the admired wit, scholar, and poet of the clubs, the ornament of every circle in which he moved, eagerly surrendering all successes and honors that he might defend the integrity of his country, and lay down his life on the desolate and bloody plain of Cold Arbor? Does it not raise our estimate of common humanity when Weir and Whitridge and McEntee tell us of the early struggles of Gifford and Kensett and others; of the triumphs achieved, and of the chivalric nobleness of all their after-lives. Nor is it to be forgotten how on these occasions of commemoration the voices of the speakers mingled with the laments of the singers—Taylor, Stoddard, Stedman—and recalled to us the strains of Bion and Moschus, and of Milton in his "Lycidas," and of Shelley in the "Adonais."

I do not dwell upon these memories in order to revive the attachment of our old CENTURIONS to their Club; there is no need of that; it is ever alive, ever glowing, ever warm. Look into your catalogue and see how it has pervaded the hearts of your members, and been broken only by the cold touch of death. Among those who are gone you will see that there are some, like William J. Hoppin, who had been with us 49 years, when they were summoned away; some, like our dear Frank Marburg, 48; some, like Henry L. Pierson, 46; others again, like John W. Gourlie, Gilbert Spier, and William S. Mayo, 45; others like Louis Lang, 44; Daniel S. Appleton, 42; like Thomas Hicks, John MacMullen, and A. J. Bininger, 41; and like Richard M. Hunt, John Jay, and Smith Clift, 40. So, again, among the living you will see one who, like Daniel Huntington, has been with us for 51 years, that is, even before we had a corporate being; others, like John Durand, Charles E. Strong, and Henry E. Dow, have been with us 50 years; others, like Charles E. Butler and William M. Evarts, 49 years; others, like Frederick E. Church, 47; others, like Chief-Justice Daly, Stephen P. Nash, Jasper F. Cropsey, Frederick S. Tallmadge, Eliphalet Terry, 46 years; like Wolcott Gibbs and Henry Oakley, 45; Charles F. Southmayd and Dorman B. Eaton, 43; George B. Satterlee, 41; William Allen Butler,



James C. Carter, Edward Cooper, William E. Dodge, George Fuller, Abram S. Hewitt, Morris K. Jesup, and Frederick Sturgis, 40 years; and Joseph W. Choate, James W. Pinchot, Henry Pellew, 39 years. If I should come down to shorter periods—to 38, 35, and 33 years—though they are more than an ordinary human generation, it would take me more than the night to run over the names.

It is not for those who have been with us so long that I advert to the past, but for those who are recent accessions. In a literary society to which I belonged in college every newcomer was solemnly addressed by the president, who, in the end told him, "Sir, you are now joined in fellowship with a large and respectable body of American citizens." These are the words I should like to repeat to every one of our monthly accessions, "Sir, you are now admitted to a large and respectable body of your fellow-citizens." How numerous they are our catalogues tell; how respectable, the records of city, state, and nation. In looking over the former they will find the names of more than one hundred and fifty artists, painters, sculptors, and architects, the most of them known to fame, and many of them eminent; they will find the names of more than a hundred authors, poets, historians, and novelists, who have more or less illuminated our literary annals; they will find the names of nearly all our most learned judges, not only of our local courts, but of the Court of Appeals and of the Supreme Court of the United States; and they will find the names there of our leading lawyers, and to be a leading lawyer of New York is to be a leading lawyer of the nation.\* The shining lights of the pulpit are there; the foremost editors of the newspapers whose names are worthy of mention are there; the more distinguished presidents and faculties of our colleges are there; governors and other officers of our state are there; and the master spirits of several contemporary clubs. Of our many merchant princes who seem to believe in the apparent paradox of Mr. Carnegie, that a man who dies rich dies discredited, the majority belong to our fraternity. We have the honor of numbering on our lists no fewer than three

\* At the last election of the Bar Association every officer chosen but one was a CENTURION.



