

Z  
473  
S64C2

A  
A  
0  
0  
0  
4  
8  
1  
6  
4  
7  
6



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

ROSWELL SMITH  
1829 — 1892





THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation





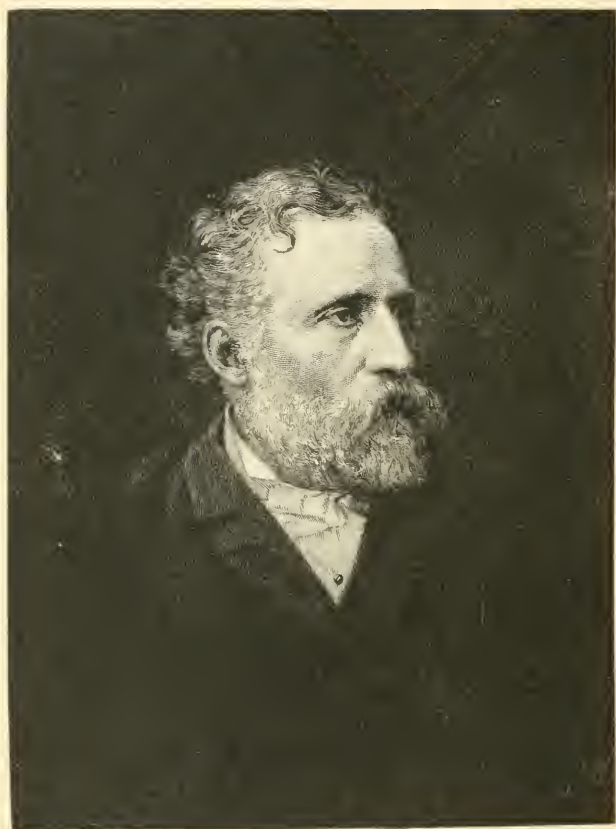












A MEMORY OF  
ROSWELL SMITH

---

BORN MARCH 30, 1829

DIED APRIL 19, 1892

PRIVATELY PRINTED



Z

473

S 64 C 2

THIS TRIBUTE HAS BEEN PREPARED  
AT THE SUGGESTION OF THE WIFE AND DAUGHTER  
OF ROSWELL SMITH BY HIS FRIEND  
GEORGE W. CABLE

1252012





## A MEMORY OF ROSWELL SMITH

**W**HEN those we love die, even after we may have attained to resignation and risen to meet again the duties and endearments that remain to us in our visible world, there linger within our hearts a craving and an unreprieve until our eulogies have supplied—so far as mere words can—full definition and appraisal of our loss, and justified our love and sorrow.

Those whose values have been large in civil affairs have sometimes been finest, best, in relations of which the civic world can say but little. Not any one voice or semichorus from any one direction can or should satisfy the ear of those who mourn them most. The total dues of their praise can issue only from the full chords of all relationships. Such was he to whose memory

## *Roswell Smith*

are offered these pages gathered from the tributes of many friends and lovers.

Roswell Smith was born on the thirtieth of March, 1829. His birthplace, the small town of Lebanon, in southeastern Connecticut, is situated in a thickly settled region of great natural beauty. The clear, rocky streams of the Yantic, the Thames, and lesser waters, hurrying among its green, stone-walled hills, slender woods and fence-rows and flowery meadows, yield abundant mill-power to a strong-armed, strong-minded population habituated from long-gone generations to give their best energies, in material as well as in intangible things, to the development of their secondary and higher values. Northward and southward from it, an easy hour's drive either way, shine by summer day and winter night the countless factory windows of Willimantic and Norwich.

In Lebanon, among other venerated homes, stands the house of that Trumbull family so notably related—with Washington's "Brother Jonathan" at its head—to so much that was good and best in the State's and the nation's Revolutionary and later politics and art; and in this home, his father having acquired it, Roswell



## *Roswell Smith*

Smith passed his boyhood. His father was a man of strong integrity, his mother quietly faithful to every virtue of her sphere. They held by long inheritance, and even with something of their ancestors' rigid scrupulosity and literal faith, the Puritan habit of mind. Industry of hand and of mind; fidelity; rigorous justice in all relations; prudence of purse and of word—with, possibly, an implied mistrust of poetic impulses and an approbation of emotional reticence; moral courage and indignation; a reverence for the Bible as the only and perfect word of God; the common-school education of the day: these they sought to bestow upon their son as the true and sufficient equipment with which to take his place in the world of human affairs.

Such was the mold on its various sides—nature, society, household, and moral training—in which his life took its early form and features. Those whose first acquaintance with him began after he had entered manhood have to confess it equally difficult to think of him either as a boisterous, prankish boy or as a sad or soft-mannered lad given to books and reverie. Cheerful, dignified, and sententious he undoubtedly was, and that incessant diligence of mind and purpose so

## *Roswell Smith*

prominent in his strong, kind, adult life must have shown itself early, and made mere play the slender, handsome youth's least interesting and most difficult work. Certainly such was the lament of his nearest friends concerning him when in later years a stronger capability for pure diversion might have prolonged his days and his usefulness. Whether it came by birth, environment, training, or all, to plan work was his true play. He began each day with plans as spontaneously and unlaboriously as birds begin it with songs. He was not incapable of momentary despondencies, but they were never narrowed to mere self-concern; he seemed scarcely to know at all the cares of this world. But that divine thing, the care of this world, was ever on his ardent heart; and this care, with the redundant fertility of the plans that were forever springing from it, gave, or gives now, certainly, fine and ample interpretation to what, in his youth, seemed to his solicitous father first a premature restlessness, and then a tardy vacillation, in the son's choice of a calling.

It is but just to say that his going into commercial employment when scant fourteen, serving "a brief apprenticeship with the publishers of

## *Roswell Smith*

the school-books of his uncle Roswell C. Smith, in New York," was no choice of his. This was the only time in his life that he was ever an employee. It was against his nature so to be. Many a day of his early manhood this lack — this noble deficiency, if we may so call it — cost him dear, yet served him well; and he who knew so well how to be generously just and wisely kind to employees of every rank, professional, commercial, industrial, domestic, could fairly boast through all his life with the amplest range of significance, standing in the world's marketplace, "No man hath hired me." He was a master workman born, and seems to have felt it when, at seventeen, he pleaded for a better education, and turned back again by eager preference to studies and school, "taking up and finishing the English course in Brown University." Here was no uncertainty of will, but a swift widening of his young grasp upon life and the world's affairs.

With a ruling impulse not only to conceive and to carry out large designs, but to view and to do all things largely, Roswell Smith had also in strong degree the knowledge of how to wait and the courage to change his course. His

## *Roswell Smith*

waiting was observant, purposeful, diligent, never supine; and his turning aside from a mistaken path was invariably prompt and without a note of chagrin. His changes of direction were not changes of purpose. From the university in Providence he went to Hartford and studied law. Here and thus early he began to show the deep interest and to take the active practical part in distinctly religious work and affairs which were ever afterward a part of his life. Here lived his uncle Roswell C. Smith, within whose social and household circles he came into range of some especially refining and inspiring influences, chief among them the companionship of his uncle's daughter, his beloved "sister-cousin," as he always regarded her. In the company of his uncle he was brought for the second time into close contact with the idea of making and publishing books, and seems to have consciously caught somewhat of its influence.

In Hartford lived also some of the distinguished Ellsworth family, and among them, also, he made acquaintances and one or two positive friendships, which presently were to have a controlling effect upon the current of his life. Ex-

## *Roswell Smith*

Governor Ellsworth and his household were here, and his brother Henry L. Ellsworth, the first United States Commissioner of Patents, had gone into the West, entered large tracts of Government land in Illinois, and in Lafayette, Indiana, had set up, after the fashion of the times, a law- and land-office. Here his business soon developed the need of an assistant, and through the medium of one or two of the kindred still resident in Hartford the place was offered to Roswell Smith.

The young law-student promptly accepted it. To him it is altogether likely this was no departure from an appointed course. With all his planning he never overplanned—never planned too elaborately nor too fast. He believed in the coming greatness of our country; he felt the movings of his own still unperfected powers; and he was full of that strong common sense which seizes unforeseen occasion as it hurries by, and distinguishes between the false and the real opportunity under all their disguises. He could act as quickly as he could wait patiently.

His purposes, never hard and fixed, always had a greatness which spanned the waves of

## *Roswell Smith*

impatience with an even keel. His designs, even his yearnings,— and his yearnings were not few,— took ever calmly into account the whole wide current of universal interests; the world, to him, was never less than round, and yet never had an unseen side. He “waited God’s leisure,” and matched it with his own alacrity. To be out of partnership with God in time seemed to him as idle and as evil as to be so in purpose. Timeliness — the divine moment — was as much to his mind as the divine direction. He will always be remembered as a man of enterprise; and yet the only “when” of his profoundest choice concerning any most cherished project or undesired happening, was Thomas Jefferson’s solemn “When in the course of human events it becomes necessary.” Looking back on sixty years of life, he was able, one birthday night, to say, “I never ran away from a duty, and I never ran after one.”

