

1936

# John Godfrey Saxe: his place among American humorists

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

JOHN GODFREY SAXE:  
HIS PLACE AMONG AMERICAN HUMORISTS

by

Marian Ruth Essery  
(A.B., Boston University, 1922)

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts.

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JOHN GODFREY SAXE:

HIS PLACE AMONG AMERICAN HUMORISTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The French say that forty lines may suffice to bestow literary immortality on a writer; and so it seems imperative to bring to the attention of the American public the name of John Godfrey Saxe, the once pre-eminently popular Vermont poet, humorist, lawyer, State's attorney and twice candidate for Governor of his native state, editor, and lyceum lecturer. It is the purpose of this thesis to call attention to the name of John Godfrey Saxe, the genial New England poet now so completely forgotten; and to estimate his place in American letters. This thesis also has as its purpose to show why this once esteemed poet has been so entirely eclipsed by later humorists, and to suggest that he belongs in the evolutionary development of columnist writers in America. Care will be given to recognize the function of the newspaper as a medium for literature. Another definite purpose of this thesis is to write a more composite biography of Saxe's life, than has

JOHN GODFREY SAXE

HIS FIRST BOOK AMERICAN POETRY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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heretofore been done, for the material for this sketch has been gathered from a number of various sources. In collecting data for this work, the writer has attempted to correct a number of biographical errors. The main purpose of this thesis, however, is an analysis of Saxe's humor, with some classification and criticism of his comedy devices, with reference to the conditions, political, social, and local, that determined them and made his range. A secondary purpose of this thesis is to compile a revised, corrected, and more complete bibliography of John Godfrey Saxe than has previously existed.

The difficulties encountered in gathering material for this thesis have been many, as may be imagined when it is stated that the card catalog of the University of Kentucky library did not contain a single work by or about this author. However, an encouraging letter from Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who wrote, "It's good news to know that an A. M. thesis is to be written on John Godfrey Saxe, who is still held in high and loyal esteem in Vermont," gave the writer a new interest in following up the many kind suggestions which Mrs. Fisher made. A similar letter came from Miss Ella Titus, of the Harvard Library, who wrote, "You must write his biography. I don't find that anyone has

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done it yet. Harvard hasn't a sign of a book about him, and there isn't one mentioned in the cyclopedia article that I read, nor in the Books of Print, 1928 of the American Catalogue." Helpful and inspiring letters came from many prominent professors of English, and librarians all over the state of Vermont. Perhaps one of the most fruitful bits of counsel of this entire research came from Mr. Harold Rugg, assistant librarian at Dartmouth College, who most graciously loaned a rare and costly biography of Saxe by Russell W. Taft. In fact this manuscript is one of the eight copies now extant in the United States. Special appreciation is due Miss Viola C. White, Curator of the Abernethy Library, Middlebury, Vermont, who copied for the writer from various obscure sources many pages of interesting data about Saxe. A gratifying letter with additional information was received from Miss Mary Sollace Saxe, a niece of the poet. Miss Saxe is at present a retired librarian of the West Mount Public Library, Montreal, Canada.

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## CHAPTER II

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GODFREY SAXE

Before beginning an analysis of the humor of this poet, or any classification and criticism of his comedy devices, it seems fitting to state a few biographical facts about John Godfrey Saxe. Regarding the poet's parents, Mr. Russell Taft says,

"Peter Saxe, store-keeper, mill-owner, and local politician married, in 1813, Elizabeth Jewett, and their second son, for whom a niche at least may be reserved in America's literary Valhalla, is the subject of the present sketch. John Godfrey Saxe was born in Highgate, Vermont on June 2, 1816, one day later than Charles Gamage Eastman, Vermont's lyric poet."<sup>1</sup>

Saxe's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine to seventeen he attended district school, and worked in his father's mill. Mrs. Carolyn Brown Freer, the teacher of the district school, portrayed him as "a lively, mischievous and sometimes unruly lad, to whose shoulder she was many a time obliged to apply the rod."<sup>2</sup>

During the years 1833 and '34 Saxe attended the Grammar School of St. Albans, where he prepared for college. In 1835 he entered Wesleyan University,

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1. Taft, Russel W. John Godfrey Saxe, Burlington  
1900 p. 3
  2. Ibid p. 4

CHAPTER II

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I. Tait, Russell W. John Godfrey Saxe, Burlington  
p. 2 1898  
p. 4 1912

Middletown, Conn, but he did not remain there the entire year. However, in the fall of 1836, he entered the sophomore class of Middlebury College. During his college course, Saxe became an ardent lover of the classics - and this love did not abate in after life, as can be seen in his frequent allusions in his poems to Latin authors.

"Saxe's first literary efforts were published about the beginning of his junior year in the local prints. My Uncle William or Love vs Law was his first printed effort, and was meritorious chiefly on account of its brevity. The Autobiography of a Pocket Knife, the next offspring of his budding fancy, also shows no palpable traces of genius. Later on Saxe became a member of the 'Tub Philosophers a la Diogenes' who turned loose their literary talent on the Green Mountain Argos."<sup>3</sup>

In 1839 Saxe was graduated from Middlebury and then went to Lewiston, near Lockport, N. Y. to study law. In 1841, he returned to Vermont and on September 9, he married Miss Sophia Newell Sollace, a sister of one of his classmates, and daughter of the Honorable Calvin T. Sollace of Bridport, Vt.

In September 1843, Saxe was admitted to the bar in St. Albans; and for the next seven years he practiced law in both St. Albans and Highgate. For one year

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3. Ibid p.14

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1847-48 Saxe was Superintendent of the Common Schools of Franklin County.

In 1850 he removed to Burlington, and for ten years he resided in that city. He was elected state's attorney of Chittenden County in 1851. Finding the practice of law irksome, he abandoned it, and with a few thousand dollars inherited from his father in 1850 he purchased the Vermont Sentinel, a democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vt. This paper he edited for six years. This was a wise move as Mr. Taft says,

"Mr. Saxe rightly turned to journalism as offering the readiest means of applying his talents and his tastes. His editorial labors interested him by bringing him into contact with varied phases of humanity and led to unexpected results by involving him in the small politics of the day." <sup>4</sup>

In 1856 he was appointed U. S. deputy collector of customs, and in 1859 and 1860 he ran for Governor of Vermont on the democratic ticket. This last named honor was complimentary as Vermont was not strongly enough democratic to elect any executive. Saxe considered the matter jocosely as can be seen by the closing sentences of a letter in which he accepted the nomination, "For further political views, and opinions, I will refer you to my inaugural message." <sup>5</sup>

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4. Ibid p. 38

5. Ibid p. 39

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4. 1814 p. 38  
 5. 1814 p. 38

"In 1846 Saxe's first published volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. It was dedicated to Oliver Wendell Holmes after his fashion;

'To Oliver Wendell Holmes, as a slight token of the admiration which the writer entertains for his fine poetical genius; his unequalled power of playful satire, and his terse and felicitous versification, this poem is respectfully inscribed by his obliged friend, the author'." <sup>6</sup>

In this connection it is essential to call the attention of the reader to an error in Mr. Taft's biography regarding the date of his first published edition, for on page 33 of his book Mr. Taft states, "In 1849 Saxe's first collected edition was issued at the instance of James T. Fields, the publisher, and from then on, Saxe was a public character in American letters." <sup>7</sup> Likewise, the same error in date of publication is found in an anonymous pamphlet, issued by the State of Vermont, Free Public Library Department, Montpelier, which records, "His (referring to Saxe) first volume of poems appeared in 1849 and during the active period of his literary work more than forty editions of his poems were published in America and Europe. He was noted for his humor and was a famous punster." <sup>8</sup> That 1846 is the correct

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6. Ibid p.29-30.

7. Ibid p.33.

8. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept. Montpelier.

"In 1848 Bax's first published volume came  
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6. Ibid. p. 88-90.  
 7. Ibid. p. 88.  
 8. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library  
 Dept. Montpelier.

date can be seen by reference to Library of Congress Cards. In this respect The Americana states, "His reputation as a humorous poet was considerable during the mid century, his verses often appearing in Harper's magazine, Atlantic Monthly, and in the Knickerbocker magazine. He published Progress, a satirical poem, 1846." <sup>9</sup> The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography says, "In 1846 he published a volume of poems including Progress, a satire, many of which had appeared in the Knickerbocker magazine." <sup>10</sup> Hence it can be readily seen that 1846 is the correct date of this first publication of Saxe's poems.

A day long-looked-for in Saxe's life arrived in 1856, for no longer needing to rely on journalism for a living, he sold the Sentinel and trusted to literature for a living. <sup>11</sup> As his biographer said of this move, "The trust was securely placed, for, through economical treatment of his income he acquired means which afforded him an opportunity for leisure and travel." <sup>12</sup>

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9. The Americana V.24 p.339.  
 10. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p.438.  
 11. Taft, R. W. John Godfrey Saxe Burlington, Vt.  
 1900 p. 45.  
 12. Ibid. p. 45.

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9. The Americanist, V. 34, p. 332.  
 10. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, p. 432.  
 11. Life of W. W. John Godfrey Baxe, Burlington, Vt.,  
 1900, p. 43.  
 12. Ibid., p. 43.

In 1860 he returned to Albany, New York, where he became an editor of the Albany Evening Journal.<sup>13</sup> He also wrote editorials for the Albany Morning Argus. "The Honorable William Cassidy, proprietor of the latter sheet, was a democrat and at that time perhaps the nearest personal friend of the poet and to him Saxe dedicated the Highgate edition (1871) of his poems." <sup>14</sup> Saxe occasionally wrote criticisms and book review for the Argus.

In 1866 Middlebury College, Saxe's Alma Mater, conferred on him the L. L. D. degree. "Prior to this he had won a name in literature, and as an attractive lecturer, his facility as a writer of humorous verse being his distinguishing characteristic." <sup>15</sup>

No sketch, regardless how brief, would be complete without mention of the charming social character of the poet, whose physical attractiveness never failed to appeal to those with whom he came in contact. People who met him were charmed with his genial personality and wit, and he became a national favorite. He was a brilliant conversationalist, and was in his element at the fashionable resort of Saratoga Springs, which he visited for twenty-

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13. Ibid p.45.

14. Ibid p.52.

15. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p.438.

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In 1888 Middlebury College, Saxe's alma mater, conferred on him the L. L. D. degree. Prior to this he had won a name in literature, and as an attractive lecturer, his facility as a writer of numerous verses being his distinguishing characteristics. In his sketch, regardless how brief, would be complete without mention of the charming social character of the poet, whose physical attractiveness never failed to appeal to those with whom he came in contact. People who met him were charmed with his genial personality and wit, and he became a national favorite. He was a brilliant conversationalist, and was in his element at the fashionable resort of Saratoga Springs, which he visited for twenty-

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13. 1813 p. 43.  
 14. 1813 p. 43.  
 15. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p. 438.

three consecutive summers. <sup>16</sup> "His verses were quoted both at home and abroad, and such was his popularity that he was soon obliged to leave prose and the press and move to Albany and confine his works to poetry and to the lecture platform. He lived in Albany from 1860-70, and during these years visited England twice, where he was much sought after by literary people." <sup>17</sup>

The 1867 visit to Europe added much to Saxe's fame as well as to his pecuniary success. "The Cockney, one of Saxe's wittiest sketches, is reminiscent of this trip."<sup>18</sup> While in England he was the guest of the late George Peabody, who was instrumental in arranging for Saxe to give many lectures. The poet was hailed by the English press as "A second Tom Hood, and when he returned in the fall, he brought with him many gifts from England's best people. During the years from 1855 to 1870, one would seldom pick up a paper which did not contain some joke or witty speech from the poet's pen." <sup>19</sup>

The year 1846 marked the beginning of the poet's popularity as a lecturer, especially at college commencements and similar functions. "He read Progress before

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16. Anonymous pamphlet -State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept.

17. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free

18. Taft p. 56.

19. Anonymous pamphlet -State of Vt. Free

These consecutive numbers. In "His verses were quoted both at home and abroad, and such was his popularity that he was even obliged to leave prose and the press and move to Albany and confine his work to poetry and to the lecture platform. He lived in Albany from 1880-90, and during these years visited England twice, where he was much sought after by literary people." 17

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While in England he was the guest of the late George Peabody, who was instrumental in arranging for Sara to give many lectures. The poet was hailed by the English press as "A second Tom Hood, and when he returned in the fall, he brought with him many gifts from England's best people. During the years from 1885 to 1890, one would seldom pick up a paper which did not contain some joke or witty speech from the poet's pen." 19

The year 1888 marked the beginning of the poet's popularity as a lecturer, especially at college commencements and similar functions. "He read Progress before

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- 16. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library
  - 17. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free
  - 18. Call p. 58.
  - 19. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free

the Middlebury Alumni in 1846; The Times before the Boston Mercantile Library Association in 1849; Carmen Laetum at Middlebury College in 1850 at their semi-centennial celebration; and New England at the Hamilton College Commencement of 1849." <sup>20</sup>

Regarding his wide spread popularity as a lecturer Mr. Taft states,

"It was at this time (1874) that the popular lecture was rampant as a source of public education and incidentally as a replenisher of depleted literary exchequers; and no leading 'lecture course' was thought complete unless it contained the name of the foremost poet of satire and humor. Saxe drew equally well with Wendell Phillips, George William Curtis, Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin, Anna E. Dickinson, and others who, in the decade from 1859, were kept on the go from early fall until the spring apples were ripe --- Saxe had but to set the date and name his price, as an opportunity to see the author of Proud Miss McBride was not to be missed by the lecture going people of the day. To the eyes of the audience, at least, the investment must have seemed a wise one, for Saxe was a remarkably handsome man. He was six feet two inches tall, proudly erect and muscular, with a large round and finely poised head set upon broad and stalwart shoulders." <sup>21</sup>

About this same phase of his career, it is recorded,

"The poet's lectures were delivered from Main to California, and he was in great demand. During the troublesome years just previous to the Civil War he spent many of his winters in the Southern States, and was a guest at many of the old manor houses, where he was welcomed because of his abundance of good cheer and his well known political views." <sup>22</sup>

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20. Taft, R. W. p. 28.

21. Ibid p. 51.

22. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept.

the Middlebury Alumni in 1844; The Times before the  
 Boston Mercantile Library Association in 1845; Carver  
Library at Middlebury College in 1850 at their semi-  
 centennial celebration; and his Journal at the Hamilton  
 College Commencement of 1847.

Mr. Telf states,

"I see at this time (1874) that the popular  
 lecture was rampant as a source of public education  
 and incidentally as a replacement of depleted  
 literary exchequers; and no leading lecture course  
 was thought complete unless it contained the name of  
 the foremost poet of satire and humor. Care drew  
 equally well with Wendell Phillips, George William  
 Curtis, Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Dr. E. B. Channing,  
 Anna E. Dickinson, and others who, in the decade  
 from 1832, were kept on the go from early fall to  
 till the spring equinox were ripe --- Care had but  
 to set the date and name his price, as an opportunity  
 lay to see the author of Brook Farm Journal was not  
 to be missed by the lecture-going public of the  
 day. To the eyes of the audience, at least, the  
 investment must have seemed a wise one, for Care  
 was a remarkably handsome man. He was six feet  
 two inches tall, broadly erect and muscular, with  
 a large round and finely poised head set upon broad  
 and stalwart shoulders."

About this same phase of his career, it is recorded

ed.

"The poet's lectures were delivered from  
 Main to California, and he was in great demand.  
 During the troublesome years just previous to the  
 Civil War he spent many of his winters in the  
 Southern States, and was a guest at many of the  
 old manor houses, where he was welcomed because  
 of his abundance of good cheer and his well known  
 political views."

Ms. A. 9. 2. 28.  
 Ms. A. 9. 2. 29.  
 Ms. A. 9. 2. 30. - State of Vt. Free Public  
 Library Dept.

"Again deciding to change his residence, Mr. Saxe, in 1872, removed to Brooklyn, N. Y., where he bought a home at number 28 First Place. The location was one of the coolest and pleasantest in the city, while among the poet's neighbors were Austin Corbin, Demas Barnes, the Rev. Dr. Ludlow, and other people of culture and refinement." <sup>23</sup>

This delightful home, referred to in a poem found in the poet's last collection of verse, was where Saxe had anticipated spending the remaining years of his life in happiness and contentment. But little did he realize how heavily the hand of Fate was to be laid upon him; and yet it would almost seem as if he had had a premonition of the sorrows that were soon to follow, for almost immediately after establishing his residence in Brooklyn he bought a very beautiful family burying lot in Greenwood Cemetery. <sup>24</sup> Nor indeed was this too precipitately done, for his first sorrow came in 1874, when his youngest daughter, Laura, who had contracted lung trouble at a boarding school in Massachusetts, died. <sup>25</sup>

The next spring (1875) <sup>when the poet was</sup> while returning home at the close of a lecture tour in the South, the sleeping car in which Saxe had his berth was derailed and thrown down a steep embankment, near Wheeling, West Virginia. One of the fellow passengers who had escaped returned to look

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23. Taft, R. W. p. 59.

24. Ibid p. 61.

25. Ibid p. 61.

"Again deciding to change his residence, Mr. Saxe, in 1872, removed to Brooklyn, N. Y., where he bought a house at number 28 First Street. The location was one of the coolest and pleasantest in the city, while among the guest's neighbors were Austin Corbin, James Barnes, the Rev. Dr. Ludlow, and other people of culture and refinement."

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he bought a very beautiful family dwelling lot in Greenwood Cemetery. For indeed was this the principal cause, for his first sorrow came in 1874, when his youngest daughter, Laura, who had contracted lung trouble at a boarding school in Massachusetts, died.

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22. Feb. 1. 7. p. 59.  
23. Feb. 1. 7. p. 61.  
24. Feb. 1. 7. p. 61.

for a sum of money which he had left behind, and in

"returning to the car he stumbled upon the bruised and insensible poet wedged between heavy timbers. Mr. Saxe was thereby rescued from a revolting death, for the sleeper in which he was found soon became a mass of seething flames. Even under these fearful circumstances the poet's wit did not fail him, for when someone asked him how he liked Riding on the Rail now, he replied, 'a great deal better than riding off from it!'" <sup>26</sup>

Physically Saxe seemed to suffer no serious consequences from this accident, but his nervous system suffered a shock from which it never rallied, and this accident was undoubtedly the cause of the deep melancholia which enshrouded the poet in his last years. <sup>27</sup>

"Excepting the ill-starred lecture tour referred to, Mr. Saxe's last appearance before the general public was on September 27, 1873, when he read an ode on the occasion of the unveiling of a bust of John Howard Payne, in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. However, true to fraternal promptings, he read some prandial verses at Delmonico's on April 8, 1874, the occasion being a festival of the Forty-first Annual Convention of Psi Upsilon." <sup>28</sup> (Saxe had been initiated as an honorary member into Alpha Chapter of this fraternity in Harvard in 1753,<sup>29</sup> and had been a devoted member of this fraternity all his life)

Leisure Day Rhymes, the poet's last collection came from the press in 1875. This collection lacked the pristine vigor and virility of his earlier verses. In this collection he deals with more placid themes and

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26. Ibid            p. 61-62.  
 27. Ibid            p. 62.  
 28. Ibid            p. 63.  
 29. Ibid            p. 20.

for a sum of money which he had left behind, and in  
 "returning to the car he stumbled upon the  
 pugilist and immediately fell between heavy  
 pillars. Mr. Gaxe was thereby rescued from a  
 revolting death, for the danger in which he was  
 found soon became a mass of scolding. Even  
 under these fearful circumstances the poet's wit  
 did not fail him, for when someone asked him how  
 he liked riding on the Fall now, he replied, "I  
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 Presumably Gaxe seemed to suffer no serious consequences  
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"Excepting the ill-starred factors that re-  
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 general public was on September 27, 1873, when he  
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 bust of John Howard Payne, in Prospect Park, Brooklyn.  
 However, true to traditional promptings, he read some  
 original verses at Delmonico's on April 8, 1874, the  
 occasion being a festival of the forty-third annual  
 Convention of the American Society (Gaxe had been  
 initiated as an honorary member into the Society  
 of the University in New York in 1852, and had been  
 celebrated member of this University all his life)

Private Day Papers. The poet's last collection came  
 from the press in 1873. This collection lacked the  
 pristine vigor and vitality of his earlier verses. In  
 this collection he dealt with more pleid issues and

26	1814	7	81-83
27	1814	9	83
28	1814	9	83
29	1814	9	80

more reference is found to theological subjects. <sup>30</sup>

Death again visited the Saxe home in 1879, this time claiming for its victim the poet's eldest and favorite daughter Sarah. A still more crushing blow followed the next year when Mrs. Saxe, who had been the noblest of noble wives for forty years, was snatched from him. But grim death was not through, for in 1881 he claimed the poet's solely remaining daughter, Harriet. <sup>31</sup> A little later the wife of his eldest son, John, was taken; and nine weeks following this dire tragedy the poet's son John was found dead in bed.

"Thus in the brief space of seven years, had the poet's wife, his three daughters, his eldest son, and his daughter-in-law crossed the mystic river before his very eyes. What wonder then, that death seemed to him his best friend as with whitened locks, bent form, and sad eyes he wearily sought shelter with his only surviving child, Charles, beneath whose roof tree he was to spend the last sorrowful years of his life, brooding hopelessly in solitude over his afflictions, his mind still haunted by joyous memories of the golden past."<sup>32</sup>

For a while after Saxe came to live with his son Charles, he tried to recover some of his wonted bouyancy of spirit, but it was of no avail,

"and in 1884 he withdrew altogether from the eyes of men - - - - hardly a person knew that one (Saxe) who, in his time, did more than any other to brighten the world around him, was ending his days apart from his

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30. Ibid p.63.  
 31. Ibid p. 65.  
 32. Ibid p.68

more references is found in theological subjects.

Death again visited the Saxe home in 1872, this time claiming for its victim the poet's eldest and favorite daughter Sarah. A still more crushing blow followed the next year when Mrs. Saxe, who had been the object of noble wives for forty years, was snatched from him. But Grim Death was not through, for in 1881 he claimed the poet's solely remaining daughter, Elizabeth. A little later the wife of his eldest son, John, was taken; and nine weeks following this dire tragedy the poet's son John was found dead in bed.

"Thus in the brief space of seven years, had the poet's wife, his three daughters, his eldest son, and his daughter-in-law crossed the mystic river before his very eyes. That wonder took, that death seemed to him his last friend as with whitened locks, bent form, and sad eyes he wearily sought shelter with his only surviving child, Charles, beneath whose roof trees he was to spend the last mortal years of his life, brooding hopelessly in solitude over his afflictions, his mind still haunted by joyous memories of the golden past."

For a while after Saxe came to live with his son

Charles, he tried to recover some of his mental buoyancy of spirit, but it was of no avail.

"and in 1884 he withdrew altogether from the eyes of men - - - - - hardly a person knew that one (Saxe) who, in his time, did more than any other to enlighten the world around him, was ending his days apart from his

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30. 1814	o. 63.
31. 1815	o. 65.
32. 1816	o. 67.

fellow-men, crushed by bereavements and the victim of a settled melancholy. It is one of the eccentricities of fate that a man whose mission was to gladden others should thus drag out his last years, dead to the world which was once so kind to him. In the poet's own words, 'Isn't it queer that one who made others laugh should end his days so in sorrow.'<sup>33</sup>

What a tragic contrast was the condition of the genial humorist to that of the previous years when

"his verses were eagerly accepted by the leading periodicals, when he was the nation's wit and humorist whose delicious rhymes brought to himself fame and a competence, and to many a household the cheerful smile or hearty laugh. Even across the sea he was known as the 'Thomas Hood of America' yet at sixty-five his condition much resembled the closing days of Scott, Southey, Cowper, and Tom Moore."<sup>34</sup>

The last three years of the once exuberant poet were pathetic in the extreme. Saxe now made no effort to combat his melancholia. "His light had gone out forever; not a gleam recalled the brilliant flashes of wit that had played so merrily across the literary firmament of twenty years agone, and his last years afford but another instance of the fatality that seems especially to beset the sons of laughter."<sup>35</sup> The tragedy of the poet's own words seem burned deeply in the reader's mind as he scans, the poem Comic Miseries which says,

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33. Ibid p.69.  
 34. Ibid p.67.  
 35. Ibid p.67.

