

# THE BROOKLYN MAGAZINE

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## A POET IN HIS DECLINE.

By EDWARD DUFFY.

In a large and luxuriously furnished apartment in a four story brown-stone house on State Street, in the city of Albany, and almost within a stone's throw of the great Capitol, sits, or walks, or reclines throughout the day a man of seventy years of age. With hair that is silvery white, a full beard that is gray-white, a form that is bent and emaciated, a step that is slow and tottering, and a cheek that is pallid and shrunken—his blue eyes yet full and lustrous alone indicate the strength and pride of other days. This man is John Godfrey Saxe, the poet.

It is only a few years since the verses of Saxe were eagerly accepted by the leading periodicals, and his services as a lecturer were everywhere popular. In his day he was a bright member of many a literary gathering, being known personally to all of the most prominent of contemporary poets and prose writers. He was the nation's wit and humorist, whose delicious rhymes brought to himself fame and a competence, and to many a household the cheerful smile or hearty laugh. Even across the sea he was known as "the Thomas Hood of America."

Yet alas! how intensely pathetic is the rounding out of this man's days! For some years he has been dead to all the world. Few people know that he is yet alive; few of his numerous former ardent admirers think of him now other than as one who has been, but who no longer moves among his kind. The

victim of a deep-seated, ever-present melancholy, his closing years are touchingly sad and uneventful, the never-ceasing care of the few relatives that are spared him even failing to rid him of the deep gloom in which unhappily his mind is now shrouded.

Up to the year 1875 John G. Saxe was a splendid and conspicuous specimen of virile manhood. He stood six feet two inches tall, proudly erect and muscular, with a large, round and finely poised head set upon broad and stalwart shoulders. The latest photograph of him, now possessed by his family, represents his face in profile—a broad, high, intellectual forehead, wavy brown hair in abundance, large, keen eyes set in deeply, and with strong and suggestive feature outlines set off by a mustache and "Burnside" whiskers. Less than a dozen years ago this picture was fully justified by its subject.

The beginning of the end was the poet's dreadful experience and remarkable escape from a revolting death in a Western railway disaster in the spring of 1875, while on his return to Brooklyn at the conclusion of a lecture tour in the South. The sleeping-car in which he had a berth was thrown down a steep embankment, and he was rescued therefrom by the merest chance. As he lay wedged in between the broken timbers, stunned and bruised, a fellow-passenger who had escaped bethought him of a sum of money which he had left behind him. On returning to the car,

## SALMAGUNDI.

*In this pudding is not commonly put one thing alone, but one thing with other things put together.*—Littleton.

### OUR SEASIDE COTTAGE.

BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

Our summer-house is a cottage at East Hampton, Long Island, overlooking the sea. Seventeen vessels in sight, schooners, clippers, hermaphrodite brigs, steamers, great craft and small. Wonder where they come from, and where they are going to, and who is aboard? Just enough clover-tops to sweeten the briny air into the most delightful tonic. We do not know the geological history of this place, but imagine that the rest of Long Island is the discourse of which East Hampton is the peroration. There are enough bluffs to relieve the dead level, enough grass to clothe the hills, enough trees to drop the shadow, enough society to keep one from inanity, and enough quietude to soothe twelve months of perturbation. The sea hums us to sleep at night, and fills our dreams with intimations of the land where the harmony is like "the voice of many waters." In smooth weather the billows take a minor key; but when the storm gives them the pitch, they break forth with the clash and uproar of an overture that fills the heavens and makes the beach tremble. Strange that that which rolls perpetually and never rests itself should be a psalm of rest to others! With these sands of the beach we help fill the hour-glass of life. Every moment of the day there comes in over the waves a flotilla of joy and rest and health, and our piazza is the wharf where the stevedores unburden their cargo. We have sunrise with her bannered hosts in cloth of gold, and moonrise with her innumerable helmets and shields and swords and ensigns of silver, the morning and the night being the two buttresses from which are swung a bridge of cloud suspended on strands of sun-beam, all the glories of the sky passing to and fro with airy feet in silent procession.

We have wandered far and wide, but found no such place to rest in. We can live here forty-eight hours in one day, and in a night

get a Rip Van Winkle sleep, waking up without finding our gun rusty or our dog dead.

No wonder that Mr. James, the first minister of this place, lived to eighty years of age, and Mr. Hunting, his successor, lived to be eighty-one years of age, and Doctor Buel, his successor, lived to be eighty-two years of age. Indeed, it seems impossible for a minister regularly settled in this place to get out of the world before his eightieth year. It has been only in cases of "stated supply" or removal from the place that early demise has been possible. And in each of these cases of decease at fourscore it was some unnecessary imprudence on their part, or who knows but that they might be living yet? That which is good for settled pastors being good for other people, you may judge the climate here is salutary and delectable for all.

