



## The Last Amateur: The Life of William J. Stillman

**Stephen L. Dyson**

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Born the 1st of June, 1828, this restless man from Schenectady set aside a fairly promising painting career at the Hudson River School to help found the nation's first critical art journal, *The Crayon*. Tall, ruggedly handsome, and adventurous, he chummed around with Louis Agassiz, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and other Eastern notables, and complemented his landscape brush with the newly invented camera in the late 1850s.

Not for the first time, Europe called, in the form of consular service in Rome during the US Civil War, and William Stillman's eclectic life was put on an extraordinary trajectory—art, photography, writing, disarming earnestness, intelligence, and a revolutionary's spirit all serving to open doors from London to Crete, the Balkans to Paris.

He pursued archaeology seriously, took some of history's most revered photos of the Athens Acropolis, and served as a correspondent for *The Times* of London for many years.

The man from Schenectady died in early July, 1901, at his beloved home in Surrey, England. *The Last Amateur*, in splendid prose, proves that they don't make men like they used to.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Winter 2015)

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