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#### THE WHITTIER ANNIVERSARY.

One of the most interesting literary events of the year 1877 was the celebration of the seventieth birthday of John G. Whittier. A banquet in honor of the poet was given in Boston, at which all our leading men of letters were present, either in person or by letter. From points far and near all over the English-speaking world messages of love and congratulation came winging their way to the quiet home at Amesbury, from whence for more than half a century the good Quaker poet had been singing himself into the hearts and lives of the American people. Among all the tender words and tributes of praise and admiration spoken and written on that happy occasion there were none more tender, more hearty and sincere than those of Bryant, Emerson and Longfellow, three of Whittier's most beloved associates and fellow-workers in the harvestfields of literature. All of these were old men. Longfellow had himself just passed his seventieth milestone, Bryant was over eighty, and Emerson seventy-four; the former two were still in full voice, but the splendid mind of the Concord philosopher was passing into eclipse. A decade has passed since then, and Whittier alone of all the tuneful brotherhood yet remains a blessed presence on the earth. The summer following the Whittier anniversary, in his home at Roslyn, the author of "Thanatopsis" wrapped "the drapery of his couch about him" and laid down to pleasant dreams. Longfellow sang on for four years longer, and then his gentle soul went out to the "Silent Land," and the sweet voice was hushed in the hush of the grave.

Emerson also, after Bryant, had four more years of life to live, though the shadows were upon him long before the end came. A few weeks after Longfellow was laid away, with tears and farewells, at Mount Auburn, Emerson found the rest for which he longed, near Hawthorne and Thoreau, in the cemetery at Concord. But Whittier, the good, the true; the noble, the poet of

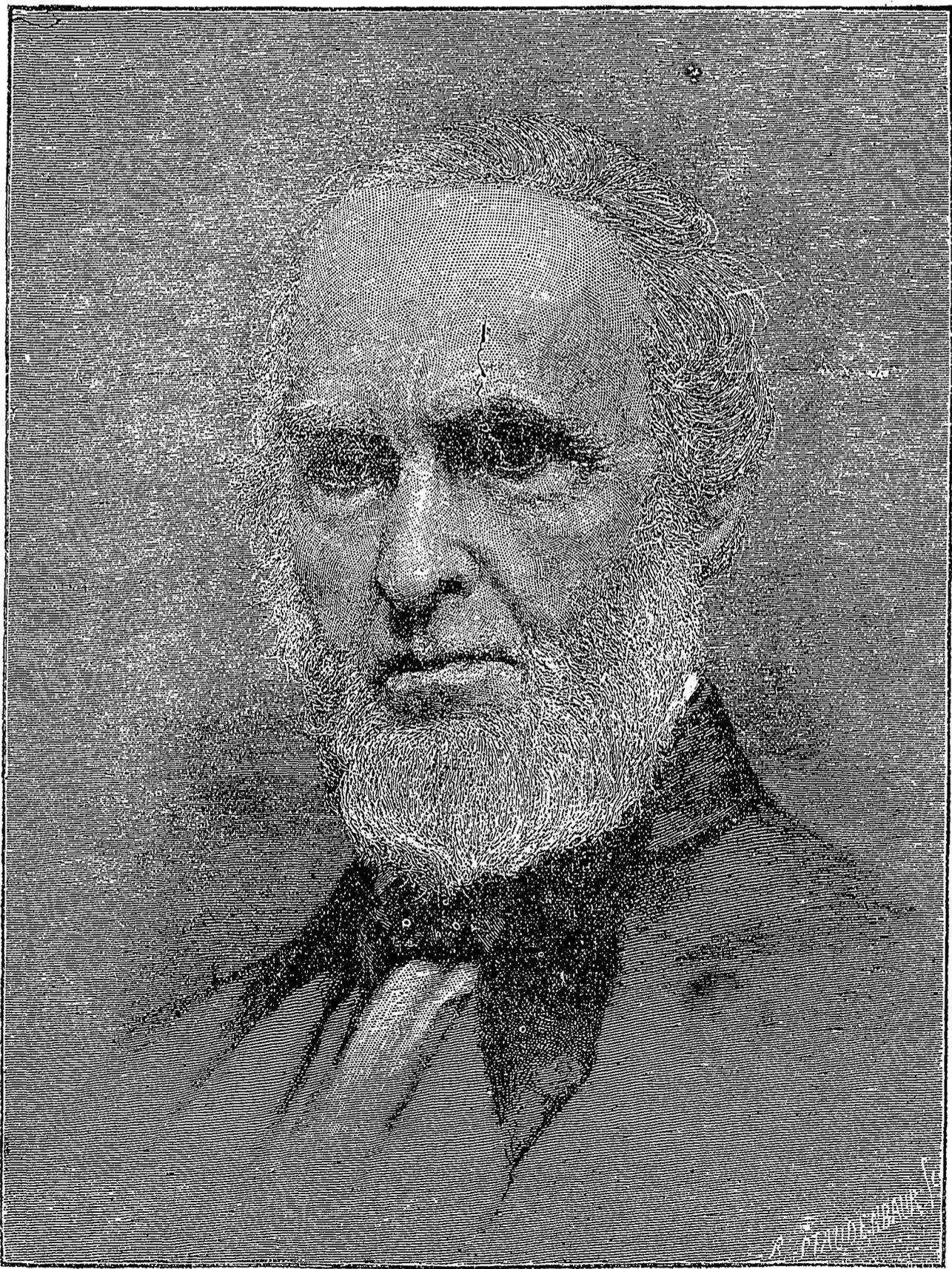
our hearts and homes, is still with us, and the seventeenth of December rounded out the full measure of eighty years.

That a man has lived to the age of eighty years is not of itself such an unusual or a wonderful thing even in these days of physical degeneracy as to call for a public demonstration of any kind. The land is full of octogenarians, many of whom have

served their fellow-men grandly and nobly in their day, many that are loved and honored, but there is only one Whittier, only one octogenarian so loved and honored throughout the world as he whom men have long since learned to know as the "dear old Quaker poet." Few poets have ever lived who have filled their years with such noble, helpful service to their fellow-men

as Whittier has filled his four-score. It was over sixty years ago that he began to sing the songs of freedom, right and truth, and down to this time, through many dark and stormy days, through good report and evil report, through all the vicissitudes which years have wrought, he has kept on his way unfalteringly, his voice as firm and strong, his heart as warm and true as in his youth. He sang the critics into respectful silence long ago; they formed, from the beginning, the smallest and the least part of the opposition he had to encounter.

It was a matter of little consequence to him whether they were pleased or not, whether or no his verse was framed according to the strict rules of art, as long as it served the main purpose of his life, the overcoming of evil, the putting down of tyranny. It was enough for him that his songs found their way to the lips and the hearts of the people, carrying with them everywhere the love of right and the hatred of wrong which he had breathed into them. His muse was early consecrated to the cause of humanity, and he has kept it true to that aim all these years. His ardent and stirring verse has been from the beginning one continuing battle-cry against injustice and oppression among



JOHN G. WHITTIER.

W. M. P. 1588  
GALTON