If it were the purpose of these pages to lay main stress on what Roswell Smith did or what befell him, we might not so early begin thus to linger by the way while the narrative waits; but to those for whom this is written, what he was must ever be most of all. He “never

*Roswell Smith*

ran after a duty." And so, with all his strength of will, his energy of purpose, and his fertility of suggestion in every direction, he never showed the shadow of a fanatical or oppressive tendency. He loved to direct and govern; he probably never got near enough to any one, however high or low of station, to call him friend, without planning for him; but the directing and governing he loved were never built on the reduction of liberty anywhere, but always on liberty conveyed or enlarged. Another's responsibility was distinctly more to him than his own wealth; his very suggestions ceased wherever their utterance could in the least degree resemble interference, and his ability to let those to whom he had delegated any power or office win successes, and even make failures costly to him, while he looked on in silence, seemed almost a separate talent. He never forgot that responsibility and liberty make, together, the vital breath of all efficient service.

It was natural that such a mind should be deeply religious. It could not easily suppose an unplanned and automatic universe; nor a revelation of its Creator's will finished in past ages and totally committed and confined to

## *Roswell Smith*

writing and print; nor a Providence either unsolicitous for, or wholly undeputized to, the children of its creation. The sacred Scriptures, daily in his hand, were to him a treasury not so much of promises as of eternal principles; their precepts were prophecy enough for him.

One day, in Indiana, traveling on horseback in company with a stranger who, he had just been told, was a hot-tempered skeptic, he took pains, by quoting the Bible, to draw from him a fierce assertion of total disbelief of the whole book — “every word of it.”

“But that is not really so,” he persisted; “you actually do believe a great deal of it.”

The stranger challenged him fiercely to repeat anything whatever from Scripture which he, the stranger, would admit to be true.

“Well,” was the reply, “don’t you believe ‘a soft answer turneth away wrath’?”

The man, with restored good nature, said he did, and his companion closed the discussion with the advice, “Search the Scriptures for what you can’t deny, and keep its commandments when you can’t honestly break them.”

When Roswell Smith, years afterward, visited the same region again, a man prominent in the



## *Roswell Smith*

church and community for piety and good works said to him, "I am the man whom you once reminded that the Bible is good for what we already believe in it."

In Roswell Smith's belief—at least in the assumption of his daily life, whether he ever so formulated the belief or not—divine revelation was continuous and familiar. He read, as it seemed to him, on the ever-turning pages of his own life's constant happenings, God's daily will and plan concerning his very self; and whether on the page of Scripture or on that of daily incident, his eye was ever in search not of God's permissions, but commissions. Baffled in any project, his cheerful, quick interpretation was sure to be, "The Lord did not want it done that way."

It is somewhat strange that there should be so little to recount of the social life of one so full of human feeling. But we know how often men appointed by nature to wide public usefulness show but a moderate zeal for private society, or are tardy even in the domestic impulses. For Roswell Smith the pleasures of mere social acquaintanceships and activities were not deep enough to satisfy, even in young

## *Roswell Smith*

manhood, his kindly, strenuous temperament, his overflowing fullness of beneficent purpose. He was very soon too busy seeking the world's good, to seek, at all busily, its company. And this, especially in his earlier Indiana days, a rather rude fraction of the world near about him could not quite forgive.

But of home, household, and friends he was a true and intense lover. He married before he was twenty-three. In this alliance there is yet another hint of that largeness with which the lines of his opening life were being projected. We have seen how, from boyhood, he had been related to one of the world's most far-reaching methods of enlightenment, and had acquired by contact, if not by inheritance, the ruling desire to measure the field of his usefulness by no narrower bound than the whole province of the printing-press and its marvelous adjuncts. His uncle was the author, his father the seller, of a group of school-books, "Smith's Grammar" among them, which in that day were found in the hands of a larger number of teachers and school-children than was any similar work save only the world-renowned Webster's spelling-book. His removal to Indiana brought him

## *Roswell Smith*

under the roof, as a member of the household, of Commissioner Ellsworth, the first head of that great national office whose stimulating rewards have done so much to make Americans the most inventive nation in the world. From this household death had removed the wife and mother, and the daughter was absent in the East when Roswell Smith became one of its number. It was some months before the daughter returned. When she did so, expecting to be met at the station by her father, in his stead she saw awaiting her the young stranger, tall, slender, forceful, and exceptionally handsome, so well known to her by report, but hitherto unconsidered and unseen. Realizing that they were to be almost the sole inmates of one small house together, the question must have been uppermost in the mind of each, what degree and phase of intimate relation they would find best and most tolerable. But so looking each on each, in the same moment,—as many a time, in after years, they reverently confessed to each other,—the word came to her heart, “Yonder stands my destiny,” and to his, “I am for that maiden and she for me.” They came at once, at the family board, by the fireside,

## *Roswell Smith*

under the summer vine or evening lamp, in readings together, in musings side by side, daily and hourly, into congenial companionship surrounded by a state of society that could offer very little such to either of them; and it was with a significance as happy as the event was natural that in his choice of a wife his love fixed here upon Annie, granddaughter of the illustrious Oliver Ellsworth, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, the young girl by whose hand that famous first electro-telegraphic message was sent, between Baltimore and Washington, across the inventor Morse's wire, "What hath God wrought!" In her Roswell Smith found a spirit ever wifely, sympathetic, and supremely faith-giving and loyal. Prompt and highly trained in all the real duties of the social world, the pleasures of her fullest choice were yet, as his were, those gentler ones that are found nearest the hearthstone. The fire-side companionship with which their common life began was still very much the largest part of it when his death brought it to an earthly end; and in forty wedded years, says the one best able to know, he never spoke an unkind word to the partner of his life.

## *Roswell Smith*

Their early pathway led through many sharp vicissitudes. They trod upon the stones and thorns of poverty. The world—fortunate if not one's kindred, too—charges (maybe it is best it should) a heavy entrance-fee to an exalted spirit rich in self-reliance but poor in material resources. The people among whom the young pair chose, or found, their lot were more than willing to let the husband feel, even professionally and pecuniarily, that if they were not of his kind it was at least partly his misfortune. Neither law nor land business brought him more than the most meager returns. When they found it best to set up their own home, the total cost of the house they built was five hundred dollars. Here children were born to them: children that brought them joy for a time and then died, only one, a daughter, surviving. The husband's health gave way; one lung was said to be quite gone; the wife, too, was feeble, and, turning all his means into a few hundred dollars, he started with the mother and child for San Antonio, Texas, the refuge of consumptives. At New Orleans, waiting for a promised remittance from his father, he became absolutely penniless. But concealing his distress from his

## *Roswell Smith*

delicate wife, and walking in the streets the better to keep it to himself, he chanced upon two men whom he had slightly known in Indiana, who were bound, as he was, for the Rio Grande, and who, having more money on their persons than they thought it safe to carry, without knowing anything of his strait, begged him to take care of it. He told them, thereupon, his whole case, and arranged with them to be the borrower instead of custodian of their money, and so reached his destination.

The air of San Antonio proved unfavorable; but when he went upon a ranch some distance further north, and began in that wild region to live entirely out of doors, his health and vigor, that had seemed wholly lost, completely returned, and he presently found his life threatened not subtly, by disease, but wordily, by men from whom he would not conceal that he favored the abolition of slavery.

His affairs by and by called him back to Lafayette, and he resumed business there under new conditions that made marked changes in his fortunes. He only partly resumed the profession of the law, acting as counselor, but never again pleading in court. The death of

## *Roswell Smith*

his wife's father filled his hands with new interests both hers and his. Some of the lands still retained turned out, or had turned out already before falling to their inheritance, to be rich in coal. Certain family matters required him to revisit the East, and while there he quite accidentally became most pleasantly acquainted with Dr. J. G. Holland and his family. Returning to the West, the burden of his swiftly growing affairs was again bearing seriously upon him—for he had not only intricate and perplexing financial problems to meet, but the active opposition of strong and hostile wills to overcome—when, on a visit to Cincinnati compelled by business, he fell ill again, this time of typhoid fever, and was soon to all appearances nearer than ever to the brink of the grave. But just at that brink the path of life turned sharply and led into wider fields; for the noted physician who attended him assured him he could not live in the climate of the Ohio Valley, and exacted from him a solemn pledge, while his recovery was yet in doubt, that if his life was spared he would leave that region and settle permanently in the East.

This promise, as soon as his strength would

## *Roswell Smith*

allow, he set about to fulfil. He made final surrender of the profession of law, turned his land business over to others, and, in order to a more complete recuperation, arranged for a tour of Europe. This juncture of his life is remarkable. The great work which is now his monument lay yet in the germ. The choicest wish of his nature, the desire to concentrate all his powers to the dissemination of right ideas through the medium of the printed page, was taking the form of a definite purpose, but the purpose was almost totally without plan; and when in after life he looked back to this period, he seemed to himself to have been, just here, more passively than ever before or after, guided by what some of us call fate, but he, Providence. But a strong, clear purpose, always timely, patient, and courageous, can afford to let the turn of events shape its plans. To Roswell Smith the turn of events was the very text of God's commission. He tried simply to read and obey.

