

## THE LADY MOWLSON SCHOLARSHIP AT CAMBRIDGE.

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At the meeting of this Society held in Worcester, October 21, 1887, I submitted a paper which was printed in the Proceedings of the Society under the title, "The first Scholarship at Harvard College."

The founder of this Scholarship was described in the original document dedicating the fund to beneficiary purposes, as Lady Ann Mowlson of London, widow, but beyond the information contained in these words nothing was at that time known about her. In alluding to this fact I made use, in the beforementioned paper, of the following language: "Notwithstanding the great interest which attaches to the name of Lady Mowlson, Quincy was compelled to sum up what he could find out about her in the paragraph 'Nothing is known of Lady Mowlson except that she was among the earliest of the transatlantic benefactors of the College.' A grateful posterity, not content with merely knowing her name and holding up for admiration her liberality in thus generously endowing the distant College in the wilderness, would gladly know more of her. Perhaps a clue to her kinsfolk may be found in the designation of 'John Weld now scholler in sd College' as the first beneficiary of the exhibition."

Ever since my attention was attracted to the subject, I have been watchful for clues which might clear up the mystery which surrounded the personality of Lady Mowlson. When Brown's *Genesis of the United States* came out I carefully examined the names therein given, of subscribers

to American ventures, and was rewarded by discovering that one Thomas Mowlson was present at a meeting of the the Court of Assistants of the Grocers' Company held at London, April 15, 1614.<sup>1</sup>

This solitary item of what might possibly aid in my search, was all the information on the subject which I had been able to glean, up to last spring when I submitted to Mr. John Ward Dean, the editor of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, the manuscript of an article which was published in the July number of the *Register*, under title of "The Exhibitions of Harvard College prior to 1800." While this article was going through the press, Mr. Dean expressed great interest to know more about Lady Mowlson. His familiarity with sources of information upon points of genealogy enabled him to place at my disposal several references, the examination of which furnished considerable information relative to a certain Sir Thomas Mowlson prominent in London affairs in the early part of the seventeenth century. He also kindly invoked the aid of Mr. Henry F. Waters, the accomplished genealogist, who supplemented the foregoing work by an original investigation in England, which disclosed the fact that Sir Thomas died about 1638, leaving a widow, Dame Ann, who was alive in 1643. The information collected from these several sources will be found in the sequel.

Sir Thomas Mowlson was a native of Hargrave-Stubbs, Cheshire, where his family settled about 1500. His name appears in a list of those present at a meeting of a Court of Assistants of the Grocers' Company, held in London, April 15, 1614. His name also appears in the lists of sheriffs for London and Middlesex,—21st James I., 1624. In 1627, he founded at Hargrave-Stubbs a chapel, and endowed it with £10 per annum for a minister. At the same time he

<sup>1</sup> Brown's *Genesis*, Vol. II., Page 687.

endowed a school, adjoining the chapel, with £20 per annum "for the government, education and instruction of youth in grammar and virtue," and directed the overplus of rents arising from certain lands, then by him given, to be applied to the relief of such poor persons as the majority of the feofees should think fit. In 1633-34, he was an alderman of the City of London, and in March, 1634, the Lord Mayor having died, he was chosen to succeed in that government. He was knighted at Greenwich, on the first day of June, 1634. After the expiration of his term of office as Lord Mayor, his name is still found for a brief time among the aldermen.

Traces of the esteem in which he was held are to be found in the character of his official work and correspondence. On the 17th of May, 1634, he reported to the Council the quantity of oats in store in the shops of the chandlers in London. On the 15th of July, the Commissioners of Pious Uses wrote to him relative to the procuring of contributions towards repairing St. Paul's. On the 24th of July, 1634, the King addressed a communication to Sir Thomas Mowlson, Lord Mayor, and the Aldermen of London, recommending a scheme for the improvement of the streets of London. This letter contains a suggestion for maintaining sidewalks, and for the introduction of water into the city, and is of itself of so much interest that I quote it in full.

"It is not unknown to them (the Lord Mayor and Aldermen) with what readiness the late King gave encouragement to propositions made to him concerning the beautifying of the city of London. His endeavors have produced good effect, the King, in confidence of their industry to advance a work so happily begun, recommends to them a proposition lately made to his Majesty by Daniel Nys, a gentleman of good understanding and experience, for beautifying the streets of the city by raising them to a convenient height, evenness and decency leaving an ample passage

for coaches, carts and horses, and reserving a competent part of the streets to be made even in a commodious manner and for the greater convenience of those that travel on foot, besides a handsome accommodation of water for cleansing the streets by pipes of lead so to be laid as will be found a work of great consequence for avoiding those unwholesome and contagious vapours which infest the city at all times. The King has therefore addressed this gentleman to them, not doubting but that in conference they will find his proposition worthy of encouragement."

