

heavy financial outlay necessary. He then turned to law. It was about this time that he wrote his best known work, "Thanatopsis" (a view of death). Eighteen years of age at the time of its composition, he kept it in his desk for four years, when it was published in the *North American Review*. In 1815 he was called to the Bar, and began at Barrington a practice extending over ten years. During this period two important events in his life occurred: he was married and he published his first collection of poems. Both ventures were successful. In 1825 he was persuaded to give up his lucrative law practice to go to New York to devote himself to literature. Accordingly, in 1825, he accepted the position of editor of the *New York Review*. Next year he received the appointment of assistant editor of the *New York Evening Post*, a paper with which he remained connected till the time of his death. The remainder of his life passed on uneventfully, being occupied by the performance of his editorial labors, and by the effort to improve his mind in study and travel. His poetical labors never ceased, and poems kept flowing from his pen. Of these several appeared in the *Talisman*, an annual in which he was interested from 1827 to 1830; others were published in magazines, and afterwards collected in book form in 1832. An English edition, with an introduction by Washington Irving, was quite successful, winning the praise of so severe a critic as John Wilson, of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Between the years 1834 and 1867 he made six trips to Europe, and was improved by his study of its people, languages, and institutions. He also travelled in Cuba and in his own country. In all these journeyings he wrote to the *Post* letters which were widely read at the time, and have since been published in book form. Like all his prose they are clearly, simply, carefully and entertainingly written.

As he grew older his influence grew great, and no literary or æsthetic undertaking was considered complete without his support and co-operation. When, in 1864, the Century Club of New York tendered him a reception on his seventieth birthday, the literary men and women of all America were delighted to be present, or to send their words of congratulation to him whom they all regarded as "a high-priest at the altar of nature, singing its praises in most harmonious numbers."

At an age when most men look upon their life's work as practically finished, Bryant was still in harness, using his great engine, the *Post*, in favor of good government and public morality; nor did he cease his poetical labors, though he probably thought his powers were failing, as the following words, written in answer to a request for a poem, seem to indicate:

"Besides it is the December of life with me. I try to keep a few flowers in pots—mere remembrances of a more genial season which is now with the things of the past. If I have a carnation or two for Christmas, I think myself fortunate. You write as if I had nothing to do in fulfilling your request but to go out and gather under the hedges and by the brooks a bouquet of flowers that spring spontaneously, and throw upon your table. If I am to try, what would you say if it proved to be only a little bundle of devil-stalks and withered leaves, which my dim sight had mistaken for fresh, green sprays and blossoms?"

It was this consciousness, perhaps, that induced him to devote himself, in his seventieth year, to translation—a work that does not tax the mind so much as does original poetry. In 1870 appeared his translation of Homer's "Iliad," and in 1871 his "Odyssey" was published. Both these works have taken a high place amongst the many translations of these epics. The poems, however, that he produced during the last years of his life are in no way inferior to his other work. His "Centennial Ode," "The