...crossed by devastation and the victim  
...of a settled melancholy. It is one of the reasons  
...of late that a man whose mission was to  
...others should thus die in his last years.  
...to the world which was once so kind to him. In  
...the poet's own words, 'I am! it goes that one was  
...made others laugh about and his days so in sorrow.'

What a tragic contrast was the condition of the general  
humorist to that of the previous years when

His verses were eagerly accepted by the leading  
periodicals, when he was the nation's wit and humorist  
whose brilliant lyrics brought to himself fame and a  
competence, and to many a household the cheerfulness  
and hearty laugh. Even across the sea he was  
known as the 'Thomas Hood of America', yet at sixty-  
five his condition was described in the following  
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twenty years ago, and his last years afforded but a  
rather instance of the fatality that seems especially  
to beset the sons of laughter. The tragedy of the  
poet's own words seem burned deeply in the reader's mind  
as he scans the poem Homecoming which says,

33. 1814  
34. 1815  
35. 1816

"My dear young friend, whose shining wit  
 Sets all the room ablaze,  
 Don't think yourself a happy dog  
 For all your merry ways;  
 But learn to wear a sober phiz,  
 Be stupid if you can,  
 It's a very serious thing  
 To be a funny man." <sup>36</sup>

The "long craving for the final summons to join the loved ones who had gone before"<sup>37</sup> was satisfied, for on March 31, 1887, the name of John Godfrey Saxe was joined to the long list of immortals whose literary genius still lights the dark prosaic world.

The Century Magazine for June 1886 contains the following lines to the poet, written by C. S. Percival.<sup>38</sup>

" O genial Saxe whose radiant wit  
 Flashed like the lightning from the sky,  
 But, though each flash as keenly hit,  
 Wounded but what deserved to die --  
 Alas! the cloud that shrouds the day  
 On gathering darkness, fold on fold  
 Serves not as background for the play  
 Of those bright gleams that charmed of old.  
 Yet charms not now his blithesome lay,  
 Nor flowery mead in'verdure clad'.  
 The world that laughed when thou wast gay,  
 Now weeps to know that thou art sad."

"The State of Vermont has erected at the old homestead at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was unveiled in August 1920. In 1916 Middlebury College observed the hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth and reciprocated his services in officiating as the Poet on the occasion of Middlebury's fiftieth anniversary by conferring upon his grandson, and namesake, John G. Saxe, of New York, the degree of Doctor of Laws."<sup>39</sup>

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36. Ibid p. 39.

37. Ibid p. 73.

38. Ibid p. 74.

39. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt.

"My dear young friend, whose shining wit  
 Sets all the room ablaze,  
 Don't think yourself a happy dog  
 For all your merry ways;  
 But learn to wear a sober brow,  
 Be stupid if you can,  
 It's a very serious thing  
 To be a funny man."<sup>38</sup>

The "long craving for the final answer to John the  
 loved ones who had gone before"<sup>37</sup> was satisfied, for on  
 March 31, 1887, the name of John Bradley Saxe was joined  
 to the long list of immortals whose literary genius still  
 lights the dark prosaic world.

The Century Magazine for June 1888 contains the

following lines to the poet, written by C. S. Peirce.<sup>38</sup>

"O genial Saxe whose radiant wit  
 Flashed like the lightning from the sky,  
 But, though each flash as keenly lit  
 Wounded not what deserved to die --  
 Alas! the cloud that shrouds the day  
 On gathering darkness, fold or fold  
 Gathers not as background for the play  
 Of those bright gleams that charmed of old.  
 Yet charm not now his bitterness lay,  
 Nor flowers mead in 'verdure clad'.  
 The world that laughed when thou wast gay,  
 Now weeps to know that thou art dead."

"The State of Vermont has erected at the old homestead  
 at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was un-  
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 observed the hundredth anniversary of the poet's  
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 as the poet on the occasion of Middlebury's fiftieth  
 anniversary by conferring upon his grandson, and  
 namesake, John O. Saxe, of New York, the degree of  
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36. Ibid	p. 33.
37. Ibid	p. 33.
38. Ibid	p. 34.
39. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt.	

For this occasion, commemorating the memory of Saxe, a poem was written by Rev. Wm Colton Clark of South Hero, Vermont. The poem follows:

John Godfrey Saxe

"In Highgate town a poet grew,  
The ways of country folk he knew;  
Among the neighbors he was one  
Of ready speech and full of fun,  
Participating in the joys  
Of hale and hearty girls and boys.

To manhood grown his active mind  
To literary work inclined;  
As journalist with facile pen  
He could portray the ways of men,  
With fitting praise and friendly word  
Or satire keen as sharpened sword.

As poet he attained renown  
Not only in his native town,  
In circle large his fame was spread  
Where'er his clever verse was read,  
His wit and wisdom recognized,  
His timely counsel highly prized.

His memory should be preserved  
His sayings carefully conserved,  
Vermont should honor well the name  
Of John G. Saxe and spread his fame,  
A sage with clear discerning mind  
A man at heart humane and kind."<sup>40</sup>

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40. The Vermonter V. 38 No. 4. April 1933 p.96  
White River Junction, Vt.

For this occasion, commemorating the memory of Saxe,  
a poem was written by Rev. Wm Colton Clark of South Hero,  
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John Saxe's Verse

His Highgate town a poet grew,  
The ways of country folk he knew;  
Among the neighbors he was one  
Of ready speech and full of fun,  
Participating in the joys  
Of hale and hearty girls and boys.

He manhood grew his active mind  
To literary work inclined;  
As journalist with facile pen  
He could portray the ways of men,  
With fitting praise and friendly words  
Or satire keen as sharpened sword.

As poet he attained renown  
Not only in his native town,  
In circles large his fame was spread,  
Where'er his clever verse was read,  
His wit and wisdom recognized,  
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His memory should be preserved,  
His sayings carefully conserved,  
Vermont should honor well the name  
Of John C. Saxe and spread his fame,  
A sage with clear discerning mind,  
A man of heart humane and kind.

40. The Vermonter V. 32 No. 4. April 1883 p. 38  
White River Junction, Vt.

### CHAPTER III

#### A SURVEY OF SOME AMERICAN HUMORISTS 1830-65.

A merry heart doeth good like medicine. Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone. The fundamental truth of these old proverbs has always been recognized; but it has been left for the moderns to teach the world the commercial value of laughter, and to convince the every day man of the street that humor makes a deep and lasting contribution to his happiness. Notice what the practical man of letters, William P. Trent, says in this respect, "There are times in the life of every nation, whether it be a monarchy or a republic when the disposition and the ability to laugh seem alone to safeguard society. Democritus is a better patron saint than Heraclitus." <sup>1</sup>

This merry little god, laughter, has indelibly inscribed men's names on the literary scroll of immortality.

The Bookman of June 1916 concurs in this opinion:

"John Godfrey Saxe has outlined many of the writers of his day because he realized that the mission of mirth and humor was to restore the balance which is frequently lost by the weight of so much that is drudgery in life. Even a vein of jests is soon worked out; but mirth is a perennial flower. That is why this son of Vermont is not forgotten, though he died more than a quarter of a century ago." <sup>2</sup>

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1. Trent, William P. A. History of American Literature  
N. Y. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922 p.536.
  2. Bookman, N. Y. Dodd, Mead & Co. V. 43 p. 392 June 1916

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF SOME AMERICAN HUMORISTS 1830-60.

A merry heart beats good like medicine. Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone. The fundamental truth of these old proverbs has always been recognized; but it has been left for the modern to teach the world the commercial value of laughter, and to convince the every day man of the street that humor makes a deep and lasting contribution to his happiness. Notice what the practical man of letters, William F. Howells, says in this respect: "There are times in the life of every

nation, whether it be a monarchy or a republic when the disposition and the ability to laugh seem alone to save a hard society. Democracy is a better patron saint than Heracles."

This merry little god, laughter, has nobility in-  
scribed men's names on the literary scroll of immortality.  
The Bookman of June 1918 concurs in this opinion:

"John Goffrey Saxe has outlined many of the writers of his day because he realized that the mission of mirth and humor was to restore the balance which is transiently lost by the weight of so much that is drabbery in life. Even a vein of jest is good worked out; but mirth is a perennial flower. That is why this son of Vermont is not forgotten, though he died more than a quarter of a century ago."

1. Grant, William F. A History of American Literature  
N. Y. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923. p. 338.  
2. Bookman, N. Y. Book, News & Co. V. 43. p. 382 June 1918

Many have recognized the frolicsome, bouyant gaiety which abounds everywhere when the jovial, carefree god, laughter, enters; but it has been left to Mr. William P. Trent to paint out the civic service which laughter renders to America, "It is probably not an exaggeration to say that American humorists have played a great part in rendering the masses of the people more and more homogeneous. This role was especially forced on them after the accession of Jackson because of the great influx of foreign immigrants." <sup>3</sup>

Rightly, the question arises when did America give cognizance to men of wit? The answer comes from the pen of this same literary man, Mr. Trent, who says, "It seems fair to say that before 1830 there was little truly American humor, and after that date a good deal that Americans have some right to claim as peculiarly their own." <sup>4</sup> The philosophical mind will find interest in accounting for this birth of humor, and many theories might be offered as partial explanation. But history submits this suggestion:

"The period between the accession of Jackson and the death of Lincoln is rich in material for

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3. Trent, Wm P. A History of Am. Lit. p. 516.

4. Ibid p. 516.

Many have recognized the fact that, beyond safety  
which abounds everywhere when the Jewish, Catholic, and  
laughter, enters; but it has been left to Mr. William F.

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admits this suggestion:

"The period between the accession of Jackson  
and the death of Lincoln is rich in material for

3. Trent, W. F. A History of Am. Lit. p. 316.  
4. Ibid. p. 316.

humorists due to incongruities between the pretensions of the new democracy to rule the fortunes of the country and the capacity to do so wisely, and between the theories of the Declaration of Independence and the facts of slavery." <sup>5</sup>

This same writer ventures another explanation when he writes,

"Another reason that American humor should have begun a fairly rapid evolution after 1830 is that humorous creations were first published in newspapers, and the importance of the daily press increased greatly during the epoch of the first railroads and telegraph lines, and of the great political struggle over slavery." <sup>6</sup>

A cursory study or survey of the chief exponents of this humorous movement will prove both advantageous and interesting. Consequently, a partial list of American humorists follows:

- |                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Benjamin Franklin,     | 1706 - 1790 |
| 2. Washington Irving,     | 1779 - 1860 |
| 3. James K. Paulding,     | 1779 - 1860 |
| 4. Fitz-Green Halleck,    | 1790 - 1867 |
| 5. Seka Smith,            | 1792 - 1868 |
| 6. Eliza Leslie,          | 1787 - 1858 |
| 7. Robert C. Sands,       | 1799 - 1832 |
| 8. Oliver Wendell Holmes, | 1809-1894   |
| 9. George W. Harris,      | 1814-69     |

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5. Ibid p. 516.

6. Ibid p. 517



10. Benjamin P. Shillaber, 1814-90
11. Johnson P. Hooper, 1815-63
12. John Godfrey Saxe, 1816-87
13. James Russell Lowell, 1819-91
14. Henry Wheeler Shaw (Josh Billings), 1818-85
15. George H. Derky (John Phoenix), 1823-61
16. David R. Locke (Rev. Petroleum Nasky) 1833-88
17. Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward) 1834-67
18. John Hay, 1838-1905
19. Francis Bret Harte, 1839-1902
20. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) 1835-1910
21. Edward Eggleston, 1837-1902
22. James Whitcomb Riley, 1849-1916

Lowell and Holmes, the academic humorists, like their predecessors, Benjamin Franklin, and his contemporary, Francis Hopkinson, all followed British models in their style of writing.<sup>7</sup> Of these British humorists, W. M. Praed and Thomas Hood are the two most popular models which the American humorists followed.<sup>8</sup> America's indebtedness to English writers is commented upon by Mr. Trent when he says,

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7. Trent, William P. p. 519

8. Cambridge History of English Literature, V. 12, p.119.

- 10. Benjamin P. Shillaber, 1814-30
- 11. Johnson P. Cooper, 1815-33
- 12. John Berkeley Jones, 1816-37
- 13. James Russell Lowell, 1819-31
- 14. Henry Wheeler Shaw (John Billings), 1819-33
- 15. George H. Bury (John Thosnix), 1823-31
- 16. David R. Locke (Rev. Paterson Macky) 1827-33
- 17. Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward) 1834-37
- 18. John Gay, 1833-1903
- 19. Francis Bret Harte, 1833-1903
- 20. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) 1835-1910
- 21. Steward England, 1837-1903
- 22. James Whitcomb Riley, 1843-1916

Lowell and Holmes, the academic humorists, like their predecessors, Benjamin Franklin, and his contemporary, Francis Hopkinson, all followed British models in their style of writing.<sup>7</sup> Of these British humorists, W. D. Howes and Thomas Hood are the two most popular models which the American humorists followed.<sup>8</sup> American's indebtedness to English writers is commented upon by Mr. Frost when he says,

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7. Frost, William F. p. 213  
 8. Cambridge History of English Literature, V. 12, p. 112.

"In 1809 Irving's Mr. Knickerbocker's History of New York gave the world its first prolonged opportunity to smile or laugh at the creations of an American's whimsical genius. - - - Irvine was indebted to Goldsmith for the humor of the Sketch Book, and later writings. Other Knickerbocker authors, Paulding, Drake, Halleck, Sands, and the rest, while not entirely un-American in their mild humor, obviously drew upon their reading just as Irvine did, so that it seems fair to say that for forty years after Franklin's death no humor equal in raciness to his made its appearance in American literature."<sup>9</sup>

That John Godfrey Saxe was somewhat indebted to Thomas Hood is evident from Mr. Taft's reference to one of the poet's most popular poems, "But Saxe's literary reputation was not firmly established until in 1848 Proud Miss McBride caught the public ear and won universal popularity for her author. This poem is a Yankee Version of Hood's Golden Legend."<sup>10</sup> Mention of this similarity to Hood is made in an article in The Bookman for June 1916.

"It is chiefly as a poet that Saxe will be known to fame, and more especially, as a humorous poet. He has often been styled the Tom Hood of America, and he resembled Oliver Wendell Holmes in the finish of his verse, but had the advantage over him in his faculty of punning."<sup>11</sup>

On this same subject, Mr. John S. Hart has said,

"Until his (Saxe) fame was somewhat overshadowed by Artemus Ward, he might have been called

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9. Ibid p. 520.

10. Taft, Russell W. - John Godfrey Saxe p. 32.

11. Bookman p. 390.

"In 1808 Irving's Mr. Tinker's History of New York gave the world the first professional opportunity to write or judge of the character of an American's historical genius. - - - Irving was indebted to Goldsmith for the honor of the Knickerbocker book, and later writings. Other Knickerbocker authors, Folsom, Drake, Ketchum, Bache, and the rest, while not entirely co-American in their mind, were, especially Drake, their leading just as Irving did, so that it seems fair to say that for forty years after Franklin's death no honor came in America to his name but the appearance in American literature."

That John Goffrey Saxe was somewhat indebted to Thomas Hood is evident from Dr. Tappin's reference to one of the poet's most popular poems. "But Saxe's literary reputation was not firmly established until in 1848 Frank Miss McClure caught the public ear and won universal popularity for her edition. This poem is a Yankee version of Hood's Golden Legend." <sup>10</sup> Mention of this similarity to Hood is made in an article in The Bookman for June 1910.

"It is chiefly as a poet that Saxe will be known to fame, and more especially, as a humorous poet. He has often been styled the Tom Hood of America, and he resembled Oliver Wendell Holmes in the finish of his verse, but had the advantage over him in his faculty of punning."<sup>11</sup>

On this same subject, Mr. John E. Hart has said, "Until his (Saxe) fame was somewhat overshadowed by Artemus Ward, he might have been called

9. Ibid. p. 250.  
10. Tappin, Assail 2. - John Goffrey Saxe p. 22.  
11. Bookman p. 290.

the most humorous writer of America - - - - Mr. Saxe excels in light, easy verse, and in the unexpected, if not absolutely punning, turns of expression. His more elaborate productions are not so successful. In the general style and effect of certain of his comic pieces he strongly reminds one of Thomas Hood. Saxe, it must be observed, is one of the very thoroughly national poets, in this sense, that his themes and the atmosphere of his verse are almost exclusively American."<sup>12</sup>

That Saxe ranked with Holmes and was equally as clever as Hood seemed fully agreed upon by many critics, as Mr. Justin S. Merrill says, "Saxe was the author of some poems as witty as any ever written by Dr. Holmes, and some of his punning pieces are not excelled even by anything of Tom Hood's."<sup>13</sup>

Brander Matthews, writing in 1896 adds a little different note to the general consensus of opinion, "A poet who wrote society verse of not a little sparkle, although not equal to the best in that kind by Halleck and Holmes."<sup>14</sup> In regard to Saxe's patterning after British models, Mr. Matthews continues,

"His verse is modelled upon Praed's, to whose dazzling brilliance he could not attain; and he borrowed also the pattern of Hood in his more broadly comic lyrics; but he was a little too easy going to achieve the delicate fineness which we have a right to demand in familiar verse - - - - His defect is that his verse tends to be fankly laughter-provoking."<sup>15</sup>

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12. Moulton, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism of English & American Authors

13. Ibid p. 617.

14. Ibid p. 617.

15. Ibid p. 617.

the most humorous writer of America - - - Mr. Saxe wrote in light, easy verse, and in the most perfect, it not absolutely genuine, form of expression. His more elaborate productions are not so successful. In the general style and effect of certain of his comic pieces he strongly reminds one of Thomas Hood. Saxe, it must be observed, is one of the very thorough national poets, in this sense, that his poems and the atmosphere of his verse are almost exclusively American.<sup>13</sup>

That Saxe ranked with Holmes and was equally as clever as Hood seemed fully agreed upon by many critics, as Mr. Justice S. Merrill says, "Saxe was the author of some poems as witty as any ever written by Dr. Holmes, and some of his punning pieces are not excelled even by anything of Tom Hood's."<sup>14</sup>

Stander Matthew, writing in 1886 adds a little different note to the general consensus of opinion, "A poet who wrote society verse of not a little genius, although not equal to the best in that kind by Eliot and Holmes."<sup>15</sup> In regard to Saxe's parting after British models, Mr. Matthews continues,

"His verse is modelled upon French, to whose dazzling brilliancy he could not attain; and he borrowed also the pattern of Hood in the more prosaic lyric; but he was a little too easy going to achieve the delicate fineness which we have a right to demand in English verse - - - His defect is that his verse tends to be fairly English-pro-  
voking."<sup>16</sup>

13. Houston, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism of English & American Authors  
13. 1014 p. 617.  
14. 1014 p. 617.  
15. 1014 p. 617.

To the serious-thinking student of literature comes the ever recurring query why did this once popular lecturer and poet become so thoroughly eclipsed. Many theories to answer this question might be suggested. One of the most obvious explanations is offered by his grandson.

"He (Saxe) is often as clever in the humorous vein as Dr. Holmes. But he didn't live in the Boston pale, though his works were published by its classic house. So he missed accelerated and imputed fame. After he left Vermont, he settled in Albany. So he was not in the Knickerbocker School. Albeit his first verses appeared in The Knickerbocker Magazine in 1841. He was isolated, without a claque. Mr. Stedman left him out of that exceedingly Catholic American Anthology."<sup>16</sup>

Mr. Taft offers another very probable reason for his eclipse which is due to so many local allusions in his work. For example one of the stanzas of the poem Ye Pedagogue contains such a one:

"Ah, many a steake hath he devoured,  
That, by ye taste and sighte,  
Was in disdaine, Twas very plaine,  
Of Daye his patent righte."<sup>17</sup>

Thus it is evident that this reference to "the inventor of 'patent leather', then just coming into vogue, would scarcely be understood by the rising generation."<sup>18</sup>

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16. Anonymous Pamphlet p.38 (Contributed by Miss Mary Sollace Saxe).  
17. Taft, R. W. p.26.  
18. Ibid p.27.

To the various-thinking student of literature comes  
the ever recurring query why did this occur  
leather and great books as tentatively suggested. The  
theories to answer this question might be suggested. One  
of the most obvious explanations is offered by his grand-

"He (Baxo) is often as clever in the humorous  
vein as Dr. Holman. But he didn't live in the  
Boston area, though his works were published by  
the classic house. So he missed conventional and  
imputed facts. After he left Vermont, he settled in  
Albany. So he was not in the Knickerbocker school.  
Albeit his first verses appeared in The Knickerbocker  
Magazine in 1841. He was isolated, without a circle.  
Mr. Baxo left the rest of that exceedingly Catholic  
American Anthology, 418

Mr. Tait offers another very probable reason for his  
eclipse which is due to so many local allusions in his  
work. For example one of the stanzas of the poem Ye

Redoubts contains such a one:

"Ah, many a stanza hath he favored,  
That, by ye taste and sight,  
Was in disdain, 'twas very plain,  
Of days his patent rights."

That it is evident that this reference to "the

inventor of 'patent leather', that has come into

vogue, would naturally be understood by the rising

generation," 418

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- 16. Anonymous Pamphlet p. 36 (Compiled by Miss Mary
  - Holmes Baxo).
  - 17. Tait, N. W. p. 33.
  - 18. Ibid. p. 27.

The most outstanding reason for John Godfrey Saxe's almost total eclipse, however, may be found in the rise of the Western humorists, Derky, Hay, Browne, Clemens and Bret Harte. This new type of humor which was used by these writers may best be understood by a brief mention of its chief characteristics, as well as of those of the period which furnished them with material.

Mr. Pattee comprehensively and tersely characterizes the early American humorous writers,

"Humor is no new thing in our literature, the first really American book, Knickerbocker's History of New York, was broadly irresistibly humorous, while Holmes and Lowell, and many another of the earlier school, were mirthmakers of a high order. Yet Irving's humor is of the English type. It depends on characterization, on minute description, on sympathetic insight. Holmes brilliant bon mots were more French than American. Lowell, it is true, caught our peculiar Yankee drollery to perfection, yet his Hosea Biglow does not represent the whole American people. While the humor of all these masters is of an imperishable kind, it does not, as a European would say, have the flavor of the American soil. It remained for George H. Derby and Charles F. Browne and their followers to embody in literary form this new autochthonic American humor, which while it might be coarse perhaps at times and redolent of the frontier where it was born, was, nevertheless, something new under the sun - - - - The chief ingredients of the representative American humor seem to be irreverence, exaggeration, and a skilful mingling of incongruities."<sup>19</sup>

To continue, "During the war decade (Civil War) this distinctive phase of our literature burst everywhere with popularity. It seemed to be a phase of frontier life. It rolled in from the West - it came from the settlement of the great

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19. Pattee, Fred Lewis Century Readings in American Literature N. Y. Century, 1932, Ch. XX. p. 677.

The most outstanding reason for John Galt's almost total eclipse, however, may be found in the rise of the Western democrats, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Turgenev. This new type of hero which was used by these writers may have been understood by a brief mention of its chief characteristics, as well as of those of the period which furnished them with material.

Mr. Bates comprehensively and tersely characterizes the early American romantic writers.