Presidents—Samuel J. Tilden, who was elected by the people but defeated by the politicians; Chester A. Arthur, the constitutional successor of the martyred Garfield; and Grover Cleveland, whose name will go down in history side by side with the most illustrious of his predecessors.

There is, however, one class of men to whom, though prominent, potent prestidigitators, wielding legislation and courts and great parties—the monstrous outgrowth of political degeneracy, the party Boss—our precincts have never been opened. They have been frightened away, doubtless, by the general character of our association, and by the eloquence of those watch-dogs of reform, Curtis, Schurz, Eaton, and others, whose words have so broadly revolutionized, if they have not yet entirely regenerated, the methods of the Civil Service.

Indeed, on looking over our little annual volume, I have been myself surprised at the many ways in which, by means of our membership, we have been connected with the great material and moral advances of human civilization. It was one of us, or of our fathers, S. F. B. Morse, who "tapped the lightning of the skies, and sent it with the swiftness of the swallow's wing over the face of the land, to carry everywhere our messages of intercourse and love. It was another of us, Cyrus W. Field, who made more than a hundred voyages across the Atlantic, to deposit his wires amid the weeds and broken wrecks at the bottom of the sea, that we might talk with each other, from continent to continent, as we talk from room to room. It was the same one of us who made travel, on our narrow strip of island, not only possible but comfortable to the multitudes by those elevated roads in which we traverse the air. It was another of us, the brother of the last, David Dudley Field, to whom we owe the civil codes which control the judiciary, and which a learned judge mentioned to me, before they were meddled with by legislation, as masterpieces of comprehensive, condensed, and pervasive wisdom.

It was one of us, Engineer E. S. Brown, who first sent the iron horse careering from the Atlantic to the Lakes, in supplement of the canal, which has opened the vast resources of the West to our trade, and made New York the metropolis of the continent.

It was one of us (A. W. Craven) who built the superstructure that brought the waters of the Croton to the city, and another of us (George E. Waring, Jr.), who, believing with the apostle that cleanliness stands next to godliness in the order of the graces, has won for his sweepers and dustmen the honorable soubriquet of "Angels in White." It was one of us (Mr. Bryant) who first suggested that the old goose pastures of our northern suburbs should be turned into a Central Park, which suggestion others of us (Olmstead and Vaux), availing themselves of a previous plan of General Viele, have carried out with such magnificence and beauty. It was one of us (C. Vanderbilt) who bore the expense, and another (H. H. Gorringe) who managed the difficult labor, of bringing across the sea, as an ornament to the Park, the obelisk which connects the oldest civilization of the world with the newest. It was one of us (Dr. Bellows) who, during the war, stood at the head, and, with the co-operation of others (G. T. Strong, P. Agnew, A. J. Bloor, and many artists), carried on the work of that Sanitary Commission which, in addition to material comforts, sent to the brave boys in the field, as they paced their solitary rounds in the outposts or lay dreaming of home in the bivouac, an assurance that the hearts of the multitudes behind them beat in unison with their own.\*

It was one of us (Charles Brace) who gathered together the abandoned and wretched waifs of the town to be transplanted to the rich fields of the West, where they might find, and so many of them have found, the opportunities of education and useful labor which have made them respectable citizens, and in not a few instances legislators and statesmen. It was one of us, if we may believe the testimony of Mr. Gourlie, who gave the first hint for those twin monuments of our glory—the Metropolitan Museums of Art and of Natural History—which have been so grandly maintained by the liberal hands of John Wolfe, Adrian Iselin, Wm. T. Blodgett, Jonathan Sturges, John Taylor Johnston, and others; and especially by the intelligent care, the indefatigable zeal, and the flowing purses of Morris K. Jesup and Henry G. Marquand, all CENTURIONS.

\* Mr. Bloor informs me that the Sanitary Commission was afterwards continued as the Society of the Red Cross Knights.



It was exclusively due to the enterprise of the CENTURY, and to the active ten years' exertions of several of its members—J. W. Drexel, Ex-Governor Potts, J. W. Pinchot, Richard Butler, H. F. Spaulding, and one other—that the pedestal was raised for the statue of "Liberty"—the generous gift of the French people to the people of the United States—which now rises as a pharos at the entrance to our harbor, proclaiming to all the world that "here the free spirit of mankind at length throws its last fetters off."

