

Of thy perfections.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in Thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue."

And in Autumn Woods,
"Ah, 'twere a lot too blest
Forever in thy colored shades to
stray;

Amid the kisses of the soft south west
To rove and dream for aye.
And leave the vain low strife
That makes men mad—the tug for
wealth and power
The passions and the cares that wither
life,
And waste its little hour."

"In a land where so many have largely
invested,
Not only where treasure is never
molested
By thieves, moth or rust: but on this
earthly ball,
Where interest is high and security
small,"—
It is gratifying to find poets upholding
the idea
"That somehow the gold isn't all."

Critics of Bryant's poetry might suggest
that his writings tended toward
the melancholy. Although there is a
serious tone to his poetry there is an
optimism and faith in the future pervading
it that is a pleasing contrast to the
writings of some of our great
poets, who were often cynical and sar-
castic and at times pessimistic.

This author's philosophy of life is well
set forth in a beautiful epitaph entitled
"The Old Man's Funeral":

"Why weep ye then for him who having
won
The bound of man's appointed years, at
last,
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's
labors done,
Serenely to his final rest has passed:
While the soft memory of his virtues
yet
Lingers, like twilight hues, when the
bright sun is set.

"His youth was innocent: his riper age,
Marked with some act of goodness,
every day;
And watched by eyes that loved him,
calm and sage,
Faded his late declining years away.
Cheerful he gave his being up, and went
To share the holy rest that waits a
life well spent.

"That life was happy: every day he
gave
Thanks for the fair existence that was
his;
For a sick fancy made him not her
slave,
To mock him with her phantom
miseries.
No chronic torture racked his aged
limb,
For luxury and sloth had nourished
none for him.

"And I am glad that he has lived thus
long,
And glad that he has gone to his re-
ward;
Nor deem that kindly nature did him
wrong,
Softly to disengage the vital cord.
When his weak hand grew palsied, and
his eye
Dark with the mists of age, it was his
time to die."

When we have it upon such excellent
authority that to attempt "to gild re-
fin'd gold, to paint the lily or add per-
fume to the violet is wasteful and
ridiculous excess," why add any com-
ment to lines like those?

Best of all is the faith in the future
and in a supreme being expressed in the
closing stanza of "To A Waterfowl":

"He who from zone to zone
Marks through the boundless sky thy
certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread
alone
Will guide my steps aright."

How similar to the Bard of Avon
where he said, "He who doth the raven
feed and doth diligently cater to the
sparrow, keep me in my age." Few bet-
ter instances does literature afford that
great minds think alike.

The poet's firm belief in a future life
is evidenced by his poems entitled, "The
Future Life," and "The Return of
Youth." The latter poem is worthy of
our attention both for the truths ex-
pressed and for the form of the expres-
sion.

"My friend, thou sorrowest for thy
golden prime,
For thy fair youthful years too swift
of flight;
Thou musest, with wet eyes, upon the
time
Of cheerful hopes that filled the
world with light,
Years when thy heart was bold, thy
hand was strong,
And prompt thy tongue the generous
thought to speak,
And willing faith was thine, and scorn
of wrong
Summoned the sudden crimson to thy
cheek.

"Thou lookest forward on the coming
days,
Shuddering to feel their shadow o'er
thee creep:
A path, thick set with changes and
decays,
Slopes downward to the place of com-
mon sleep;
And they who walked with thee in life's
first stage,
Leave one by one thy side, and, wait-
ing near,
Thou seest the sad companions of thy
age,—
Dull love of rest, and weariness and
fear.

"Yet grieve thou not, nor think thy
youth is gone,
Nor deem that glorious season e'er
could die,
Thy pleasant youth, a little while with-
drawn,
Waits on the horizon of a brighter sky;
Waits like the morn, that folds her wing
and hides,
Till the slow stars bring back her
dawning hour;
Waits, like the vanished spring, that
slumbering bides
Her own sweet time to waken bud and
flower.

"There shall He welcome thee, when thou
shalt stand
On His bright morning hills, with smiles
more sweet
Than when at first He took thee by the
hand,
Through the fair earth to lead thy
tender feet,
He shall bring back, but brighter,
broader still,
Life's early glory to thine eyes again,
Shall clothe thy spirit with new strength,
and fill
Thy leaping heart with warmer love
than then."

In concluding, let us note his longest
poem, "To the Ages." Macaulay, in his
history, points out that modern evils are
not new; it is the perception of these
evils and the spirit that would remedy
them that are the new products. This
poem emphasizes that idea. After allud-
ing to the time of which high dreaming
bards have told,

"Ere friendship grew a snare or loved
waxed cold,
Those pure and happy times, the golden
days of old."

the trend of development is traced
from Egypt to Greece and Rome, and
from thence to the Northern European
and Western hemisphere. In a careful
resume of the accomplishments of the
ages, blame is meted out where it was
deserved, and praise given where it was
earned. Our notice is directed to the
time when

"Cowl and worshiped shrine could still
defend
The wretch with felon stains upon his
soul;
And crimes were set to sale and pard
his dole
Who could not bribe a passage to the
skies;
And vice, beneath the mother's kind con-
trol,
Sinned gaily on, and grew to giant size,
Shielded by priestly power and watched
by priestly eyes."

Advancement is apparent to this author
as evidenced in a stanza further on in
the poem:

"For look again on the past years;—
behold
Flown like the nightmare's hideous
shapes away,
Full many a horrible worship that of
old,
Held, o'er the shuddering realms, un-
questioned sway;
See crimes that feared not once the eye
of day,
Rooted from men without a name or
place,
See nations blotted from the earth to
pay
The forfeit of deep guilt—with glad
embrace,
The fair disburdened lands welcome a
nobler race."