"Romance is no longer in our literature, the first really American book, Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness, was probably the last really successful masterpiece of the American romantic school, and marks another of the earlier stages, were developments of a high order. Yet Irving's hero is of the English type. It depends on characterization, on minute description, on sympathetic feeling. Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness were more French than American. Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness was a peculiar Yankee brother to the French, but his hero is not representative of the whole American people. While the hero of all these romances is of an imperishable kind, it does not, as a European would say, have the flavor of the American soil. It remained for Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness and Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness to embody in literary form this new autochthonous American hero, which while it might be coarse perhaps at times and tedious in the treatment there it was born, and nevertheless, speaking now under the sun - - - the chief ingredients of the representative American hero seem to be heroism, exaggeration, and a skillful mingling of localities."

To continue, "During the war decade (Civil War) this distinctive phase of our literature burst everywhere with spontaneity. It seemed to be a phase of frontier life. It rolled in from the West - it came from the settlement of the great

13. Bates, Fred Lewis, Leatherstocking's Discovery of Van Ness, N. Y. Century, 1922, Ch. IX, p. 277.

mid-land region, from the steamboats of the Mississippi, from the camps of the gold coast, and the bivouacs of the Civil War."<sup>20</sup>

Longstreet, Harris, and Baldwin had been the pioneer humorists,

"but the real father of the new school was an engineer, George Horatio Derby, 1823-1861, who found relief at times from the perplexities of an exacting profession by writing his John Phoenix papers, in which he embodied the spirit of early California, where for a long time he was stationed. In his Phoenixiana, published in 1855, we find the elements of exaggeration, irreverence, euphemistic statement, understatement, and Yankee aphorism."<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Trent acknowledges Derby's contribution of two volumes of burlesque sketches (The Phoenixiana, 1855), and The Squibob Papers, 1859) describing the Pacific Coast. He says, "Nor should he be denied the credit of having introduced to the world the humor of the Pacific Coast, and having taught his countrymen new tricks of extravagant thought and expression."<sup>22</sup>

The second humorist in this new school was Charles Farrar Browne, (1834-67)

"A Maine Yankee, who worked his way into the Middle West, established one of the first of the Newspaper funny columns, and there lectured extensively, at one time reaching the California Coast. London, England, was the last of his lecture stands and it was the complete winning of this critical city that made him universally famous. - - - His 'Artemus Ward' papers are

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20. Ibid p.677

21. Ibid p.677

22. Trent, Wm P. A History of American Literature 1903 p. 531.

midland region, from the steppes of the  
Miscellaneous, from the range of the cold coast,  
and the Divisions of the Civil War.

Longest, Harris, and Baldwin had been the

greatest historians.

"But the real father of the new school was an  
engineer, George Horatio Derby, 1823-1881, who  
found relief at times from the generalities of an  
exacting profession by writing his John Fremont's  
papers, in which he embodied the spirit of early  
California, where for a long time he was stationed.  
In his Phoenician, published in 1855, we find the  
elements of exaggeration, irreverence, egotism,  
statement, understatement, and Yankee egotism."

Mr. Grant acknowledges Derby's contribution of two

volumes of picturesque sketches (The Phoenician, 1855).

and The Golden Age, 1855) describing the Pacific

Coast. He says, "Nor should he be denied the credit of

having introduced to the world the name of the Pacific

Coast, and having taught his countrymen new tricks of

extravagant thought and expression."

The second humorist in this new school was Charles

Farrar Brown, (1824-87)

"A Maine Yankee, who worked his way into the  
Middle West, established one of the first of the  
Newspaper penny columns, and there lectured ex-  
tensively, at one time reaching the California  
Coast. London, England, was the last of his  
lectures and it was the complete winning  
of this critical city that made him universally  
famous. - - - His 'Farrar Brown' papers are

30.	1815	p. 277
31.	1815	p. 277
32.	Grant, W. F.	A History of American Literature
	1803	p. 231

unique. They are redolent of a droll personality. He added cacography to the stock of American humorous devices, and he added also whimsical incongruity, the element of the grotesquely unexpected."<sup>23</sup>

History furnishes a vivid portrayal of the background of these humorists: "The discovery of gold in California in 1849, with its attendant excitement and its unpredecated conditions, marks the opening of a picturesque era in American history."<sup>24</sup>

Miss Jennette, Tandy in Cracker Box, Philosophers further testifies to the picturesqueness of this period.

"The Americans were digging for gold, they were staking out the Great Plains, they were quarrelling and fighting, they were building transcontinental railways, laying down the Atlantic cable, swarming into cities, erecting huge industrial plants, and changing almost overnight from an aggregation of farmers and villagers into a nation of city dwellers and factory workers. And through it all they toiled and speculated and boodled and laughed, - great horse laughs, sardonic grunts, silly giggles, open-mouthed guffaws, sly chuckles.

Of the many men who kept them grinning, C. F. Browne and Henry Wheeler Shaw are best remembered. Both were fun-makers of a rare sort. They cracked jokes, sometimes inane, and sometimes vulgar. More than this, they breathed through their drolleries the exhalations of inborn and original personality. They made along with their witticisms an interpreta-

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23. Pattee, p. 677.

24. Patee, p. 738.

... They are... of a...  
... to the...  
... and...  
... the...  
...

History... a... of the...  
... of these...: "The... of gold in  
California in 1848, with the attendant excitement and  
its unprecedented conditions, marks the opening of a  
... in American history."<sup>34</sup>

Miss... in...  
...

Further... to the... of this period.

"The Americans were digging for gold, they  
were staking out the Great Plains, they were  
conquering and fighting, they were building  
transcontinental railways, laying down the Atlantic  
cable, erecting iron cities, erecting huge in-  
dustrial plants, and changing almost overnight  
from an aggregation of farmers and villagers into  
a nation of city dwellers and factory workers.  
And through it all they sailed and specialized  
and battled and fought - great horse races,  
carbonic gases, ally... open-mouthed  
cutlery, six churches.

Of the many men who kept their...  
C. T. Brown and Henry Wheeler Shaw are best  
remembered. Both were... of a...  
... They... some...  
and... More than this, they  
... through their... the...  
... and... They  
... with their... an...  
...

33. Pater, p. 277.  
34. Pater, p. 232.

tion of human nature as they saw it, and an arraignment of the foibles of man and the imperfections of the social order. And in Artemus Ward and Josh Billings, their assumed characters, they created literary personalities of undeniable virility. Long life to them."<sup>25</sup>

The Americans' love of aphorisms has been deep and lasting ever since the time of Benjamin Franklin, but the real "American Comic Solomon"<sup>26</sup> did not appear until the birth of Henry Wheeler Shaw 1818-85.

"Shaw, or 'Josh Billings', as he called himself, had had a varied career as college student, deck hand on the Ohio River, farmer and auctioneer in Western towns, before he began to write. In 1859, when he was forty, he published an Essay on the Mule and from that time his writings became more and more familiar until his name was well known in every American household, and deservedly so, for behind his grotesque spelling is real wisdom. From his quaint store of aphorisms one may construct the very soul of our Americanism."<sup>27</sup>

Synonymous with the development of the West, and the birth of the Western Humorists are the names of Francis Bret Harte 1836-1902 and Samuel Langhorne Clemens 1835-1910.

Regarding Bret Harte's place in the literary world William Henry Hudson says,

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25. Tandy, Jennette Reid Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire  
N. Y. Columbia University Press, 1925 p. 132.  
26. Patee, p. 678.  
27. Ibid p. 678

tion of human nature as they saw it, and an assign-  
ment of the forces of man and the imperfections of  
the social order. And in Artemus Ward and Josh  
Billings, their assumed characters, they created  
literary personifications of undeniable vitality. Long  
life to them.

The Americans' love of epigrams has been deep and

lasting ever since the time of Benjamin Franklin, but  
the real "American Basic Epigram" did not appear until

the birth of Henry Wheeler Shaw 1816-82.

"Shaw, or 'Josh Billings', as he called himself,  
had had a varied career as college student, book  
hand on the Ohio River, farmer and schoolmaster in  
Western towns, before he began to write. In 1832,  
when he was forty, he published an essay on the  
art of writing and from that time his writings became more and  
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every American household, and deservedly so, for he  
had his epigrams spelling in real wisdom. From  
his quaint store of epigrams one may construct the  
very soul of our Americanism."

Synchronous with the development of the West, and

the birth of the Western Epigram are the names of

Francis Paul Harte 1836-1902 and Samuel Langhorne

Clemens 1825-1910.

Regarding Paul Harte's place in the literary world

William Henry Hudson says,

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35. Harte, "The American Epigram" in American Humor and Satire  
W. Y. Columbia University Press, 1922, p. 122.

36. Harte, p. 878.

37. Harte, p. 878.

"In estimating Mr. Harte's work, allowance has of course to be made for the fact that it was his rare good fortune to break new ground, and to become the first literary interpreter of a life which with its primitive breadth and freedom, its unconventionality and picturesqueness, its striking contrasts of circumstance and character, offered singular opportunities to the novelist. - - - -

Among the qualities which perhaps most constantly impress the critical reader of his total work are his splendid dramatic instinct, his keen insight into character, his broad sympathy, and his subtle and pervasive humor."<sup>28</sup>

This "new ground" which Mr. Hudson aptly terms Harte's field of endeavor is fittingly and realistically described by Mr. Pattee, who says,

"The mad rush of all nationalities across the pathless plains, around the southern cape, across the isthmus; the headlong scramble of the mines; the mining towns that rose as if by magic in every gulch; the lawless miners who appealed to no law save their revolvers - men who today might be fabulously rich, 'treating' the town to champagne in buckets, tomorrow 'busted', and at work with spade and cradle; the rivalry and excitement when a stroke of the pick might make a man a millionaire or the turn of a card reduce him to poverty; the new scenery, almost tropical in its flora, and unprecedented in its proportions, with mammoth plants and trees, great canons, alkaline plains, and lofty sierras--all this was highly romantic and bound sooner or later to have its laureate, and they found it in Harte."<sup>29</sup>

No sketch of frontier life would be adequate without mention of John Hay (1838-1905), and Edward Eggleston

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28. Warner, Charles Dudley Library of the World's  
Best Literature - N. Y. Hill & Co. 1902, V. 17 p.6986.  
29. Pattee p. 738.

"In estimating Mr. Harte's work, allowance has of course to be made for the fact that it was his late good fortune to break new ground, and to become the first literary interpreter of a life which with its primitive breadth and freedom, its unconventionality and pictorialness, its striking contrasts of circumstance and character, offered singular opportunities to the novelist."

Among the qualities which perhaps most constantly impress the critical reader of his total work are his splendid dramatic instinct, his keen insight into character, his broad sympathy, and his subtle and persuasive humor."

This "new ground" which Mr. Hudson aptly terms Harte's

field of endeavor is fittingly and realistically described by Mr. Feltner, who says:

"The real truth of all realistic fiction is the picture plain, around the central case, across the landscape; the real one, the world of the mind; the plain that sees as it is made in every detail; the picture miners who appeared to no law save their own - men who today might be fabulously rich, tomorrow 'treating' the town to champagne in pockets, tomorrow 'dusted', and at work with spade and pickaxe; the rivalry and excitement when a stroke of the pick might make a man a millionaire or the loss of a mine reduce him to poverty; the new scenery, almost foreign in its life, and unprecedented in its proportions, with mammoth plants and trees, great canyons, alkaline plains, and lofty sierras--all this was highly romantic and bound sooner or later to have its laurels, and they found it in Harte."

No sketch of frontier life would be adequate without mention of John Hay (1858-1905), and Edward Eggleston

22. Warner, Charles Dudley, Library of the World's Best Literature - N. Y. Hill & Co., 1902, V. 17 p. 228-230.  
23. Feltner, p. 728.

(1837-1902), The latter was "the first to introduce prominently the middle border states into literature."<sup>30</sup> Eggleston's story The Hoosier Schoolmaster, the scene laid in the crude regions of early Indiana, was the first of his stories to attract attention. Mr. Pattee says,

"Its humor, its strange types, and its undoubted moral atmosphere, gave it a circle of readers wider even than that which had greeted the first stories of Harte. - - - Undoubtedly there is much of crudeness in the early work, but parts of it are exceedingly valuable. The End of the World and The Circuit Rider are realistic studies, by one to the manner born, of an era in our national life that has vanished forever."<sup>31</sup>

Hay's contribution to "wild-western" literature consisted of a "wild lawless ballad form."<sup>32</sup> His ballads were later collected as Pike County Ballads, and described "the homely western frontier life." The significance of this collection of poems lies in the fact that it, "all unconsciously set in motion that school of poetical local colorists, and dialect versifiers of whom James Whitcomb Riley is perhaps the typical figure. - - -"

"His was one of those rare germinal minds that appear now and then to break into new regions and to scatter seed from which others are to reap the harvest."<sup>33</sup>

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30. Pattee, p. 753.  
 31. Ibid p. 653.  
 32. Ibid p. 759  
 33. Ibid p. 759

(1887-1903). The latter was the first to introduce pro-  
 identify the middle border states into literature.<sup>30</sup>  
 Eglington's study, The Russian Schoolmaster, the scene  
 laid in the wide regions of early Indiana, was the first  
 of his stories to attract attention. Mr. Patten says,

"The honor, its strange type, and its un-  
 doubted moral atmosphere, gave it a circle of  
 readers wider than that which had greeted the  
 first stories of Eglington. - - - - - Undoubtedly there is  
 much of originality in the early work, but parts of  
 it are exceedingly valuable. The End of the World  
 and The Circuit Rider are realistic studies, by  
 one in the manner born, of an era in our national  
 life that has vanished forever."<sup>31</sup>

Ray's contribution to "mid-western" literature  
 consisted of a "wild lawless ballad form."<sup>32</sup> His

ballads were later collected as Pink Shovel Ballads,  
 and described "the homely western frontier life." The  
 significance of this collection of poems lies in the  
 fact that it, "fell unconsciously and in motion that  
 school of poetical local colorists, and dialect verse-  
 lists of whom James Whitcomb Riley is perhaps the  
 typical figure. - - - - -"

"This was one of those rare germinal minds that  
 appear now and then to break into new regions and to  
 scatter seed from which others are to reap the harvest."<sup>33</sup>

30. Patten,	p. 753
31. 1914	p. 853
32. 1914	p. 753
33. 1914	p. 753

In commenting on the function of the newspaper as a medium for literature, much credit must be assigned to James Whitcomb Riley, (1849-1916), whose poetical work as a humorist, began in verse contributions to all the papers around his home (Greenfield, Indiana). At first many of these poems were issued under pseudonyms; then in 1883 he published at his own expense a small collection entitled The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems.<sup>34</sup>

Riley is the foremost American representative of the movement called the democratization of poetry. His poetry confined itself to humble life - often rural life - and still more humble characters. He used dialect;

"And he used with liberal hand sentiment, and not over-refined humor, and all those other well known devices that enable the public reader to win popular audiences. His poems are thoroughly American and thoroughly democratic, and his influence on the period has been considerable. Often he strikes the note of true pathos, especially in his lyrics of childhood, and now and then there are chords that raise him from the ranks of the mere entertainers into the select company of the true poets."<sup>35</sup>

The picturesqueness of this new frontier life has been ably described by that master of humorists, Mark Twain. After the publication of Roughing It, his most

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34. Ibid p. 966.

35. Ibid p. 966.

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 entitled The Old Kentucky Home and Other Verse.<sup>34</sup>

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 American and thoroughly democratic, and his influence  
 on the period has been considerable. Often he strikes  
 the note of true pathos, especially in his lyrics of  
 childhood, and now and then there are choruses that  
 raise him from the ranks of the mere entertainer  
 into the select company of the true poets.<sup>35</sup>

The picturesque of his new frontier life has  
 been aptly described by that master of humorists, Mark  
 Twain. After the publication of Kentucky is his most

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34. Ibid. p. 288.  
 35. Ibid. p. 288.

amusing account of the frontier life, one reads "His pen became immediately in great demand, and innumerable sketches flowed from it, many of them recklessly exaggerated for the effect he wished to produce, always laughter-provoking, and nearly always having a wholesome element of satire of some sham or pretense or folly."<sup>36</sup>

There is a striking similarity between the lives of Mark Twain, and Saxe, for both writers were in great demand as lecturers, and as after dinner speakers. Referring to Mark Twain, Mr. Hudson writes, "As a lecturer, a teller of stories, and delineator of character he had scarcely a rival in his ability to draw and entertain vast audiences."<sup>37</sup>

Considering the similarity of the two men's lives, one will again ask why was Saxe eclipsed, while this contemporary and others live on in dazzling splendor. One preeminent reason is offered:

"Mr. Clemens humor has the stamp of universality which is the one indispensable thing in all enduring literary productions, and his books have been translated and very widely diffused and read in German, French and other languages. This is a prophecy of his lasting place in the world of letters."<sup>38</sup>

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36. Warner, Charles Dudley ed. Library of the World's Best Literature, N. Y. Hill & Co. 1902. V. 7 p. 3788.

37. Ibid p. 3788.

38. Ibid p. 3789.



Like Mark Twain, Artemus Ward "aimed at the presentation of a national, not a local type."<sup>39</sup> In contrast to these writers, Saxe's poems contained too many local allusions, which would not be readily understood by the universal reader. In short, his poetry lacked "the stamp of universality." There, again, many of Saxe's poems were satires on popular day fables; and satire, regardless how clever or brilliant, is doomed to perish with the period or circumstance which calls it forth. Then mention must be made of the fact that the Western humorists portrayed the teeming activities of the every day life of the every day pioneer and would therefore appeal to a vastly larger audience; whereas Saxe's poems were filled with classical allusions, and literary references; thus his audience would be greatly restricted. Then, too, Saxe had lived the conventional life of a lawyer, editor and poet; whereas the western writers, like Mark Twain and Bret Harte, had seen life in the mining camps, - "in the rough". Therefore, the writings of each would reflect the surrounds of the writer - which meant that Saxe's poems would be more

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39. Tandy, Jennette Reid p. 136.

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 writers, like Mark Twain and Bret Harte, had seen life  
 in the mining camps, - "in the rough." Therefore, the  
 writings of each would reflect the surroundings of the  
 writer - which meant that Saxe's poems would be more

refined, more conventional as regards theme and form,  
 while Harte's and Twains would be more filled with  
 flesh and blood.

Before any classification and selection of the  
 many devices which have been used, attention will  
 be directed to the range of the author's work. The  
 Riverside Edition of The Complete Works of John Muir  
 1911 (published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston,  
 1911), table of contents, classifies the work under the  
 following titles:

- 1) Prose; 2) Love Poems; 3) Leisure Day Essays;
- 4) Fairy Tales; 5) Fables and Legends of Many Countries;
- 6) Satires; 7) Examples from Occasional Poems; 8)
- Translations and Paraphrases; 9) Provenances; 10) Epigrams;
- 11) Epigrams; 12) Epigrams from the Latin of Virgil.

Instead of following the above conventional classification  
 of these poems, this thesis will group the  
 poet's range under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational
  - a) Politics
  - b) Law
  - c) Journalism
- 2) Occasional
- 3) Social

refined, more conventional as regards theme and form.

While Barre's and Tullis would be more filled with

flash and gloss.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SAXE'S HUMOR AND ITS RANGE

Before any classification and criticism of the comedy devices which Saxe used are made, attention will be centered on the range of the author's work. The Household Edition of The Poetical Works of John Godfrey Saxe, (published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston C. 1892,) table of contents, classifies the poems under the following titles:

- 1) Poems; 2) Love Poems; 3) Leisure Day Rhymes;
- 4) Fairy Tales; 6) Fables and Legends of Many Countries;
- 7) Satires; 8) Excerpts from Occasional Poems; 9) Translations and Paraphrases; 10) Travesties; 11) Sonnets;
- 12) Epigrams; 13) Epigrams from the Latin of Martial.

Instead of following the above conventional classification of Saxe's poems, this thesis will discuss the poet's range under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational
  - a) Politics
  - b) Law
  - c) Journalism
- 2) Occasional
- 3) Social

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SAKE'S WORK AND ITS RANGE

Before any classification and criticism of the poetry begins which Sake used and made, attention will be centered on the range of the author's work. The Riverside Edition of The Poetical Works of John Keats, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1892, table of contents, classifies the poems under the following titles:

- 1) Sonnets; 2) Love Poems; 3) Letters Day Letters;
  - 4) Fairy Tales; 5) Fables and Legends of Fairy Countries;
  - 7) Ballads; 8) Fragments from Occasional Poems; 9) Translations and Paraphrases; 10) Tragedies; 11) Sonnets;
  - 12) Epigrams; 13) Epigrams from the Latin of Martial.
- Instead of following the above conventional classification of Sake's poems, this thesis will discuss the poet's range under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational
  - a) Politics
  - b) Law
  - c) Journalism
- 2) Occasional
- 3) Social

- 4) Personal
- 5) Religious
- 6) Democracy
- 7) Local
- 8) Satires

Most people might agree that these are the representative phases of Saxe's life, and, as such, have contributed the subject matter or background for a very great majority of the poet's work. Recalling the biographical facts of Saxe's life that he was attorney-general of the State, then deputy-collector of customs, and in 1859 and 1860 the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor, one find it most natural that politics should furnish the poet with a lively topic for his versifying.

An incident of the campaign for governor furnished the following well-known epigram, A Candid Candidate.

"When John was contending (though sure to be beat)  
 In the annual race for the governor's seat,  
 And a crusty old fellow remarked to his face,  
 He was clearly too young for so lofty a place,  
 'Perhaps so,' said John, 'but consider a minute  
 The objection will cease by the time I am in it'."<sup>1</sup>

The humor of this characteristic epigram only can be fully appreciated when it is recalled that Saxe realized

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1. Saxe, J. G. The Poetical Works of --- p. 251.

- 4) Personal
- 5) Religion
- 6) Democracy
- 7) Local
- 8) National

Most people might agree that there are the representative  
 sensitive phases of a man's life, and, as such, have  
 contributed the subject matter or background for a very  
 great majority of the poet's work. Recalling the  
 biographical facts of Blake's life that he was attorney-  
 general of the state, then deputy-collector of customs,  
 and in 1803 and 1809 the unsuccessful Democratic candi-  
 date for governor, one finds it most natural that politics  
 should furnish the poet with a lively topic for his  
 versifying.

An incident of the campaign for governor furnished  
 the following well-known epigram. A Gambit candidate  
 "When John was contending (though true to be true)  
 In the recent race for the governor's seat,  
 And a certain old fellow resorted to his seat,  
 He was clearly too young for so lofty a place,  
 'Perhaps so,' said John, 'but consider a minute  
 The objection will cease by the time I am in it.'  
 The humor of this characteristic epigram only can  
 be fully appreciated when it is recalled that Blake realized

and regarded the nomination as purely complimentary, for there were not enough Democrats in the entire state to elect any executive to office.

Saxe was all his life a zealous Democrat, and soon after he became a lawyer he began to use his pen for the benefit of his political party. "During the Clay Campaign of 1844 he contributed various campaign songs and squibs to The St. Albans Republican."<sup>2</sup> One of the epigrams, characteristic of this period, runs as follows:

"The image of the Syrian Monarch's dream  
A type of modern whiggery would seem -  
A little gold, some iron and much brass  
Composed in part the ill compounded mass  
But yet so strong, it might have stood today  
Had not the pedestal been made of Clay."<sup>3</sup>

Of the three vocational themes, politics, law, and journalism, it is apparent that law furnished a greater number of his most popular poems, albeit Saxe never enjoyed this profession. And even though he practiced law in St. Albans and Burlington, Vermont until as late as 1851, he found the profession irksome, and expressed an intention of leaving the practice as soon as he could find a more congenial way of earning a living. One reason for his dislike of the law may be inferred from Mr. Taft's description of this period of Saxe's life.