He was now in his fortieth year, a man's second majority, and was not only commissioned, but equipped, accoutred. He had seen at close view the three great sections of our



*Roswell Smith*

vast country, and been a sagacious and sympathetic student of their diverse conditions and interests. He had been for nearly twenty years a lawyer, had shown himself a financier of rare skill, had a most thorough knowledge of men, both intuitive and acquired, was as free from cynicism as from credulity, and with the freshness of a natural bent still retained, from the days of his boyhood's three years' apprenticeship in the New York publishing-house and from his later contact with his father and uncle, a habitual studious scrutiny of the field and methods of the publisher's business. "Even when we first sat together by my father's fireside," says she who was then Annie Ellsworth, "constant readers of the comparatively slender 'Harper's Magazine' of those times, he always read and handled it with speculative scrutiny as to how it was made and sent forth, and how it might be made or sent forth better." And the daughter of their early married life says, "I cannot remember ever having seen my father, even in church, take up an unfamiliar book without, by a kind of only half-conscious instinct, passing his eye and hand over the various features of its workmanship, first the outward, then the in-

## *Roswell Smith*

ward, and turning last to the title-page and publisher's imprint."

Moreover, he was now, at length, abundantly able to put aside the Franklinian counsel given him by his uncle when he was starting West, and which he still quoted with approval thirty years afterward, "Keep your own bank-account, if you have to borrow money to do it." For he had gathered a more than comfortable fortune. How essential this was to the effectiveness of a man of his peculiar sort he knew full well. While always abounding in a fraternal spirit that was ever ready with the word of apt and kindly counsel, and which kept the hand of material succor constantly outstretched to others, his nature could never allow him to be for a moment, in whatever manner, the younger brother of any man. Beyond doubt this quality, in the years of his adversity, stood in the way of an earlier but less illustrious success.

Nevertheless, Roswell Smith had in rare degree the gift of choosing wisely all needed associates, whether equals or subordinates. He was a man of energetic instincts, and had a cordial belief in them. Except a certain fierceness in his purity, this was probably the only femi-

## *Roswell Smith*

nine trait in his mind or character. Yet his choosings of co-workers were not sudden inspirations. Rarely, if ever, did he make such a choice without close, even prolonged, study of all the requirements of the place and of all traits and capacities of the person; and yet, on the other hand again, he always finally allowed a distinctly controlling value to his unreasoned intuitions. Indeed, no one ever, by whatsoever merit of conduct, persuaded him—though he might visibly wish to be persuaded—to put those intuitions quite aside. When, in 1868, he was contemplating his trip to Europe, his purposes for the future had so far taken form that he was revolving the thought of buying and conducting, on his return, some Eastern newspaper. He must have been casting about in his private counsels then for the right allies in a work which, whatever its ultimate form, would be great enough, he planning it, for the collaboration of many minds, and of kindred, yet diverse, natures; and an intuition, however indefinite or partly conscious, was most likely an influence with him when he arranged to make both the ocean voyage and the Continental tour with his esteemed but

## *Roswell Smith*

not yet intimate acquaintance, Dr. Holland. Each of them was to be accompanied by his family.

The Doctor was ten years the senior. He had been, until a short time before, a noted journalist, having lately retired from the "Springfield Republican." His earlier books, "Bitter-Sweet," "Letters to the Young," and other strong, high-minded, sympathetic pen-preachings on manners and conduct in every relation of life, had made him, in this country, one of the most widely read authors then writing, and had drawn him to the public-lecture platform, and so to the West. Still earlier in life he had lived in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and thus, like Roswell Smith, had seen and felt, as we may say, the three great parts of our country and nation. His ambitions were large and chivalric, and though physically he had no such hold on life as his junior, he had yet enough to say often to him in tones of manly lamenting, "Ah, if I were only where you are!" We see, then, how much there was to draw the two men together. Both were cutting loose from old moorings, and, with similar motives, and in much the same direc-

## *Roswell Smith*

tion, were silently making ready for a new dedication of their strength and fortunes to higher uses than before.

“Before we finally decide this,” said Dr. Holland one day,—meaning their project to see Europe together,—“we ought to have one point plainly understood. I am a very punctual man, always at a place exactly at the hour appointed. I hope you are so.”

“No,” said Roswell Smith; “I never arrive at the hour.”

“Then I do not think we had better travel together,” replied the Doctor.

“Maybe not,” said his friend; “for I am always half an hour ahead of time.” And the decision was that they would not separate.

Difficulties unforeseen prevented them, however, from sailing on the same steamer, and they had to content themselves with the agreement for Dr. Holland and family to sail without the other group, and for the two friends with their families to join company at a later date, fixed, in Geneva, Switzerland. And so the hour came which was ever afterward to be stimulating to the spirit, and oftenest recurrent in the reminiscences, of both men: an hour that must ever

## *Roswell Smith*

be notable in the history of our nation's — shall we not say of the world's? — literature.

“ I have often heard both **Dr. Holland** and **Roswell Smith** allude to the memorable night when, standing upon one of the bridges that span the rushing **Rhone** at **Geneva**, **Dr. Holland** outlined to his friend a project which he had been maturing, of a monthly magazine devoted to **American letters** and **American art**. The emphasis rested upon the adjective: the work was to be done in **America**, by **Americans**, for **Americans**; it was to be a popular educator of the highest grade. **Roswell Smith** promptly seized upon the project.” So writes **Dr. Gladden** in the magazine whose world-wide pre-eminence celebrates that hour.

As **Dr. Holland** at that time set forth the scheme, it was one to which he was not yet irrevocably committed, but which he was still weighing: an expansion in his own thought and wish of a simpler proposition made to him, shortly before sailing for **Europe**, by his near friend **Charles Scribner**, the publisher of his books. But upon **Roswell Smith's** so ready enlistment his own resolution became final, and ere long the two friends returned to **America**,

## *Roswell Smith*

perfected arrangements with Messrs. Charles Scribner and Co., and “founded the corporation which now bears the name of The Century Co., and began the publication of their magazine.”

How much larger that constant, yet ever more and more honored, visitant of hundreds of thousands of American homes, and of every clime where the English tongue is spoken—how much larger it is, and how much larger it began from its first day to be, than any mere mercantile adventure and phenomenal commercial success, scarce one of a thousand knows of those who enjoy, directly or indirectly, its superb yet unburdensome beneficences. But from this time the life and work of Roswell Smith is so interwoven with the labors and achievements of those with whom he associated himself, that to distinguish exhaustively or exactly what was his, and what theirs, is as impossible to us as it would have been distasteful to him. He joined himself to all co-workers in a spirit almost as of wedlock, and so long as ends were achieved neither he nor they ever wasted time to decide by any minuteness of measure in what degree each had furnished the elements of success.

## *Roswell Smith*

Indeed, so intimate and constant was and has ever been the harmony pervading this always increasing group of co-laborers, that only in the most initial conception of any feature of their multiform work could, or can, anything be credited to a single brain or one pair of hands. And this very fact must be credited largely — most largely — to him to whom these pages are dedicated. He established from the first an identity of spirit, a unity of interest, between the editorial and the counting room upon the broad and sure foundation of a common aim pointing toward the highest ideals, whether of commerce, ethics, or art. It was from beginning to end his own clear, unvarying choice to make his commercial and financial management a well-spring of faithful and inspiring counsel to the editorial rooms, yet never to let it hinder their utterance or dominate their policy. He made it understood at once and ever afterward, that the editors might depend with certainty upon the counting-room to be bold in enterprise, firm in peril, and faithful in adversity. More : passing over into the editorial department with the cordial freedom and confidence which he encouraged and maintained on every hand, he



## *Roswell Smith*

gave the whole force of his most ardent approval to whatever there tended to make the whole world's good, and nothing less, the policy of the magazine. In the magazine itself, Mr. Gilder writes :

Behind every successful enterprise one may be sure that there is somewhere at work, even if not always prominently in sight, a powerful personality. The personal force—alert, original, full of initiative, insistence, and enthusiasm—which has been from the beginning, in 1870, up to the past year or two of illness, behind the publishing corporation now known as The Century Co. was that of Roswell Smith. Others may express in these pages their impression of the man in the various phases of his aspiration and activity. It is, perhaps, only necessary for the present writer to record here the grief of all associated in business with our late President at his untimely departure, and to say a word regarding especially his relation to "The Century Magazine."

We do believe that Roswell Smith came nearer realizing the strictest editorial idea of what the publisher and chief owner of a periodical should be to that periodical than has often been seen in the literary and publishing world. Trusting the persons chosen to take editorial charge in a manner to call out all the energies and abilities of those so generously confided in, he spent no part of his energy in thwarting or diverting their control, but set all his great strength to the task of enthusiastically coöperating with the plans of the magazine—making possible, by his

## *Roswell Smith*

appreciation, courage, and loyal and liberal support, enterprises in their way of unprecedented cost and importance.

It was always an idea—always the ideal—that, appealing to his imagination, drew forth his deepest and most active sympathies. It was especially ideas of usefulness, of patriotism, of humanity, which commanded his most practical and zealous activities. The famous War Series of "The Century" could not have been carried on with a publisher of a timid and time-serving disposition.

