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DINNER IN HONOR OF WILLIAM WINTER
AT THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB OF NEW YORK CITY,
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER FIFTEENTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINE

■
SPENCER TRASK, President
■

WILLIAM T. EVANS, Vice-President

Presiding

Speakers

REV. THOMAS R. SLICER

AUGUSTUS THOMAS

J. RANKEN TOWSE

EDWARD J. WHEELER

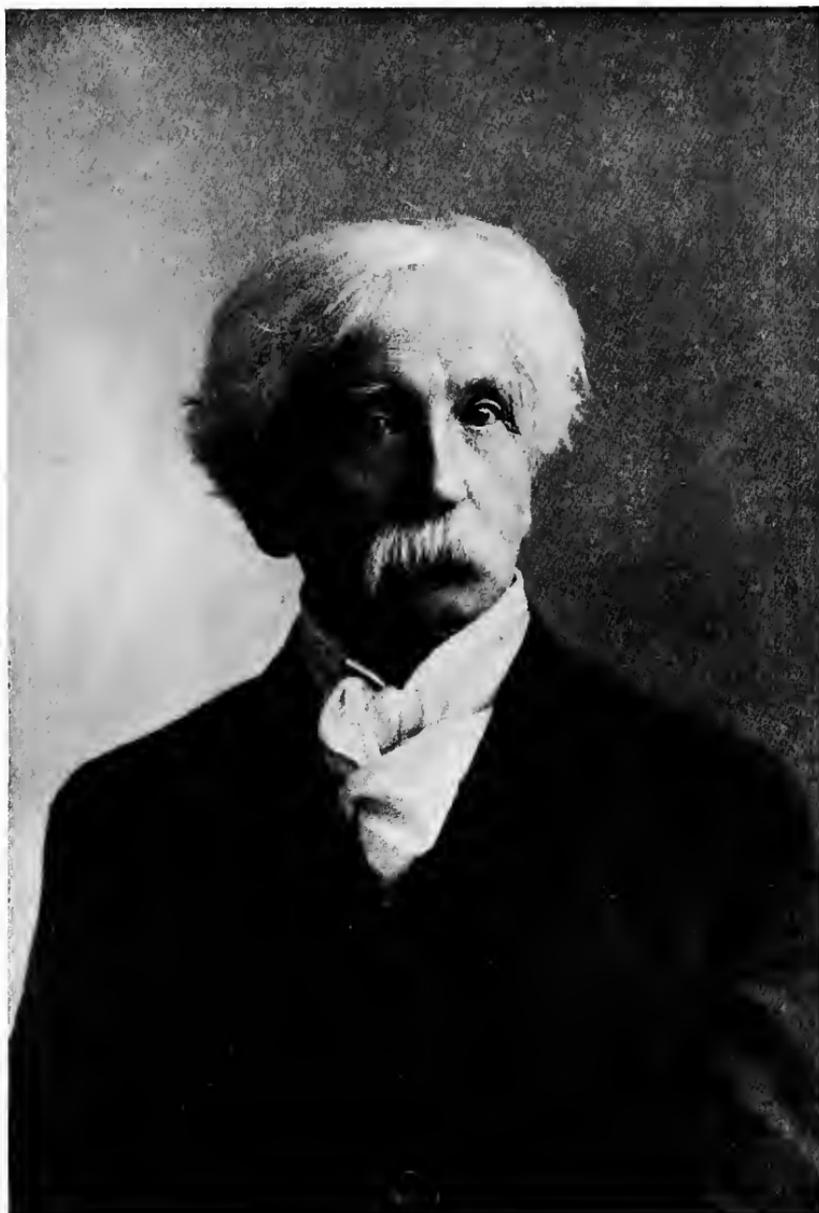


WILLIAM WINTER

IN

1859

From an oil painting



WILLIAM WINTER

IN

1909

From his latest Portrait

*“The dearest friend, the kindest man,
The best-condition’d and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honor more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.”*

—SHAKESPEARE.

TRIBUTE TO WINTER.

FROM "THE NEW YORK PRESS", DECEMBER 16, 1909.

"Culture and wealth, represented by a brilliant group of men and women, joined in the National Arts Club at dinner last night in a splendid tribute to the work and worth of William Winter, the foremost American poet and dramatic critic. The Church, the Bench and Bar, Belles Lettres, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Journalism, Medicine, Music, Politics and the Drama all did honor through their leading devotees in person and in spirit to the gifted writer who has given half a century of his life to the service of the Stage and of Letters, and whose labor is yet unfinished.

"A glance at the list of names appended to this account will be enough to show that the characterization of the band of kindred spirits that honored William Winter is not overdone. Absence or aloofness were conspicuous only in two cases. No theatre manager in the United States sent greetings or was at the board. 'The New York Tribune', which he served for forty-four years, did not share in the ceremonies, except in the fashion of a message from the *Proof Room* of that newspaper. To those familiar with the manuscript of the

famous writer this, nevertheless, spoke volumes of good will. But owing to the pre-eminence in their callings of those who did share in the celebration these omissions were scarcely noticed. . . .

"In the absence of Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, who could not be present because of illness, Mr. William T. Evans, Vice-President of the Club, presided. Mr. Evans, in introducing the first speaker, Rev. Thomas R. Slicer, briefly sketched the changes of the period between the day when the Theatre was often disguised as a 'Lecture Room' or a 'Museum', and the opening of the New Theatre, and paid his tribute to the guest as one who 'since he published his first book in 1854 has led us in the paths of purity and peace'".