I might go on in this way all the rest of the evening, telling of the good deeds in which we have participated; but I must stop, though you know, and will forgive me consequently, that as we grow older our interests go back to the former days. The German poet Goethe, when he had reached his eightieth year, and finished the immortal work of his life, dedicates it not to his living companions, but to the friends who had seen its beginning. "Again ye come," he says, "again ye gather round me, dim shadowy visions of my boyish days." So I, while I have been listening to the words of others, and uttering my own poor valedictory words, have seen not you who now occupy these seats, but those who occupied them before. As in those mediæval pictures of the saints where the whole background is made up of angel faces, the whole air around me has been filled with the spirits of the departed. A hundred warm hands have grasped my own with the old familiar greetings, a hundred fair faces have turned upon me their genial smiles, and a hundred friendly voices have spoken to me in æolian tones out of the depths. I have stood once more beside the easel of Cole, as he poured his ideal visions of the Voyage of Life and the Course of Empire in gorgeous colors upon the canvas. I have seen the boyish Kensett trying to infuse his own refinement and sweetness into the wild woods of the wold. I have watched the stately Gifford as he brought the City of the Sea out of its waters, in a style that Canaletto and Ziem would envy, and with a brilliancy of color that outshone even its native Italian skies. I have stood beside the burly Leutze as he portrayed our Washington among the ice of the Delaware, or depicted the multitudinous tramp of immigrants making their Western way through the wilderness to the shores of the Oregon,



that "hears no sound save its own dashings." All have come back for a moment, but now they are gone. Oh, whither? Into the silent land, says Von Salis; yet how silent it is! We speak to them, but they answer us not again. No one of them returns—no one has ever returned—to tell us of its conditions. The popular creeds, which are apt to raise their pretensions to knowledge highest where their ignorance is deepest, give out their noble hopes, their glorious guesses, but they impart nothing that they know or can know. Yet those hopes and guesses are the brightest when, as now, we indulge in reminiscences of the past and commune once more with vanished friends. It is then we feel them most strongly, while the phenomena of external nature come and go and disappear forever; while the imposing orbs and systems of orbs, wheeling unshaken in the void immense, are suddenly blotted and disappear from the skies, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving no track behind. Well, let them go! Who cares for stars or systems? They are but shows and symbols. But the human spirit, which has reason, which has affection, which has freedom to choose its way to infinite ends of good or bad, we cannot let that go. Oh, that must be ours forever! Do not we feel, too, in these higher moments, that there must be as the centre of all these appearances a Power that sustains them, a Wisdom that guides them, a Love that determines their ultimate issues. Do we not feel then more deeply than ever that all seeming death is but a transitional change? And do we not approach its grim portals, not without awe, but without fear? We go to it, as our poet says, "not like the quarry-slave scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams." To pleasant dreams, O venerable poet? No; but to pleasant realities, realities more firm and consistent, more vivid and enduring, than any that eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the tongue of man can describe; to realities, where as the ideal spaces expand, new and magnificent structures roll into view, and where, as the ideal times fly by, new visions of immortal beauty awaken reverence and kindle the joy of the hearts.



## POEM

BY

WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER

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OLD AND NEW—1847-1897

Is THAT oft-uttered adage true—  
"The Old is better than the New"—  
Old ways, old wines, old friends, old books,  
The ancient haunts, the time-worn nooks  
With Memory's twilight overcast,  
Where visions of a vanished Past  
Bring back, in all its mellow glow,  
The Golden Age of long ago?

Or is it wiser to be told—  
"The New is better than the Old"—  
New schemes, new arts, new creeds, new men,  
New themes for pencil, tongue, and pen,  
New depths, new heights, where Thought explores,  
Or Science delves, or Genius soars,  
While the New Woman leads the van,  
New crowned with all the rights of Man?