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2. Taft, R. W. p. 22.

and received the nomination as purely complimentary,  
 for there were not enough Democrats in the entire  
 State to elect any executive to office.  
 Saxe was all his life a restless Democrat, and soon  
 after he became a lawyer he began to use his pen for the  
 benefit of his political party. "During the City Con-  
 vention of 1844 he contributed various campaign songs and  
 epigrams to the St. Albans Advertiser." One of the anti-  
 Democrats characteristic of this period runs as follows:

"The image of the British monarch's crown  
 A type of modern whigery would seem -  
 A little gold, some iron and much brass  
 Composed in part the ill compounded mass  
 But yet as iron, it might have stood today  
 Had not the political been made of clay."

Of the three vocational careers, politics, law, and  
 journalism, it is apparent that law furnished a greater  
 number of his most popular poems, albeit Saxe never en-  
 joyed this profession. And even though he practiced law  
 in St. Albans and Burlington, Vermont until as late as  
 1881, he found the profession tiresome, and expressed an  
 intention of leaving the practice as soon as he could find  
 a more congenial way of earning a living. One reason for  
 his dislike of the law may be inferred from Mr. Telfer's  
 description of this period of Saxe's life.

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St. Albans, Vt., p. 23.

"He was not a success as a lawyer; the brilliancy of his intellect forbade his relishing the dry profundity of the abstract science; and his practice which was never large was cared for by ex-lieutenant, governor Levi Underwood. His (Saxe) only appearance before the Supreme Court was in State v. Woodward - 23 Vt. 92 - argued for the State by J. G. Saxe, State's attorney, with whom was L. Underwood. In this he seems to have had the strong end of the argument for the decision favored the respondent Woodward."<sup>4</sup>

Saxe's uncongenial attitude towards the practice of law is readily sensed in the <sup>Poem</sup> case in which he offers advice to a young friend who thinks he should like to become a lawyer. Not only his distaste for the law, but his skill in punning are so unusual that the entire poem follows:

Advice to a Young Friend, who  
Thinks He Should like to Be a Lawyer

"No, no my boy! let others sweat  
And wrangle in the courts;  
Their pleas are most unpleasing things;  
You cannot trust Reports!

Although the law of literature  
May your attention draw,  
I'm very sure you wouldn't like  
The Literature of Law!

Justinian's Novels don't compare  
With those of Walter Scott;  
They've very little sentiment,  
And deuce a bit of plot!

When Coke on Littleton came down,  
He served him right; but who  
Would say it were a civil thing  
To set them both on you?

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4. Ibid p.35.

"He was not a success as a lawyer; the  
 brilliancy of his intellect forbade his relying  
 the dry practicality of the abstract sciences; and his  
 practice which was never large was cared for by an  
 lieutenant, Governor Levi Underwood. His (Saxe)  
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 State v. Woodward - 23 Vt. 33 - argued for the  
 State by L. G. Saxe, State's attorney, with whom  
 was L. Underwood. In this he seems to have had the  
 strong end of the argument for the decision favor-  
 ed the respondent Woodward."

Saxe's unpopularity attests towards the practice of  
 law is really senseless in the case in which he offers ad-  
 vice to a young friend who thinks he should like to be-  
 come a lawyer. Not only his detestation for the law, but  
 his skill in winning are so unusual that the entire poem  
 follows:

Advice to a Young Friend, who

Thinks He Should Like to Be a Lawyer

"No, no my boy! let others sweat  
 And wrangle in the courts;  
 Their business are most unpleasing things;  
 You cannot trust business!

Although the law of literature  
 May your attention draw,  
 I'm very sure you wouldn't like  
 The literature of law!

Lawyer's novels don't compare  
 With those of Walter Scott;  
 They're very little company,  
 And scarce a bit of profit!

When Scott an edition came down,  
 He served his light; but who  
 Would say it were a civil thing  
 To eat them both on go?

In Blackstone there is much, I own,  
 Well worthy of regard;  
 But then, my boy, like other stone,  
 You'll find him precious hard!

Sir William Jones is very well,  
 As every scholar knows;  
 But read, my lad, his poetry,  
 And never mind his prose.

Though Angell tempt you, heed him  
 not;  
 For Satan, to his shame,  
 Full oft, to further wicked ends,  
 Employs a seraph's name!

Though Aiken may be very wise,  
 Pray what is that to you?  
 His reader will be apt to find  
 That he is achin' too!

There's Story now, the lawyers say,  
 Is very fine indeed;  
 I only know he's not the kind  
 Young fellows like to read!

And as for Cruise, though much ad-  
 mired,  
 You'd better let him be,  
 And use, instead, the milder sort  
 That people take at sea!

No, no, my boy! let others sweat  
 And wrangle in the courts;  
 There's nothing pleasing in a Plea;  
 You cannot trust Reports!

Although the law of literature  
 May your attention draw,  
 I'M very sure you wouldn't like  
 The Literature of Law!"<sup>5</sup>

Saxe, humorously at least, recognized his inefficiency as a lawyer, for he once jocosely remarked on the

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5. Saxe, J. G. The Poetical Works of - p. 78.

In Elisabeth there is much, I own,  
Well worthy of regard;  
But then, my boy, like other things,  
You'll find his precious hand!

Mr. William lives in very well,  
As every school-boy knows;  
But read, my lad, his poetry,  
And never mind his prose.

Though Angels tempt you, read his  
Poem;  
For John, to his shame,  
Told all to further shamed ends,  
Enjoys a tragedy's name!

Though Alfred may be very wise,  
Till what is that to you?  
His reader will be not so kind  
That he is worth a look!

There's Stacy now, the lawyer boy,  
Is very fine indeed;  
I only know he's not the kind  
Young fellows like to read!

And as for Richard, though much ad-  
mired,  
You'd better let him be,  
And see, instead, the other sort  
That people take to see!

No, no, my boy! let others see  
And struggle in the court;  
There's nothing pleasing in a Stacy  
For cannot trust a lawyer!

Although the law of literature  
May your attention draw,  
I'm very sure you wouldn't like  
The literature of law!

Some, however at least, recognised his intellect  
clearly as a lawyer, for he once famously remarked on the

fact that out of three divorces which he secured, "two couples had been remarried and gone to living together again."<sup>6</sup>

On one occasion Saxe was present in the court at a tedious trial between two men, Weed and Beach. The lawsuit involved some water rights in the town of Jericho. Even while he sat listening to the tiresome suit, his sense of humor was present as well as his facility to versify, for he wrote:

"My wonder is really boundless,  
That among the queer cases we try,  
A land case should often be groundless,  
And a water case always be dry."<sup>7</sup>

Some of the best-known poems which were based on Saxe's law practice are:

The Briefless Barrister

Ode to the Legislature

The Blarney Stone

The Caliph and the Cripple

It is a well known fact that the law gave birth to some of the poet's cleverest verses, and of these undoubtedly The Briefless Barrister, a ballad, which humorously narrates the sad experience of a lawyer who had not a single case, is the most familiar. The popularity of this poem is vouched for by Mr. Taft.

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6. Taft, R. W. p.36.  
7. Ibid p. 36.

fact that out of three witnesses which he examined, "and  
 couples had been examined and come to living together  
 again."  
 On one occasion there was present in the court of a  
 tedious trial between the wife, Wood and Beach. The law-  
 suit involved some water rights in the town of Litchfield.  
 Over this he was listening to the witness and his  
 sense of humor was present as well as his facility to  
 variety, for he wrote:

"My wonder is really pardoned.  
 That among the great cases we try,  
 A land case should often be brought,  
 And a water case always be dry."

Some of the best-known poems which were based on  
 Beach's law practice are:

- The Water Case
- On the Land Case
- The Water Case
- The Water Case and the Land Case

It is well known that the law gave birth to  
 some of the poet's cleverest verses, and of these un-  
 doubtedly The Water Case, a ballad, which  
 humorously narrates the sad experience of a lawyer who  
 had not a single case, is the most familiar. The popu-  
 larity of this poem is vouched for by Mr. Tappan.

W. W. Tappan, p. 38.  
 W. W. Tappan, p. 38.

"The Briefless Barrister, published in The Knickerbocker for September, 1844, travelled fugitively through the papers of America and took a new lease of life after having been copied into Punch."<sup>8</sup> So filled with clever puns, and so characteristic of Saxe's ready wit, the poem is given in its entirety.

The Briefless Barrister

"An Attorney was taking a turn,  
 In shabby habiliments drest;  
 His coat it was shockingly worn,  
 And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,  
 His linen and worsted were worse;  
 He had scarce a whole crown in his  
 hat,  
 And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,  
 A cheerless and comfortless elf,  
 He sought for relief in a song,  
 Or complainingly talked to him-  
 self:-

"Unfortunate man that I am!  
 I've never a client but grief:  
 The case is, I've no case at all,  
 And in brief, I've ne'er had a brief!

"I've waited and waited in vain,  
 Expecting an 'opening' to find,  
 Where an honest young lawyer might  
 gain  
 Some reward for toil of his mind.

"'Tis not that I'm wanting in law,  
 Or lack an intelligent face,  
 That others have cases to plead,  
 While I have to plead for a case.

"The Princess Barbara, published in the Entertainment  
 for September, 1944, traveled faithfully through the  
 papers of America and took a new lease of life after hav-  
 ing been copied into unch. It is filled with clever puns,  
 and so characteristic of Barbara's ready wit the poem is  
 given in its entirety.

The Princess Barbara

"An attorney was taking a train,  
 In shabby habilitations dress;  
 His coat it was shockingly worn,  
 And the dust had invaded his vest.

His presence had sullied a bench,  
 His linen and surtout were soiled;  
 He had scowled a whole crown in his  
 hat.

And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,  
 A specious and comfortable air,  
 He sought for relief in a song,  
 Or complainingly lauded to him-

self:-

"Unfortunate was that I am!  
 I've never a client but great;  
 The case for, I've no case at all,  
 And in brief, I've never had a brief!

I've waited and waited to wait,  
 Expecting an 'opinion' to find,  
 Where an honest young lawyer might

gain

Some reward for toil at his side.

"This not that I'm wanting in law,  
 Or lack an intelligent face,  
 That others have cause to praise,  
 While I have to plead for a case.

'O, how can a modest young man  
 E'er hope for the smallest progres-  
 sion,-  
 The profession's already so full  
 Of lawyers so full of profession!'

While thus he was strolling around,  
 His eye accidentally fell  
 On a very deep hole in the ground  
 And he signed to himself, 'It is  
 well!'

To curb his emotions, he sat  
 On the curbstone the space of a min-  
 ute,  
 Then cried, 'Here's an opening at  
 last!'  
 And in less than jiffy was in it!

Next morning twelve citizens came  
 ('Twas the coroner bade them at-  
 tend),  
 To the end that it might be determined  
 How the man had determined his end!

'The man was a lawyer, I hear,'  
 Quote the foreman who sat on the  
 corse.  
 (A lawyer? Alas!' said another,  
 'Undoubtedly died of remorse!')

A third said, 'He knew the deceased,  
 An attorney well versed in the laws,  
 And as to the cause of his death,  
 'Twas no doubt for the want of a  
 cause.'

The jury decided at length,  
 After solemnly weighing the matter,  
 That the lawyer was drowned, because  
 He could not keep his head above wa-  
 ter!<sup>9</sup>

U, how can a modest young man  
find time for the swiftest progress  
also -

The professor's already as this  
of lawyers as full of professional

While thus he was strolling abroad,  
His eye accidentally fell  
On a very large hole in the ground  
And he picked it up. 'It is  
well!

We could his emotions, he said  
On the cupboard the space of a min-

ute,  
Then cried, 'Here's an opening at  
last!

And in fact then fifty was it!

Next morning twelve citizens came  
(There the corner had been at-  
tend)

To the end that it might be determined  
How the man had determined his end!

'The man was a lawyer, I hear,  
Quota the testimony who sat on the  
case.

'A lawyer? Alas! said another,  
'Undoubtedly died of nervous!

'I think said, 'He knew the deceased,  
An attorney well versed in the law,  
And as to the cause of his death,

'There he looks for the rest of a  
case.'

The jury decided at length,  
After solemnly weighing the matter,  
That the lawyer was crowded, because  
He could not keep his head above wa-  
ter!

Saxe's Ode to the Legislature, written on the occasion of "the expiration of the Hundred Days,"<sup>10</sup> might in many respects aptly describe the extra session of the recent legislature at Frankfort and the sales tax issue. His brilliant satire is evident throughout the poem. In part the ode follows:

"O Wise Assembly! and O wiser senate!  
 I much rejoice to pent it, -  
 The Hundred Days in which you lived in clover  
 Are gone and over:

Gone are the Legislators, great and small;  
 Clerks, Ushers, Porters, Messengers, and all  
 The crowd of country cousins in the hall:  
 Gone are the vultures, large and little;  
 Gone are the venders of cold victreal.  
 Gone are the ladies, short and tall,  
     The virtuous and the vicious,  
     The meritorious and the meretricious,  
 -----Gone is the patient, patriotic 'Lobby';  
 Some, who have bagged their game  
     Laden with wealth - and shame,  
 And others, leading home their lame  
     And ill-conditioned hobby,  
     A little leaner than it came;

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 The burning satire continues:

"They say, O Legislature; in despite  
 Of all adverse appearances, you might  
 Have been much weaker,  
 (How? I have asked, - but all in vain;  
 Nor could, or would, explain:)

-----  
 Perhaps, O Legislature; since your pay is  
     rather small  
 (I mean, of course, the regular per diem  
 And not the price of votes when brokers buy 'em)  
     You saw the Hundredth day  
     With pleasure, after all.

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10. Ibid p. 103.

...written on the occasion

of "the expiration of the ..."

respects apply describe the extra session of the recent

legislature at ... His

beliefs ... in part

the are follows:

"O like Assembly; and O what ...  
I much rejoice to ...  
The ... in which you lived in ...  
the gone and over;

Gone are the legislators, great and small;  
Gone are the ...  
The crowd of country ...  
Gone are the ...  
Gone are the ...  
The victims and the ...  
The ... and the ...  
-----  
Gone is the ...  
Some, who have ...  
Laden with ...  
And others, leading ...  
And ill-...  
A little ...

The ...

"They say, O ...  
Of all ...  
Have been ...  
(How? I have asked - but all in vain;  
Not could, or ...)

Perhaps, O ...  
rather ...  
(I mean, of course, the ...  
And not the ...  
The ...  
with ...)

-----

And thus, with greater cause,  
 Would we respect the Laws  
 (Which should be revered to be obeyed),  
 It isn't best to see them made."<sup>11</sup>

In the poem The Blarney Stone, Saxe continues his sharp satire of the "flippant tourist," the "shallow dandy", "the fine lady,-ready to defame, An absent beauty, with as sweet a grace," the "false pastor," and the lawyer to whom he refers in the stanza beginning:

"When sleek attorneys, whose seductive tongues,  
 Smooth with the unction of a golden fee,  
 'Breathe forth huge falsehoods from  
     capacious lungs,'  
 (The words are Juvenal's), 't is plain to see  
 A lawyer's genius isn't all his own;  
 The specious rogue has kiss the Blarney Stone!"<sup>12</sup>

It will be recalled that Saxe renounced the practice of law in 1851, and began his career as a journalist by buying and editing the Vermont Sentinel, which was a democratic weekly, then published in Burlington, Vermont.<sup>13</sup> He followed this career until 1856, and greatly enjoyed this editorial work; though strangely enough, he "did not try to make the Sentinel a power in politics or literature."<sup>14</sup>

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11. Ibid      p. 103-104 .

12. Ibid      p. 65.

13. Taft, R. W.      p. 38.

14. Ibid      p. 43.

And then, with greater haste,  
I tried to repeat the law  
(Which should be reversed in its effect),  
It isn't best to see them made, all

In the poem The History Lesson, some confusion has

arisen out of the "flippant comment," the "shallow

depth," the "fine lady," ready to believe, in effect

poetry, with an exact a phrase, "the 'false pastor,' and

the lawyer to whom he refers in the stanza beginning:

"When that attorney, whose seductive tongue,  
Sooths the the nation of a golden law,  
I breathe forth my falsehoods from  
casual language,"

(The words are "casual," it is clear to see

A lawyer's gentle law's all his own;

The speaker never has been the History Lesson,

It will be recalled that some confusion has arisen

of law in 1851, and began his career as a journalist in

beginning and editing the Western Herald, which was a

democratic weekly, then published in Burlington, Vermont.

He followed this career until 1866, and greatly enjoyed

this editorial work; though strongly opposed, he "did not

try to make the Herald a power in politics or literature.

- 11. 1818 P. 108-109
- 12. 1818 P. 88
- 13. 1818 P. 7 P. 88
- 14. 1818 P. 88

That he believed in the power of the newspaper as a force for good or ill in the community is attested to by such lines as:

"In the close precincts of a dusty room  
That owes few losses to the lazy broom,  
There sits the man; you do not know his name,  
Brown, Jones, or Johnson - it is all the same,  
Scribbling away at what perchance may seem  
And idler's musing, or a dreamer's dream;  
His pen, runs rambling, like a straying steed;  
The 'We' he writes seems very 'Wee' indeed;  
But watch the change; behold the wondrous power  
Wrought by the press in one eventful hour;  
Tonight, 'tis harmless as a maidens rhymes;  
Tomorrow, thunder in the London Times!  
The ministry dissolves that held for years;  
Her Grace, the Duchess, is dissolved in tears;  
The Rothchilds quail; the church, the army quakes,  
The very Kingdom to the center shakes;  
The Corn Laws fall, the price of bread comes down-  
Thanks to the 'we' of Johnson, Jones, or Brown!"<sup>15</sup>

Another incident during his editorial career is illustrative of the poet's ready wit. The following skit was suggested by a communication from an irate subscriber of the Sentinel whose political views differed from those of Saxe.

"A free soil patron of the Sentinel  
Politely bids us send the thing to hell;  
A timely hint. 'Tis proper we confess,  
With change of residence to change the address  
It shall be sent, if Charon's mail will let it."<sup>16</sup>

Although politics and the law both furnished Saxe with much material for his poems, yet many more were written to

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15. Ibid p. 44.

16. Ibid p. 44.

That he believed in the power of the newspaper as a force  
for good or ill in the community is attested by such

lines as:

"In the close proximity of a dusty town  
That were the lanes to the busy street,  
There sits the man; you do not know his name,  
But know his name - it is all the same,  
Scorning away at what perchance may seem  
And hissing, or a dreamer's dream;  
His pen, thus scribbling, like a straying steed;  
The 'W' he writes seems very 'Wet', indeed;  
But watch the change; behold the wondrous power  
Wrought by the press in one eventful hour;  
Tonight, 'tis heralded as a noblest triumph;  
Tomorrow, hushed in the Jordan flood;  
The ministry dissolves that held for years;  
For grace, the harness, is dissolved in tears;  
The gospeller's quill; the church, the very ground,  
The very Kingdom to the center's end;  
The corn laws fall, the price of bread comes down,  
Thanks to the 'W' of Johnson, Cass, or Sumner."

Another incident during his editorial career is this-

native of the poet's ready wit. The following was  
suggested by a communication from an Irish subscriber of  
the Register whose political views differed from those of

Saxs.

"A true self patron of the Register  
Politely bids us send the following to you:  
A timely hint, 'tis proper we confess,  
With change of residence to change the address  
It shall be sent, if Carson's call will let it."

Although politics and the law both furnished Saxs with

much material for his poems, yet many more were written to

18 1818  
18 1818

commemorate special incidents in the poet's life, or for special occasions. Little Jerry the Miller is one of the poet's best known ballads; and is a pleasant reminiscence of the poet's childhood, for the description of both the mill and the miller are both drawn from real people. The poem follows:

Little Jerry the Miller

"Beneath the hill you may see the mill  
 Of wasting wood and crumbling  
 stone;  
 The wheel is dripping and clattering  
 still,  
 But Jerry, the miller, is dead and  
 gone.

Year after year, early and late,  
 Alike in summer and winter weather,  
 He pecked the stone and calked the  
 gate,  
 And mill and miller grew old together.

'Little Jerry!' - 'twas all the same,-  
 They loved him well who called him  
 so;  
 And whether he'd ever another name,  
 Nobody ever seemed to know.

'Twas, 'Little Jerry, come grind my  
 rye';  
 And, 'Little Jerry, come grind my  
 wheat';  
 And 'Little Jerry' was still the cry,  
 From matron bold and maiden sweet.

'Twas 'Little Jerry' on every tongue,  
 And so the simple truth was told;  
 For Jerry was little when he was young,  
 And Jerry was little when he was old.

But what in size he chanced to lack  
 That Jerry made up in being strong;  
 I've seen a sack upon his back  
 As thick as the miller, and quite as  
 long.

commensurate special incidents in the year's life, or for  
 special occasions. Little Jerry the Miller is one of the  
 poet's best known ballads; and it is a pleasant reminiscence  
 of the poet's childhood, for the description of both the  
 mill and the miller are both drawn from real people. The  
 poem follows:

Little Jerry the Miller

"Beneath the mill you may see the mill  
 Of weathered wood and graining  
 stone;  
 The wheel is dripping and clattering  
 still,  
 But Jerry, the miller, is dead and  
 gone.  
 Year after year, early and late,  
 Alice in summer and winter weather,  
 He packed the stone and raised the  
 gate,  
 And mill and miller grew old together.  
 'Little Jerry!' - 'Dear old the same -  
 They loved him well who called him  
 so;  
 And whether he'd ever another name,  
 Nobody ever seemed to know.  
 'Twas 'Little Jerry,' come crying by  
 the  
 And 'Little Jerry,' come crying by  
 wheat;  
 And 'Little Jerry,' was still the cry,  
 From narrow hold and maiden quest.  
 'Twas 'Little Jerry,' on every tongue,  
 And so the simple truth was told;  
 For Jerry was little when he was young,  
 And Jerry was little when he was old.  
 But what in time he changed to look  
 That Jerry made up in being strong;  
 I've seen a sack upon his back  
 As thick as the miller, and quite as  
 long.

Always busy, and always merry,  
 Always doing his very best,  
 A notable wag was Little Jerry,  
 Who uttered well his standing jest.

How Jerry lived is known to fame,  
 But how he died there's none may  
 know;  
 One autumn day the rumor came,  
 'The brook and Jerry are very low.'

And then 't was whispered, mournfully,  
 The leech had come, and he was  
 dead;  
 And all the neighbors flocked to see;  
 'Poor little Jerry!' was all they said.

They laid him in his earthy bed,-  
 His miller's coat his only shroud;  
 'Dust to dust,' the parson said,  
 And all the people wept aloud.

For he had shunned the deadly sin,  
 And not a grain of over-toll  
 Had everdropped into his bin,  
 To weigh upon his parting soul.

Beneath the hill there stands the mill,  
 Of wasting wood and crumbling stone;  
 The wheel is dripping and clattering  
 still,  
 But Jerry, the miller, is dead and  
 gone.<sup>17</sup>

Acquiring a college education was a hazardous under-  
 taking in Saxe's day, and frequently meant an economic  
 struggle. That Saxe knew the literal meaning of the old  
 saying, "Plain living and high thinking" may be judged by

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17. Saxe, J. G. Complete poems p. 21.



some lines, reminiscent of under-graduate life, which are found in Carmen Laetum:

"Ah! well I remember the halcyon years,  
 Too earnest for laughter, too pleasant for tears,  
 When life was a boon in yon classical court  
 Though lessons were long, and though  
     commons were short!  
 Ah! well I remember these excellent men,  
 Professors and tutors, who reigned o'er us then;  
 Who guided our feet over Science's bogs,  
 And led us quite safe through Philosophy's fogs,  
 Ah! well I remember the President's \* face  
 As he sat at the lecture with dignified grace,  
 And neatly unfolded the mystical themes  
 Of various deep metaphysical schemes,-  
 How he brightened the path of his studious flock,  
 As he gave them a key to that wonderful Locke;  
 How he taught us to feel it was fatal indeed  
 With too much reliance to lean upon Reid;  
 That Stewart was sounder, but wrong at the last,  
 From following his master a little too fast,-  
 Then closed the discourse in a scholarly tone,  
 With a clear and intelligent creed of his own.  
 That the man had his faults it were safe to infer,-  
 Though I really don't recollect what they were,-  
 I hardly remember this one little truth,  
 When his case was discussed by the critical youth,  
 The Seniors and Freshmen were sure to divide,  
 And the former were all on the President's side!"<sup>18</sup>

\*(Joshua Bates, D. D.)

