

Biology of Prescott, by Bancroft.
At a meeting of the Historical Society in New York on Tuesday evening, Horatio (later Jones) Bancroft, read the paper on the evening of Bancroft's kinship and his discoveries in biological science.

President King, of Columbia College, then announced the death of Wm H Prescott, when George Bancroft, Esq and Rev Dr De Witt made eloquent addresses. In reference to Prescott's work, Mr Bancroft said:

Each of Prescott's works has a charm of its own, but the special attraction that belongs to the earliest but thoroughly matured fruit of his youthful aspirations. In the "Conquest of Mexico," a subtle, serene perceptivity, yet all pervading warmth underlies the style of the whole work, running through every sentence from the first to the last. The plastic power of the author in moulding words, inconspicuous and forbidding materials to shape and unity and life, appears most conspicuous in the "Conquest of Peru." In his last work we discern in the highest degree the hand of the master. Years seemed only to renew the freshness of his talent; enhance the brilliancy of his coloring, and confirm the vigor of his grasp. I remember hearing Bryant, in his eulogy on Bancroft's "Conquest of Peru," with words of admiration, the undimmed lustre of an inspiration which he displayed in one of his works written when he was more than fifty years old. Prescott's last volume was finished after he was sixty, and it is a perfect model of skill in narration. Every statement is the result of most elaborate research, and yet it passes from court to country, from valley to mountain ranges, from Spain to the Levant, and Corsica, from Barbary, his movements are as easy and graceful as those of the humming bird, as it roves after honey among the flowers of summer, and his pictures of battles are as vivid as though the sun had taken them in its brightest colors, at the very moment they were raging.

In the writings of Prescott his original character is never thrust into the attention of his readers, but it should ever be the case in a true work of art, as appears only in glimpses, or as an abstraction from the whole. Yet his personality is the source of the charm of his style, and who knew him will say that he himself was greater and better than his writing. While his histories prove to have felt that he owed his time to the service of mankind, everything about him marked him out to be the most beloved of his companions, and the life, and joy, and pride of society.

His personal appearance itself was singularly pleasing, and won for him wherever in advance a welcome and favor. His countenance had something that brought to mind "the beautiful diadem" that hovers on top of the Apollo. But, while he was high spirited, he was tender, and gentle, and his voice was like music, and one could never hear enough of it. His cheerfulness reached and animated all about him. He could indulge in playfulness, and could also speak earnestly and profoundly, but he knew not how to be ungracious and pedantic. In truth, the charms of his conversation were unequalled, he was so conversant with the world, with the case of one who is familiar with the world.

In his friendships he was most faithful; true to them always; true to the last; never allowing his confidence to be so much as ruffled by the noisy clamors of calumny, or by rivalry, or by differences of opinion. In the management of his affairs he was liberal and generous, and his expenditures liberal to all about him, and to those in want, ever largely generous, having an open hand, but doing good without ostentation. His affections rested early and happily on the congenial object of his choice, and the rosy light of his youth, never dimmed by a cloud, went with him all his way through life.

Brothers of the Historical Society, I am among you those who have been a friend; you the untroubled world in honoring his memory, you mingle our tears with those of his family. Standing, as it were, by his grave, we cannot recall anything in his manner, his character, his endowments, or his conduct, that we could wish changed. If he had faults, his associates loved him too well to find them out. We, some of us, his biographers, are men that could wish to blot out, or utter a word of which the echo would be suppressed. Those of us who are growing old, must bear in mind that he has gone but a little before us; his spirit speaks to you, young man, charging you to emulate him in the culture of intelligence, and the practice of virtue.

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