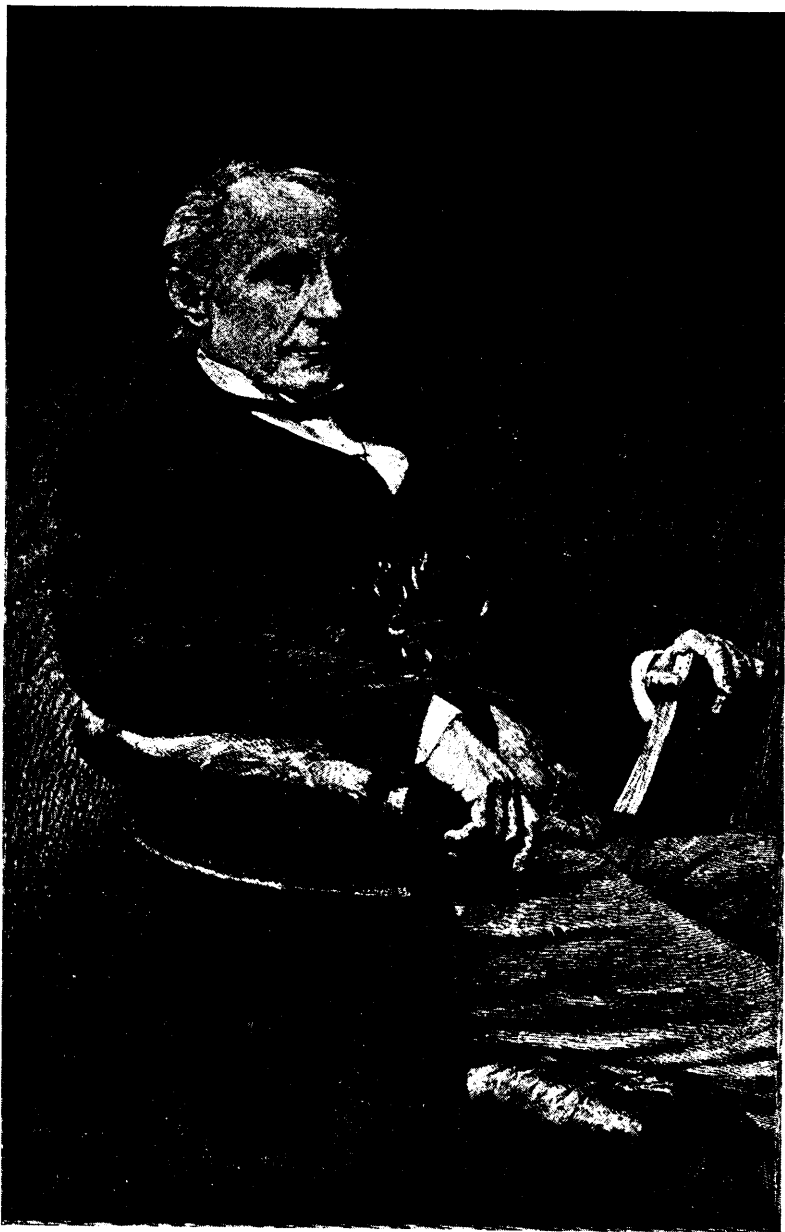


Take bloom and fragrance from some morn of May,
When he who gives it shall have gone the way
Where faith shall see and reverent trust shall know."



THE LATE ALEXANDER KINGLAKE.

Our New York Letter.

This has been a busy week. On Monday night the Manhattan Athletic Club threw open to some thousands of male guests their magnificent loggia-crowned building on Madison avenue, which could comfortably swallow four of Messrs. Henry Morgan & Co.'s new building on St. Catherine street, Montreal. On Tuesday afternoon they welcomed an equal number of ladies, and on Wednesday night entertained eight or ten thousand dancers for three hours—without refreshments. But the band was first-rate on each occasion, and the dancers found the floor first-rate, and everybody wanted to see the famous new building, with its skating rink in the loggia on the roof, and its splendid gymnasium and bowling alley.

Wednesday night witnessed also "watch night" at the Author's Club, attended by men so diversely representative as Chauncey Depew, John Dillon, M.P., Bill Nye, R. W. Gilder, Moncure Conway, and a hundred or two more celebrities, including four Blue-noses, Bliss Carman, Prof. C. G. D. Roberts, Dr. Frank Ferguson and Dr. Meek. On Thursday night Mrs. Frank Leslie held her New Year reception, and on Friday the Womens' Press Club gave theirs at their handsomely decorated rooms in Union Square, while last night the Shakespeare Club met at Mrs. Diehl's.