Another verse which has the ear-marks of college days, is the epigram, A Plain Case which reads as follows:

"When Tutor Thompson goes to bed,  
 That very moment, it is said,  
 The cautious man puts out the light,  
 And draws the curtain snug and tight.  
 You marvel much why this should be,  
 But when his spouse you chance to see,  
 What seemed before a puzzling case  
 Is plain as --Mrs. Thompson's face!"<sup>19</sup>

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18. Saxe, S. G. - The Poetical Works p. 70.  
 19. Ibid p. 250.



It will be recalled that Saxe was superintendent of the public schools of Franklin county for one year (1847-48). That experience in his career has furnished material for one of his cleverest poems- one that is especially enjoyable to study boys filled with a desire to "get even" with their tyrannical teachers.

Ye Pedagogue

" Righte learned is ye Pedagogue,  
 Fulle apt to reade and spelle,  
 And eke to teache ye parts of speeche,  
 And strap ye urchins welle.

For as 'tis meete to soake ye feete,  
 Ye ailinge heade to mende,  
 Ye Younker's pate to stimulate,  
 He beats ye other ende!

Righte lordie is ye Pedagogue  
 As any turbaned Turke;  
 For welle to rule ye District Schoole,  
 It is no idle worke.

For oft Rebellion lurketh there  
 In breaste of secrete foes,  
 Of malice fulle, in waite to pulle  
 Ye Pedagogue his nose!

Sometimes he heares, with trembling  
 fears,  
 Of ye ungodlie rogue  
 On mischieffe bent, with felle intent  
 To licke ye Pedagogue!

And if ye Pedagogue he smalle,  
 When to ye battell led,  
 In such a plighte, God sende him  
 mighte  
 To breake ye rogue his heade!

Daye after daye, for little paye,  
 He teacheth what he can,  
 And bears ye yoke, to please ye folke,  
 And ye Committee-man.



Ah! many crosses hath he borne,  
 And many trials founde,  
 Ye while he trudged ye district through,  
 And boarded rounde and rounde!

Ah! many a steake hath he devoured,  
 That, by ye taste and sighte,  
 Was in disdaine, 't was very plaine,  
 Of Days his patent righte!

Fulle solemn is ye Pedagogue,  
 Amonge ye noisy churls,  
 Yet other while he hath a smile  
 To give ye handsome girls;

And one, - ye fayrest mayde of  
 all,-  
 To cheere his wayninge life,  
 Shall be, when Springe ye flowers shall  
 bringe,  
 Ye Pedagogue his wife!<sup>20</sup>

But of all the most historic incidents which found expression by Saxe's pen, Carmen Laetum, is undoubtedly the best known. It was "recited, after dinner, before the Alumni of Middlebury College, at their semi-centennial celebration, August 22, 1850."<sup>21</sup> The poem was written to commemorate "an unsuccessful attempt to unite Middlebury College with the University of Vermont."<sup>22</sup>

Selections from this poem follow:

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20. Saxe, J. G. Poetical Works of- p. 58.  
 21. Saxe, J. G. Complete poems p. 69.  
 22. Ibid p. 69

The first of these is the fact that the  
... ..  
... ..

I have a number of other reasons  
... ..  
... ..

This subject is very important  
... ..  
... ..

and it is very important  
... ..  
... ..

and of all the other things which  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..

... ..

CONFIDENTIAL

... ..  
... ..  
... ..

"Indeed, I must tell you a bit of a tale,  
 To show you she's feeling remarkably hale;  
 How she turned up her nose, but a short time ago,  
 At a rather good-looking importunate beau,  
 And how she refused with a princess like carriage  
 A very respectable offer of marriage:

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So away with the dream of connubial joys,  
 I'll stick to the homestead, and look to the boys."<sup>23</sup>

The occasion when Saxe was enrolled as an honorary member of Psi Upsilon fraternity, by the Harvard Alpha Chapter (1853) was one of the happiest experiences of his life. As Mr. Taft states,

"The poet's love for Psi Upsilon and its members was deep and lasting, and he was a familiar figure at the reunions and bangnets of the order where some of his cleverest thoughts were delivered as toasts. On July 21, 1853, a few weeks after his initiation, Saxe read some characteristic post-prandial verses, part of which ran as follows:

'Success to Psi Upsilon - Beautiful Name!-  
 To the eye and the ear it is pleasant the same;  
 Many thanks to old Cadmus who made us  
     his debtors,  
 By inventing one day, those capital letters  
 Which still from the heart, we shall know how  
     to speak  
 When we've fairly forgotten the rest of our Greek.'

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Above all-the chief blessing the gods can impart-  
 May you keep a clear head and a generous heart;  
 Remember 'tis blessed to give and forgive;  
 Live chiefly to love, and love while you live;  
 And dying when life's little journey is done,  
 May your last, fondest sigh, be Psi Upsilon!'



All references to Saxe's personal life emphasize his social, genial nature. He was never happier than when mingling with the most distinguished of his contemporaries. For twenty-three consecutive summers he went to Saratoga Springs, a fashionable watering place.

"At such a place he was in his element; a brilliant conversationalist and something of a ladies' man withal, he never tired of talking when he had a good subject, and interested listeners; and often he would spend many happy hours conversing far into the night. The fashions and foibles of the famous watering place afforded a rich mine of satire."<sup>24</sup>

The Song of Saratoga is the most representative of this type of the poet's work. The popularity of this poem in the press in summer months was similar to Clement C. Moore's "The Night Before Christmas" in winter time.<sup>25</sup> The poem follows:

'Pray, what do they do at the  
Spring?'  
The question is easy to ask;  
But to answer it fully, my dear,  
Were rather a serious task.  
And yet, in a bantering way,  
As the magpie or mocking-bird  
sings,  
I'll venture a bit of a song  
To tell what they do at the Springs!

Imprimis, my darling, they drink  
The waters so sparkling and clear;  
Though the flavor is none of the best,  
And the odor exceedingly queer;  
But the fluid is mingled, you know,  
With wholesome medicinal things,  
So they drink, and they drink, and they  
drink,-  
And that's what they do at the  
Springs!

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24. Taft, R. W. p. 54.  
25. Ibid p. 55.

All reference to Ben's personal life emphasizes his  
 social, genial nature. He was never happier than when  
 mingling with the most distinguished of his contemporaries.  
 For twenty-three consecutive winters he went to Saratoga  
 Springs, a fashionable watering place.

"At such a place he was in his element; a  
 brilliant conversationalist and possessor of a 'lady's'  
 man withal, he never tired of talking when he had a  
 good subject, and interested listeners; and often he  
 would spend many happy hours conversing far into the  
 night. The seasons and topics of the former winter  
 plans afforded a rich mine of matter."<sup>22</sup>

The Book of Hymns is the most representative of this  
 type of the poet's work. The popularity of this poem in  
 the press in recent months was similar to Clement B. Moore's  
 "The Night Before Christmas" in winter time.<sup>23</sup> The poem

follows:

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,  
 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the land,

laughter, my darling, this drink  
 The waters so sparkling and clear;  
 Though the flavor is none of the best,  
 And the odor is scarcely sweet;  
 But the drink is mingled, you know,  
 With wholesome medicinal things,  
 So they drink, and they drink, and they  
 drink,  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Christmas!

22. Book of Hymns, p. 22.  
 23. Book of Hymns, p. 22.

Then with appetites keen as a knife,  
 They hasten to breakfast or dine  
 (The latter precisely at three,  
 The former from seven till nine).  
 Ye gods! what a rustle and rush  
 When the eloquent dinner-bell rings!  
 When they eat, and they eat, and they  
 eat,-  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

Now they stroll in the beautiful walks,  
 Or loll in the shade of the trees;  
 Where many a whisper is heard  
 That never is told by the breeze;  
 And hands are commingled with  
 hands,  
 Regardless of conjugal rings;  
 And they flirt, and they flirt, and they  
 flirt,-  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

The drawing-rooms now are ablaze,  
 And music is shrieking away;  
 Terpsichore governs the hour,  
 And Fashion was never so gay!  
 An arm round a tapering waist,  
 How closely and fondly it clings!  
 So they waltz, and they waltz, and they  
 waltz,-  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

In short-as it goes in the world-  
 They eat, and they drink, and they  
 sleep;  
 They talk, and they walk, and they  
 woo;  
 They sigh, and they laugh, and they  
 weep;  
 They read, and they ride, and they  
 dance  
 (With other unspeakable things);  
 They pray, and they play, and they  
 pay,--  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!<sup>26</sup>

Then with appetites keen as a knife,  
 They seated in breakfast or dine  
 (The latter precisely at three,  
 The former from seven till nine).  
 Ye goodly what a traffic and rush  
 When the elegant dinner-deli rings!  
 When they eat, and they eat, and they  
 eat,  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

Now they stroll in the beautiful walks,  
 Or loaf in the shade of the trees;  
 There many a whisper is heard  
 That never is told by the breeze;  
 And hands are congratulated with  
 hands,  
 Regardless of conjugal rings;  
 And they flirt, and they flirt, and they  
 flirt,  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

The drawing-rooms now are ablaze,  
 And music is whisked away;  
 Terpsichore governs the hour,  
 And fashion was never so gay!  
 As she turns a sportive waist,  
 How closely and fondly it glazes  
 So they wait, and they wait, and they  
 wait,  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

In an effort to go in the world-  
 They eat, and they drink, and they  
 sleep;  
 They talk, and they walk, and they  
 woo;  
 They sigh, and they laugh, and they  
 weep;  
 They read, and they ride, and they  
 dance  
 (With other unnumberable things);  
 They play, and they play, and they  
 play,  
 And that's what they do at the  
 Springs!

The versatility of Saxe needs little comment to one familiar with his poems. His pen seemed equally trained to depict serious or light moods. His carefree jovial nature often expressed itself in little personal skits, written frequently to celebrate some family experience. The following poem, written at the time of Saxe's youngest brother's marriage to Mrs. Saxe's youngest sister, is typical of this phase of his work:

"Oh lovely Sal, you naughty gal,  
Pray how's your noble Jim?  
And how is she who made for me  
A brother-in-law of him?"<sup>27</sup>

Another instance where the personal furnished him with the theme is found when, "Saxe laughingly alludes to his size in his Rhymed Epistle to the Editor of The Knickerbocker Magazine, in the lines.

"Now I am a young man you must learn,  
Less famous for beauty than strength,  
And for aught I could ever discern,  
Of rather superfluous length.  
In truth 'tis but seldom one meets  
Such a Titan in human abodes,  
And when I stalk over the streets,  
I'm a perfect Colossal of roads."<sup>28</sup>

The sheer joy which Saxe felt in living is well expressed in the poem,

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27. Taft, R. W. p. 48.  
28. Ibid p. 52.

The versatility of Gurne needs little comment to one familiar with his poems. He has seemed usually confined to habit and to light moods. His characters reveal nature often expressed itself in little personal epics, written frequently to celebrate some family experience. The following poem, written at the time of Gurne's youngest brother's marriage to Mrs. Gurne's youngest sister,

is typical of this phase of his work:

"Oh lovely girl, you marryest Gurne,  
 Every man's your wish's him!  
 And how is she who made for me  
 A brother-in-law of mine?"

Another instance where the personal furnished him with the theme is found when, "Gurne's marriage" alludes to his wife in his Epitaph on the Death of the Entrepreneur Magazine, in the lines,

"How I am a young man you must learn,  
 Late lessons for beauty than strength,  
 And for aught I could ever discern,  
 Of better opportunities I learn,  
 In youth 'tis not seldom one meets  
 Such a Titan in human shape,  
 And when I stain over the marble,  
 I'm a perfect Colossus of youth." 38

The short toy which Gurne left in living is well preserved in the poem.

BY Mrs. G. N. N. . . . .  
 IN 1881 . . . . .

Lines on My Thirty-Ninth Birthday

"Oh, few that roam this world of ours,  
 To feel its thorns and pluck its flowers,  
 Have trod a brighter path than mine  
 From blithe thirteen to thirty-nine.  
 Health, home, and friends (life's solid part)  
 A merry laugh, a fresh young heart,  
 Poetic dreams and love divine-  
 Have I got these at thirty-nine,  
 Oh, Time! Forego thy wasted spite,  
 And lay thy future lashes light,  
 And, trust me, I will not repine,  
 At twice the count of thirty-nine."<sup>29</sup>

The birth of twin sons, born to Saxe's brother, was  
 the occasion of the following lines:

"The proverb says in somber tone  
 'Troubles seldom come alone,'  
 But, to recompense our cares,  
 Blessings are sometimes sent in pairs.  
 Thus, when a single babe was due,  
 The grateful father welcomed two.  
 God bless them in this world of trouble;  
 May both find all their blessings double,  
 And to the joy of sire and mother  
 Each prove an honor to his brother."<sup>30</sup>

The poet's last collection of verse, Leisure-Day  
Rhymes (1875) show that he is thinking and writing about  
 more placid themes; and in Here and Hereafter, Saxe  
 gives glimpses of his own theological views:

" As for Me,  
 My creed is short as any man's may be;  
 'Tis written in the sermon on the Mount,  
 And in the Pater-Noster, I account

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29. Ibid p. 66.

30. Ibid p. 49.



The words Our Father (had we lost the rest  
Of that sweet prayer, the briefest and the best  
In all the liturgies) of higher worth,  
To ailing souls, than all the creeds on earth."<sup>31</sup>

And to the doubting person, anxious of the future destiny  
of man, Saxe gives comfort:

"No tongue inspired  
Hark plainly told us that. I cannot tell-  
It is not given to know - where we shall dwell;  
I only know-and humbly leave the rest  
To Wisdom Infinite - that what is best  
For each will be his place; that we shall wear  
In the Beyond the character we bear  
In passing."<sup>32</sup>

To the man mourning over his son's genius which was cut  
short before it had had time to develop, Saxe again pens  
the hopeful word:

"O Bildad; let it soothe thy grief,  
That He who gave the talents thou hast sought  
To cherish, and by culture wouldst have wrought  
To highest excellence in this thy son,  
Will surely finish what thou hast begun."<sup>33</sup>

Saxe's more religious poems included a beautiful hymn,  
Miserere Domine, which offers hope of forgiveness to any  
sinner who trusts in God's infinite mercy:

"Our Father! ever blessed name;  
To thee we bring our sin and shame;  
Weak though we be, perverse of will,  
Thou art our gracious Father still,  
Who knowest well how frail we be,  
Miserere Domine!"<sup>34</sup>

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31. Saxe, J. G. p. 92.

32. Ibid p. 93.

33. Ibid p. 93.

34. Saxe, J. G. - The Poetical Works of-- p. 97.

The words But Father (and we lost the rest  
of that great prayer, the witness and the best  
in all the liturgies) of higher worth,  
To bring back, then all the words so good.

And in the doubtful border, between of the future destiny  
of man, some give comfort:

"No longer inspired  
Mark plainly told us that. I cannot tell -  
It is not given to know - what we shall do;  
I only know-and hardly leave the rest  
To Wisdom Infinite - that what is best  
For each will be his gift; that we shall wear  
In the Beyond, the character we bear  
In passing."

To the man working over his own's genius which was not  
short before it had had time to develop, some again point

the hopeful word:

"O Mind; let it create thy trial,  
That we who have the talents thus best wrought  
To cherish, and by others' souls have wrought  
To highest excellence in this day age,  
Will surely find what that best power."

Some more religious poems included a beautiful hymn,

Minister Home, which offers hope of forgiveness to any

sinner who trusts in God's infinite mercy:

"Our Father! ever blessed name;  
To this we bring our sin and shame;  
Wee know not we be, purveyors of will,  
That our own passions' Father still,  
Who knowest all we fail we be,  
Minister Home!"

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31. Some, J. G.	p. 83.
32. Ibid	p. 84.
33. Ibid	p. 85.
34. Some, J. G. - The Pastoral Verse 85-	p. 87.

Two themes which furnished Saxe ample material for his poems were democracy and satire. In an unusually humorous vein he shows his love of democracy by severely satirizing the false pretensions of would be aristocrats for family pride in their ancestors. This bitter arraignment of American ancestor worship is best seen in The Proud Miss McBride, one of Saxe's longest and best known poems. He writes:

"Of all the notable things on earth,  
 The queerest one is pride of birth,  
 Among our 'fierce Democracie'!  
 A bridge across a hundred years,  
 Without a prop to save it from sneers,-  
 Not even a couple of rotten peers,-  
 A thing for laughter, fleers, and jeers,  
 Is American aristocracy:

- - - - -  
 English and Irish, French and Spanish  
 German, Italian, Dutch, and Danish,  
 Crossing their veins until they vanish  
 In one conglomeration!  
 So subtle a tangle of Blood, indeed,  
 No modern Harvey will ever succeed  
 In finding the circulation!

Depend upon it, my snobbish friend,  
 Your family thread you can can't ascend,  
 Without good reason to apprehend  
 You may find it waxed at the farther end  
 By some plebeian vocation;  
 Or, worse than that, your boasted Line  
 May end in a loop of stronger twine,  
 That plagued some worthy relation!"<sup>35</sup>

From this same poem comes a stanza, peculiarly

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35. Ibid p. 11.

The House which furnished some ample material for his  
 some were democracy and justice. In an unusually democratic  
 year he shows his love of democracy by actively maintaining  
 the fair pretensions of some of his constituents for family  
 pride in their country. This is the assignment of  
 American respect which is best seen in the Great War  
History, one of our best history and best known names. He

writes:

For all the noble things in earth,  
 The greatest one is wife and child,  
 Along our 'Glories Democratic';  
 A father needs a hundred years,  
 Without a day to have it free again,  
 Not even a couple of rotten years,  
 A time for laughter, tears, and love,  
 Is American democracy;

English and Irish, French and Spanish  
 German, Italian, Dutch, and Welsh,  
 Crossing their paths with their various  
 In the cosmopolitan;  
 He settles a family of blood, indeed,  
 He makes history all over again,  
 Is living the classical;

Democracy is, my noblest friend,  
 Your family bread you can not afford,  
 Without good reason to appreciate,  
 You may find it waxed at the father end  
 By some political position;  
 Or, worse than that, your bowed line  
 May end in a long of stronger line,  
 That played some worthy relation;

From this time comes a state, particularly

appropriate to the situation of the financial world in  
1929:

"Alas! that people who've got their box  
Of cash beneath the best of locks,  
Secure from all financial shocks,  
Should stock their fancy with fancy  
stocks,  
And madly rush upon Wall Street  
rocks,  
Without the least apology;  
Alas! that people whose money affairs  
Are sound beyond all need of repairs,  
Should ever tempt the bulls and bears  
Of Mammon's fierce Zoology!"<sup>36</sup>

The poet's love of democracy <sup>as</sup> in regard ~~to~~ financial  
equality, and intense hatred of the idle rich ~~is~~ keenly  
apparent in his bitter satire, The Money-King. The power  
of wealth he describes in the lines:

"That mighty potentate, the Money-King!  
His kingdom vast extends o'er every land,  
And nations bow before his high command,  
The weakest tremble, and his power obey,  
The strongest honor, and confess his sway.  
He rules the Rulers!- e'en the tyrant Czar  
Asks his permission ere he goes to war;  
The Turk, submissive to his royal might,  
By his decree has gracious leave to fight;  
Whilst e'en Britannia makes her humblest bow  
Before her Barings, not her Barons now,  
Or on the Rothchild suppliantly calls  
(Her affluent 'uncle' with the golden  
balls),  
Begs of the Jew that he will kindly  
spare  
Enough to put her trident in repair,  
And pawns her diamonds, while she  
humble craves  
The money<sup>\*</sup>king's consent to 'rule the  
waves!"<sup>37</sup>

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36. Ibid p. 12.

37. Ibid p. 211.

appropriate to the situation of the financial world is

1932:

'I'll tell you, she's got her  
 Of such beauty the best of looks,  
 Beauty that all the world  
 Shows from her face with every  
 stroke,  
 And really such a fair  
 face,  
 Without the least shadow;  
 Alas! that people were more  
 And sound beyond all need of  
 Would ever touch the pulse  
 Of Hamon's three daughters!

The poet's loss of democracy is  
 equality, and intense hatred of  
 appears in his bitter satire, The Honey-King. The power  
 of wealth he describes in the lines:

"That might possess it, the Honey-King,  
 His kingdom vast extends o'er every land,  
 And nations bow before his high command,  
 The weakest tremble, and the bravest obey,  
 The strongest honor, and converse his way,  
 He raises the humble, and the tyrant  
 And his dominion was he gave to war;  
 The Turk, submissive to his royal might,  
 By his device the Grecian  
 Shifts his throne, makes for himself  
 Before her carriage, not her  
 Or on the road, she  
 (Her attendants, with the  
 )  
 Page of the text he will  
 give  
 enough to put her  
 and power her  
 people  
 The Honey-King's  
 answer."

26. 1914 p. 18.  
 27. 1914 p. 211.