The authorized Life of Lincoln was made available to the great mass of the people largely through the liberality and determination of Mr. Roswell Smith. When George Kennan was gathering in long and painful journeys the material for his great work on the Siberian Exile System, his most frequent and most sympathetic correspondent, outside of his own family, was the busy President of The Century Co.

He not only earnestly supported the most costly and wide-reaching plans, but from his direct suggestion came magazine enterprises of breadth and moment. Nor was it only in large matters that his mind was active and helpful. In many details connected with the appearance of the magazine he made improvements: for nothing to him was unimportant that tended in any way to the perfection and good repute of the publications with which The Century Co. was identified. More important than everything else, in addition to his sympathetic attitude, his suggestiveness, his faculty of invention, the fertility of his resources,—there was for all near him a constant inspiration and spur to highest effort coming from his

## Roswell Smith

fervid faith in God and man; his unswerving confidence in the success of generous methods and lofty and beneficent ideas.

Other memorials of his life, beautiful and enduring, can be pointed out [says Dr. Gladden], but it is in this magazine that the fairest and most permanent results of his work will abide. *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.* To have borne so large a part in originating and establishing an agency like this would be a sufficient distinction for any man. . . . Roswell Smith gave his life to "The Century Magazine"; we might almost say that he gave his life for it.

Few men, not contributors to literature, have had [is the testimony of the New York "Evangelist"] so much to do with the development of a national literature as the founder of The Century Company, and one of the founders of the great magazine which now bears that name. If Augustus Cæsar could say that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble, the men who projected the earlier "Scribner's Magazine" ["Scribner's Monthly"] have surely the right to say that they found American literature inchoate, and left it a thing of beautiful form and splendid promise. For what the old "Knickerbocker Magazine" essayed but failed to do for American letters, that America owes to-day to the magazines of which the early "Scribner's" set the type, and "The Century" to-day maintains the standard. And of these magazines Roswell Smith was one of the creators, and for long years the sustaining spirit.

## *Roswell Smith*

Few men [says the "Christian Union"] have accomplished results so great in a life so brief. He did not enter the publishing business until he was forty-one years of age. He retired from active participation in it nineteen years later, at sixty. In the mean time he had created The Century Company. "The Century Magazine," the "St. Nicholas," "The Century Hymn-Books," and "The Century Dictionary" may all be characterized as the children of his brain. That other men of commensurate ability coöperated with him does not detract from, but adds to, his honor. For it reflects the greater credit on his ability that he gathered about him men who supplemented his business sagacity with literary, editorial, and business skill of rare quality. The burdens he carried and the energies he expended in the battle of life told upon a constitution naturally good, and never impaired by excesses except in work. For the last three years of his life he had been laid aside from active business, and his death was not unexpected.

It is not chiefly, however, as a man of business genius that Roswell Smith will be remembered by those who knew him best. Goodness is more enduring than greatness; love is longer-lived than admiration; and Roswell Smith will be remembered by all who knew him because they loved even more than they admired him. He carried Christian principles into his business life. He proved that consistent adherence to those principles does not interfere with, but promotes, the highest success. He practically repudiated the doctrine embodied in the pagan motto, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest." In all his literary dealings he paid, not the least sum that was necessary to secure the wares, but the sum

## *Roswell Smith*

which, in his judgment, fairly represented the author's proportion of the profits. In one instance within our knowledge he voluntarily paid a literary colaborer two and a half times the price which the author had himself suggested. He carried the same spirit into all dealings with his employees, and so administered his business that they shared with him in its enlarged and enlarging prosperity. He trusted to the honor of his subordinates rather than to pains and penalties. One young man obtaining employment in his office, and asking for the rules, was told there were none. When the young man expressed surprise, and asked how he could know what was expected of him, he received for answer, "Carry out the principles of the New Testament. When you have understood and fulfilled those, you may come to me for something more."

The spirit of trust and confidence which Mr. Roswell Smith manifested toward those who coöperated with him, and his generous desire that they should share in the prosperity which his genius made possible, aroused an enthusiasm which a more worldly and selfish method of dealing never could have created. This spirit of enthusiasm, the product of a mutual respect and a mutual coöperative interest, is the secret of that remarkable growth both in usefulness and commercial prosperity which has characterized The Century Company. The world is better and happier because Roswell Smith lived in it. How much it owes him the readers of his publications probably never think, and, indeed, cannot really know.

Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, bearing witness in the pages of "St. Nicholas," which "never

## *Roswell Smith*

would have had an existence but for the faith, enterprise, and foresight of its founder, Mr. Roswell Smith," writes :

Throughout his career he was ambitious for the work in hand rather than for himself. His successes were those of a brave, able, honorable, and just-minded Christian, who did with his might whatever he found it right to do. The very titles of the two little stories that he wrote for "St. Nicholas" seem now to have a special significance: "The Boy who Worked," and "Little Holdfast."

Roswell Smith had passed out of his earlier occupations not because of any insufficiency for them, but rather of their insufficiency for the peculiar quality of his great talents. From his earliest manhood he had shown unusual ability for the law. The eminent lawyer in whose office he read—for law offices were then the law schools—stated that he was the best student, the most promising young man, and the most useful assistant he had ever had in his office. In Indiana he had had, for so young a lawyer, many important employments, and in later life, when he had been long withdrawn from legal practice and at no pains to keep up a knowledge of the law, he constantly surprised his

## *Roswell Smith*

legal advisers by his great familiarity with the principles of law, his apt citations of them without quoting text-books or cases, and the wisdom with which, from them, he deduced the rules properly governing any matter in hand; though, with the exception of a single earlier experience, his business affairs during this period were the most difficult, perplexing, and important with which he was ever connected. A considerable portion of them involved the progress of The Century Co. from a highly respectable and fairly prosperous corporation to the very great proportions, influence, and success to which it had attained at the time of his death. "In that regard," writes Mr. Cephas Brainerd, for the last fifteen years of Roswell Smith's life his principal and intimate legal adviser, and from whose memoranda these facts are almost literally quoted, "he was one of the most helpful clients whom I have ever known."

His ability as a draftsman of legal papers was extraordinary. "In all my practice," writes Mr. Brainerd, "I have never fallen in with a business man who could make so complete a draft of a complicated contract as did he on

*Roswell Smith*

many occasions. Such a paper prepared by him generally expressed the legal effect of an understanding between parties in such language and with such clearness as to meet the views of all concerned, and to require only slight changes of phrase to satisfy conflicting feelings. Long after disease had begun to tell upon him, a condition arose which threatened a suit in equity to protect important interests in which others were concerned with him. There had been some consultation between us, and much correspondence. While we were all considering what position it were best to take if driven to a suit, I received from him the outline of a bill of complaint, covering many pages, characterized by the utmost care, skill, and completeness, and worthy of a good lawyer in the largest practice on the chancery side of the court."

His innate intimacy with the spirit of the law, as well as his familiarity with its forms and processes, was marvelously illustrated in perplexing questions arising out of differing senses of injury, dignity, and moral right held by opposite parties maintaining antagonistic claims. His quick discernment and prompt adaptation of ethical principles involved in the law, in



## *Roswell Smith*

short, his diplomatic skill, enabled him to dispose of many serious difficulties that otherwise would have risen to the dignity of important suits at law. It rendered it possible for The Century Co. to make its prodigious progress through all the years of his presidency without a single litigation, and, as a rule, without the production of permanent harsh feeling anywhere. He saw at once what was legally valuable in any discussion of interests, and wasted no time and no thought upon what was unimportant: while as to what was important he was strenuous, but politic. He certainly was ambitious. His purpose being ever of the highest, he was determined and aggressive, untiring in his effort to increase the strength and power of The Century Co. But his methods were both just and generous, even to those who sought to obstruct his way, and he never sought to injure others, even to secure the realization of any of his highest hopes.

During the progress of the movement for international copyright, a suggestion that the whole matter could be accomplished by treaty had been much discussed in the newspapers, and diplomatically considered, to some extent,

## Roswell Smith

between our own Government and that of Great Britain. A *projet* of a treaty had been prepared and perhaps exchanged for consideration. At this juncture Roswell Smith, in an elaborate letter to an important personage connected with this initiated negotiation, suggested — and “so far as I have been able to learn,” says Mr. Brainerd, “the objection originated with him. In the first consultation I had with him on the subject, he had in hand a draft of a letter expressing his views” — that the Constitution did not permit any such arrangement as was contemplated; in short, that the treaty-making power was quite too circumscribed to compass the adjustment of the difficulties involved in the subject. The result of this letter was that the thought of a treaty was given up, and recourse was again had to Congress, with final success.

“Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” was the precept that hung, printed in gold, just above his office desk. But his practice was yet better; he rarely led in mirth, full of cheer as he ever was, but maybe all the more for that he was a very happy man, and it was one of the richest

## *Roswell Smith*

sources of his daily happiness to be not diligent simply, but chivalrous in business. It happened often that, a matter having turned out more profitably than he had anticipated, he would cause to be added an unsolicited bonus of hundreds of dollars to its originally stipulated price.