On the 16th of March, 1635-36, Sir Thomas, then an alderman, was associated with Sir Nicholas Rainton, alderman, by order of Council to report on the petition of the "Tawyers and Skinners," which was by order of Council referred to them. The report of the committee was made on the 22d of July.

In 1638, the will of Sir Thomas Mowlson was probated. In 1657, Dame Ann Mowlson, his widow, executed a will which was proved in 1661.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the foregoing discloses the career of a successful and public-spirited merchant, who was honored by his fellow-citizens. In the height of his prosperity, mindful of the obligations imposed upon him by the accumulation in his hands of an undue proportion of the wealth of the land, his mind turned to his place of nativity in Cheshire, and he there established a beneficiary fund for religious, educational and charitable purposes. He shared in the general interest which American ventures stirred up at that time in London, and his name is handed down to us in an American historical work through his attendance at a meeting of the Court of Merchants of which he was a member. His rank

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<sup>1</sup> Since this communication was laid before the Society, abstracts of the Wills of Sir Thomas and Lady Mowlson have been received by Mr. Dean and will appear in the *Waters Gleanings* in the January number of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. From references in Lady Mowlson's will to her relatives, it may be inferred that her family name was Radcliffe.

as knight gave him the title of Sir and entitled his wife to be addressed as Lady. Certain eccentricities in spelling on the part of those who recorded Lady Mowlson's name in the Massachusetts archives and in the college records were alluded to in the paper of October, 1887. In the several references which have been referred to herein the name is spelled either Moulson, or Mowlson, the former being the prevailing method.

There is nothing in these references which will determine the theological opinions of Sir Thomas, but the language used by the author of the chapter in Lyson's *Magna Britannia*, in which he speaks of the chapel at Hargrave-Stubbs being endowed with £40 "for a minister" would indicate that Sir Thomas was a dissenter. This is not the word ordinarily used to designate a clergyman of the Church of England. Nor do I think that this inference is much weakened by the fact that the same author is authority for the statement that the Dean of Chester and the Rev. John Oldershaw, Vicar of Tarvin, were, in 1810, when the second volume of *Magna Britannia* was published, among the feoffees of the trust. The Restoration effected many changes in trusts of similar nature, of which the conversion of that notably liberal institution, Emanuel College at Cambridge to its present high-church views is an illustration. In any event I do not wish to be understood as attaching much weight to the inference as to the theological opinions of Sir Thomas which I draw from the use of the word "minister" in describing the clergyman who was to officiate in his chapel. If he was a dissenter, it would have furnished one more reason why his widow should be called upon by the committee from Massachusetts Bay who were then soliciting funds in Great Britain. If he was not a dissenter there was no reason why she should not contribute. The continuous flow of funds which took place at this time from Old England to New England was not limited by any question

of theological belief between givers and receivers. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, was a Church of England organization. Its funds were used for the construction of an Indian college at Cambridge and its officers assented to the use of the building for dormitories for white students. The gleanings of Mr. Waters, now being published in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, furnish abundant evidence of the widespread interest which was felt in England in the welfare of the colony of Massachusetts Bay.

It was in 1643 that Thomas Weld, pastor, of Roxbury, in the Plantation of New England, received from the hands of Lady Ann Mowlson of London, widow, the full and entire sum of one hundred pounds, to be given to Harvard College in New England, the yearly revenue of which was according to her good and pious intention to be and remain as a perpetual stipend for and towards the perpetual maintenance of some poor scholar.

Lady Ann Mowlson, the relict of Sir Thomas, was then in the fifth year of her widowhood. Her survival at that period is attested by the execution of a will in 1657. The committee appointed by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay were then seeking aid in England. What more natural than for them to turn to the wealthy widow of a man who had shown an interest in American affairs, who had while still living himself endowed a chapel, a school and a charitable fund, and who was probably in sympathy with the theological opinions of the members of the committee. All circumstances point to the identification of the founder of the Lady Mowlson Scholarship with the widow of the sometime Lord Mayor of London. If the proof is not positive in its character, still the chain of evidence is sufficiently strong to carry conviction to most minds. Those interested in the subject who accept these conclusions will rejoice that the mystery which has enshrouded the generous

founder of the first scholarship in this continent has at last been removed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The sources of information upon which the above statements are based are as follows:—

Calendar of State Papers (Domestic) 1633-34.

Same series, 1634-35.

Same series, 1636-37.

The History of the Worthies of England, endeavored by Thomas Fuller, D.D., London, 1662. Nuttall's edition, London, 1840.

Lyson's *Magna Britannia*. Vol. 2, Part 2, Cheshire. London, 1810.

Brown's Genesis of the United States.

Letter of Henry F. Waters to John W. Dean, dated London, 18th June, 1892.

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