The power of money is apparent:

"He builds the house where Christian  
 people pray,  
 And rears a bagnio just across the way;  
 Pays to the priest his stunted annual  
 fee;  
 Rewards the lawyer for his venal plea;  
 Sends an apostle to the heathen's aid;  
 And cheats the Choctaws, for the good  
 of trade;  
 Lifts by her heels and Ellsler to renown,  
 Or, bribing "Jenny," brings an angel  
 down!  
 He builds the Theatres and gambling  
 Halls,  
 Lloyds and Almacks, St. Peter's and St.  
 Paul's;  
 Sin's gay retreats and Fashion's gilded  
 rooms,  
 Hotels and Factories, Palaces and  
 Tombs;  
 Bids Commerce spread her wings to  
 every gale;  
 Bends to the breeze the pirate's bloody  
 sail;  
 Helps Science seek new worlds among  
 the stars;  
 Profanes our own with mercenary  
 wars;  
 The friend of wrong, the equal friend  
 of right,  
 Oft may we bless and oft deplore his  
 might,  
 As buoyant hope or darkening fears  
 prevail,  
 And good or evil turns the moral scale."<sup>38</sup>

Saxe's strong dislike of the extreme wealthy is expressed  
 in:

"Of all the ills that owe their baneful rise  
 To wealth o'er grown, the most despotic vice.  
 Is Circean Luxury; prolific dame

---

38. Ibid p. 212.

The power of money is enormous:

"He builds the house where Christian  
 people pray,  
 and turns a certain hour across the way;  
 says to the priest his richest annual  
 fee;  
 rewards the lawyer for his usual plea;  
 sends an agent to the merchant's aid;  
 and cheats the doctor, for the good  
 of trade;  
 little by her heels and slyly to remove  
 Of public 'sauce,' brings an angel  
 down;  
 He builds the theater and gambling  
 halls,  
 Florida and Alaska, St. Peter's and St.  
 Paul's;  
 his gay retreats and Venetian's allied  
 rooms,  
 Hotels and Casinos, Palaces and  
 ponds;  
 his conquest spread her wings to  
 every side;  
 sends to the prince the pirate's booty  
 all;  
 helps science seek new worlds among  
 the stars;  
 protects our own with necessary  
 wars;  
 the friend of wrong, the enemy friend  
 of right;  
 Of us we bless and all despise his  
 might;  
 As potent hope or deterring fear  
 prevail,  
 and good or evil turns the mortal scale."<sup>13</sup>

Some other details of the extreme wealth is expressed

in:

"Of all the life that one their benefit tries  
 To wealth or power, the most despotic tries  
 In Circumlocution; political name

Of mental impotence and moral shame,  
 And all the cankering evils that de-  
   vase  
 The human form and dwarf the human  
   race.  
   See yon strange figure, and a moment  
   scan  
 That slenderest sample of the genus  
   man!  
 Mark, as he ambles, those precarious  
   pegs  
 Which by their motion must be deemed  
   his legs!  
 He has a head,-one may be sure of  
   that  
 By just observing that he wears a hat;  
 That he has arms is logically plain  
 From his wide coat-sleeves and his pen-  
   dent cane;  
 A tongue as well,-the inference is  
   fair,  
 Since, on occasion, he can lisp and  
   swear.  
 You ask his use? - that's not so very  
   clear,  
 Unless to spend five thousand pounds a  
   year  
 In modish vices which his soul adores,  
 Drink, dress, and gaming, horses,  
   hounds, and scores  
 Of other follies which I can't rehearse,  
 Dear to himself and dearer to his purse."<sup>39</sup>

The poet's true love of equality in all things - of  
 real democracy in all walks of life abounds in such lines  
 as:

"To me the boon may gracious Heaven  
   assign,-  
 No cringing suppliant at Mammon's  
   shrine,  
 Nor slave of Poverty,-with joy to  
   share

---

39. Ibid p215.

Of mental impotence and moral shame,  
 And all the degrading evils that be-  
 come  
 The human form and heart the human  
 race  
 See you strange figures, and a woman,  
 that slender sample of the female  
 race;  
 Mark, as he smiles, those pretensions  
 which by their motion must be deemed  
 his own;  
 He has a hand, - one may be sure of  
 that  
 By just observing that he wears a hat;  
 That he has arms is logically plain  
 From his wide coat-sleeves and his gait  
 best seen;  
 A tongue as well, - the inference is  
 plain,  
 Since, on occasion, he can hiss and  
 hiss,  
 You see his feet - that's not so very  
 clear,  
 Unless to spend five thousand pounds a  
 year  
 In rolling vice which his kind shows,  
 Drink, games, and gambling, horses,  
 pounds, and scores  
 Of other follies which I can't rehearse,  
 Best to himself and better to his purse.  
 23

The poet's true love of equality in all things - of  
 real democracy in all walks of life stands in each line

22

"So we the poor and gracious Heaven  
 -  
 No earthly equivalent of Heaven's  
 -  
 Not slave of Poverty, - with joy to  
 share

The happy mean expressed in Agur's  
 prayer:-  
 A house(my own) to keep me safe and  
 warm,  
 A shade in sunshine, and a shield in  
 storm;  
 A generous board, and fitting raiment,  
 clear  
 Of debts and duns throughout the cir-  
 cling year;  
 Silver and gold, in moderate store, that I  
 May purchase joys that only these can  
 buy;  
 Some gems of art, a cultured mind to  
 please,  
 Books, pictures, statues, literary ease.  
 That 'Time is money' prudent Frank-  
 lin shows  
 In rhyming couplets and sententious  
 prose.  
 Oh, had he taught the world, in prose  
 and rhyme,  
 The higher truth that Money may be  
 Time!  
 And showed the people, in his pleasant  
 ways,  
 The art of coining dollars into days!  
 Days for improvement, days for social  
 life,  
 Days for your God, your children, and  
 your wife;  
 Some days for pleasure, and an hour to  
 spend  
 In genial converse with an honest friend.  
 Such days be mine! - and grant me,  
 Heaven, but this,  
 With blooming health, man's highest  
 earthly bliss,-  
 And I will read, without a sign or  
 frown,  
 The startling news that stocks are going  
 down;  
 Hear without envy that a stranger  
 hoards  
 Or spends more treasure than a mint  
 affords;  
 See my next neighbor pluck a golden  
 plum,  
 Calm and content within my cottage-  
 home;

The paper soon answered in reply  
 A message (or) to come on sale and  
 A shade in pencil, and a shade in  
 A general heart, and filled  
 Of hope and love throughout the air  
 Silver and gold, in moderate flow, that I  
 May purchase love that only love can  
 Some form of art, a polished style to  
 Hence, wherever, either, literary man,  
 That 'tis in every, prudent, man  
 In physical complete and mental  
 Oh, had he taught the world, in prose  
 The higher truth that honey may be  
 And showed the people, in his presence  
 The art of cooling, before the day  
 Days for your God, your children, and  
 Few have for pleasure, and as best to  
 In social converse with an honest friend,  
 Such days be mine - and that we,  
 With flowing health, man's highest  
 And I still read, without a sign or  
 The statistic news that stocks are rising  
 Hear without any that a stranger  
 Or speaks more pleasant than a wife  
 See my next neighbor, glad to hold  
 Calm and content with my content  
 None;

Take for myself what honest thrift may  
 bring,  
 And for his kindness bless the Money-  
 King!<sup>40</sup>

Saxe had a profound love of satirizing the foibles of his day, and this fondness for satire has given the world some of his best known poems. His dislike of the young widow, so beautifully dressed in mourning, yet without any real sadness in her heart is humorously commented on:

"I saw her last night at a party  
 -----Boiled over in billows of crape!"<sup>41</sup>

His irony for this type of person is continued:

"I thought:- It is scarce without measure-  
 The sorrow that goes by the yard!"<sup>42</sup>

Another observation which Saxe made about the irony of life, and how happiness is marred by foolishness is found in The Way of the World which follows:

"A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But she was rich, and he was poor,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A lady never could wear-  
 Her mother held it firm-  
 A gown that came of an India  
 plant,  
 Instead of an India worm.-  
 And so the cruel word was spoken;  
 And so it was two hearts were broken.

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40. Ibid p. 216.  
 41. Ibid p. 8.  
 42. Ibid p. 9.

There for myself what happens...  
Add for a...  
Etc.

There had a profound love of...  
of his days and this...  
world some of his best known...  
young widow, so beautifully...  
without any real...  
connected on;

There for last night at a party...  
-----filled over in...  
of...

The irony for this type of process in...

It thought: -- It is scarce without...  
The source that goes by the...

Another observation which says was about the irony

of life, and how happiness is...  
of...

found in the way of the world...

A youth would marry a maiden,  
For fair and good was she;  
But she was rich, and he was poor,  
And so it might not be.  
A lady never would wear  
Her mother's old dress;  
A gown that came of an India  
Instead of an India gown.  
And so the cruel word was spoken;  
And so it was the hearts were broken.

40. 1018 p. 218  
41. 1018 p. 218  
42. 1018 p. 218

A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But he was high and she was low,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A man who had worn a spur,  
 In ancient battle won,  
 Had sent it down with great re-  
 renownd,  
 To goad his future son!-  
 And so the cruel word was spoken;  
 And so it was two hearts were broken.

A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But their sires disputed about the  
 Mass,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A couple of wicked kings,  
 Three hundred years ago,  
 Had played at a royal game of chess,  
 And the Church had been a  
 pawn!-  
 And so the cruel word was spoken;  
 And so it was two hearts were broken."<sup>43</sup>

The mother eager to marry off her daughter, who comes  
 to Saratoga Springs, serves as a subject of ridicule-

In Cloe to Clara this situation is discussed.

"'Tis pleasant to guess at the reason  
 The genuine motive, which brings  
 Such all-sorts of folks, in the season,  
 To stop a few days at the Springs.  
 Some come to partake of the waters  
 (The sensible, old-fashioned elves);  
 Some come to dispose of their daughters,  
 And some to dispose of -themselves!"<sup>44</sup>

This same poem describes the general gossip which goes on  
 at such places and by such people -

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43. Ibid p. 7-8.

44. Ibid p. 64.

A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But he was rich and she was poor,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A man who had won a war,  
 In ancient battle won,  
 Had sent it down with great re-  
 venue,  
 To good his father's name;  
 And so the great word was spoken;  
 And so it was the hearts were broken.

A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But their eyes shined about the  
 moon,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A couple of mixed blood,  
 Their hearts were true,  
 Had loved at a royal court of grace,  
 And the Church had seen a  
 seal;  
 And so the great word was spoken;  
 And so it was the hearts were broken.

The mother came to marry off her daughter, who comes

to Saratoga Springs, serves as a subject of thought.

In this is shown this situation is discussed.

With pleasant to guests at the season  
 The guests were, which were  
 From all sorts of folk, in the season,  
 To stop a few days at the Springs.  
 Some come to parties of the water  
 (The beautiful, old-fashioned view);  
 Some come to dinner of their language,  
 And some to dinner of - (the same).

This same poem described the general aspect which goes on

at each place and by each people -

43. 1915 P. 1-2  
 44. 1915 P. 24

"And then what a gossiping sight!  
 What talk about William and Harry;  
 How Julia was spending last night;  
 And why Miss Morton should marry:  
 Dear Clara, I've happened to see  
 Full many a tea table slaughter;  
 But, really, scandal with tea  
 Is nothing to scandal with water!"<sup>45</sup>

Thus it is evident that all subjects, from the legislature to the idiosyncracies of woman's dress afforded Saxe rich ground for his popular satires.

"He who laughs," said the Mother of Goethe, can commit no deadly sin!"<sup>46</sup> Sterne insisted that every laugh lengthens the term of our lives. "The Emperor Titus thought he had lost a day if he had passed it without laughing."<sup>47</sup> Now what is laughter? A brief review of the theory of laughter based on the principles stated by Meredith, Hobbes, Sully, and Bergson follows:

Regarding the origin of laughter, Meredith says,

"The precise origin of ancient classical comedy is a matter of dispute. Aristotle observes the invention of comedy was claimed by the Dorians of Megara, and likewise by the Dorians of Sicily; he adds that at all events comedy originated in the improvisations of the leaders in the Phallic song and dance, noting that the custom of the Phallic procession has been preserved up to his time in many cities. The Phallic procession was associated with the worship of Dionysus. In The Origin of Attic Comedy, London, 1914, F. M. Cornford argues from a

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45. Ibid p. 63.

46. Whipple, Edwin, P. Literature and Life.  
 Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899, p. 86.

47. Ibid p. 86.

And then what a beautiful night!  
 What fair about William and Mary;  
 How little was spending last night;  
 And how Mrs. Norton should marry;  
 Dear Clara, I've happened to see  
 Full many a tea table lighter;  
 But, really, I'm scandalized with you,  
 Is scandalous to scandal with you!"

That is it evident that all subjects, from the  
 legislature to the idiosyncrasies of women's dress al-  
 luded here rich ground for his popular satires.  
 "He who laughs," said the Baron of Goethe, "can  
 commit no deadly sins."<sup>46</sup> Sterne insisted that every  
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Regarding the origin of laughter, Meredith says,  
 "The practice origin of ancient classical comedy  
 is a matter of dispute. Aristotle observes the in-  
 version of comedy was coined by the Romans of  
 Wagner, and likewise by the Romans of Sicily; he  
 adds that all comic comedy originated in the in-  
 provocations of the leaders in the Phallic song and  
 dance, noting that the origin of the Phallic pro-  
 ceeding has been preserved up to his time in many  
 cities. The Phallic procession was associated with  
 the festival of Dionysus. In The Origin of Laughter  
 Huxley, London, 1912, p. 10. Darwin agrees from a

46. Ibid. p. 98.  
 47. Whipple, Edwin, P. Litigators and Life.  
 Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892, p. 82.  
 48. Ibid. p. 98.

study of Aristophanes that the type arose from a marriage ritual, in which the risen god, Dionysus typified the revival of vegetation when the winter is past (he seeing the fructifying principle), and which stimulated the 'Union of Heaven and Earth for the renewal of all life in Spring'."48

While the origin of laughter is uncertain, there is no uncertainty about the lack of dignity which was at first associated with it.

"It was long ago suspected by Greece and Rome who had no good opinion of it. A Victorian social code frowned on laughter-loving women. Neither the painter nor the sculptor can find any beauty in it for his art. --- It is not found in the temple nor where men seek honor and glory. Be one a lover, a singer, a dreamer, or a warrior and such he will not laugh. Aristotle has observed that in Greece men who were eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, or the arts were melancholy men. Laughter - the word itself can claim no better origin than an Anglo-Saxon cacophony. Out of the Greek a laugh comes down to us as a cochinnation and out of the Latin it comes rooted in our verbs to deride and to ridicule."49

George Meredith, however, presents a balance between the good and bad effects of laughter.

"Laughter is open to perversion, like other good things; the scornful and the brutal sorts are not unknown to us; but the laughter directed by the Comic Spirit is a harmless wine, conducing to sobriety in the degree that it enlivens. It enters you like fresh air into a study, as when one of the sudden contrasts of the comic idea floods the brain like reassuring daylight. ---That which you give out-

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48. Meredith, George      An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1918 p. 179-80.

49. Letters, Lexington, University of Ky. V. 5- No. 20. p. 28. August 1932.

study of vegetation that the type grows from a  
certain point, in which the river and the  
typical the typical of vegetation when the water  
is high (the water the typical principle), and  
which illustrates the 'Union of Heaven and Earth for  
the removal of all life in Spring', etc.

While the origin of language is uncertain, there is  
no doubt about the fact of identity which was at first  
associated with it.

It was long ago described by Brown and Jones who  
had no good opinion of it. A Victorian social code  
learned on higher-level women. Neither the painter  
nor the sculptor can find any beauty in it for his art  
--- if he is not found in the family nor where can he  
honor his art. He has a lover, a sister, a daughter,  
or a warrior and even he will not laugh. Aristotle  
has observed that in Greece men who were eminent in  
politics, poetry, or the arts were seldom  
only men. Aristotle - the word itself can claim no  
better origin than an Anglo-Saxon etymology. Out of  
the Greek a large course down to us as a confirmation  
and out of the fact it comes rooted in our words to  
politics and to philosophy.

George Meredith, however, presents a balance between

the good and bad effects of language. Language  
Language is often a pervasion, like other good  
things: the eternal and the eternal sense are not un-  
known to us; but the language described by the comic  
is a harmful vice, according to Aristotle in  
the course that it follows. It enters you like fresh  
air into a study, as when one of the random contents  
of the comic idea floods the brain like the resuscitating  
air. --- that which you give out.

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- 88. Meredith, George. An Essay on Comedy and the Uses  
of the Comic Spirit. New York, Scribner's Sons,  
1913. P. 178-80.
  - 89. Aristotle, Linguistics, University of Chicago Press, 1927.  
P. 25. Chapter 1777.

-the joyful roar- is not the better part; let that go to good-fellowship and the benefit of the lungs."<sup>50</sup>

In order that one may fully understand Meredith's description of laughter, it is necessary to know what he means by the Comic Spirit.

"It is a Spirit overhead --- luminous and watchful. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half-tension- ---was once a big round satyr's laugh--men's future upon earth does not attract it; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hood winked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another. Whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk; the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign, and cast an oblique light on them, followed by valleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit."<sup>51</sup>

Meredith considers that laughter "is more of the order of smile, finely-tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity."<sup>52</sup>

Another well-known theory of laughter has been advanced by the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, whom Addison in the Spectator No 47 quotes as stating,

"The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly;

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50. Meredith, George An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1918, p.145

51. Ibid p. 141-142.

52. Ibid p. 141.



for men laugh at the folly of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonor. 'Fortunately Hobbes in his work, Leviathan, defines the meaning of the phrase 'sudden glory'. 'Sudden Glory', is the passion which maketh those grimaces called 'laughter'; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that they are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves who are forced to keep themselves in their own favor, by observing the imperfections of other men, and therefore much laughter at the defects of others, is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves only with the most able."<sup>53</sup>

Regarding his observations about laughter, Addison concludes, "Every one laughs at somebody that is in an inferior state of folly to himself."<sup>54</sup> He substantiates this theory by quoting customs of various countries like England and Germany; for instance, he continues,

"It was formerly the custom for every great house in England to keep a tame fool dressed in petticoats, that the heir of the family might have an opportunity of joking upon him, and diverting himself with his infirmities."<sup>55</sup>

For this same purpose, idiots were retained in the court at Germany so that the courtiers could use them as a butt

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53. Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil, Cambridge (Eng.) Univ. Press 1904. p. 34.

54. Addison, Joseph. The Spectator, No. 47, Philadelphia, James Crissy, 1838, p. 260.

55. Ibid p. 261.

the most important of the latter of themselves part, even  
 that some tendency to conservatism, except that which  
 will then be present in the mind. 'Historically' before  
 in his work, Education, defines the meaning of the  
 phrase 'Education' as 'the process  
 which causes those changes called 'Education'; and is  
 caused either by some action not of their own, but  
 directed toward them; or by the application of some action  
 to them in another, by comparison whereof they suffer  
 in applied themselves. And it is indeed most to them  
 that they are conscious of the least utility in  
 themselves who are forced to learn themselves in their  
 own way, by observing the instruction of other  
 men, and therefore with respect to the latter of  
 which, is a kind of qualification. For of great  
 value, one of the proper ways is to help and the  
 other two ways, and various impressions will with  
 the most effect.

Regarding his observations about language, Addison  
 concludes, "Every one learns his vocabulary that is in an  
 inferior state of faculty to himself."<sup>134</sup> M. Robertson  
 this theory by testing students of various countries like  
 England and Germany; for instance, he continues,  
 "If we formerly the answer for every great nation  
 is found to keep a term that is used in vocabulary,  
 that the rest of the faculty might have an opportunity  
 of taking upon him, and diverting himself with the im-  
 pression."<sup>135</sup>  
 For this same purpose, Addison with respect to the words as  
 Germany so that the countries could use them as a rule

134. Robert, Thomas P. (ed.), The Works of John Locke, 2 vols.  
 of a German vocabulary and Civil, Cambridge  
 (Eng.) Univ. Press, 1963, p. 34.  
 135. Addison, Joseph, The Spectator, No. 97, Pedagogical,  
 James Claxton, 1835, p. 280.  
 136. Ibid. p. 281.

for their jests."<sup>56</sup> Addison continues to enlarge on this principle when he says,

"Thus we see in proportion as one man is more refined than another, he chooses his fool out of a lower or higher class of mankind, or to speak in a more philosophical language, that secret elation or pride of heart which is generally called laughter, arises in him, from his comparing himself with an object below him, whether it so happens that it be a natural or an artificial fool. It is, indeed, very possible that the persons we laugh at may in the main of their characters, be much wiser men than ourselves; but if they would have us laugh at them, they must fall short of us in those respects which stir up the passion."<sup>57</sup>

Still a different theory of laughter is presented by Henri Bergson in his book Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. On this subject Bergson makes three observations:

- 1) The Comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human.
- 2) Absence of feeling must accompany laughter. "Indifference is its natural environment, for laughter has no greater foe than emotion."<sup>58</sup>
- 3) Laughter "must have a social signification. You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt your-

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56. Ibid p. 261.

57. Ibid p. 263.

58. Bergson, Henri. Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. New York, MacMillan, 1924, p. 4.

for their...  
principles when it says.

"That we see in proportion as one man is more  
refined than another, he shows his face out of a  
set of higher lines of marking, or he speaks in a more  
philosophical language, that comes within or out  
of heart which is generally called intellect, unless in  
him, from his comparison himself with an object below  
him, whether it be because that it is a natural or  
an artificial faculty. It is, indeed, very possible  
that the persons we judge to be in the rank of their  
character, be much wiser men than ourselves; but  
it may be that we have an image of them, they may fall  
short of us in those respects which set up the  
question."

Still a different theory of laughter is presented

by Herodotus in his book Laughter: an Essay on the  
Meaning of the Gales. On this subject Herodotus makes

three observations:

1) The Gales does not arise out of the Gales of

what is usually known.

2) Absence of feeling does not accompany laughter. In-

stances of the natural development, for laughter is

no greater for than emotion."

3) Laughter does not have a moral significance.

The words fairly associate the name of the Gales with your-

56-1213 P. 511  
57-1213 P. 511  
58-1213 P. 511  
of the Gales. The Gales, Herodotus, 1213, p. 5.

self isolated from others."<sup>59</sup> All in all Bergson emphasizes that laughter is an appeal to the intellect rather than to the emotions. Throughout the entire book, he attempts to explain laughter in terms of the mechanical.

"The attitudes, gestures, and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine."<sup>60</sup>

Again he contends that the image in all laughable objects is "something mechanical in something living; in fact something comic."<sup>61</sup>

Consequently after these various theories of laughter have been studied, it seems possible to tell why and when we laugh as well as at what we laugh.

The principle which explains what makes one laugh may be summed up in this law - "a laugh begins in a recognition of some incongruity of idea, action, character, or situation."<sup>62</sup> Accordingly this law bears out Bergson's theory that laughter begins in the head and not in the heart. "Incongruity" as used in this definition means, "any departure from, or contradiction of what one's experience of life and of people has led him to expect or regard as normal. It is a departure from what most people

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59. Ibid p. 8.

60. Ibid p.29.

61. Ibid p. 77.

62. Letters, Lexington, University of Ky. V. 5. No. 20.  
August 1932. p. 32.



would call common sense as they see it expressed in custom, habit, convention, manner, and conduct."<sup>63</sup> James Sully in An Essay on Laughter quote Schopenhauer as saying,

"In every instance the phenomenon of laughter indicates the sudden perception of an incongruity between a conception and a real object, which is to be understood or 'thought' through (i. e., by means of) this conception.----- The greater and the more unexpected, the incongruity, the more violent will be our laughter."<sup>64</sup>

Sully explains incongruity as

"lack of harmony and of mutual fitness.---A country woman displaying in her dress or in her speech a bizarre mixture of the peasant and the fine lady, a proposal to climb a mountain in dainty high-heeled shoes. ---These pull at the muscles of laughter because they strike us as a forcing together of things which hurtle and refuse to consort."<sup>65</sup>

The subject of incongruity naturally falls into four divisions:

- 1) Laughter, for incongruity of ideas;
- 2) Opposites, for incongruity of objects in a situation;
- 3) Contradictions for incongruity of character, its sham, bluff, and hypocrisy;
- 4) Disparities, for promise without performance that makes an action comic. Life is rich in such incongruities."<sup>66</sup>

The second law of laughter explains why one will laugh, and "requires that one get out of his recognition of some incongruity a sudden sense of his own superiority."<sup>67</sup>

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63. Ibid. p. 32.

64. Sully, James, An Essay on Laughter, New York, Longmans, Green & Co. 1902 p. 130.

65. Ibid p. 108.

66. Letters p. 33.

67. Ibid p. 33.

... would call common sense as they see it expressed in nature.  
... habit, conventional, manner, and conduct. ...  
... as habit or manner from convention as a habit.

"In every instance the phenomenon of laughter  
indicates the sudden perception of an incongruity be-  
tween a conception and a real object, which is to be  
understood as 'laughter' through (1) ... by means of  
this conception. ... The greater and the more man-  
ifest, the incongruity, the more violent will be  
our laughter."

Gail explains incongruity as

"... lack of harmony and of natural fitness. ...  
country women displaying in her dress or in her speech  
a bizarre mixture of the peasant and the fine lady, a  
proposal to climb a mountain in dainty high-heeled  
shoes. ... These will at the meeting of laughter be-  
cause they strike as so a forcing together of things  
which nature and nature to connect."

The subject of incongruity naturally falls into four  
divisions:

- 1) Laughter, for incongruity of ideas;
- 2) Opposition, for incongruity of objects in a situation;
- 3) Contradictions for incongruity of character, its sham, bluff, and hypocrisy;
- 4) Discrepancies, for promises without performance that make an action comic. This is rich in such in-  
congruities."