The place was settled in 1648, and that is so long ago that it will probably never be unsettled. The Puritans took possession of it first, and have always held it for the Sabbath, for the Bible, and for God. Much maligned Puritans! The world will stop deriding them after a while, and the caricaturists of their stalwart religion will want to claim them as ancestors, but it will be too late then; for since these latter-day folks lie about the Puritans now, we will not believe them when they want to get into the illustrious genealogical line.

East Hampton has always been a place of good morals. One of the earliest Puritan regulations of this place was that licensed liquor-sellers should not sell to the young, and that half a pint only should be given to four men—an amount so small that most drinkers would consider it only a tantalization. A woman here, in those days, was sentenced "to pay a fine of fifteen dollars, or to stand one hour with a cleft stick upon her tongue, for saying that her husband had brought her to a place where there was neither Gospel nor magistracy." She deserved punishment of some

kind, but they ought to have let her off with a fine, for no woman's tongue ought to be interfered with. When in olden time a Yankee peddler with the measles went to church here on the Sabbath for the purpose of selling his knick-knacks, his behavior was considered so perfidious that before the peddler left town the next morning the young men gave him a free ride upon what seems to us an uncomfortable and insufficient vehicle—namely, a rail, and then dropped him into the duck-pond. But such conduct was not sanctioned by the better people of the place. Nothing could be more unwholesome for a man with the measles than a plunge in a duck-pond, and so the peddler recovered one thousand dollars damage. So you see that every form of misdemeanor was sternly put down. Think of the high state of morals and religion which induced this people, at an early day, at a political town-meeting, to adopt this decree :

“ We do sociate and conjoin ourselves and successors to be one town or corporation, and do for ourselves and our successors, and such as shall be adjoined to us at any time hereafter, enter into combination and confederation together to maintain and preserve the purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which we now possess.”

The pledge of that day has been fully kept ; and for sobriety, industry, abhorrence of evil and adherence to an unmixed Gospel, we know not the equal of this place.

Glorious place to summer ! Darwin and Mill, Huxley and Renan, and Ingersoll have not been through here yet. May they miss the train the day they start for this place ! With an Atlantic Ocean in which to wash, and a great-hearted, practical, sympathetic Gospel to take care of all the future, who could not be happy in East Hampton ?

The strong sea-breeze ruffles the sheet upon which we write, and the “ white caps ” are tossing up as if in greeting to Him who walks the pavements of emerald and opal :

“ Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,  
And you, ye waters, roll,  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.”

### DOM PEDRO AT HOME.

Americans have formed their own opinions of the Brazilian emperor ; correct opinions, in the main, for he is at home what he was in the United States—a thorough gentleman, not at all assuming, but with just enough of pride and reserve to give him dignity in his office ; a quiet, scholarly man, who can converse well on almost any subject from music to palæontology. He visits schools and hospitals about the city, occasionally makes a flying trip to the provinces, where he is received with expensive outbursts of public rejoicing, and is fêted and eulogized and bored, as royal personages are the world over. The emperor does not multiply these visits ; he is content to shine nearer home. Above all, he likes to take part in the proceedings of scientific societies and art clubs ; with his encyclopædic knowledge he can enter into a debate at a moment's notice. But Dom Pedro is not a Napoleon ; he is simply a well-meaning, well-informed nobleman, who has the good of his country at heart, but is not always strong enough to force the benefits he would gladly give. He could study our school system, and charm every one by his intelligent questions ; but we cannot see that the Brazilian schools are greatly the gainers. He could study yellow-fever and its preventives at New Orleans, but there are the dirty, ill-smelling, badly-drained streets in Brazil, the same pestilence-breeders that they were a year ago.

From his position the emperor cannot always see the real faults and needs of Brazil ; he sees only the best side of things, just as you see the best side of a prison or an asylum that you may inspect ; go there as an inmate, and you may tell another story. His Majesty may visit one of the public institutions on a set day ; his faithful subjects set the carpenters and whitewashers at work on the building, and the tailors prepare broadcloth coats for the occasion ; His Majesty's faithful institution is ready for His Majesty's inspection ; and majesty is bowed to, and shown around, and humbugged into a very majestic idea of a very mean little affair. That is the misfortune of hereditary royalty—to see everything in its Sunday