Rev. Mr. Slicer, speaking on "The Moral Influence of the Drama", made a strong plea for independence in criticism, and a scathing arraignment of the hypocrisy which, morally speaking, indulges, in the privacy of the individual's mind, in all the vices, because of lack of honesty and courage enough literally to commit any of them—"the Pharisees who remain formally virtuous, not because they abhor vice, but because they fear detection." Mr. Slicer pointed out that it is a wide prevalence of such weak-kneed, mental vice which makes possible some of the worst things in civilization and social existence, and, particularly, many of the worst things which sometimes disgrace our Stage. "It is largely these despicable hypocrites,—often young men, and young women, too,—who don't dare frankly to gratify those animal propensities and appetites, which they will not extirpate, who sneak off to see, and listen to, and applaud, fictitious presentations of the moral iniquities they would like to practice, if they only had the pluck."

"But", continued the speaker, "if our Theatre and our Public are sometimes a source of mutual disgrace, it is not therefore just to condemn the Public as a whole, or the Theatre as an institution. If the Stage is sometimes very bad, also it is sometimes very good; and when we consider how good it can be, and sometimes is, we are forced to conclude that the very immorality of the Stage at its worst is the justification of the Stage at its best." And it is the man,—the writer,—who, knowing his subject, is not afraid of it, nor afraid of the Public itself, nor of the managers, nor of the loss of their advertising patronage, has the grit to denounce and oppose, in season and out of season, moral obliquity and artistic mediocrity; who has, also, the grit and consistency in frankness to be unafraid of saying the kind, appreciative and helpful word every time he has the opportunity; and who, whatever he says, says it beauti-

fully, whose voice counts with the community. Such a critic does great good: more good than the members of the clergy can do, to-day; for, to-day, the members of the clergy belong to a discredited class in the estimation of the average man: a class which exercises, if it does not plead, special privilege; a class which constitutes the most exclusive Labor Union in the world, and too often draws its salaries and its credentials from the same source!

“The Drama I hold to be a possible, tremendous, vital force for spiritual enlightenment and elevation. The people,—the great, simple, fundamentally honest people, struggling for living and improvement (as, in all ages, the people *are* struggling, and, little by little, succeeding, too!), need to be told what to see and what to keep away from, need to be guided, and to have the beauty pointed out and interpreted—for nothing does us all more good than beauty, and there is plenty of it, if we will only see. I told that to a young Russian woman, last night—one of the striking shirt-waist-makers. It made her angry. ‘How can you tell us there is beauty all around us,’ she said, ‘when you *see* what *we are going through*, because we want our rights—a chance to get decent wages and live decently? If there *is any* beauty, it’s all for the rich!’ That is one kind of person that needs an interpreter. And you don’t find that kind only among poor, half-educated, East Side girls, either. Actor, playwright, and manager, singly or collectively, have their plain limitations: the function and the opportunity of the critic are supreme. It is his duty and his privilege to foster, encourage, and help to develop the beautiful and beneficial, and to oppose and rebuke the vulgar, the vile, and the low. And it is in as far as he understands and fulfills those requirements that the dramatic critic is useful and respectable. The world does not need, and does not want, the so-called critic,—and there are many such,—that draws his sword and, flinging away the scabbard, assails everything and everybody, until, at last, society is relieved of a nuisance, when, as inevitably happens, he falls on his own blade. The Stage can be a cross-section of Hell—and it can be the open gate to a veritable Paradise of beauty and inspiration; and it is the critic that dares to condemn it, when it is the former, and to fight for it, when it is the latter, and who always makes what he says both interesting and instructive, that is worth while, and is useful to the People, and to the time in which he lives, and thus justifies his existence: And it is because, from the first, William Winter has been, as he still is, such a dramatic critic, that we are here to honor him to-night”.

Mr. Slicer was followed by Augustus Thomas, who, declining to speak to "The Art of Acting", addressed himself to "the subject of William Winter". Mr. Thomas said:

Mr. Winter, in his biography of the Jeffersons and speaking of the first Jefferson, establishes by method, not infrequent with the biographer, the time in which that actor lived by showing us his contemporaries. He writes that the first Jefferson saw the curtain rise before an audience that included Hogarth, Charles Churchill and Edmund Burke; he heard Goldsmith's childlike laugh and Doctor Johnson's gruff applause; he saw the sparkle of Horace Walpole's eyes and the quaint figure of Joshua Reynolds. He had flirted with Kitty Clive and supped with Fanny Abingdon.

To understand the character of William Winter himself we must know the environment he had when he took up his duties as a critic. At that time James H. Hackett was playing *Falstaff*—George Fox was in pantomime; "Billy" Florence and Charlotte Cushman were favorites; Proctor was playing "The Jibbenainosay"; Edwin Booth was in the heyday of his youth; Forrest was a favorite; Davenport and Wallack were playing "The Iron Chest"; John Sleeper Clarke was a prominent comedian; Mrs. D. P. Bowers was *Lucretia Borgia*; James Murdock was giving his classical performances, and John Owens was *Solon Shingle*. The country was taking its drama seriously and accepting the sentiments of patriotism as a theme.

