

EMERSON, THE THINKER,

READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY ON THURSDAY EVENING,
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BY

GEORGE STEWART, JR.,

Author of "Canada under the Administration of the Earl of
Dufferin," etc.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

SOME of you, doubtless, remember seeing a print, issued a few years ago, which represented a literary party at Washington Irving's. In the centre of the group sat the author of "Rip Van Winkle," while around him stood and sat the prominent pen men of his time. You have seen hanging on many walls, engravings of a picture which grew out of the imagination of a great painter, entitled "Shakespeare and his friends," and a few of you, perhaps, are familiar with the grand canvas which seems so endowed with life, and which exhibits, with wonderful fidelity, the hard features of the autocratic Johnson, the plastic face of the mercurial Sheridan, the classic front of Burke, the inspired head of the warm-hearted Goldsmith, and the tragic countenance of the player Garrick. One cannot look upon pictures like these without feeling proud of the age which gave birth to such men; men who have been the moulders of thought in their day, and whose works have come down to us through the long decades of time. It is the literature of a country which tells us of her progress and civilization. The letters of a nation reveal to us in unmistakable language, the culture and social and political advancement of her people.