An artist, at the time of the occurrence poor and uninfluential, demanded for some illustrations twice what the art editor thought he should be paid. The art editor brought the matter privately before Roswell Smith, who asked promptly:

“Do you think he is trying to overreach you?”

“Consciously, by no means. He believes they are worth what he asks.”

“Then pay him his price; we can't afford to have him think we are stingy.”

No man ever more wholly or joyfully believed in the commercial value of doing business on principles of Christian unselfishness. He used to say laughingly that the Lord never gave him time to enjoy any self-complacency over any act of generosity in business, He “always made it pay so well and so quickly.”

## *Roswell Smith*

Neither did any man ever know better than Roswell Smith the value of routine ; but none knew better the evil and loss of yielding to the spirit of routine. To him routine was a mere base of operations, a point of perpetual departure upon countless radii of enterprise and improvement. He seemed ever to be stirred from within by the spirit of Emerson's words: "Nothing stands still in nature but death ; the whole creation is on wheels, in transit, always passing into something else, streaming into something higher. . . . Thin or solid, everything is in flight ; . . . everything undressing and stealing away from its old into new form, and nothing fast but those invisible cords which we call laws, on which all is strung."

The invention of new schemes, new methods, the opening of new fields, became the delight of his fancy. These were new machinery ; routine was the old. He never tired of the old because it was old, or changed to new for novelty's sake ; but he bore in mind the fact that millions constantly do. And therefore, though never quixotic or fantastical in any act, no plan or thought, from within or without, could be so new or unusual as to be turned away uncon-

## *Roswell Smith*

sidered by his hospitable mind; while from himself came a ceaseless stream of new suggestions, often fanciful to a degree, and evidently brought forward simply to keep up the war against the spirit of routine.

There were doubtless other causes, but this is certainly one, that from the day of his entrance into the business of magazine-making, whether for adults or children, dates the revolution in aims and methods which has made American magazines the admiration of the world. Almost or quite his initial declaration as he entered into the work was that the general fashion of making a magazine an adjunct to a book-publishing business was not necessary even if it were—which he doubted—legitimate. No organ of universal truth, right, welfare, and culture, he maintained, could fulfil its very largest destiny while held in leash by interests not essential to its own being. He would make a magazine the possible mother of any such interest, but never its daughter; and when he laid down the work, he left the great magazine he had done so much to create the majestic convoy of a heavily and costly freighted book-publishing business. With his associates, he

## *Roswell Smith*

claimed for the magazine of his and their conception no more, no less, than this—a field as wide as all human interests, a responsibility as wide as that field, and a liberty as wide as that responsibility.

When they began their work there was in our country a distance, an estrangement, between culture and religion, between author and preacher, artist and common people, scientist and Bible student, that is now not easily realized. To remove that gulf, to draw these elements, by a kind and faithful energy, nearer to one another, was recognized as one large article of the magazine's great commission. Of this high aim, and of the specific steps taken to fulfil it, Mr. Charles Scribner was the earnest supporter and seconder. But while the work was still almost in its beginnings he died, and it is significant of the boldness and energy of those he left behind, that in this sad event the more conservative elements, especially of the religious press, censoriously found their explanation of the magazine's audacious progressiveness. For it turned not away with prudential silence from any pressing question of politics or religion if only the interest were, or could and should be

## *Roswell Smith*

made, wide enough to justify its presentation by a publication whose field was the world. In order that it might be, in noblest guise, for Americans, by Americans, it essayed to be, and under Roswell Smith's presidency it became, a voice of truth—of all truth, civic, scientific, esthetical, ethical—from the whole world to the whole world, by the avenue of American publication.

To realize fully how much the life of Roswell Smith and the history of the magazine he took part in founding signify, each to other, we need to remember that almost ever since it began to be "The Century" he was the only survivor of its three founders. With almost arithmetical exactness the gravestone of Dr. Holland, its first editor-in-chief, marks the half-way bound between its first issue, in November, 1871, and the death of The Century Co.'s first president in April, 1892; for Dr. Holland was taken in October, 1881. The monumental achievements that have made "The Century Magazine" a factor in American history date within the last ten years; yet no one so eagerly as Roswell Smith attributed them to the staff of younger men under his wise and loving leadership.

## *Roswell Smith*

To have work in common with Roswell Smith was the key to the whole wealth of his personal friendship and solicitude. Those who had not this key now and then misunderstood and undervalued him, because work too completely preoccupied him to leave room for the cultivation of indiscriminately winning ways. But to have work with him was to love him, as well as to be loved by him. In spirit he seemed ever saying of all who were in any way related to him as colaborers, "Behold my mother and my brethren."

Comparatively slight acquaintances could bear witness that "all the force of such a character was combined with a personal kindliness which everywhere called out answering esteem and regard," that he "was a man to call out much personal affection on account of the heartiness of his nature and the nobility of his character," "a man of large ideas and of large charity," "a courteous and most agreeable gentleman," or that "he carried his religion into his daily work, and abounded in acts of charity and benevolence." But the nearer men were to him the more abundant was, and is now, the measure of their praise, reverence, and love.



## *Roswell Smith*

What this measure was let the following offerings signify :

To its president The Century Co. was truly an individual, beloved as a favorite child. There was hardly a waking hour of his life, especially after the company entered upon a separate existence, in which he was not pondering on and planning for its enterprises present and to come. . . .

. . . He took his pleasure in his labors as they went on ; and he had so poured his individuality into the corporate life which was largely his creation that he seemed to see much of his own personal energy and individuality existing along the future in forms of usefulness to mankind.

Roswell Smith had somewhat of the reserve attributed to the New England character, and his mind was concentrated on the principal work of his life with peculiar intensity. Yet collectively and individually his business associates and employees have all and each at various times, and in many an hour of stress and trouble, found in him a kind, sympathetic, and generous friend. There are men of letters in this country whose lives have been made smoother and brighter because of his faith in them, and because of his friendly and substantial encouragement, proffered in all respect and manliness. He has done a good work in many ways ; in a sense no one can "take his place" : but the spirit in which he labored will not soon fail of inspiration for his survivors and successors.

R. W. GILDER.

## *Roswell Smith*

. . . As the result of less than a single score of years of business activity in New York, Roswell Smith left two monumental achievements, either of which is large enough to have engaged a lifetime. These are "The Century Magazine" and "The Century Dictionary," which, on their business side, were distinctly his work. Much of Roswell Smith's success was due probably to good fortune in literary and business associates. But without his ever-fresh originality in business methods, his largeness of plan, and that momentum by which he overbore all difficulties, success so large and complete would have been impossible.

Every man has his limitations, and Mr. Smith's were apparent. He was by nature restricted to large undertakings. He had no relish for success by detail — for a victory made up of successful skirmishes. He told me once that he thought himself personally unfitted for ordinary book-publishing. Besides those enterprises that he engaged in with varying success, he contemplated and negotiated regarding others that came to nothing, but the very conception of which was enough to take the breath. One might say that he had a passion for undertakings of the cosmical sort.

A remarkable example of his liberality in expenditure and the expansiveness of his ideas is to be found in the history of "The Century Dictionary." As at first projected it was to cost a trifle of twenty thousand dollars to revise the English "Imperial Dictionary," and to adapt it to American use. But the ideal of a vastly greater work grew by degrees, and the ultimate cost was, I suppose, nearer to a million than to the first estimate. There was

## *Roswell Smith*

a conservative caution in his character, and in some moods he shrank from the boldness of his own enterprises. When he had added to his original third of "The Century Magazine" almost the whole of the other two thirds, he found himself burdened with a financial responsibility that seemed appalling, and he thought of selling again a considerable block of the stock; but he quickly regained his nerve, and held his course with most fortunate results. At a later period, when the full measure of the expenditure needed to complete the dictionary became evident, he explained to me as a friend how it had grown to such vast proportions, with the avowed intention of making it possible for me to do him justice if financial disaster should result. But again his foresight was justified by the event. . . .

Among his interests was a large share in a coal-mine. Hearing that the miners were dissatisfied, he repaired to the place, and found them holding a meeting in the woods at an inclement season. He persuaded them to adjourn to a hall in the village, the rent of which he defrayed for them, learned the grounds of discontent, and came to an understanding with them. It was and is the habit of corporations owning mines to conduct stores, from which the workmen are obliged, by one device or another, to buy at exorbitant rates; but Mr. Smith set up a store at which no man was under any compulsion to buy, and which furnished the men their supplies at much lower rates than they had been paying to the village merchants. In one mine he retained an interest after his removal to the East, and a resident of the region told me that Mr. Roswell Smith sent a copy

## *Roswell Smith*

of one of his magazines into the household of every workman in the mine.

In The Century Co., under Mr. Smith's presidency, the heads of every department had opportunity to become stockholders. At one time of exceptional prosperity a portion of the profits was divided among the employees, down to the humblest. An amusing story is told of the wife of a man employed in a non-literary capacity by The Century Co. She was quite unable to believe her husband's account of the dividend, and she lay awake all night, distressed with suspicions of his dishonesty. I do not know whether Mr. Roswell Smith retained to the last the conviction I have often heard him express, that such coöperative methods were profitable in a business sense. They have their advantages and their inconveniences, but they certainly tend to do away with the unhappy conflict between labor and capital, and to "make the earth wholesome." Roswell Smith was a conspicuous and active member of a church, but it is much more to the point to say that there are very many who cherish a grateful remembrance of his generosity. He probably gave like others to remote philanthropies, but it is far higher praise that those whose lives were most closely associated with his own found him magnanimously thoughtful of their welfare.