Accepting this *entourage*, however, I think we must still look for the secret of William Winter's great efficiency as a critic in the fact that he is first a poet. To him words are *things*. In his mind a name is very closely associated with an object or with an action, and ideas, to most of us abstract, are, to him, more vivid. I think he must strongly sympathize with that feeling in Plato which gave to abstract ideas almost a definite geography just beyond this concave shell in which the stars are set. Things have, for him, not only a physical and an intellectual, but also a spiritual meaning.

*Not only to give light those urns
Of golden fire adorn the skies;
Nor for her vision only burns
The glory of a woman's eyes;
But in those flames and that fine glance
Th' authentic flags of heaven advance.*

No executor for the charms of Woman ever made a richer distribution of his legacy than William Winter has given in that verse of "Symbols". I think, perhaps, the most grateful thing that we could say to this man would be that we knew something of the cost at which his verses were produced. I am reminded of Rossetti's sonnet:

*By thine own tears thy song must tears beget
O Singer! Magic mirror thou hast none
Except thy manifest heart; and save thine own
'Anguish or ardour, else no amulet
Cisterned in Pride, verse is the feathery jet
Of soulless air flying fountains; nay, more dry
Than the Dead Sea for throats that thirst and sigh,
That song o'er which no singer's lids grew wet.*

More than any poet that I have read, William Winter has the power of surprising me to tears. I have tried in vain to analyze this ability. His lines flow on in amiable simplicity for a disarming moment, and then there is a stroke with the suddenness of an ambush, and I pay the involuntary tribute of my tears. I recall from the twenty-five or thirty stanzas of his poem "At Arlington" two quatrains:

*Pile thick the amaranth and the myrtle o'er them,—
For whom our laurell'd banners flash and flow,—
Roses that love, and pansies that deplore them,
And lilies, weeping from their hearts of snow.*

*Breathe low, ye murmuring pines, ye whispering grasses!
Ye dews of summer night fall softly here!
Be sorrow's sigh in every breeze that passes,
And every rain-drop be a mourner's tear!*

I know the mood in which those lines were written—I am sure of the hour. The house was still. Little Arthur and Louis, of whom he has written with such inhibiting pathos, were in the nursery—there was no longer the echo of their shouts and steps. As he sat in his study and the beauty of that trope burst upon him, I know that his own eyelids grew of a sudden wet—that he rose from his table and

paced the floor—that there was a humming in his ears and that the rectangular lines of the study zigzagged and leaned.

In addition to being a poet and a symbolist Mr. Winter possesses to an eminent degree the sympathy necessary to the successful critic,—the faculty of putting himself in the other fellow's place. This great sympathy and insight have made him the serious friend of the Theatre and the Actor. It is not telling tales out of school to say that, in the old Palmer days, when a new play was to be done, it was Mr. Winter's custom to ask beforehand, and to receive and carefully study, the manuscript. He came to the theatre expectant, understanding the viewpoint of the dramatist and knowing what the actors were endeavoring to convey. Somewhere in my reading I have met a tradition of a people that each year extinguished the fires upon the hearths and renewed them from a blaze at the altar of the priest. In a considerable travel over this country from shore to shore I have met the dramatic critics of many cities. It is unfortunately true that many of them are imbued with a vaudeville spirit that makes it admirable in their eyes to punctuate their criticisms with the exclamation "O, Mommer!" But I have always found among them some serious and earnest writer doing his best to maintain the standard of the Theatre, and that man has, almost invariably, inquired of me about William Winter. I mention this because Mr. Winter has written, in a little verse at the end of his book of poems, this:

*'Tis little, but 'tis the witness of one soul,—
How life has curbed it to the just control
Of Duty, teaching that as first of good,
With humble faith and cheerful fortitude;
And so, by other heirs of joy and pain,
My voice, if heard at all, will not be heard in vain.*

His friends have been somewhat saddened by the note of farewell that has crept into much of his recent writing and his frequent allusions to the comrades on the other shore. When his friend Augustin Daly died he wrote, meditating sadly on conditions that confronted us:

*On our eyes the Future rushes, blatant, acrid, fraught with strife,
Arrogant with tinsel'd youth, and rank with flux of sensual life,*

*Naught avails to stem the tumult,—vulgar aims and commonplace,
Greed, and vice, and dross, and folly, frenzied in the frantic race.*

*Naught avails, and we that linger, sick at heart and old and grim,
Can but pray to leave this rabble, loving Art and following him.*

It should be our privilege to tell him that there is, beside the ties of blood and comradeship, a spiritual kinship, and that, for him, these kin exist all over this broad land. He has counted his friends on this side too few, for I know that I express only a general wish when I say "God bless and speed William Winter".

John Ranken Towse followed Mr. Thomas, speaking on "The Personality of Mr. Winter". Mr. Towse said, in substance:

