

**ENGLISH MEN OF  
LETTERS, WILLIAM  
CULLEN BRYANT**

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English men of letters, William Cullen Bryant by William Aspenwall Bradley

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**WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY**

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*ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS*

*BRYANT*

•The  Co. •

*ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS*

WILLIAM CULLEN  
BRYANT

BY

WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY

New York

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## PREFATORY NOTE

My principal authority for the facts of Bryant's life as I have here presented them is the official biography by his son-in-law, the late Parke Godwin. On the exhaustive material brought together in the two massive volumes of that work I have drawn freely for my own picture of the poet and editor as he appears to us now that nearly a generation has elapsed since his death. Other authorities have also been consulted, such as Mr. John Bigelow's "William Cullen Bryant" in the American Men of Letters series, and General James Grant Wilson's "Bryant and His Friends." Mr. Henry C. Sturges's elaborate Chronology, based upon Mr. Godwin's Life, in the recent Roslyn edition of Bryant's poetical works, has been useful for purposes of reference, as have also his extended Bibliographies in the same volume.

On the critical side I have found valuable suggestions in many places, particularly in Mr. E. C. Stedman's "Poets of America," Mr. Churton Collins's "The Poetry and Poets of America," containing a notable tribute to Bryant by a distinguished English critic, and Mr. G. E. Woodberry's "America in Literature." All three of these works assign Bryant a high place in American literature. On the whole, however, it seems to me that criticism, and especially American criticism, has done him scant justice. Singularly

enough, Poe, himself unappreciated in America, was almost the only critic of Bryant's own time who fully recognized and vindicated his genius. It was France that discovered Poe. Possibly, judging by Mr. Collins's laudation, it may be England that will eventually discover Bryant. Meanwhile, if anything I have written in the following pages should, happily, contribute to his wider acceptance, not merely as the earliest American poet, but as one of the more considerable luminaries of our small constellation—the most imaginative, perhaps, of all our poets save Poe—the purpose of the present volume would be amply fulfilled.

W. A. B.

NEW YORK,  
March, 1905.

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