EDWARD EGGLESTON.

In seeking to gather up for grateful recognition some of the finer qualities of Roswell Smith, my thought first rests upon a certain largeness of conception which characterized all his undertakings. He liked to do great

## *Roswell Smith*

things; he had the courage that is not appalled by difficulties, and the faith that removes mountains. The "St. Nicholas Magazine" was started in the very moment of wide-spread commercial depression. His plans for the extension of the sale of the magazines were bold and enterprising; his ambition was to make them as good as they could be made, and he grudged no outlay for this purpose; his confident expectation was that the best thing would turn out to be the most profitable. His residence in the West had given him large ideas respecting the publisher's field; he thought that the West and the South as well as the North and the East were cardinal points in the publisher's compass. When the magazines had won their footing on this continent, he boldly carried them to England; what was good enough for Americans was good enough for Englishmen. This was the first invasion of the British market by the American periodical. The large success of the undertaking opened the way for other publications; and American magazines, now on sale on every bookstand, have exerted an important influence upon English opinion concerning America.

The quality of his mind is illustrated by the project of "The Century Dictionary." This was purely his own. The scheme of owning and publishing a great dictionary of the English language laid hold upon him many years ago. "It is an open question with us"—so he wrote eleven years ago—"whether it is best for us to buy one of the leading dictionaries and build on that, or to organize the scholarship of the English-speaking world and make a new one. There must be one English language, and a common standard of the English tongue." He

## *Roswell Smith*

saw no reason why this should not be published in New York. The purchase of the right to revise and republish "The Imperial Dictionary" in America laid the foundation of this enterprise. It was thought at the outset that a "slight revision" would fit the four volumes of "The Imperial" for the market; but the scope of the work at once began to broaden, and before anything had been realized from the sale of the dictionary, nearly fifty times as much money was expended as had been provided for in the original estimate. In all this his courage never faltered. The ambition to "make it what it ought to be" was far stronger than any financial consideration. His satisfaction in the perfection of the work, his sense of its value to the world, were to him a great reward. It was precisely in such concerns as this that the peculiarity of his mind appeared. The importance of a work like the making of a great dictionary was obvious to him. He could see its relations to all science, to the spread of accurate knowledge in the world. He knew that language is the instrument of thought, the medium of communication, the vehicle of truth; that whatever makes it more precise, more luminous, more perfect, is a great benefit to all men. How many of the disputes that have disturbed the Church and convulsed the State have grown out of verbal ambiguities. How much of the dogmatism that infects philosophy as well as religion would disappear if men would only study and understand the history of the words they are using. An improved and perfected philology, based upon historical research, which gives us the elements of the words that are in our mouths every day, and shows us how they have

## *Roswell Smith*

come to stand for the ideas which we assign to them, is certainly not less important to civilization than the new chemistry, which reveals to us the elements of which physical bodies are composed. And the ambition to carry this work of linguistic exploration and analysis to the very highest perfection, so that the English language may be known in all its roots and branches, and all its terms may be used with the greatest possible precision, was certainly a lofty ambition. The rank which has been assigned to this publication among literary enterprises in this country is well known. It is only important to remember what is said about it, in the preface, by its distinguished editor: "The design originated early in 1882 in a proposal to adapt 'The Imperial Dictionary' to American needs, made by Mr. Roswell Smith, President of The Century Co., who has supported with unflinching faith and the largest liberality the plans of the editors as they have gradually extended far beyond the original limits."

An instance of his large administrative ability is seen in the reform which was made several years ago, at his suggestion, in the method of handling second-class matter by the Post-office Department. Formerly the postage on all periodicals passing through the mails was paid by subscribers; or, if prepaid by publishers, a separate account was made of every copy. Roswell Smith proposed to the authorities that the periodicals be weighed in bulk and prepaid by the publisher. The simplification of the method saves an indefinite amount of petty detail and annoyance to both publisher and subscriber, and doubtless has introduced into the Department a considerable economy.

## *Roswell Smith*

Roswell Smith's mind was not only large in the scope and range of its activity, it was exceedingly fertile. His brain was teeming with new enterprises and new methods; suggestions poured into every department of the business. These were not all practicable; and when they were not, discussion generally revealed the fact to him. His mind was as bountiful as nature herself in producing varieties of ideas; under the natural selection of free debate, he expected the fittest to survive. His friends, in all callings, are indebted to him for many quickening hints. His vital mind tended to fructify every theme that it touched. In my work as a pastor he has often given me useful suggestions, and the most popular contribution that it has been my fortune to make to "The Century"—"The Christian League of Connecticut"—sprang from a request made by him. "I want you," he said, "to write a kind of a story showing how the Christian people of some town got together and learned how to coöperate in Christian work." The elaboration of the idea was my own, but the idea was his, and justice to him requires this acknowledgment.

To "The Century Magazine" Mr. Smith's only literary contribution was a brief poem published in one of the early numbers; but he found pleasure, as did many of his young readers, in two short stories which he wrote for "St. Nicholas."

Mr. Roswell Smith was deeply interested in all the current movements of politics and religion. The failure of the Independents in 1884 to organize a new party he greatly deplored; it seemed to him that the time was ripe for a new grouping of the political elements. The



## *Roswell Smith*

attempt to keep the fires of sectional hatred burning was utterly distasteful to him; he strongly desired that the North and the South should come to a better understanding. The series of papers on "The Great South," published in the magazine under its old name, was suggested by Roswell Smith to Dr. Holland, and it aided, no doubt, in bringing about a better state of feeling. Yet this wish for more amicable relations between the two regions was not due to any lack of interest in the welfare of the Southern negroes, as his work for Berea College amply testifies. This institution, on the borders of the mountain district of Kentucky, in which both sexes and both races are educated together, was one of the special objects of his care; the broad humanity of its foundation, and the directness of its ministry to the neediest human beings, commended it to his sympathy.

Roswell Smith's interest in religion was deep and abiding. His faith was as simple and unquestioning as that of Faraday; his appeal to divine guidance in every matter of importance was as natural and habitual as that of General Gordon. The direct intervention of the divine power in human affairs was to him a living reality. The institutions of religion were his special care. Though of Congregational origin, he was for the greater part of his life a member of the Presbyterian Church, and the Memorial Church of that denomination in New York (now the Madison Avenue Church) owes much to his brave financial leadership. He was not, however, the kind of man whom any sect can monopolize: for many years he was the president of the New York Congregational Club, and he worshiped during the last years of his life with one of

## *Roswell Smith*

the Reformed churches. The wish for a closer and more practical unity among the churches, which found expression in the suggestion about the Christian League, was always in his heart. He was a vice-president, I think, of the American Congress of Churches, which undertook to do something for Christian union in this country; and as an officer of the American Tract Society, he strove to rejuvenate the life and to enlarge the function of that venerable institution. "Parish Problems," one of the books published by The Century Co., revealed Roswell Smith's desire "to do something to help the minister." His motive in undertaking the publication was to make a book in which the people could be shown how to coöperate in the work of the local church. He wished thus to say to the members of the church many things which they greatly need to hear and which the minister cannot say; it was to be a treatise in parish theology, to offset the instruction in pastoral theology which the minister receives in the seminary. This desire to serve the churches found expression in a movement, to which he lent his influence and his personal coöperation, to lift the load from churches which were burdened by debt. Roswell Smith entered upon this work with enthusiasm, and had the satisfaction of seeing a number of churches set free from their encumbrances.

It is not to be supposed that this great publisher was beyond the influence of the motives which usually control men of business. He wanted to succeed in his business. To the expectation of wealth his mind was not inhospitable; but he meant to conduct his business in an honorable way, and, more than this, he was glad to make it tributary

## *Roswell Smith*

to higher interests. If he could see that a given venture was likely to aid the churches, this fact added greatly to its attractiveness. The publication of hymn and service books, in which he has been a leader, was not wholly a matter of business with him; the purification and elevation of the psalmody of church and Sunday-school enlisted his enthusiasm. In the last serious conversation which I had with him, he opened to me a great scheme with which his mind was laboring — to organize the best Biblical scholarship of this country for the translation and publication of a popular edition of the Bible. He proposed to follow mainly the suggestions of the American revisers; perhaps also to make such judicious selection of Biblical material as would better fit the Sacred Scriptures to be read through in families. No man had a deeper reverence for the Holy Book; but he was of the opinion that its value for popular use might be increased by a careful collection of its more nutritious parts. I sought to dissuade him from the enterprise, which he was in no condition of health to undertake; but the bent of his mind appears in the proposition.