To-night our golden milestone stands  
A mark between two border lands;  
A point where parting ways divide,  
With "Old" and "New" on either side;  
The New with eager hope we grasp,  
Yet keep the Old with tender clasp;  
As some worn pilgrim in his quest  
Stops by a way-side shrine to rest,

Before the sacred symbols bows,  
 And tells his beads and breathes his vows,  
 We pause to-night and linger here  
 To count our decades, year by year,  
 Till as the lengthened lines unfold  
 A full half-century is told.

One longing, backward glance we cast,  
 A search-light through the midnight Past,  
 Revealing in its quickening rays  
 The friendships of departed days,  
 While Fancy's gleam and Memory's grace  
 Restore each once familiar face ;  
 A silent multitude—and thus  
 No message comes from them to us,  
 Yet, like a tuneful requiem,  
 A greeting goes from us to them—  
 "Hail, Comrades all!" from lip to lip,  
 This pledge of old companionship,  
 From heart to heart, this whisper low,  
 Forth through the wintry night shall flow,  
 From star to star, from space to space,  
 To some diviner dwelling-place.

Foremost before my mental sight  
 Three noble forms appear to-night ;  
 Chieftains of our CENTURION band,  
 Like David's mightiest three they stand  
 (Those heroes without spot or stain  
 To whom the rest could not attain),  
 And of what time they ruled of old  
 Our Book of Chronicles has told.

And first, the grave and genial Sage  
 Whose judgments on the stately page  
 Of sovereign Law still rule to-day  
 And all unchallenged hold their sway ;



Fit with the worthiest to stand  
 Of his ancestral Fatherland,  
 He loved with ours his life to blend,  
 In evening hours a fireside friend,  
 And gave the world, with patient toil,  
 Fresh flowers of thought from ancient soil,  
 Fair garlands which entwine his name,  
 In lasting bands, with Shakespeare's fame.

And next, with aspect calm, severe,  
 Our Poet, Oracle and Seer,  
 Of whom to sing, my faltering lines  
 Should catch the breath of forest pines,  
 The music of the mountain rills,  
 And strength of the eternal hills ;  
 Who taught, in loftiest speech and song,  
 The love of Right, the hate of Wrong,  
 Who stood, in all the storm and stress  
 Of evil days, for Righteousness ;  
 Whose hand upheld the hand that gave  
 The gift of Freedom to the Slave ;  
 Nor lost in his declining days  
 The Minstrel's skill, the Prophet's gaze,  
 And tuned to breathe our Mother tongue  
 The sounding harp that Homer strung.

Last of the three, and latest spared  
 In the long life which once he shared  
 With us, in manhood's fullest prime,  
 Undimmed by age, untouched by Time,  
 With insight keen and courage bold  
 The truth to seek and sift and hold,  
 The kindling eye, the thrilling tone,  
 The cordial grasp, were all his own ;  
 Scholar and Statesman, on whose brow  
 A world-wide homage hovers now ;  
 To him the Muse of History brought  
 With brightening face, the task he wrought

To trace, beneath her guiding hand,  
The annals of his native land,  
And in majestic outlines draw  
The forms of Liberty and Law.

Nor shall these honored memories die  
As days glide on and years go by ;  
As once from Athens' lofty crown  
The sculptured gods of Greece looked down  
To guard the mariners who gave  
Their barks to the Ægean wave,  
They watch us still as sailing on  
We leave behind *our* Parthenon.  
To-night we shape our course once more  
Where Life's broad ocean spreads before ;  
Some with stanch keels for storms and blasts,  
Some with rent sails and shattered masts ;  
Some with full-freighted argosies  
And canvas spread for Fortune's breeze ;  
Some strained and bent and worn away  
By Time's invisible decay ;  
Yet may it be for every one  
As to that brave CENTURION,  
When to his wind-swept deck he clung  
And to the waves the tackling flung,  
In the wild hour of wreck to hear,  
Above the storm, this word of cheer  
From Faith's inspired, prophetic lip,  
"No loss but only of the ship !"