The second law of laughter explains why one will

laugh, and requires that one get out of his expectations  
of some incongruity a sudden sense of his own superiority."

87. 1911. N. 33.  
88. Letters. N. 33.  
89. 1913. P. 103.  
90. 1913. P. 103.  
91. 1913. P. 103.  
92. 1913. P. 103.  
93. 1913. P. 103.

The third law of laughter determines when one will laugh, and is best expressed by Bergson, who states that laughter <sup>must be accompanied by absence of feeling, for any</sup> <sup>68</sup> emotion is a deadly foe to laughter. "To him who feels life is a tragedy," as Horace Walpole said.

*Laughter.*  
*emotion is a deadly foe to*

An analysis of the first principle of laughter reveals the sub-divisions into which language incongruity falls: "cacography, malapropisms, punning, the sustained pun, the architectural pun, the co-operative form, paradox, satire, irony and sarcasm."<sup>69</sup>

"The second class of incongruities is in"objects suddenly brought together in situation as opposites."<sup>70</sup> Thus it is one always laughs to see a tall angular woman walking with a fat, short man.

"The third class of incongruities is made up of contradictions in those things that make character. --- A reformed pick pocket singing out of a hymn book and anxious not to let his right hand know what his left hand is doing in his neighbor's pocket illustrates."<sup>71</sup>

"The fourth class of incongruities is disparities or mere promise substituted for performance. Such incongruities associate themselves with action and are the most laughable."<sup>72</sup> This type is clearly illustrated in the

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68. Ibid. p. 31.  
69. Ibid. p. 35.  
70. Ibid. p. 36.  
71. Ibid. p. 36-37  
72. Ibid. p. 37

The total law of laughter determines when one will laugh, and is best expressed by Darwin, who states that laughter, "is him who finds life is a tragedy," as Erasmus

Wolfe said.

An analysis of the first principle of laughter reveals the sub-divisions into which language necessarily falls: "accidents, metaphors, punning, the concealed, the architectural part, the co-operative laws, paradox, satire, irony and sarcasm."

The second class of incongruities is in objects and things brought together in situations of opposition. Thus it is one always laughs to see a tall slender woman walking with a fat, stout man.

The third class of incongruities is made up of contradictions in those things that have character. A released pick pocket slipping out of a Ryan book and making not to let his right hand see what his left hand is doing

in his neighbor's pocket illustrates.

The fourth class of incongruities is situations of contrast substituted for performance. Such incongruities associate themselves with action and are the most laughable. This type is clearly illustrated in the

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68.	1916.	p. 31.
69.	1916.	p. 32.
70.	1916.	p. 33.
71.	1916.	p. 33-34.
72.	1916.	p. 34.

case of the boy who has his arm raised to throw a wad of paper-but suddenly sees the teacher and scratches his head instead.

It is a truism that all the world loves a cheerful person, and little wonder for, as Meredith says, " A perception of the Comic Spirit gives high fellowship. You become a citizen of the selecter world. -----Good hope sustains you; weariness does not overwhelm you; personal pride is greatly moderated."<sup>73</sup>

Now that the range of Saxe's poetry, and the theory of laughter have been discussed, a critical analysis of the comedy devices used by Saxe will follow. An attempt will be made to include all the various types of incongruity which appear in his poetry, and mention will be made of those devices which the poet failed to use.

Of the first class of incongruities--language--the pun is by far the most frequently found in humorous writings. Even Shakespeare resorted to this comedy device.

"Not because it was a courtly practice so much, but because the pun is a form of wit easier for a young man since according to Addison it consists in a resemblance of the mere symbols of ideas, words, syllables, and even letters. Wit, Addison devines as a resemblance of ideas that give delight and surprise."<sup>74</sup>

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73. Meredith, George. An Essay on Comedy --p. 143-44.

74. Ibid p. 36.

case of the boy who has his eye raised to know a way of  
paper-but suddenly sees the teacher and escapes his  
hand instead.

It is a truth that all the world loves a spectacle  
and little wonder for, as Meredith says, 'A  
paragon of the Greek Spirit gives high fellowship.  
You become a witness of the wretched world. ---God  
hope sustain you; weakness does not overwhelm you;

parachal guide is greatly motivated."

Now that the range of Gals's poetry, and the theory  
of laughter have been discussed, a critical analysis of  
the comedy devices used by Gals will follow. An attempt  
will be made to include all the various types of humor-  
erotic which appear in his poetry, and mention will be  
made of those devices which the poet failed to use.  
Of the first class of incongruities--language--the  
one is by far the most frequently found in humorous  
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What because it was a comely practice so  
much, but because the pen is a form of wit easier  
for a young man since according to Addison it con-  
sists in a resemblance of the more symbols of  
ideas, words, syllables, and even letters. Wit  
Addison defines as a resemblance of ideas that  
give delight and surprise."

A careful study of Saxe's poems readily shows his extensive use of the pun. Lines from The Proud Miss Mac Bride are illustrative:

"That her wit should never have made her vain,  
Was, like her face, sufficiently plain;  
And as to her musical powers,  
Although she sang until she was hoarse,  
And issued notes with a Banker's force,  
They were just such notes as we never endorse  
For any acquaintance of ours."<sup>75</sup>

In the same poem Saxe referring to Miss MacBride's financial loss writes,

"But it wasn't strange, - they whispered at all;  
That the Summer of pride should have its Fall  
Was quite according to Nature."<sup>76</sup>

The Rhyme of the Rail furnishes other examples of punning as in these lines:

"Market-woman careful  
Of the precious casket,  
Knowing eggs are eggs,  
Tightly holds her basket;  
Feeling that a smash,  
If it came, would surely  
Send her eggs to pot,<sup>77</sup>  
Rather prematurely."

Another instance of the poet's fondness for this device is seen throughout the poem, The Briefless Barrister, of which the following lines are typical.

"His breeches had suffered a breach,  
His linen and worsted were worse;  
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat  
And not half a crown in his purse."<sup>78</sup>

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75. Saxe, John G.-Complete Poems--P. 11.

76. Ibid p. 13.

77. Ibid p. 20.

78. Ibid p. 20.

A careful study of Baker's poems readily shows his

extensive use of the pun. Lines from Two Good Lines

Two Good Lines are Illustrative:

"That her wit should never have made her vain,  
Was like her face, excellently plain;  
And as to her musical powers,  
Although she sang until she was hoarse,  
And learned notes with a Baker's force,  
They were just such notes as we never endorse  
For any acquaintance of ours."

In the same poem Baker referring to Miss Scudder's

financial loss writes,

"That it would't appear, - they whispered at all;  
That the danger of pills should have the fall  
Was quite according to nature."

The Rhyme of the Fall furnishes other examples of

rhyming as in these lines:

"Moral-when certain  
Of the graces certain,  
Knowing each was vain,  
Plainly told her certain,  
Feeling that a smash,  
If it came, would surely  
Send her eyes to jail,  
Rather presumably."

Another instance of the poet's fondness for this

device is seen throughout the poem, Two Good Lines

of which the following lines are typical.

"His forehead had suffered a smash,  
His lines and words were worse;  
He had scored a whole crown in his hat  
And not half a crown in his purse."

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75.	Sexe,	John G. - Tompkins Poems - P. 11.
76.	1814	p. 12.
77.	1814	p. 13.
78.	1814	p. 20.

Referring to the death of his briefless barrister,  
Saxe writes,

"And as to the cause of his death,  
'Twas no doubt for the want of a cause,  
The Jury decided at length,  
After solemnly weighing the matter,  
That the lawyer was drowned, because  
He could not keep his head above water!"<sup>79</sup>

The Cold-Water Man furnishes another example of  
punning:

Speaking of the unlettered fishman Saxe writes,

"He ne'er aspired to rank or wealth,  
Nor cared about a name,-  
For though much famed for fish was he,  
He never fished for fame."<sup>80</sup>

A series of puns is found in The Jolly Mariner.

Saxe describes the reaction of land sights on the sailor.

"The first of all the curious things  
That chanced his eye to meet,  
As this undaunted mariner  
Went sailing up the street,  
Was, tripping with a little cane  
A dandy all complete!

He stopped, - that jolly mariner, -  
And eyed the stranger well;-  
'What that maybe?' he said, says he,  
'Is more than I can tell;  
But ne'er before, on sea or shore,  
Was such a heavy swell!'

He met a lady in her hoops,  
And thus she heard him hail;-  
'Now blow me tight; but there's a sight

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79. Ibid p. 20.

80. Ibid p. 23.

Referring to the death of his brilliant daughter,

She writes,

"And as to the cause of his death,  
'There no doubt for the want of a nurse,  
The lady decided at length,  
After solemnly weighing the matter,  
That the lawyer was hanged, because  
He could not keep his hand above water."  
The Gold-Water Man furnished another example of

poetry:

Speaking of the unlettered fishman Saxe writes,

"He never wanted to lack of wealth,  
Nor cared about a name,  
Nor thought with shame for fish was he,  
He never fished for fame."

A series of puns is found in The Jolly Mariner.

Saxe describes the reaction of land alphas on the sailor.

"The first of all the curious things  
That changed his eye to sea,  
As this unlearned mariner  
Went sailing on the street,  
Was, tripping with a little cane,  
A dandy all complete!

He stopped, - that jolly mariner, -  
And eyed the stranger well;  
'What that wags?' he said, eyeing  
'Is more than I can tell;  
But never before, on sea or shore,  
Was such a heavy well!

He was a lady in her hoops,  
And thus she eyed him well;  
'Now give us sight: but there's a sight

79. 1811 p. 88.  
80. 1811 p. 88.

To manage in a gale!  
 I never saw so small a craft  
 With such a spread o' sail."<sup>81</sup>

Thus one sees that a great majority of Saxe's best known poems rely on punning for their humor.

Other comedy devices of this same language incongruity frequently used by Saxe were satire, irony, and sarcasm. In as much as satire has been discussed at some length in the section dealing with the range of the poet's work, a very brief mention will suffice to show the extensive use of this weapon made by Saxe.

The Way of the World cleverly satirizes the folly of parents sacrificing their daughter's happiness because her lover was poor, in a different social group, and of a different religious faith.

"A youth would marry a maiden,  
 For fair and fond was she;  
 But their sires disputed about the mass,  
 And so it might not be.  
 A couple of wicked kings,  
 Three hundred years ago,  
 Had played at a royal game of chess,  
 And the Church had been a pawn!  
 And so the cruel word was spoken  
 And so it was two hearts were broken."<sup>82</sup>

The above stanza is illustrative of satire, irony, and sarcasm all combined, for many of these devices are found in a single poem, and although one is more emphasized

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81. Ibid p. 51.  
 82. Ibid p. 8.

To make it a rule  
I never see as well a world  
With such a variety of well.

There are some that a great majority of the best  
known poems rely on rhymes for their humor.  
Other comedy devices of this same language in-  
clude frequently used by poets were satire, irony, and  
parody. In as much as satire has been discussed at  
some length in the section dealing with the range of the  
poetic voice, a very brief mention will suffice to show  
the extensive use of this weapon made by poets.

The Boy of the North cleverly satirizes the folly of  
poets sacrificing their daughter's happiness because  
her lover was poor, in a different social group, and of a  
different religious faith.

"A youth would marry a maiden,  
For love and love was she;  
But their eyes disagreed about the way,  
And so it might not be.  
A couple of wretched things,  
Three hundred years ago,  
Had played at a royal game of chess,  
And the church had been a pawn!  
And so the story went the world  
And so it was the facts were spoken."

The above stanza is illustrative of satire, irony,  
and sarcasm all combined, for many of these devices are  
found in a single poem, and though one is more emphasized

91. 1918 p. 81  
92. 1918 p. 82

than the others.

The Mourner a la Mode, a poem which satirizes the fashionable widow, lacking feeling, whose mourning is expressed in beautifully becoming clothes, combines these three closely connected devices.

"Yet I know she was suffering sorrow  
Too deep for the tongue to express,-  
Or why had she chosen to borrow  
So much from the language of dress?  
-----

And the grief that was heaving her breast  
Boiled over in billows of crape!  
-----

And yet as I viewed, at my leisure,  
Those tokens of tender regard,  
I thought: -It is scarce without measure-  
The sorrow that goes by the yard!" 83

The Proud Miss Mac Bride is a bitter satire on family pride in ancestors, pride of family wealth, pride in everything "beyond comparison."

The idle rich who spend their time at Saratoga furnished the poet with material for one of his keen satires, Cloe to Clara, The follies of the lawyer, preacher, flippant tourist and "shallow dandy" provided material for the satire entitled, The Blarney Stone.<sup>84</sup>

However, Ode to the Legislature is most outstanding for its bitter denunciation of legislators--

"And thus, with greater cause,  
Would we respect the Laws  
(Which should be revered to be obeyed),  
It isn't best to see them made."<sup>85</sup>

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83. Ibid p. 9.  
84. Ibid p. 65.  
85. Ibid p. 104.

than the others.

The Mourner at the Grave, a poem which expresses the  
fathomless grief, fathomless feeling, which mourning is  
expressed in beautifully pathetic words. Compare these  
three closely connected devices.

"Yet I know she was suffering  
For fear for the length of days,  
Or why had she chosen to part  
So early from the language of tears?"  
-----  
And the girl that was leaving her breast  
Told over in silence of tears.

-----  
And yet as I viewed, at my leisure,  
Those tokens of tender regard,  
I thought: - It is scarce without measure  
The sorrow that gave by the year's end

The Blind Man's Guide is a bitter satire on  
family pride in ancestors, pride of family wealth, pride  
in everything "beyond comparison."

The rich who spend their time at Saratoga  
Turned the poet with material for one of his lines  
written. How to show the follies of the lawyer,  
preacher, highest level and "shallow depth" provided  
material for the satire entitled, The Lawyer's Stone.  
However, On the Legislators is most interesting  
for its bitter denunciation of legislators--

"And those, with greater care,  
Would we regard the laws  
(Which should be reverence to be obeyed),  
It had'st best to see them made."

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28. 1814  
29. 1814  
30. 1814

Saxe was a lover of sincerity and strongly disliked pretence of all kinds, and those people who practiced any deception were frequently the butt of his pen. A Charming Woman is typical of this type of poetry.

"A charming woman, I've heard it said  
 By other women as light as she;  
 But all in vain I puzzle my head  
 To find wherein the charm may be.  
 Her face, indeed, is pretty enough,  
 And her form is quite as good as  
 the best,  
 Where Nature has given the bony stuff,  
 And a clever milliner all the rest.

Intelligent? Yes, - in a certain way;  
 With a feminine gift of ready speech;  
 And knows very well what not to say  
 Whenever the theme transcends her  
 reach.

But turn the topic on things to wear,  
 From an opera cloak to a robe de  
 nuit, -  
 Hats, basques, or bonnets, - 't will  
 make you stare  
 To see how fluent the lady can be!

Her laugh is hardly a thing to please;  
 For an honest laugh must always  
 start  
 From a gleesome mood, like a sudden  
 breeze,  
 And hers is purely a matter of art, -  
 A muscular motion made to show  
 What Nature designed to lie beneath  
 The finer mouth; but what can she do,  
 If that is ruined to show the teeth?

To her seat in church- a good half-  
 mile-  
 When the day is fine she is sure to go,  
 Arrayed, of course, in the latest style  
La mode de Paris has got to show;  
 And she puts her hands on the velvet  
 pew  
 (Can hands so white have a taint of  
 sin?)  
 And thinks- how her prayer-book's  
 tint of blue  
 Must harmonize with her milky skin!

There was a fever of electricity and strongly believed  
presence of all these, and those people who practiced any

deception were frequently the best of his best. A

Charming woman is typical of this type of beauty.

"A charming woman, I've heard it said  
By other women as light as she;  
But all is vain I guess my head  
To find what's in the charm she  
Her face, indeed, is pretty enough,  
And her form is quite as good as  
the best.  
Where Nature has given the body a gift,  
and a clever milliner all the rest.

Intelligent? Yes, - in a certain way;  
With a feminine gift of ready speech;  
And knows very well what not to say  
Whenever the time transcends her  
reach.

But from the logic on things to year,  
From an open clock to a rose de  
malin.

Kind, forgiving, or forgetful, - it will  
make you stare  
To see how clever the lady can be!

Her laugh is hardly a thing to please;  
For an honest laugh most always  
start  
From a pleasant mood, like a sudden  
breath.

And here is surely a matter of art,  
A peculiar motion made to show  
What Nature designed to be beneath  
The finer mouth; but what can she do,  
If that is talent to show the truth?

To her seat in church - a good half-  
mile -

When the day is fine she is sure to go,  
Arrived, of course, in the latest style  
in hats de Paris has not to show;  
and the pale hat hangs on the velvet  
see

(Don't hang up white hats a hint of  
stiff)

And richer has her prettier-hats,  
that of silk

Must harmonize with her white skin!

Ah! what shall we say of one who walks  
 In fields of flowers to choose the  
                   weeds?  
 Reads authors of whom she never  
                   talks,  
 And talks of authors she never reads?  
 She's a charming woman, I've heard  
                   it said  
 By other women as light as she;  
 But all in vain I puzzle my head  
 To find wherein the charm may be."<sup>86</sup>

The use of cagography as a comedy device, so frequently used by Bret Harte, Artemus Ward, and the Western Humorists, was used most sparingly by Saxe. The three poems, The Cockney, Ye Pedagogue, and Paddy's Ode to the Prince begins:

"O Mighty Prince!  
 It's no offense,  
 Your worship, that I mane ye,  
 While I confess  
 'T was ra-al bliss,  
 A moment to have sane ye."<sup>87</sup>

Ye Pedagogue furnishes a clever use of cacography as in such lines as:

"For as 'tis meete to soake ye feete,  
 Ye ailinge heade to mende,  
 Ye younker's pate to stimulate,  
 He beats ye other ende!"<sup>88</sup>

The dialett of the unschooled Englishman is recorded in The Cockney.

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86. Ibid           p. 99.  
 87. Ibid           p. 80.  
 88. Ibid           p. 58.

All that shall be said of the world  
 in lines of flowers to please the  
 world!  
 Heeds authors of words and every  
 thing,  
 And tells of authors and never forget  
 Spenser's spiritual words, live words  
 it with  
 By other words as light as air;  
 But all in vain I praise my hand  
 To find wherein the charm may be.

The use of geography as a comedy device is frequent-  
 ly used by John Donne, Andrew Marvell, and the English  
 humanists was used most especially by Donne. The three poems,  
The Goodness, In Bedlam, and Donne's Use of the Lines

begin:

"O mighty Prince!  
 It's no offence,  
 Your words, that I have seen,  
 While I contain  
 'T was never said  
 A moment to have seen you."

The Goodness furnishes a clever use of geography as  
 in each line as:

"For as 'twixt words to come ye learn,  
 Ye allude hence to words,  
 Ye ponder's a part to enlighten,  
 Ye best to other words."

The effect of the worded Englishman is repeated

in The Goodness.

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85. 1014	p. 88.
87. 1014	p. 88.
88. 1014	p. 88.

"When I named the Colosseum,  
 He observed, ' 'Tis very fair;  
 I mean, ye know, it would be,  
 If they'd put it in repaid;  
 But what progress on himprovement  
 Can those curst Hitalians 'ope  
 While they're hunder the dominion  
 Of that blasted muff, the Pope?"<sup>89</sup>

That Saxe was unfamiliar with the second class of incongruities - objects suddenly brought together in situation as opposites - may be justly inferred by his infrequent use of this device. In the Rhyme of the Rail is found his nearest approach to this principle.

"Gentleman in shorts,  
 Looming very tall;  
 Gentleman at large,  
 Talking very small  
 Gentleman in tights,  
 With a loose-ish mien;  
 Gentleman in gray  
 Looking rather green.

Gentleman quite old,  
 Asking for the news  
 Gentleman in black,  
 In a fit of blues;  
 Gentleman in claret,  
 Sober as a vicar;  
 Gentleman in tweed  
 Dreadfully in liquor."<sup>90</sup>

One of the few poems illustrating the third class of incongruities - contradictions in those things that make character - is The Best of Husbands which follows in its entirety.

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89. Ibid p. 29.

90. Ibid p. 19.

When I heard the Professor  
 He observed, "It's very faint;  
 I can't read it, it would be  
 if that's not it in regard;  
 But what progress on improvement  
 Can those great-Hispanic 'ogs  
 While they've under the dominion  
 Of that blasted old, the Pope's?"

That line was unfamiliar with the second class of  
 illustrations - objects and objects brought together in  
 attention as opposites - may be best inferred by his  
 reference to the eyes of the ball. In the eyes of the ball  
 is found the nearest approach to this principle.

gentleman in white  
 looking very tall;  
 gentleman in black  
 looking very small  
 gentleman in white  
 looking in white  
 with a loose-limbed man;  
 gentleman in grey  
 looking rather green  
 gentleman with a  
 Apple for the nose  
 gentleman in black  
 in a fit of black;  
 gentleman in black  
 sober as a vicar;  
 gentleman in black  
 looking in black, etc.

One of the two poems illustrating the third class of  
 illustrations - contradictions in these things that make  
 character - is The Post of Hesperus which follows in the  
 entirely.

---

99. 1818  
 99. 1818

"Oh I have a man as good as can be,  
 No woman could wish for a better than he.  
 Sometimes, indeed, he may chance to be  
     wrong,  
 But his love for me is uncommonly  
     strong.

He has one little fault that makes me  
     fret,  
 He has ever less money, by far, than  
     debt;  
 Moreover, he thrashes me now and then;  
 But, excepting that, he's the best of  
     men!

I own he is dreadfully given to drink,  
 Besides, he is rather too fond, I think,  
 Of playing at cards and dice; but then,  
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

He loves to chat with the girls, I  
     know  
 ('Tis the way with men, they are al-  
     ways so).  
 But what care I for his flirting, when,  
 Excepting that, he's the best of men?

When soaked with rum, he is hardly po-  
     lite,  
 But knocks the crockery left and right,  
 And pulls my hair, and growls again;  
 But, excepting that, he's the best of  
     men!

I can't but say I think he is rash  
 To pawn my pewter, and spend the  
     cash,  
 But I haven't the heart to schold him,  
     when,  
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

What joy to think he's all my own!  
 The best of husbands that ever was  
     known;  
 As good, indeed, as a man can be;  
 And who could wish for a better than  
     he?"<sup>91</sup>

"Oh I have a plan as good as any  
 No more words with for a better than  
 Somewhat, indeed, he says things to be  
 But the love for me is unreasonably  
 strong."

He has one little fault that makes me  
 First,  
 He has ever less money, by far, than  
 I have;  
 Moreover, he dislikes me now and then;  
 But, excusing that, he's the best of  
 men!

I can be as greedily given to drink,  
 Sober, he is rather too fond, I think,  
 Of playing at cards and dice; but then,  
 Excusing that, he's the best of men!

He loves to chat with the girls, I  
 know  
 ('Tis the way with men, they are al-  
 ways so).

But what care I for his chattering, when  
 Excusing that, he's the best of men!  
 When asked with whom he is likely to  
 live,

But he says the country is not so good,  
 And while my hair, and grows again;  
 But, excusing that, he's the best of  
 men!

I can't but say I think he is worth  
 To pawn my watch, and spend the  
 cash,  
 But I never let the heart be so bold  
 when,

Excusing that, he's the best of men!  
 What joy to think he's all my own!  
 The best of husbands that ever was

known;  
 As good, indeed, as a man can be;  
 And who could wish for a better than  
 myself!

