

JOHN GODFREY SAXE.

AM EMACIATED FORM, TOTTERING STEPS AND SHRUNKEN CHEEK.

The Old Poet a Mere Shadow of His Former Self—He Seldom Goes Beyond the Confines of His Rooms—Reads but Little.

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 70 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.

The old poet is now much changed in form and feature, being merely a shadow of his former self. During the first three years of his residence in Albany he spent some hours each pleasant day in strolling about the beautiful park near by, or tranquilly sitting there in a shady arbor, watching the children at their play. But during the past two years no public eye has seen him, for in that long interval he has of his own choice been carefully secluded in his room. He neither rides nor walks abroad. The apartment in which he spends his melancholy days consists of a suite of three rooms, located in the rear end of the house, on the third floor, and overlooking the noble Hudson to the south.

WATCHING THE RIVER CRAFT.

Here by the window he whiles away much of his time in watching the busy river craft and in contemplating the picturesque landscape. Of street attire he no longer has a need; in dressing gown and slippers he paces the floor with slow and trembling steps, seldom or never going beyond the confines of his own rooms. He prefers to have perfect quiet about him, and oftentimes dislikes to be disturbed even by a member of his own family.

It is a long time since he last consented to receive a stranger, or even a friend, or an acquaintance of former days.

"I cannot bear," he said, with pathos, "to be forcibly reminded of what I once was—of the days of my hope and strength, when the world had charms that now are dead to me; before sickness had deprived me of my health and death had robbed me of my loved ones."

In 1881, on his first coming to Albany, the eminent physicians whom his family consulted in his behalf predicted that he would not survive two years longer.

He goes to bed between the hours of 9 and 10 o'clock in the evening, and rises at about 6:30 in the morning. He complains much of insomnia, and during the day is often very restless, suffering from neuralgia in the head. When not sitting in an easy chair or moving leisurely about his room, he reclines upon a couch. He eats often but very sparingly, and partakes of the plainest of food, indigestion being one of his principal bodily ills. Of his valet, a middle-aged colored man (who by reason of prior service with eminent people at Washington and other places is more than ordinarily intelligent and entertaining), the poet is very fond, chatting with him now and again with a more than usual degree of interest and animation.

READS COMPARATIVELY LITTLE.

Until quite recently he devoted a good share of his time to a perusal of the standard poets and the leading magazines, those of the latter to whose pages he was once a valued contributor being still sent him regularly and unsolicited by the publishers thereof, in kindly remembrance of past services. For some years he has not read the daily papers, and evinces little or no interest in current events.

"It pains me," he said, "to meet with the details of so much crime and so many casualties."

Indeed, he reads comparatively little of any kind now—occasionally a page or two, may be, of one of his favorite prose authors, that mainly consist of Hawthorne, Dickens and Thackeray, judiciously selecting therefrom matter of cheerful tone and subject. When undisturbed he is much given to musing; but at times will converse willingly and fluently, displaying thereby a power of memory that, in view of his feeble physical condition, is quite unlooked for, recently surprising his son not a little by reciting verbatim one of Charles Lamb's longest essays.

His thoughts often revert to his irreparable loss of wife and children, speaking of each tenderly and regretfully, and manifesting a keen interest in the proper care of their graves—ever dwelling on the domestic afflictions which have broken his heart, and envel-

and unsolicited by the publishers thereof, in kindly remembrance of past services. For some years he has not read the daily papers, and evinces little or no interest in current events.

"It pains me," he said, "to meet with the details of so much crime and so many casualties."

Indeed, he reads comparatively little of any kind now—occasionally a page or two, may be, of one of his favorite prose authors, that mainly consist of Hawthorne, Dickens and Thackeray, judiciously selecting therefrom matter of cheerful tone and subject. When undisturbed he is much given to musing; but at times will converse willingly and fluently, displaying thereby a power of memory that, in view of his feeble physical condition, is quite unlooked for, recently surprising his son not a little by reciting verbatim one of Charles Lamb's longest essays.

His thoughts often revert to his irreparable loss of wife and children speaking of each tenderly and regretfully, and manifesting a keen interest in the proper care of their graves—ever dwelling on the domestic afflictions which have broken his heart, and enveloped his once brilliant intellect in a brooding and incurable melancholy.—*Brooklyn Magazine*.

Man's Hair Cut with Fire.

There were men and women, small boys and girls of all ages, from 7 up to 43 years, gazing down into the basement barber shop, whose front window was just below. There a middle-aged man, with raven black hair and a pair of lustrous eyes, sat, all gowned and silent, in the barber's chair. But what was the barber doing with his little torch, lighted and flaming, passing it to and fro over the customer's head? That was what puzzled the crowd. That was the thing that attracted a hundred pairs of wondering eyes and caused passers-by to stop and crane their necks up over the shoulders of those who had reached the scene just before them. A street blockade, or possibly a riot, might have resulted if the barber had not soon finished his mysterious task. The flame on the end of the little torch was extinguished, the customer's hair properly oiled and combed, and his check handed to him as he rose from the chair with that furtive, admiring glance into the mirror which every man indulges upon all similar occasions.

"Cutting the gentleman's hair with fire?" exclaimed the barber, as he saw a reporter before him. "Oh, no, that is not what I was doing. I was giving him an anti-bald-headed singe. When a man's hair begins to come out we take a little wax taper, light one end of it and pass the flame over the ends of the hair, as it is held away from the scalp with the comb. By thus singeing the ends of the hairs it is supposed falling out may be prevented, though I don't know how much truth there is in it. Mebbe it don't do any good at all, but the barbers can stand it if the customers can. It takes a good half dollar to get a singe like that. New process? Oh, no; It's pretty near as old as the barber business."—*Chicago Herald*.

A Race Around the World.

The Rev. James L. Hill, of Lynn, sent from that city in the same mail two postal cards so stamped as to go in opposite directions on a race around the world. One was sent via San Francisco to Japan and back by Brindisi and Liverpool, and the other crossed first to England and so around home by Japan and San Francisco. Both travelers returned from their long journey well worn and well stamped. As the postoffice authorities have prohibited the old time method of getting these curiosities it was necessary to arrange to have the cards restamped and redirected by a friend interested in the project at Kobe, Japan. The card that went around the earth from west to east made the circuit eight days quicker than the other and was eighty-five days on the way. If the authorities had bought elephants and hired special trains, like the hero of Jules Verne's story, the postal card might have saved five days and gone "around the world in eighty days."—*Boston Herald*.

Evangelist Moody on the Interview.

SAn interview? Do you know I shrink from them? It looks as if I were magnifying my own importance when I come out and tell what I am going to do and exploit my own acts. The reporter is not to blame, I know; it is the inevitable result of the process of interviewing. Oh, I shrink from interviews as I do from the nightmare.—*New York Mail and Express*.