I have been asked to speak to you of the personality of William Winter, and I do not think that a more difficult task could have been proposed to me. It is a subject to which, under present conditions, I am not qualified, in anyway, to do justice. In fairness to myself, as well as to you, I must tell you that this is the very first time, during the forty years that I have lived and worked as a journalist in this country, that I have ever attempted to speak at, or even attended, a public dinner of any sort, and I feel, therefore, as if I were appearing before you under false pretences. But nevertheless I very willingly and gladly seize the opportunity to testify, as best I may, to the sincere affection and high esteem which, after many years of association, I have for the guest in whose honor we are here assembled. What more I can add to what has been already so well said about his personality by the preceding speakers, I do not know. It would be possible, no doubt, to quote many a pregnant thought or comment uttered by him during the many nights we have worked together in the Theatre, but it does not seem to me that this is the time or place in which such intimate confidences should be repeated. As a matter of fact his personality must be familiar to all who are acquainted with his life and work. It was said of Grover Cleveland that he was loved for the enemies he had made. May it not be said of William Winter that his character is denoted by the quality of his friends? In the course of his long career he has been the intimate friend of many of the most distinguished men in literature, politics, and art. As a youth he was

a chosen friend of Longfellow, a man of the purest character and most fastidious taste. In later days he was the intimate associate of George William Curtis, of Aldrich, of Bayard Taylor, and of many others of similar degree. He was a favorite in that brilliant Bohemian circle at Pfaffs' of which we have all heard. His relations with the brightest lights of the Stage,—with Booth, Jefferson, Irving, and many others,—are known to all. Each of those varied and gifted personalities must have found in him some quality which appealed strongly to his own nature. Of his work as a poet it is not within my province to speak. But as a critic of the Theatre his great abilities and influence have been steadily exerted in the support of all that is best and most beneficial in dramatic art. A man of quick and delicate perception, he has always been prompt to appreciate the beauty in the works of others, and equally prompt in extending to it the fullest and most generous recognition. I do not mean to imply that his judgment has always been infallible. Indeed, I hope that it has not been, for otherwise I myself have sometimes been most deplorably wrong. But he has ever been on the side of the highest ideals. His temporary retirement from active service is a heavy loss to the Theatre, to the Public and especially to the journal which owed so much to his pen. It is a very real grief to his fellow laborers. The Theatre will not be the same without him. I can only hope that a rumor that I have heard to-night may prove true, and that he will soon resume the pen which he has so long wielded with such brilliant skill and powerful effect.

Following Mr. Towse, Edward J. Wheeler, on behalf of the National Arts Club, spoke a few genial words, reminding his hearers that, though much had been said about "honoring Mr. Winter, it is not, after all, possible for us to honor him or to honor any one else. Each individual achieves honor and is entitled to respect and support according to the manner in which that individual's life is conducted—and so we do honor to ourselves in expressing appreciation of Mr. Winter's long and faithful endeavor and fine accomplishment in the service of Letters and the Dramatic Art". Mr. Wheeler went on to say, quoting an opinion of George Bernard Shaw's that "God is a person who makes experiments", that Mr. Winter is one of God's successful experiments in making a modern and American knight, with all the chivalry and romantic enthusiasm of the Knights of Arthur's Table Round, and one in whom, notwithstanding his kindness,

age could not dull or dim the fighting spirit. "For", said Mr. Wheeler, "if you think that he has grown old, just interview any member of the Theatrical Trust!"

SPEECH OF WILLIAM WINTER

In response to these appreciative tributes, Mr. Winter said:

Somewhere in the poetry of Shakespeare there is a commandment which, were it possible, I should, at this moment, be more than glad to obey; a commandment saying:

*If you were born to honor, show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it.*

To that exploit, however, I am not equal. I can only appeal to the Past; to fifty years of faithful labor in the Journalism of this great city,—all tending to the welfare of a beneficent Stage; and to more than fifty years of faithful labor as one of the humblest, but also one of the most devoted, disciples of the great Art of Letters. In all those years and in all that labor I am wishful to believe—and sometimes I *do* believe—and certainly this brilliant occasion might encourage me to believe—that I have not toiled entirely in vain; that, notwithstanding faults and errors of judgment, I have earned and deserved some slight share of the esteem and approval of the intellectual men and women of my time. And yet, when I call to mind the momentous themes, the serious public questions, and the many persons,—all of them, whether great or small, ambitious and sensitive and therefore important,—that I have been constrained to discuss, and when I remember what my ideal of duty has been, and how far I have, sometimes or often, fallen short of its absolute fulfilment, I can but think that I owe this testimonial, not to your judgment but to your generosity. Either way, I deeply appreciate the honor that you have conferred on me: I am grateful for your approbation: and I assure you that this delightful scene—your kind faces—the sympathetic words that have been so eloquently and generously spoken—and the gentle spirit that makes this occasion beautiful—will always be remembered.

I have appealed to the Past. It is, perhaps, a little perilous for me even to mention that word, though only in reference to my per-

sonal record; for I believe it has been freely said (and not always kindly), that I am always worshipping the Past and disparaging the Present, and am blind to all merit except that which is dead and gone. Nothing could be further from the truth. I do, however, *remember* the Past, and it seems to me that there is good reason why it should be remembered. The Past is the glory and grandeur of Greece and Rome. The Past, in Dramatic Literature, is Shakespeare, Massinger, Webster, Otway, Congreve, Goldsmith, and Sheridan. The Past, in acting, is Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Cooke, Kean, Mrs. Siddons, Booth, Macready, and Forrest. The Past, in Poetry, is Milton, Dryden, Pope, Burns, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. The Past, in Novel and Romance, is the great Cervantes, the manly, truthful Fielding, the incomparable Walter Scott, Cooper, of the lion heart, and Hawthorne, the weird magician of gloom. I mention only a few of the great representative names: You, who know the storied chronicle, will readily supply the rest: and those names, which are symbols, I mention only to declare that just as we should travel in foreign lands to observe and absorb the beauty to be reproduced and perpetuated at home, so we should remember and study the Past, in order, by practical application of its lessons of grandeur and grace, to adorn and consecrate the Present.

