

## IRVING'S LIFE.

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CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

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[Mr. Warner's address being copyrighted by Messrs. Harper & Brothers, the editor is unable to give the paper entire in THE GRADUATION SOUVENIR. Instead is given the following synopsis of the same taken from the *Standard Union* of Brooklyn, N. Y.]

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At Association Hall, Bond and Fulton streets, last night, before a large audience, Charles Dudley Warner delivered an address on Washington Irving, the occasion being the 110th anniversary of the birth of the "Father of American Literature." During the address Mr. Warner described the customs, manners and social life in vogue by which Irving was surrounded in his boyhood days. He also touched upon the sanitary, sewerage and water supply of New York City at that period. Mr. Warner said that in 1784 the fashionable society of New York consisted of a clique of about 300, and although not quite so exclusive as the Philadelphia set, New Yorkers consoled themselves with a higher rate of living. New York was much the smaller city. Although there were 300 in the exclusive set in New York in 1784, it had, Mr. Warner said, taken over 100 years to raise that number to 400, which would serve to give an idea of the exclusiveness of New York's present "400." In those days board ranged from \$4 to \$7 a week, and this included in the bill of fare the dispensation of four different kinds of liquor. Washington Irving came to New York in 1783, and at that time the only literary men in the city were Capt. J. J. Fenno, a sort of rover of those times; Samuel Low, a bank clerk; and William Dunlap, a playwright and dramatist, who managed the theatrical productions of those days. Literary work evidently did not pay very well, for it is recorded that Noah Webster sold the exclusive right to a New York publisher to print his spelling book in the States for the sum of \$200. Newspaper work evidently prospered, for in 1807 there

were nineteen papers in New York City, of which eight were dailies. The more prominent of these were the "Evening Post," edited by Alexander Hamilton; the "American Citizen," by De Witt Clinton; and the "Morning Chronicle," by Aaron Burr. It was in the "Chronicle" that Irving first exercised his literary talents. Large theatre hats were just as loudly condemned then as now. The comforts and conveniences of travel were described by Mr. Warner, in a humorous way. Irving tried both business and law. He finally settled upon a literary life; but under rather adverse circumstances, for the society of the day could not be called literary. Irving's father was a Scotchman, from Orkney; his mother was the daughter of an English curate. Why Irving did not attend Columbia College, as did two of his brothers, cannot be explained. He obtained his education from private schools in New York. His first literary production, that caused extended comment, was his papers signed "Jonathan Oldstyle," a satire on the social life of the day, which he wrote after a two-years sojourn in southern Europe. He spent much of his time roaming about the country, with his gun over his shoulder, and, although he never did much execution with the gun, he did gain much in his observance of nature. It was on one of these journeys that he met "Rip Van Winkle." Irving preferred to write in short sketches rather than in novels and longer literary productions. This style originated with him, and has had many imitators. Irving's "Knickerbocker Papers" were entirely a work of fiction, but so well and pleasingly told that they have been taken for history; and it is to-day almost impossible to controvert this peculiar mistake. Irving, like all writers of humorous strain, felt that he must put some grave work before the public, and, as a result, his "Life of Columbus" appeared, which brought him a degree at Oxford, and many medals and honors, and to-day, although much has been discovered, and many libraries written on Columbus, Irving's stands the best.

After giving a personal description of Irving, furnished by a close friend of the famous writer, Mr. Warner entered into a general account of his various works.

The lecturer accounted for Irving's bachelorhood by the death of a sweetheart in his younger days.



After speaking of Irving's financial income, the address was closed with the statement that his works were read more extensively now than for some time past.