It is not, however, in these specific plans that his religious purpose was realized so much as in his deeper intention to make all his work as a publisher serviceable to that kingdom for whose coming he prayed. He desired that the two magazines, especially, should be powerful instruments of righteousness; that the tone of them should always be elevated; that nothing impure or unworthy should be allowed to appear in them; that they should never be permitted to assail or undermine genuine faith or pure morality; that they should pour into the com-

## *Roswell Smith*

munity a constant stream of refining influence — this was his central purpose, his lofty ambition. The efforts of his editors in this direction he always heartily supported. I know well, from many conversations with him, how deep and serious was this desire. I should do my friend a great disservice if I tried to convey the impression that he was not a keen, far-sighted business man ; but I believe that he was something more than this, and that all his thoughts about business were affected and, to some good degree, shaped by the wish and the hope to do something for the improvement of the world in which he lived. He meant to be, and he believed himself to be, a co-worker with God. The issues of the presses that he had set in motion were spreading light and beauty, truth and love, among men ; they were helping to make the world better every day. He knew it, and gloried in it. With all the personal satisfaction which he derived from the success of his business ventures was mingled the deeper feeling of thankfulness for the privilege of serving the higher interests of his fellow-men.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

Roswell Smith, from early manhood a life-member of the American Tract Society, was quickened to a new interest in its affairs when his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Robinson, became editor of its "Illustrated Christian Weekly," which interest culminated at the annual meeting of 1886, when, on his motion, a committee was appointed "to inquire into the practical workings of the society, and to recommend such changes in its constitution, methods, and management as may seem desirable." Declining to be-

## *Roswell Smith*

come the chairman, he accepted the position of secretary of the committee. The resolution directed the committee "to make a thorough examination of all the affairs and business of the society," and as executive secretary the burden of the duty and responsibility fell upon him, though the whole was shared by his associates, the Hon. Nathaniel Shipman (chairman), General Wager Swayne, the Rev. Talbot W. Chambers, D. D., Chancellor MacCracken, the Hon. James White, and Mr. Robert Colby.

Their report was thorough and comprehensive. It introduced vital changes in the constitution and methods of the society. Though not inerrant, after consideration and full discussion in two public meetings it was in the end adopted, June 1, 1887, with few if any dissenting voices. The five subsequent years of practical working have attested in the main the wisdom of the changes then made. At the annual meeting of the same year Roswell Smith was elected a member of the Finance and Executive committees, in which he continued by succeeding elections until his decease.

His peculiar gifts as a publisher, which placed him easily in the front rank of the men in that sphere, added to his desire to make the most of his life for the Lord, and for his fellow-men for Christ's sake, were the prime elements in the quickening which occurred about 1887. The opportunity now brought to him to put his hand to the execution of the plans which he had desired and the society had adopted, came to him as a providential call to service, and, if need be, to sacrifice; and thenceforth, whatever were the enactments of his own extensive business, his time was freely given to the interests of the society.

## Roswell Smith

His practical knowledge of the publishing business, fertility of suggestion, sound judgment, and large acquaintance with and love for missionary effort, made him a most helpful member of the committee.

He was a truly catholic Christian. One of his cherished purposes, to which he gave much thought and personal work, was a plan for close coöperation, or even a union on some general basis, between all the great American undenominational publishing societies. But serious illness overtook him, and of necessity he was constrained to remove his hand from what he hoped would be the means of furthering and demonstrating the unity of all evangelical Christians.

As weariness and weakness in the past two years stealthily crept over him, from time to time he recalled with peculiar delight his association with the men whom he esteemed and loved as members of the committee, and his satisfaction in the retrospect of his work in connection with the society. It is almost needless to add that this view is most cordially reciprocated by the officers and members of the American Tract Society, to which his decease is an irreparable loss.

(Rev.) G. L. SHEARER,

*Financial Secretary of the American Tract Society.*

For six years Roswell Smith was the honored president of the Congregational Club of New York and vicinity. For most of that time he was a member of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, but his membership in that church was determined by his personal relations with its pastor, the Rev. Charles S. Robinson, D. D. His sympathies

## *Roswell Smith*

were heartily with the Congregational churches, and his gifts for benevolent work chiefly through their missionary boards. Soon after the organization of the club he was elected to its membership, and in 1883 was chosen president. The outlook of the club at that time was not promising. No permanent and desirable place for its meetings had been found, and that, with other facts, had discouraged many of its members. When Mr. Roswell Smith assumed its presidency a new and brighter era began. He brought to the office large practical wisdom, wide knowledge of men, and exceptional opportunities for securing speakers. From the beginning of his administration to its end the Congregational Club offered the best program of any club in New York the primary object of which was the discussion of topics of current interest. The platform was always free; speakers were encouraged to give their honest thought, and were not asked whether it coincided with the views of the president or membership. One subject in particular had an especial interest for our president. Some time before his election the following question had been discussed, "Is it possible to do business on Christian principles?" A very prominent banker, who was also a prominent church member, maintained that Christian principles were one thing and business principles another. I have never seen Mr. Roswell Smith more indignant than when referring to that discussion, and he was not satisfied until it had been considered again, and he had borne emphatic testimony to his faith that the only way in which business can be conducted with prospect of permanent success is by a strict adherence to the teachings of Christ.



## *Roswell Smith*

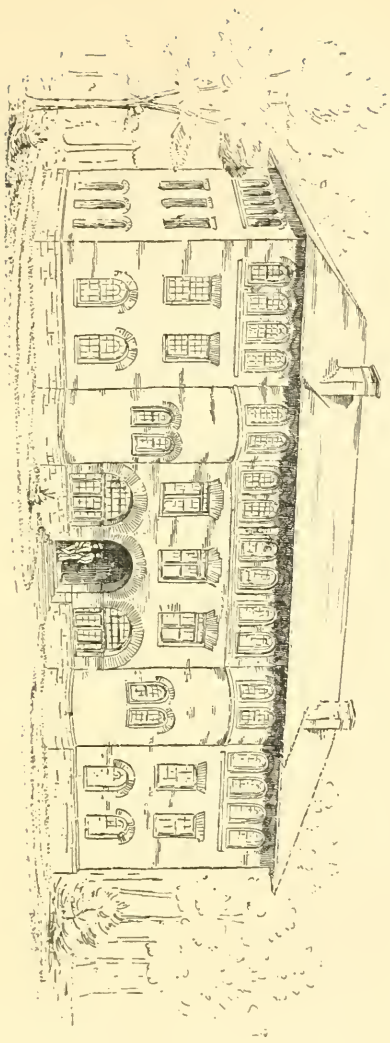
The publisher of "The Century," of course, had unequalled facilities for securing the participation of eminent authors and public speakers in the discussions of the club, and few, if any, persons whose names were prominent in the pages of "The Century" during his presidency of the club failed, at some time, to appear at its meetings. In his intercourse with its members Mr. Roswell Smith was always the urbane Christian gentleman; in his conferences with its officers he was always courteous and considerate. We felt that he gave to us his best thought, and the club had unquestionable evidence that while it honored itself by choosing him as its president, it always had a large place in his heart. In 1889 failing health compelled him to decline reelection to the office, and while he has seldom been seen at the club since that time, his name has often been mentioned with sincere and reverent regard; and in no organization of which he was a member will his memory be more fondly cherished and his loss more deeply mourned. In all the years of his connection with the Congregational Club, during most of which he was its president, its members will recall not a single act or word that was not courteous and Christian, and its present conspicuous success is universally regarded as very largely due to his wisdom and devotion to its interests.

(Rev.) AMORY H. BRADFORD.

Mr. Roswell Smith's first gift [to Berea College], one thousand dollars, was sent through the American Missionary Association in 1884 for our current expenses. In June of the following year he, with George W. Cable,



ARCHITECTS' DESIGN FOR LINCOLN HALL, BEREA COLLEGE, BY BARR, COOK AND WILLARD.





## Roswell Smith

attended our commencement. He saw our urgent need of a suitable building for class-rooms, library, etc., and remarked that we should begin making bricks. One of our workers mentioned the difficulty of making bricks without straw. Mr. Roswell Smith at once replied, "Put me down for five thousand for straw." We began making bricks that summer, and in the end he put twenty-five thousand dollars into a new building for us. One of the most characteristic letters from the large correspondence had during the progress of the building was written January 7, 1887, in which he says, "I hope the college will get on without calling on me for more money, *but* I shall be ready to respond to calls as fast as may be necessary to keep the work in progress, and I wish you to call on me freely for that end."

When the building was nearly completed we asked him to christen it. He wrote to call it "Lincoln Hall," in memory of the poor white boy of Kentucky who had won the hearts of his countrymen and the highest honors they could give.

After we had been in the building a few months, the following letter was received :

NEW YORK, Nov. 24, '87.

MY DEAR MR. DODGE: I am glad to know that the building — Lincoln Hall — meets your needs and gives you so much pleasure. I have a picture of it in my office, and it certainly gives me more pleasure at present than my new house, which I am trying so hard to get into, and can't.

I have written to Mr. Hartley about the bas-relief of Lincoln, and shall doubtless be able to advise you in that matter within a few days.

I am very sincerely yours,

ROSWELL SMITH.

## Roswell Smith

Mr. Roswell Smith wished a bas-relief of Lincoln to be placed in the vestibule of Lincoln Hall. His next letter was in reference to that, and is as follows :

NEW YORK, Nov. 29, '87.