Time past was time present once, and, casting a Parthian glance across the wide expanse of half-a-century, I seem to perceive that I celebrated, with ardent enthusiasm, and not without practical effect,—when they were comparatively unknown, or not known at all,—many actors, who subsequently rose to eminence and were admired by everybody. It is no part of my wish to be glorified, and it is no part of my purpose to assume any credit, for having tried to do my duty toward those persons: but, considering that I possess several thousand letters from actors and authors (the earliest of them dated more than fifty-five years ago—the latest dated within this week), almost every one of which is a letter of thanks for words of encouragement and cheer, spoken at the right time, and spoken from the heart, I cannot think myself amenable to the reproach of having neglected the merits of any To-day, in devotion, blind or otherwise, to the merits of any Yesterday. It is true that I see no merit, or propriety, or fitness, or common sense, in striving to use the Theatre as a vehicle for the discussion of vile subjects and the analysis of vice and disease—the only effect of which is, and must ever be, to drench the auditor's

mind with an effluvia of uncleanly thought, and to make him gloomy and cynical. I am not edified to learn that *Hamlet's* melancholy was due to his mother's pre-natal chronic indigestion, or that *Macbeth's* sanguinary conduct was attributable to his grandfather's incipient paresis. But, on the other hand, throughout the whole long period of my service, no really fine play has been produced on our stage that has not been extolled by me, to the fullest extent of my opportunity. It is "a far cry" to Wallack's old theatre, at Broome Street, and to Laura Keene's, at Bleecker. It is "a far cry" to Dion Boucicault and the first night of "Jessie Brown", and, later, of "Arrah-na-Pogue": but it was my privilege to greet and celebrate that expert dramatist and both those fine dramas, and it is my happiness to have lived long enough, in the active pursuit of my calling, to greet and honor a dramatist possessing such originality of mind as Dion Boucicault never exhibited: a dramatist who blends the elemental power and rugged sincerity and fidelity of Holcroft with the humanity, simplicity, sweetness and grace of Goldsmith; a dramatist who represents all that is best in the American Theatre of the Present,—the author of the beautiful idyl of "Alabama" and the noble, intellectual, exquisite dramatic fabric of "The Witching Hour". Dion Boucicault was the dramatist of Yesterday: the dramatist of To-day I need not name. And, as I recognized and celebrated both those dramatists, and neglected nothing that came under my observation in the interim, I think I may say that I have arched the span.

With reference to the question of wisdom in the conduct of my literary life and the fulfilment of my duty it would not become me to speak. No doubt I have made mistakes: but—I have done what I thought was right. Eighteen years ago, in a discourse delivered at Palmer's Theatre (now Wallack's, as it formerly had been), I portrayed theatrical and social conditions then existent, and aroused resentment by so doing. The conditions then were bad. The conditions now are worse—socially so much worse that, of late, the Federal Government has intervened, in so far as it could do so, for the correction of abuses. Upon this subject, however, I shall not dwell. I would only say that a solemn responsibility rests on the newspaper press, not in one city only, but in all cities throughout our country, as to its treatment of the Theatre: for the newspaper press to a great extent makes and moulds public opinion, and public opinion is the only power that can prevent the misuse of the Theatre to deaden the

sensibilities and blunt the moral perceptions of the young. And I would add that the writers who palliate theatrical offences by quoting the great authority of Shakespeare,—that the purpose of playing is to hold the mirror up to Nature,—might advantageously observe his warning, which occurs in the same paragraph, that the *modesty of Nature* should not be over-stepped—a warning which applies as directly to the choice of subject as to the manner of impersonation or the method of elocution.

Your tribute to me is very generous, and it is deeply appreciated, but I am aware of a deeper significance in this occasion than that of personal compliment. Your society is representative of *all* the Arts, and your purpose, now, as always, is to declare and illustrate your devotion to the cause that you represent. It only remains for me to express my deep sympathy with your purpose. The world, in general, esteems obvious Utility more than Beauty, and what it calls the practical worker more than the Artist,—not yet having learned the great truth that the prosperity and happiness of the human race are dependent on the ministry of beauty. I do not know of any higher, more important, more influential vocation than that of the Artist. Statesman, scholar, lawyer, philosopher, soldier—they all learn from him the lessons which they apply in their several duties. The name of the Artist is manifold, in various countries and in various climes. It is Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Raphael, Goethe, Beethoven, Jefferson, Booth, Irving, Daly, Mansfield, Sarah Siddons, Adelaide Neilson, Mary Anderson, Ada Rehan,—and the influence of the Artist flows into our lives, in every noble thought, in every symmetrical form, and in every lovely sight and sound :

*As sunbeams stream through liberal space,
And nothing jostle nor displace,
So waved the pine-tree through my thought,
And fanned the dreams it had not brought.*

So wrote that wise mystic, Emerson, who may have lacked a system of philosophy, but who possessed a golden mine of inspiring ideas, and who has left it to enrich the world forever.

