

HONORED AT HOME.

CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE POET BRYANT.

Among the Hemlocks and Pines
Shadowing the Johannot Brook,
Whose Sighs and Songs He Wrote.

The centenary of the birth of William Cullen Bryant was celebrated recently at his old home at Cummington, Mass.

The visitor to Cummington to-day finds a little town of 800 people perched high on the Hampshire hills, and the most distant from any

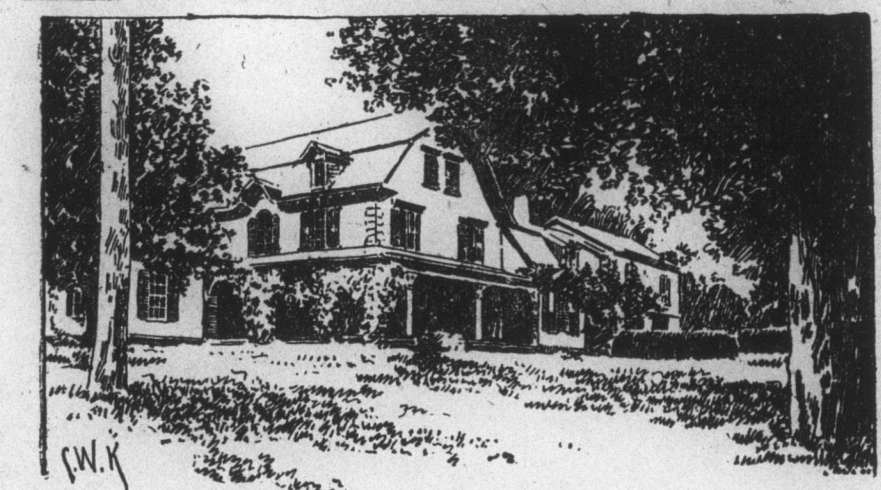


EDWIN K. BROWN, THE ORATOR OF THE DAY.

railway of any town in the State. It is to the credit of the town that she has originated the Bryant centennial observance without suggestion from the outside world, but she has called some of the famous men and women of the country to assist in the celebration.

It took place in a grove just beyond the Bryant homestead. There was an address of welcome from the librarian of the Bryant library, and Parke Godwin, Mr. Bryant's son-in-law, presided.

The orator was Edwin K. Brown, of Elmwood, Ill., a warm personal friend of Bryant and of his brother, John H. Bryant, as well. The brother, the only surviving member



BRYANT HOMESTEAD, WHERE THE POET SPENT HIS YOUTH.

of the family of Dr. Peter Bryant, read "The Rivulet," "A Monody" and "At 87," the last two his own poems.

Among the other speakers were John Bigelow, who was so many years associated with Mr. Bryant on the New York Evening Post; Charles Eliot Norton, professor of fine arts in Harvard University; Charles Dudley Warner, Rev. John W. Chadwick, the poet-preacher of Brooklyn; President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University of Worcester; George W. Cable and others.



JOHN H. BRYANT.

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe read a poem which was written by her for Bryant's sixtieth birthday, and, in addition, several stanzas appropriate for the occasion. There were letters from Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry L. Daves and others.

The evening previous to the celebration the children of the town, led by those of the Bryant School, had an observance of their own.

"Very few people ever got so near his heart as children," said Mrs. Mary Daves Warner the other day, in speaking of William Cullen Bryant. Few people are better able to judge of the poet's love of children than Mrs. Warner. For twelve years she was his favorite at his summer home in Cummington, and in chatting with a Recorder correspondent a few days ago Mrs. Warner gave many charming reminiscences of the poet as he appeared during the last years of his life there.

Mrs. Warner said: "My first recollection of Mr. Bryant was in 1866. My foster father, Francis H. Daves, had purchased for Mr. Bryant the old homestead, which had been out of the family possession for some years. Mr. Bryant had come there to spend the summer. He knew that my foster parents had no children, and when he found a tiny, tousled little girl roaming about the place with all the independence of childhood he was naturally somewhat surprised.

"Who are you?" he said, as it seemed to me somewhat sternly. "I'm a soldier's little one," I replied.

"What are you here for?" he asked.

"Because I have nowhere else to go," I made answer, "for my father is dead."

"This is certainly the place for you," he said, and he took me in his

arms, and ever afterward we were the best of friends.

"During the several months of vacation which Bryant spent every year at the home we had many merry romps together. He was shy and unapproachable even with the neighboring families, as I recall him, and often reticent with those who knew him best, but I always found a smile and kind word, even though, when he was hard at work, I brought up my pines to his study to be admired.

"Sometimes he tossed me into his waste basket, and taking it to the door, tilted it until I rolled out. And then I knew I must run away. Again, he would tell me that I might stay if I would not talk—a sentence which he well knew would deprive him of my company. And, then again, placing me on one corner of his writing table, he would read to me such queer words from books in which the letters all looked dizzy.

"Then all would be still, save the scratching of his pen as it went over the paper till I slipped off the table and out into the sunshine. Or, having been very good, I was rewarded by having both hands filled with goodies from the glass jar in the cupboard under the bookshelves, and I munched them contentedly while he wrote.

"Years afterward I learned that those queer words were Greek, and this was how Bryant translated the Iliad and the Odyssey.

"One rainy day, after long hours of work with the study door shut, he found me waiting as he came out, and a famous romp we had through the halls till he caught me and held me fast to rest. Nestled down and began, 'One, two,' to which he replied, 'Buckle my shoe,' and humoring my whim, answered with original rhymes as I counted far beyond the Mother Goose limit.

"I recall that in 1877, the year before his death, he came out into the kitchen where I was washing dishes and said, as he leaned up against a shelf, 'Mary, here is something I think you will appreciate.' And then he read some lines said to have been written by a young lady for her own consolation upon the death of her father.

You must never give up in despair and grief.

For according to God's dispensation

The trials of earth are trifling and brief

Compared with eternal damnation.