In the book world F. T. Neely, the brilliant young Chicago publisher, who recently made such a hit with his skit on the "Great Fire at the World's Fair," has just brought out a volume of the collected *Fun, Wit and Poetry* of Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley. The book is

liberally illustrated with Nye in divers Ally-Sloperesque attitudes, and the wildest caricatures of Ally Sloper are not a bit funnier than Nye with his walking clothes and family expression. Nothing could be much more amusing than Nye on Jay Gould. Mr. Gould's habits are simple, and he does not hold his cane by the middle when he walks. He owes much of his neuralgia to lack of exercise. Mr. Gould never takes any exercise at all; he sees no prospect for exercise to advance in value. He says he is willing to take anything else except exercise; prior to his neuralgia he used to sleep as sweetly and peacefully as a weasel. The story that a professional burglar broke into Mr. Gould's rooms in the middle of the night and was relieved of his tools before he could call the police, was not true. Mr. Gould's career teaches us that it always pays to do a kind act, for a great deal of his large fortune has been amassed by assisting men like Mr. Field when they were in a tight place, and taking their depressed stock off their hands while in a shrunken condition. Mr. Nye's pun is a crushing indictment.

Whittier, who would be the laureate of America, if Republics indulged in such oppressive institutions, did me the honour of sending me for New Year's Day his little privately printed "At Sundown," a lovely specimen of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.'s scholarly book-making, containing eleven poems, besides the charming dedication to Edmund Clarence Stedman.

"Poet and friend of Poets, if thy glass
Detects no flower in winter's tuft of grass,
Let this slight token of the debt I owe
Outlive for thee, December's frozen day,
And like the arbutus, budding under snow,

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, by an English premier (New York: Minerva Publishing Co., 1890) is a rambling and inartistically written book, with some good things in it. The announcement that it is by an English Premier adds a transgression hitherto unexpected to the long list of Mr. Gladstone's delinquencies. Being liberal, if not distinctly socialistic, it cannot have been written by Lord Salisbury, and England has no other ex-premier living. Seriously, internal evidence proves that it was not written by an English premier, for the writer has evidently been in Australia, and knows only as much of English society and institutions as an Australian, who is well provided with introductions and intelligence, might very easily make himself, and there is a sort of latent prigishness in the book which would be likely to characterize such a personage. But the writer is a man of sense and justice and sometimes, as in the description of the vision of the wild beasts or the delineation of the character of Dunstan, successively a fashionable High church clergyman, a rake, and a socialist, displays considerable power.

THROUGH THICK AND THIN (Estes and Lauriat, Boston, 1890) is a schoolboy story of the orthodox English pattern, by Laurence H. Francis. It has the bad boy, who gets on better than the good boy at first, but meets Nemesis in the shape of brain fever, and reforms as he should do. It goes without saying that it doesn't come up to "Tom Brown," or rival in pathos, excitement and interest, Archdeacon Farrar's "Eric." It is just a healthy, straightforward tale of English school life, more calculated perhaps to interest those who love to read of boys than boys themselves, because its power lies in the development of character rather than in incident. It has, of course, the bull story, the stealing of the money and the apples, but no first-class fight.

THE LION'S CUB, by Richard Henry Stoddard (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890). Of all the goodly fellowship, which once included Longfellow, Emerson and Bryant, only Whittier, Holmes, Lowell and Stoddard remain, and a book of either of them is therefore an event. Stoddard is a true poet, for the true poet is the creator—the original man. Instance such poems as "Through Darkness," "Mors et Vita" or "The Singer." Some of the long poems, like "The Brahmin's Son," are full of magnificent lines.

"There is no giving back,
Death takes his own, and keeps it; takes all things.
The stars die in their courses like the dew,
That shines and is not; the containing heavens
Wither like leaves in autumn; all the worlds,
And all the creatures that inhabit them,
Vanish like smoke and incense—which they are,
From the beginning offered up to death."

Here is a description of the City of the Gods:

"A City builded in the summer clouds,
By masonry of winds, fantastic, strange;
Tier on tier, in mountain terraces,
Sheer from the hollows of that happy vale,
It rose resplendent; leagues of palaces,
The sudden opening of those doors disclosed
The light of thrones within; what temples seemed
Interminable columns, crowned with domes;
Towers, wall surrounded, high, mysterious;
Arches, where through one saw the rise and fall
Of dazzling fountains in perpetual bloom;
Towers, temples, palaces, and over all
The great gate of the Palace of the Gods."

* * * * *

"There, where the Gods were in divine repose,
Not as where sculptured in colossal forms,
With four-fold faces and with sceptred hands,
They sat, cross-legged, among their worshippers,
In tall pagodas, or in temple caves,
Quarried in mountains ancient as themselves,
But presences wherein the Power they were,
Was felt, not seen!"

And here are three lines worth remembering:

"Death comes like a torrent from the hills,"
"Taking up the burden of his life
He lived it out and earned a quiet grave."

Long live Richard Stoddard, say we.