The artist may never know of the good that he has done, in the fidelity of his service. In the ministry of art it is the exceeding great privilege of certain men and women, much favored of Fate, that they

can diffuse a radiant glamour of ideal charm. Like a delicate perfume that suddenly comes upon you, from a withered rose, or a bit of ribbon, or a tress of hair, long hallowed and long preserved; like a faint, far-off strain of music that floats upon a breeze of summer night across a moonlit sea, they touch the spirit with a sense of the holiness, the mystery, and the pathos of our existence, and we are lifted, and hallowed, and strengthened; and all that is bitter in our experience and harsh and hard in our surroundings is soothed and sweetened. They teach us hope and belief, instead of doubt and despondency, and thus, in a world of trial and sorrow, giving us the patience of mind and the nobility of spirit which, more than anything else, we need, they

*Shed a something of celestial light
'Round the familiar face of every day.*

Let us never doubt nor falter in the service of the Arts. For my part, I have not laid down my pen. It will not be dropped until I drop with it, and what it has been in the past it will be in the future. What that future will bring I cannot divine. It may be all conflict and storm. If so, it will not find me unprepared. It may be only the silence of the fireside and "unregarded age, in corners thrown". That also can be endured: for I shall have my memories; and one of the brightest and sweetest of them all will be the memory of your generous kindness and this delightful night.

A specially agreeable and interesting feature of this memorable occasion was the receipt of congratulatory messages, from many parts of the country, sent by sympathetic admirers whom circumstances prevented from being "in person present".

From Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, D. D.

New York, December 15, 1909.

I am very sorry not to be at the National Arts Club to-night to express my personal appreciation of Mr. Winter and of the services which he has rendered to the community.

We must either go with the Cavalier to see everything which Commercialism puts on the stage to attract us; or refuse with the Puritan to see anything on the stage; or we must have critics

like Mr. Winter on whose discriminating and courageous criticisms we must depend for our ability to choose between the good and the bad in the Theatre. Believing as I do that the Theatre has a real and useful part to play in society, I have looked forward to this evening as affording an occasion for expressing my personal obligation to one of the foremost dramatic critics of the times.

Yours sincerely,

LYMAN ABBOTT.

From Viola Allen.

Hartford, Conn., December 15.

Deeply regret my inability to be personally present, but heartily join in the tribute of appreciation and honor to the genius of William Winter, to whom the Stage owes a great debt for the courage and dignity with which he has always upheld its highest standards.

VIOLA ALLEN (DURVEA).

From Margaret Anglin.

New York City, December 15.

Please convey my earnest felicitations to your honored guest of this evening, to whom the Stage and actors of this country owe a deep debt of gratitude for his never failing loyalty, encouragement, and friendship.

MARGARET ANGLIN.

From James O'Donnell Bennett.

Chicago, December 15.

Love and honor to the "Old Chief" on this genial occasion.

JAMES O'DONNELL BENNETT.

From R. R. Bowker.

New York, December 15.

I regret to be prevented from attending the dinner this evening to William Winter, for every honor that can be paid to him

at this time, by his friends and the community, should be paid to him, in honor of the stand he has taken at such self-sacrifice for the sake of righteousness in Art and in the Press. Mr. Winter has always deserved the highest esteem from those interested in the American Stage and American Drama. . . . Praise to him that he, most fit of all to do so, has led in the protest against the demoralization of the American Stage.

R. R. BOWKER.

From Harriet Lewis Bradley.

Portland, Me., December 15.

Greetings and congratulations to William Winter, from Portland and his sincere admirer.

HARRIET LEWIS BRADLEY.

From George Broadhurst.

Los Angeles, California, December 6.

I regret extremely that my absence from New York City will prevent my being present at the dinner to be given in honor of William Winter. Were I within any reasonable distance of New York, I would willingly make the journey in order to pay tribute to the man whose steadfastness and sincerity did so much for the American Drama.

GEORGE BROADHURST.

From John Burroughs.

West Park, New York, November 30.

It will not be possible for me to accept your kind invitation to attend the dinner to be given in honor of William Winter. But I am glad such a dinner is to be given him. The treatment of Mr. Winter by "The New York Tribune" was an insult to Literature and an outrage upon honest Journalism.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

From John M. Carrère.

Washington, D. C., December 15.

I regret extremely that I am unable to attend the dinner which you are giving to-night to do honor to my friend William

Winter. May I express through you my deep regard and affection for Mr. Winter?

JOHN M. CARRERE.

From Hon. Joseph H. Choate.

New York, November 27.

I greatly appreciate the honor of being asked by the National Arts Club to attend the Testimonial Dinner to William Winter on December 15—a compliment most richly deserved by Mr. Winter for his long and valuable services. But I am sorry to say that I am under engagement to be out of town at that time, and must, therefore, with great regret, decline your kind invitation. Most truly yours,

JOSEPH H. CHOATE.

From Hart Conway.

Chicago, December 15.

Greeting to the kind critic in grateful remembrance of generous encouragement when the subscriber was a nervous young actor.

HART CONWAY.

From William H. Crane.

Butte, Montana, December 15.

Regret inability to be with you to-night. To my friend and your honored guest, William Winter, who has always stood for what is best in dramatic art, affectionate greetings, with best wishes for all happiness and comfort and long deferred final curtain.

WILLIAM H. CRANE.

From "D. K. E."

Upsilon Chapter Delta Kappa Epsilon, Providence, Rhode Island, congratulates you.

From "D. K. E." Association.

Providence, Rhode Island, December 15.

The Delta Kappa Epsilon Association of Rhode Island, appreciating your services to the causes of Art and Letters . . . extends to you its congratulations.

A. TINGLEY WALL. President.

From John Drew.

Presbyterian Hospital, New York, December 15.