MY DEAR MR. DODGE: I have purchased from Mr. J. S. Hartley a bronze cast of the Lincoln head, duly framed, and suitable for hanging up indoors in Lincoln Hall. . . . I hope it will reach you before Christmas.

Will you kindly thank Mr. E. H. Fairchild for his letter of Thanksgiving Day, and tell him that he is unduly alarmed as to my health? As Mr. Lowell said yesterday, in his address on Copyright, "We are all of us, always, just beginning to live."

I am very sincerely yours,

ROSWELL SMITH.

Besides the new building, we received from him four thousand dollars for current expenses. His last gift and last letter came after the exciting political campaign of four years ago :

NEW YORK, Dec. 31, '88.

MY DEAR FELLOW-WORKER FOR CHRIST: I wish you a Happy New Year, and I send you a thousand dollars for your work, which please use (after consulting Pres. Fairchild) "Where it will do the most good," as the politicians say, and may the Divine Master's blessing go with and attend its use.

I am yours sincerely,

ROSWELL SMITH.

Our sympathies are with the family and friends of this good man.

Very truly yours,

P. D. DODGE,

*Secretary and Treasurer.*

BEREA COLLEGE, Ky., April 21, 1892.

## *Roswell Smith*

There was, if I may judge correctly, something statesmanlike in his conduct of the business interests of which he was at the head, while there was also something romantic in his feeling about them. To his mind The Century Co. was not a concern for making money, but an organization for the advancement of civilization. . . . This was the spirit in which he conceived and carried on the work of his life. And it imparted itself to those who were associated with him. He was justly proud of their friendship, confidence, and loyalty, and they in turn bear testimony to the inspiration of his stimulating leadership. The many volumes which have been brought out by the company of which he was the president are in one sense a monument to him; but the influence of his strong personality on the minds and characters of those who, through these years, have been working with him, will doubtless continue when all these volumes shall have ceased to be read. . . .

It is not only in the offices where he will be no more seen that he will be gratefully remembered. . . . He bore his part of the work of some of the most important of the benevolent societies of the church. . . . The shadows of death have been gathering around him for many months, and he entered into them bravely, patiently, without a murmur. And now, out of the unwearied and loving ministries which attended him to the last moment, he has passed to the freedom and the peace of that larger life on which no shadows fall. . . .

REV. DR. EDWARD B. COE.

(Funeral Address.)

*Roswell Smith*

Here where I, sitting in my place,  
So oft have seen you at the door,  
A lad comes with indifferent face  
To tell me we shall meet no more.

The Old World pity of slow ships  
Was kinder than this flashing speed ;  
The first short sigh on Western lips —  
I hear it plainlier than I need.

The paper flutters to the ground.  
Cold wastes of ocean scarcely part  
Your voiceless mouth that makes no sound,  
And silence of my beating heart.

In this first hour, while thought is blank,  
I dwell on all that made you dear ;  
And for the gracious past I thank  
Whatever now can feel or hear.

The gentle mode, so subtly leagued  
With moral power and mental health,  
The courteous patience unfatigued,  
The cordial wish to please by stealth !

That lifelong flame which rose and fell  
By purest purpose still was fanned ;  
That stringent will which planned so well —  
For others, not for self, it planned.

## *Roswell Smith*

Vain, vain are words! I sit alone  
And helpless sorrow westward send.  
Roar louder, London's central moan,  
My world is poorer by a friend.

EDMUND GOSSE.

LONDON, April 20, 1892.

As I complete the hurried grouping of these testimonials, I am moved to venture a word, the briefest, and merely for emphasis, on four or five traits in the character of Roswell Smith, which seem, in the moment of tribute-offering, to have been eclipsed by the luster of more imposing qualities.

And first, the almost poignant longing with which he clung to the days of best strength as they glided relentlessly through his grasp. He was as much too wise to be avaricious of time as he was too noble to be so of money; and yet he yearned toward every parting hour. How often did he say to intimates younger than himself, "You think you know the value of time; but you do not — no young man can."

In the years of his great achievements he was hale, well knit, broad of frame, strong in features, and of majestic yet most inviting

## *Roswell Smith*

presence; "a remarkably fine-looking man, and the very embodiment of energy and intelligence." I never saw in him the most covert sign of personal vanity, or saw him resort to the most momentary expedient to deceive himself or others as to his advancing years. And yet it was touching to observe the silent, or nearly silent, intensity with which he craved departing youth. Oftenest it betrayed itself in a certain robust sadness with which he laid upon some younger friend the tender accusation, "You, too, are getting old."

I might give a trivial incident that illustrates both this and the manly purity of his mind. A companion, his junior, said laughingly, as they parted with some fair young friends after a moment's greeting, he had made the sad discovery that he had arrived at the stage of life where girls were no longer afraid of him. Roswell Smith's answering smile was faint, grave, and soon gone as he said, "You 've another stage to reach, and a sadder discovery to make—the day you find you 're no longer afraid of the girls."

Probably the explanation of this trait is that almost with the first of the series of his great



## *Roswell Smith*

successes there set in a slow, and for a long time very slight, but steady and conscious decline of his physical powers, which followed his every step, an ever-darkening shadow. He did not take age unkindly, but he took death, when at length he plainly saw it approaching, kindlier than he could take the thought of an enfeebled age. He was so invincibly bent on keeping his spiritual life whole that a flaw in his physical perfections was to him as the fall of some outpost in his soul's defenses.

This leads me to note, as a second trait, his moral indignation. Among all the soul's armament no other one thing, I take it, is so effective, so needful, or so rare, as a strong, quick, aggressive, and even implacable indignation against the remotest approach of temptation, the first apparition of evil. It is our moral nature's long-range artillery, and holds the soul's enemies beyond besieging distance. Roswell Smith was of so tender a sentiment, and so believed in tenderness, that he could hardly tell a touching incident without his eyes filling with tears and his voice faltering. Yet to the author of an ignoble proposition or an unfair deed he could be as rude as a thunder-cloud. He was patient with error,

## *Roswell Smith*

even when it arose from the most criminal weakness or from the grossest moral deformity. He could forgive and forbear with the largeness with which he did all things; but with men of stalwart immorality he would have no relations, no dealings, whatever, social, civil, or commercial.

I would note, too, the great depth of his feelings. To conceive largely, to execute largely—it may be that with such gifts must go always also the capacity to enjoy and suffer in like measure. A ready anger, even when readiest against evil, may come of a lack of depth; a constant cheerfulness may arise from a spirit that will not, or can not, carry grief's burdens. But Roswell Smith's affections,—his friendships and loves,—though rarely demonstrative, and almost barren of caresses, were deep seas; his sorrows were agonies. He could smite, for the rights of others and even for his own,—though these he often waived,—with stern prowess. Indeed, almost every period of his life was marked by some such struggle. But every blow that fell upon him left an inward wound, and every blow that he struck cost him deeper pain than it cost any adversary. There is no room to doubt that his griefs, and particularly the griefs that all strifes

## *Roswell Smith*

cost him, made his life shorter than it need have been. But maybe a life so broad and deep could the better afford to end so far short as it did of threescore and ten.

One day, a few years ago,—and this incident brings again to mind his yearning after spent, although such well spent, years,—The Century offices took fire. The fire was checked without having destroyed the rooms, but not until the letter-books of the president, though not destroyed, had yielded to some chemistry of fire, water, or both, and the entire record of his years of correspondence was obliterated. His sorrow for these lost letters was of a depth and poignancy as great as if they had been children. Yet he never let a darkened mood cast from him its shadow upon the spirits of others, and no sorrow or despondency ever disenobled him, or made him less a Christian or less a man.

We say his loves were deep seas: their deepest deep—and this is the last trait of his character to which we shall refer—was his love of family and kindred. For it he had few words and almost no gestures; it really was wanting in emotional demonstration. And still it was as real, as obvious, as constant, as seemingly an

*Roswell Smith*

essential part of his existence, as his breath. To those whom God had joined to him he no more needed to say, "I love," than, "I live." It was all one; they were a part of him, he of them, like members of one body; and he was forever doing, doing, doing for them as if, of that body, he were—as he was—the heart. Yet, again, his love, for all its pent fondness, never took form to belittle; it always sought to aggrandize spiritually as well as materially those whom it rested on, and there was ever present in his mind a silent punctiliousness as to the moral effect of every favor, however lavishly bestowed. Having at one time decided to make, gradually, to one of his nearest, a gift equal in total value to an independent fortune, he took pains to have its price paid step by step, month by month, thousand after thousand until they were tens and scores, by another's cheque; never by his own.

His widow, his daughter, and he whom he made so much more son than son-in-law—these cannot forget the riches of his love and worth. His young grandchildren can know its full measure only from their seniors; how perpetually they dwelt in his mind and heart; how fondly—with

*Roswell Smith*

what hope and devotion—he studied their every feature of face, form, and character through every new day of their unfolding growth. May his memory be to them, and to us all who knew him, a power to make our lives the more nearly after the likeness shown by his Master to him.







UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**AA** 000 481 647 6

S64C2