Note the optimistic tone of the last
stanza:

"But thou, my country, thou shalt never
fall,
But, with thy children, thy maternal
care,
Thy lavish love, thy blessings showered
on all—
These are thy fetters—seas and stormy
air
Are the wide harrier of thy borders,
where,
Among thy gallant sons that guard thee
well,
Thou laugh'st at enemies; who will then
declare
The date of thy deep-founded strength,
or tell
How happy, in thy lap, the sons of men
shall dwell."

We who are fortunate enough to be
able to call ourselves Canadians can ap-
preciate that stanza. A closer acquaint-
ance with the precepts with which this
writer's poetry is so replete, will enable
us to live in such a way that the optim-
ism of those last lines will be justified
as far as our country is concerned.
Bryant's was an exemplary career. For
that reason the study of his life as re-
vealed in his poetry is now valuable
to us.

Some one has said that we should not
let a day escape without listening to
some good music, looking at a good
picture, or reading some good literature.
All cannot look at a good picture or
listen to good music each day, but all
can read some splendid literature if they
are so inclined. If we do this every
evening—

"The night will be full of music,
And the cares that infest the day
Will fold their tents like Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

For this purpose, rich as the world is
to-day in literature, it pleases me to
have had the opportunity of recommend-
ing the poetry of William Cullen Bryant.

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Real Living.

None of us liveth to himself, and no
man dieth to himself.—Rom. xiv.: 7.

"Could we but crush that ever-craving
lust
For bliss, which kills all bliss, and lose
our life—
Our barren unit-life—to find again
A thousand lives in those for whom we
die—

So were we men and women! and should
hold
Our rightful rank in God's great Uni-
verse,
Whether, in heaven and earth, by will or
nature
Nought lives for Self!

All spend themselves for others!"

All the Universe, as Kingsley tells us
in the lines given above, is preaching the
strange doctrine which our Lord declared
solemnly—the doctrine that anyone who
is selfishly trying to save his life shall
lose it, while one who is ready to lay
down his life for Love's sake shall find

out the secret of real living. Real liv-
ing is the giving of self in loving ser-
vice. God is always giving life and
breath and all things. The angels are
ministering spirits, unceasingly, serving
God and His creatures. The sun is not
too great or high to pour out his life-
giving rays on every wayside plant and
tiny insect. Even plants seem to devote
themselves to the care of their growing
seed and fruit, and animals are ready to
defend their young with their own lives.

It was Satan who told the impudent
falsehood: "All that a man hath will
he give for his life."—Job II.: 4. We
have only to look at Europe to know
how untrue that apparently plausible
saying is. War is a horrible thing—we
all know that. One of our readers has
asked me to write against it. War is
its own mightiest accuser, and I don't
see how any intelligent person can possi-
bly think that the awful slaughter and
misery of millions of unoffending people
can possibly be the right way of settling
the quarrels of rulers and governments.

But the war has proved once more the
marvellous courage latent in apparently
commonplace people. As a writer from
Paris said in a letter to London:
"There is some light, and you see it if
you are interested and engaged in Red
Cross work. You see it in the brilliant
work that is being done in the emergency
hospitals that have been organized for
the care of the wounded, in the courage
of the motor-ambulance drivers who have
brought men down from the front, in the
untiring work of doctors and nurses. . . .
Officers and men alike are splendid; they
may disguise their pluck, but they don't
hide their pride that, wherever shell falls
fastest and bullets rain thickest, the
British army is there."

Another correspondent writes: "Never
once since I came to France have I seen
among the soldiers an angry face or
heard an angry word. . . . they are
always quiet, orderly, and wonderfully
cheerful."

Irvin S. Cobb, who pictures with hor-
rible vividness the endless procession of
wounded men from the front, tells us
also of the wondrous patience of those
suffering men. He saw thousands of
men in agony, but declares that there
were no moans nor shrieks from those
who were conscious. He says: "Those
newly struck seemed stunned into silence;
those who had had time to recover from
the first shock of being hit, appeared to
be buoyed and sustained by a stoic
quality which lifted them, mute and
calm, above the call of tortured nerves
and torn flesh."

We read of the nurses who work on
bravely, and even cheerfully, giving
smiles to the poor fellows for whom they
are tenderly caring, and resolutely refus-
ing to brood over the horrors they can-
not cure.

We can see the glory of such selfless
service, let us recognize its beauty in
ordinary times and places. The Chris-
tian's business in life is to follow Christ,
and He was always ready to help others
at any cost to Himself. It would have
been strange indeed if the constraining
power of His infinite love had not drawn
him down to suffer with and for man-
kind.

It is natural and right to pour out
riches and talents for the good of
humanity and the glory of God. A man
who hoards up wealth—physical, mental
or spiritual wealth—is losing it. He
might just as well collect pebbles, for all
the good that results. A man who
spends life in selfish pleasure is sure to
be discontented, for he is wasting price-
less opportunities. Every seed that falls
into the ground gains a fuller life through
death. Unless it yields up its life it
"abideth alone."

A forced or grudging sacrifice is cold
and colorless. It must be enthusiastic
if it is to be glorious and beautiful. The
disciples showed how little they under-
stood their Master's spirit when, after
mentioning the things they had given
up for His sake, they asked: "What
shall we have therefore?" If a man
tries to buy Heaven with money or ser-
vice, his bargain can hardly be consid-
ered noble and splendid.

God is educating His children, there-
fore He does not encourage them to ex-
pect payment for every act of service.
The Psalmist considered it an honor and
privilege to be a doorkeeper in the
House of God; while Malachi said that
in his day no one was willing to shut