My Dear Willie: Though I think of you as anything but "the sere and yellow", yet you have all that should accompany age—love, obedience, troops of friends. Though enforcedly absent, pray accept the homage and love of your affectionate friend.

JOHN DREW.

From George Cary Eggleston.

New York, December 8.

With my compliments to the Governors of the National Arts Club, I regret that an extremely precarious condition of health compels me to deny myself the honor and pleasure of joining in the complimentary dinner to William Winter to be given on December fifteenth.

May I add that nobody esteems Mr. Winter's genius and achievements more highly than I do, and that nothing less controlling than my health conditions could have induced me to deny myself the pleasure of being present on the occasion in question?

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON.

From Evanston Dramatic Club.

Evanston, Ill.

The four hundred members of the Evanston Dramatic Club send congratulations and greetings to Mr. Winter, most honored historian and critic of the American Stage.

THE DIRECTORATE.

From William H. P. Faunce.

Providence, R. I., December 15.

I join host of friends glad to honor William Winter. An honorary graduate of Brown University he has reflected honor on all his colleagues and made the educator's task easier throughout the land.

WILLIAM H. P. FAUNCE, President Brown University.

From William Faversham.

Baltimore, Maryland, December 15.

May I offer through you, at the dinner to-night, my congratulations and sincerest appreciation to William Winter and his work in connection with our profession?

WILLIAM FAVERSHAM.

From George Washington University.

Washington, D. C., December 15, 1909.

The President and Faculty of George Washington University congratulate William Winter on his long and distinguished services to Dramatic Art and to Letters.

CHARLES W. NEEDHAM, President.

From George Kennan.

Baddeck, C. B., Nova Scotia, December 13.

I sincerely regret that on account of my great distance from New York it will not be possible for me to attend the dinner to be given to William Winter, but I shall think of Mr. Winter at the time and send him, by spiritual wireless, my warmest esteem and my best wishes.

GEORGE KENNAN.

From Bryan L. Kennelly.

New York, December 15, 1909.

As one among thousands of grateful admirers of the fine genius and splendid character of William Winter, I ask to be

allowed to congratulate the National Arts Club in making a formal recognition of Mr. Winter's important services. . . . I know I only express the wish of every lover of fair play and every admirer of fine writing, when I say "God bless William Winter, and spare him for many years more of useful work, and more power to his pen!

BRYAN L. KENNELLY.

From Harriet McEwen Kimball.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, December 15.

Admiration for the Author, honor for the Man, and affectionate regard for the Friend of more than fifty years mingle in the salutation that I send to William Winter on this felicitous occasion.

HARRIET MCEWEN KIMBALL.

From Herman H. Kohlsaas.

Chicago, December 14.

Nothing would please me more than to be present on an occasion to honor William Winter, a man I love, but I am unable to be in New York on the fifteenth, as I am booked for a family wedding. I sincerely hope the dinner will be a success. It should be, as William Winter, I believe, is America's greatest writer to-day. Thanking you for inviting me and regretting my inability to accept, I am,

Yours most sincerely,

H. H. KOHLSAAT.

From Mary King Longfellow.

Portland, Maine, December 15.

To William Winter, my congratulations.

MARY KING LONGFELLOW.

From James M. Ludlow.

Authors Club, New York.

I regret exceedingly that absence from this part of the country will prevent my being among those who will honor themselves by honoring you on December 15. . . .

JAMES M. LUDLOW.

From St. Clair McKelway.

Brooklyn, New York, December 12.

I wish I could join with the other friends of William Winter in the dinner in his honor. I am, however, required by law to be in Albany at the time, to preside at a meeting of the State Board of Regents. My own acquaintance with Mr. Winter and my admiration for his knowledge, ability, power and grace as a public writer make me keenly regret the fact that I must be absent from the tribute of his friends and the National Arts Club to be rendered to him.

ST. CLAIR MCKELWAY.

From Colonel William L. Marshall.

Washington, D. C., December 15.

Regret that we will no longer be instructed by William Winter's just, able, and unbiased criticisms of Drama and Art.

WILLIAM L. MARSHALL,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

From Professor Partington.

National Park Seminary, Forest Glen,

Maryland, December 15.

More is thy due than more than all can pay.

FREDERICK E. PARTINGTON.

From Tyrone Power.

Macon, Georgia, December 15.

May I tender a leaf to add to the circlet with which you crown your noble guest to-night? Any appreciation but partly expresses what Society and the Stage owe to William Winter. He has always battled for the things that are clean and upright, and his influence—a vital one—has been powerful for good. Not alone has he brought credit upon the profession he honors, but to that art he so clearly understands and dearly loves—the actor's art. The Actor, by his praise, has been inspired; by his censure, guided. His long, self-sacrificing life—the employment of his

brilliant gifts in the service of the Theatre, will never be forgotten. Linked with all that is great and noble is the honored name of William Winter. Long life to him!

TYRONE POWER.

From "The Puddingstine Club".

Boston, Mass., December 15.

The members of the Puddingstine Club, of Boston—Judges, Editors, Poets, Teachers—offer heartiest congratulations to William Winter.

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, Jr., For the Club.

From Senator Root, of New York.

United States Senate,
Washington, D. C., December 11.

I regret very much that my absence at Washington in attendance upon the session of Congress will make it impossible for me to take part in the dinner to William Winter. I should very much like to do so, for I have a very high regard and admiration for Mr. Winter. I am grateful to him for many pleasant moments passed in reading his dramatic criticisms during many years, and I am his debtor for the influence of the delightful spirit which he has exhibited and helped to create among his readers in considering plays and playwrights and players. I should like to do him honor.