No careful or sympathetic reader of Saxe's poems can refrain from feeling a deep regret that the poet did not use a more varied list of comic devices. One wonders why Saxe so completely disregarded such an important class of incongruity as "disparities or mere promise substituted for performance." Apparently he did not realize the significance of the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words," nor did he seem aware that neglecting to use all known comic devices was materially narrowing his range of poetry, as well as impairing his own success. In this same connection one wonders why Saxe's poems furnish no examples of sustained pun, architectural pun, and the co-operative form.

Even a casual reading of Saxe's poems makes one cognizant of the over-use of the didactic or moralistic, for numbers of them seem to have been written solely to teach a lesson. Sometimes this is done indirectly, but very frequently the poet's last stanza is headed "moral," followed by the lines of advice, or lesson which the writer wished to teach. Possibly this sermonizing idea in Saxe is due to his Puritanical environment which at that time would still be actively reminiscent of the old time piety of the Puritans. Or again this tendency may be the result of strong desire to right wrongs in whatever walk of life he found them, and Saxe's method of reform was his

No matter of systematic leader of Babel's group can  
 believe that feeling a deep regret that the poet did not  
 see a more varied list of comic reviews. One reviewer who  
 here so consistently distinguished even an important class of  
 industry as "literature or more precise scientific  
 for performance." Apparently he did not realize the  
 significance of the old saying, "Actions speak louder than  
 words," nor did he seem aware that according to the old  
 known comic device was a carefully chosen his range of  
 poetry, as well as regarding his own success. In this  
 new connection one wonders why Babel's poems carried no  
 example of sustained but, architectural form, and the co-  
 operative form.

Even a casual reading of Babel's poems makes one  
 conscious of the overness of the dialectic or moralistic,  
 for numbers of them seem to have been written solely to  
 teach a lesson. Sometimes this is done indirectly, but  
 very frequently the poet's last stanza is headed "moral,"  
 followed by the lines of advice, or lesson which the writer  
 wished to teach. Possibly this explanation lies in Babel  
 it due to his technical equipment which at that time  
 would still be actively reminiscent of the old time play  
 of the language. Or again this tendency may be the re-  
 sult of strong desire to right wrongs in whatever walk of  
 life he found them, and Babel's method of reform was his

pen. Illustrations of the "moral" concluding a poem follow:  
The last stanza of the popular poem The Proud Miss MacBride  
reads,

"Moral  
Because you flourish in worldly affairs,  
Don't be haughty, and put on airs,  
With insolvent pride of station!  
Don't be proud, and turn up your nose  
At poorer people in palmer clo'es,  
But learn, for the sake of your soul's repose,  
That wealth's a bubble, that comes,- and goes!  
And that all Proud Flesh, whergyer it grows,  
Is subject to irritation!

Again in The Cold-Water Man Saxe cannot refrain from  
teaching:

"The moral of this mournful tale,  
To all is plain and clear,-  
That drinking habits bring a man  
Too often to his bier;

And he who scorns to 'take the pledge,'  
And keep the promise fast,  
May be, in spite of fate, a stiff  
Cold Water Man at last!"<sup>93</sup>

The didactic steals in again in Tale of A Dog which  
is concluded by the lines,

"The Moral surely isn't hard to reap;-  
Be prompt to listen unto mercy's plea;  
The good you get, diffuse; it will not hurt you  
E'En from a dog to learn a christian virtue."<sup>94</sup>

Saxe's strong dislike of drinking furnished thought  
for many of these moralistic poems. The Ghost-Player,

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92. Ibid p. 13.  
93. Ibid p. 23.  
94. Ibid p. 51.

part. Illustrations of the "moral" conclusion are given below:  
The last stanza of the popular poem The Good Wife MacGriddle

reads:

"Moral"  
Because you thought it worthily all right,  
Don't be hasty, and get on your feet,  
With invariable pride of station!  
Don't be proud, and turn up your nose  
At poorer people in palmy circles,  
But learn, for the sake of your soul's repose,  
That wealth is a bubble, that comes, - and goes!  
And that all proud flesh, whosoever it be,  
Is subject to temptation!

Again in The Good-Wife Mac Griddle we can extract from

teaching:

"The moral of this wonderful tale,  
To all is plain and clear,  
That drinking water makes a man  
Too often to his peer;

And he who soars to 'twice the height,  
And keeps the wooden boat,  
May be, in spite of fate, a stiff  
Cold water man at last!"

The classic stanza is again in John's words

is condensed by the lines,

"The Moral surely isn't hard to teach:-  
Be prompt to listen to a parent's plea;  
The good for evil, although it will not last,  
Is a true way to learn a Christian virtue."

For a strong simile of drinking furnished through

for many of these metaphoric poems. The Good-Wife

92.	1914
93.	1913
94.	1912

"Now, Tom was very fond of drink,  
Of almost every sort,  
Comparative and positive,  
From porter up to port.

But grog, like grief, is fatal stuff  
For any man to sup;  
For when it fails to pull him down,  
It's sure to blow him up."<sup>95</sup>

Sometimes this moral appears in the main part of the poem as in The Nobleman The Fisherman, and the Porter.

"So fare all villians, quote my lord,  
Who seek dishonest gain!"<sup>96</sup>

Another much quoted poem in school books, The Blind Men and the Elephant contains a deeper moral, perhaps an expression of Saxe's personal dislike of the narrowness of New England Puritanism. The lines follow:

"Moral  
So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And prate about an Elephant,  
Not one of them has seen!"<sup>97</sup>

Saxe's love of the didactic, so opposite to Poe's theory of verse is well expressed in his own verse found in King Solomon and the Bees.

"My story teaches (every tale should bear  
A fitting moral) that the wise may find,  
In trifles light as atoms in the air,  
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,  
Some truth designed to profit or to please,  
As Israel's King learned wisdom from  
the bees."<sup>98</sup>

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95. Ibid p. 44.  
96. Ibid p. 114.  
97. Ibid p. 112.  
98. Ibid p. 138.

Now, you see very little of this,  
Of almost every sort,  
Comparative and positive,  
From matter to form.

But you, like this, is what I want  
For my own to see;  
For when it falls to tell his story,  
It's sure to give him a

Conscience that what appears in the main part of the

book as in The Nobleman's Education, and the Letter.

So late all witness, every day,  
Who seek attachment with

Another such would seem in school books, The Blind

and the Elephant contains a deeper novel, perhaps an

expression of some's personal opinion of the happiness

of New England Puritanism. The lines follow:

"Moral"  
So oft in theologic wars,  
The theologian, I mean,  
Tells on in after ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And still about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!

Some's love of the Elephant, so opposite to some's  
theory of verse is well expressed in his own verse found

in the King Solomon and the Tree.

Why story teacher (every tale should bear  
A fitting moral) that the wise may find,  
In fables light as atoms in the air,  
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,  
Some truth designed to profit or to please,  
As Israel's King learned wisdom from  
The bee.

95. 1613	p. 44.
96. 1614	p. 112.
97. 1615	p. 113.
98. 1616	p. 114.

And again the ever-present moral comes to view in  
The Romance of Nick Van Stann,

"Ah! well, his blessings came so fast  
 I greatly feared they couldn't last;  
 And thus we see the sword of Fate<sup>99</sup>  
 Cuts down alike the small and great!"

Even in poems dealing with mythological subjects,  
 Saxe could not refrain from moralizing. Icarus contains  
 this message:

" L'envoi  
 The moral of this mournful tale is plain  
 enough to all;-  
 Don't get above your proper sphere, or  
 you may chance to fall;  
 Remember, too, that borrowed plumes  
 are most uncertain things;  
 And never try to scale the sky with  
 other people's wings!"<sup>100</sup>

A second characteristic of Saxe's poetry which  
 proves a handicap to the poet's popularity is his over-  
 use of literary allusions. In short, Saxe frequently  
 writes for the academic mind, and alludes to a great  
 number of persons and things familiar only to the  
 scholar. In this way Saxe has diminished his audience  
 greatly. Sometimes foreign phrases form a part of the  
 stanza or of a title as in My Castle in Spain, the last  
 stanza begins:

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99. Ibid p. 141.  
 100. Ibid p. 230.

And again the ever-present moral comes to view in

The Romance of King Lear

And will, his blessing came so fast  
I greatly feared thy countess's least  
And thus we see the worst of fate  
Cuts down alike the small and great!

Even in poems dealing with mythological subjects,  
Lear could not refrain from moralizing. Lear contains

this message:

"Lear!"  
The moral of this wonderful tale is plain  
enough to all:  
Don't get above your proper sphere, or  
you may chance to fall;  
Remember, too, that borrowed plumes  
are most uncertain things;  
And never try to walk the sky with  
other people's wings!

A second characteristic of Lear's poetry which  
proves a handicap to the poet's popularity is his over-  
use of literary allusions. In short, Lear frequently  
writes for the academic mind, and alludes to a great  
number of persons and things familiar only to the  
scholar. In this way Lear has distanced his audience  
greatly. Sometimes foreign phrases form a part of the  
stanzas or of a title as in My Castle in Spain, the last

stanza begins:

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99. 1918  
100. 1918  
101. 1918  
102. 1918

"O si sic semper!" I oftentimes say  
 (Though 't is idle, I know, to com-  
 plain),  
 To think that again I must force me  
 away  
 From my beautiful castle in Spain!"<sup>101</sup>

Again the expression Spes Est Vates furnishes  
 the title of a poem.<sup>102</sup>

In Compensation, one of the more serious of his  
 poems occur in each stanza the lines,

"Si longa, levis;  
 Si dura, brevis."

In Maximilian reference to the Bible occurs in the  
 stanza beginning;

"I loathe the rude, barbaric wrath  
 That slew thee in thy vent'rous path;  
 But 'they who take', thus saith the Lord,  
 'Shall also perish by the sword'  
 Doomed Maximillian!"<sup>103</sup>

Biographical facts make frequent reference to Saxe's  
 profound knowledge and love of the Greek and Roman classics.  
 The truth of this fact is apparent in the great number of  
 allusions which Saxe makes to the old writers. For in-  
 stance in The Masquerade, the poet has used an entire  
 epigram from "Homer II., XIV. 217".<sup>104</sup> And in the same  
 poems occur such foreign expressions as

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101. Ibid p. 3.  
 102. Ibid p. 3.  
 103. Ibid p. 7.  
 104. Ibid p. 14.

"I am also aware" I often say  
(though I know, I know, to con-  
plain)  
To think that again I must force me  
away  
From my beautiful castle in Spain!<sup>101</sup>

Again the expression Spain has been translated

the title of a poem.<sup>102</sup>

In Compendio, one of the more serious of his

poems occur in each stanza the lines,

"Si longer, longer,  
Si dura, brevis."

In Wattsonian reference to the Bible occurs in the

stanza beginning:

"I loathe the robe, barbaric with  
That also has in thy vestment  
But 'they who take', thus with the Lord,  
'I shall also perish by the sword'  
Doomed Maximilian!"<sup>103</sup>

Biographical facts make frequent reference to Exe's

profound knowledge and love of the Greek and Roman classics.

The truth of this fact is apparent in the great number of

allusions which Exe makes to the old writers. For in-

stance in The Macchabees, the poet has used an allu-

sion from "Homer II., XIV. 215." And in the same

place occur such foreign expressions as

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101.	101b	p. 3.
102.	101b	p. 3.
103.	101b	p. 7.
104.	101b	p. 14.

"infelicissimus, censor morum, Le Demi-Monde, bel-esprit, Mon Dieu, Maximus Apollo, Parbleu, C'est vrai, Solus cum sola, quelle merveille, Quelle felicite, Dieu de ciel!"<sup>105</sup>

Consequently, it is little wonder that Saxe did not make a stronger appeal to the man of the street, for these expressions are discouraging to one unfamiliar with foreign languages.

Love and Law, a satire on parents, one ambitious for their children to make suitable marriages, contains numerous Latin phrases; and Mr. Familiar, clever description of the "bore" the "friend who comes - but never goes";, has the epigram "Ecce iterum Crispimus".<sup>106</sup> A Connubial Eclogue likewise has a short quotation from Virgil as an epigram,

"Arcades ambo,  
Et cantare pares et respondere parati."<sup>107</sup>

Saxe's familiarity with Greek and Roman mythology is apparent by his over-frequent <sup>illustrations</sup> reference to it throughout many of his poems. Such lines as,

"You'll find her a delicate Heb,  
And not your magnificent Juno,"

taken from A Rhymed Epistle (written to the editor of the Knickerbocker Magazine) are illustrative. This same poem furnishes another reference to Saxe's literary allusions;

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105. Ibid p. 14-16.  
106. Ibid p. 17.  
107. Ibid p. 24.



"Now I am a man, you must learn,  
 Less famous to beauty than strength,  
 And for aught I could ever discern,  
 Of rather superfluous length.  
 In truth 't is but seldom one meets  
 Such a Titan in human abodes,  
 And when I stalk over the streets,  
 I'm a perfect Colossus of roads!"<sup>108</sup>

A similar reference to mythology occurs in a stanza from The Proud Miss Mac Bride which begins:

" No rara avis was honest John,  
 (That's the Latin for 'sable swan'),  
 Though in one of his fancy flashes,  
 A wicked wag, who meant to deride,  
 Called honest John 'Old Phoenix Mac Bride'  
 Because he rose from his ashes!"<sup>109</sup>

Saxe combines classical allusions with a knowledge of astronomy in Icarus.

"His only son was Icarus, a most  
 precocious lad,  
 The pride of Mrs. Daedalus, the image of his dad;  
 ----How very charming it would be  
 above the moon to climb,  
 And scamper through the Zodiac, and have  
 a high old time  
 Oh wouldn't it be jolly, though, - to stop  
 at all the inns;  
 To take a luncheon at 'The Crab' and  
 tipple at 'The Twins;  
 And, just for fun and fancy, while  
 careering through the air,  
 To kiss the Virgin, tease the Ram, and  
 bait the biggest Bear?"<sup>110</sup>

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108. Ibid p. 59.  
 109. Ibid p. 11.  
 110. Ibid p. 230.



## CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF JOHN GODFREY SAXE  
 WITH A SELECTED LIST OF HIS POEMS  
 WORTHY OF A PLACE IN AMERICAN LETTERS

In evaluating any writer one must take into account both assets and liabilities in a poet's work. As may be concluded from the foregoing analysis of Saxe's poems, one defect of his work was the presence of too few comic devices, in his poetry; the over-use of the pun, satire, irony, and sarcasm. Another barrier to Saxe's popularity was the too frequent moralizing in so many of the poems, and the over-abundant number of literary allusions. This last named characteristic must from necessity eliminate large numbers of people from any enjoyment of his poetry.

By some critics, Saxe is considered a moderate punner, who never offends. "He sharpens carelessly antithesis. He is always neat, makes his point, gets his laugh." Of interest to critical students of Saxe's poetry is the comment made by William Cullen Bryant on the popular poem, The Proud Miss Mac Bride.

"As early as May 1853 William Cullen Bryant wrote of The Proud Miss Mac Bride: ' This delightful







A SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF  
SAXE'S POEMS WORTHY OF BEING KEPT  
ALIVE IN AMERICAN LETTERS

Bereavement

Best of husbands, The

Blarney Stone, The

Blind men and the Elephant, The

Briefless Barrister, The

Candid Candidate, A

Carmen Laetum

Charming Woman, A

Cockney, The

Cold-Water Man, The

Early Rising

Here and Hereafter

Jolly Mariner, The

King Solomon and The Bees

Library, The



Little Jerry the Miller

Misere Domine

Money-King, The

Mourner a la mode, The

My Familiar

News

Ode to the Legislature

Post Prandial Verses

Progress

Proud, Miss Mac Bride, The

Rhyme of the Rail

Song of Saratoga

Stammering Wife, The

Way of the World, The

Ye Pedagogue



That Saxe has a place in American literature may be rightly assumed from the fact that as recently as 1905 The Mac Millan Publishing Company issued a collection of the poet's most popular poems. And, of course, no commercial publishing house would do this unless there was a demand for these poems on the part of the reading public.

Another incident to prove that Saxe is still alive comes from the pen of Professor Arthur W. Peach who wrote in a personal letter,

"As a matter of fact, Saxe is very much alive. Once in my nefarious career, I subscribed to a clipping bureau and asked them to send me cuttings of Saxe's poems. I called a halt when one hundred came in. The point is he is one of the most quoted in newspapers of the poets of his day or any day here in America. Stevenson's Home Book of Verse reprints thirteen of his poems - a larger number than more famous writers of Saxe's time are given."

The above evidence that Saxe is still alive is significant because as one can briefly show Saxe did not live a Gulliver among the Lilliputians. It is, therefore, well to review Saxe's time and environment. Saxe lived in the East, and as one critic has expressed it was a victim of the East, which was so filled with classical and academic traditions. Consequently, he felt obliged to write according to the old conventional,



accepted academic standards. The Western Humorists, of whom Bret Harte is a typical representative, were free from the shackles of the literary East. They based their work on the philosophy of democracy, the equality of man, and always placed the emphasis on human values. It would, then, be natural to expect that writers dealing with flesh and blood topics would be more popular with the general public than a literary poet writing according to literary standards.



SUMMARY

This thesis has discussed two main topics: an analysis of Saxe's humor, with some classification and criticism of his comedy devices, with reference to the conditions, political, social, and local that determined them and made his range; a revised and more complete bibliography of John Godfrey Saxe than has previously existed.

The once preeminently popular poet, John Godfrey Saxe, who was also humorist, lawyer, editor, lyceum lecturer, and state's attorney, was born in Highgate, Vermont, on June 2, 1816. He was the son of Elizabeth Jewett and Peter Saxe, store-keeper, mill-owner, and local politician.

Saxe's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine to seventeen he attended the district school and worked in his father's mill. In 1835 he entered Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, but he did not complete his freshman year. The following fall he entered the sophomore class of Middlebury College, from which institution he graduated in 1839. After his graduation he went to Lewiston, New York, to study law, and in September, 1843, Saxe was admitted to the bar in St. Albans.

Since the practice of law proved irksome to Saxe, after seven years he abandoned it. In 1850 he purchased The Vermont Sentinel, a Democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vermont. He edited this paper for six years. In 1856 he was appointed U.S. deputy collector of customs. In 1846 Saxe's first published volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. In

RESUME

This resume has discussed the main topics: an analysis of  
Baker's humor, with some classification and criticism of his comedy  
devoted with reference to the conditions, political, social, and  
local that determined them and made his range; a revised and more  
comprehensive bibliography of John Galt Baker has been previously  
published.

The more prominently popular poet, John Galt Baker, who  
was also novelist, lawyer, editor, literary lecturer, and statesman,  
was born in Highgate, Vermont, on June 2, 1844. He  
was the son of Elizabeth Towner and Lewis Baker, store-keeper,  
mill-owner, and local politician.

Baker's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine  
to seventeen he attended the district school and wrote in his  
father's mill. In 1858 he entered Wesleyan University, Middle-  
bury, Vermont, and he did not complete his freshman year.  
The following fall he entered the sophomore class of Middlebury  
College, but when graduation he graduated in 1862. After  
his graduation he went to Lexington, New York, to study law,  
and in September, 1862, Baker was admitted to the bar in St.

After the practice of law proved tiresome to Baker, after  
seven years he abandoned it. In 1869 he purchased the Windsor  
Journal, a weekly paper published in Burlington, Vermont.  
He edited this paper for six years. In 1875 he was appointed  
U.S. deputy collector of customs. In 1876 Baker's first pub-  
lished volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. In

1860 he returned to Albany, New York, where he became editor of the Evening Journal. He was also a contributor to the Albany Morning Argus. In 1867 Saxe visited Europe. While in England, he was the guest of George Peabody, who was helpful in arranging for him to give a series of lectures. No mention of Saxe's varied career would have been complete without reference to his popularity as a lecturer. He began this work in 1846, and was sought from Maine to California.

The last decade of the once exuberant poet's life was enshrouded in melancholy. In seven years death had claimed six of his immediate family; so it is little wonder that death seemed to him his best friend. His melancholia deepened; his release came on March 31, 1887. The state of Vermont has erected at the old homestead at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was unveiled in August, 1920.

This thesis has made a cursory survey of American humorists, among whom were included Franklin, Irving, Holmes, Saxe, Lowell, Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and James Whitcomb Riley. The Western humorists, Derby, Hay, Browne, and Bret Harte, were the first "to embody in literary form this new autochthonic American humor", which was characterized by "irreverence, exaggeration, and a skilful mingling of the incongruities."

Saxe's range of poetry was discussed under the topics vocational, occasional, social, personal, religious, democracy, local, and satires. As these were representative of phases of the poet's life, they fittingly contributed the subject matter or background for the majority of the poet's work.



Though Saxe never enjoyed the practice of law, yet this profession afforded him material for some of his best-known poems. Despite the fact that the greater part of Saxe's poems were written in a humorous, satirical vein, yet his last collection of verse, Leisure Day Rhymes, gave evidence that he thought and wrote about deeper and more religious subjects. The poem Here and Hereafter expresses Saxe's own theological views, while the beautiful hymn Misere Domine continues his broad, liberal views on theology.

Saxe's love of democracy in regard to financial equality and his intense dislike of the idle rich are keenly sensed in his bitter satire, The Money King. The poet had a profound love for satirizing the foibles of his day. All subjects from the legislature to the idiosyncracies of woman's dress furnished Saxe material for his popular satires.

This thesis next analyzed the comedy devices used by the poet. Of the first class of incongruities--language--the pun is most frequently found in humorous writings. This form Saxe used over extensively in his poetry. Other comedy devices of this same language incongruity frequently used by Saxe were satire, irony, and sarcasm. Often these three devices were found in the same poem as in the Way of the World. Cacography was used infrequently by Saxe. It is found in three poems only. No examples of sustained pun, architectural pun, or the cooperative form were found in his poems. His overuse of literary allusions, as well as his too frequent reference to Greek and Roman mythology, greatly limited his audience to the academic mind.

though some never enjoyed the freedom of law, yet this freedom  
 with attention and interest for some of the best-known names.  
 realize the fact that the greatest part of the power was with  
 you in a measure, and you, yet the last collection of  
 were, John Jay, John Jay, and evidence that he thought and  
 wrote about them and more religious subjects. The poem John  
 and John Jay and John Jay and John Jay and John Jay and  
John Jay and John Jay and John Jay and John Jay and  
 on theology.

John's love of democracy in regard to financial equality  
 and his intense dislike of the rich are equally evident in  
 his bitter satire, The Money Man. The poet had a profound  
 love for equality and justice for all. All subjects from  
 the legal side to the religious side of man's state touched  
 his interest for his political justice.

This thesis dealt with the many various uses of the  
 poet. Of the first class of independent languages--the pun  
 is most frequently found in humorous writings. This form has  
 used over extensively in his poetry. Other amusing devices of  
 this new language frequently used by John were  
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 was used infrequently by him. It is found in three poems only.  
 No examples of sarcasm and architectural pun, or the opposite  
 five were found in his poems. His devices of literary in-  
 ventions, as well as his frequent reference to Greek and  
 Roman mythology, greatly lighted his subjects to the reader.

Saxe's place in American literature has been discussed and the fact recorded that he was a victim of the East and its classical and academic traditions.

It is a pleasure to have you here and to see  
the first number of the new volume of the book and the  
of course the volume is finished.

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The following bibliography is submitted as the most complete one yet compiled. It has been compiled from a list of the books in the Library of Congress; from photostats from the Union Catalogue; from the extensive bibliography of Saxe as printed in Driftwind vol. 5, no.5 March, 1931. North Montpelier, Vermont, ed. by Walter John Coates; and from lists in various encyclopaedias. Attention is called to the difficulty in compiling a complete bibliography, because Saxe's poems went through many editions, in various sizes and bindings, including the Diamond Edition, the Red Line Edition, and the Highgate edition. These several editions attained wide popularity in the United States.

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