ELIHU ROOT.

From Francis M. Stanwood.

Boston, December 15.

There would seem to be an "eternal fitness" in the National Arts Club compliment to William Winter. His fifty years of service in the field of New York Journalism has been marked by many brilliant achievements, and,—what is very unusual in that vocation,—the sunset work seems to me to have eclipsed the earlier efforts: he has been a strong force for good, not only in the Press but in the broad field of American Letters.

FRANCIS M. STANWOOD.

From Laura Stedman, (With a cluster of roses).

*"Everything my heart would say,
Valiant roses shall declare."*

In loving memory of his "friend for nearly fifty years", Edmund Clarence Stedman, to William Winter, who, in 1860, "wrote a serious review of my very first volume,—the very first review which the little book received",—and, in 1897, "the most generous letter I ever received from a brother poet."—E. C. S.

Laura Stedman.

From George H. Story.

Central Park West, December 10.

I much regret that conditions are such that I am obliged to decline, with thanks, your invitation to be present at the dinner to William Winter, as I have a warm place in my heart for the one who, for many years, has been my guiding star in dramatic criticism, and also my admiration and pride as a poet and litterateur. With much esteem,

Geo. H. Story.

From Hon. Joseph W. Symonds.

Portland, Maine, December 15.

I cannot be present, as I hoped to be, at the William Winter dinner to-night, but the voice of New England will acclaim him here as the first of living American poets, and a prose writer of ideal charm.

Joseph W. Symonds.

From Stephen Henry Thayer.

The Authors Club,

New York, November 29.

It is with regret that I find I cannot attend the complimentary dinner to William Winter. I hope and trust that his retirement

from his specific post will not deprive the public of his eminent services in behalf of the Drama.

STEPHEN HENRY THAYER.

From Edward A. Thurston.

Fall River, Mass., December 15.

To the best friend of all who have sought to maintain the highest standard in dramatic criticism: To the "tall pine" who has not bent to every breeze . . . wishing him many more years of labor in the good cause.

EDWARD A. THURSTON.

From "The Tribune" Proof Room.

To Dr. Lyman Abbott, Presiding at the William Winter Dinner.

The Staff of the *Proof Room* of "The New York Tribune" desires, through you, to extend to William Winter sincere congratulations and very best wishes.

From Dr. van Dyke.

Avalon, Princeton, New Jersey.

I sincerely regret that a previous engagement will prevent me from accepting the invitation of the National Arts Club to the Testimonial Dinner to be given to William Winter. . . . I should have been glad to join in tribute of honor to such a good critic, a fine writer, and an upright man.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

From David Warfield.

El Paso, Texas, December 15.

I wish to add my appreciation and wishes for the health of, and long life to, William Winter, Poet and Critic.

DAVID WARFIELD.

From Williams College.

Williamstown, Mass., December 15.

We send you heartiest congratulations on this delightful occasion.

M. N. WETMORE, Williams College.

From President Wilson of Princeton.

Princeton University, December 13.

I wish, most sincerely, that I were free for the evening of December 15th, that I might be one of the subscribers to the complimentary dinner to be given to William Winter on that evening, but I am sorry to say that I am bound by an engagement in Washington City. It would be particularly agreeable to me if I could join in paying a tribute to Mr. Winter's distinguished services as a dramatic critic.

WOODROW WILSON.

MESSAGES.

Abbott, Rev. Lyman, D. D., clergyman, editor, author, educator.
Allen, Viola, actress.
Anglin, Margaret, actress.
Bennett, James O'Donnell, journalist, dramatic editor, critic.
Bradley, Harriet Lewis, author.
Bowker, R. R., publisher, editor, author.
Broadhurst, George, dramatist.
Burroughs, John, author and naturalist.
Carrère, John M., architect.
Choate, Joseph H., jurist, statesman.
Conway, Hart, actor, stage-manager, instructor.
Crane, William H., actor.
D. K. E. Association.
D. K. E. Fraternity.
Drew, John, actor.
Eggleston, George Cary, journalist and author.
Evanston Dramatic Society.
Faunce, William H. P., lecturer, author, and educator.
Faversham, William, actor.
George Washington University.

Kennan, George, lecturer, journalist, engineer, author.
Kennelly, Bryan L., broker.
Kimball, Harriet McEwen, poet.
Kohlsaat, Herman H., journalist.
Longfellow, Mary, artist.
Ludlow, James M., clergyman, author.
McKelway, St. Clair, journalist and educator.
Marshall, Col. William L., engineer, explorer, educator.
Partington, Frederick E., lecturer and educator.
Power, Frederick Tyrone, actor.
Puddingstine Club, The.
Root, Elihu, statesman.
Stanwood, Francis M., journalist.
Stedman, Laura, author.
Story, George H., artist.
Symonds, Hon. Joseph W., jurist.
Thayer, Stephen Henry, author.
Thurston, Edward A., educator.
Tribune Proof Room.
Van Dyke, Rev. Henry, D. D., author, educator, poet.
Warfield, David, actor.
Wetmore, M. N., educator.
Wilson, Woodrow, lawyer, historian, and educator.

The courtesy of the several speakers in furnishing to the National Arts Club the contents of the speeches, as herein printed, is appreciated, and gratefully acknowledged.

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