

## OBITUARIES

## JAMES PHINNEY BAXTER

James Phinney Baxter, for many years a member of the Council of this Society, died in Portland, May 8, 1921, at the age of ninety years. He was born at Gorham, Me., March 23, 1831, the son of Elihu and Sarah Cone. He was educated in the schools at Gorham and at Portland, and later studied, especially in foreign languages and English literature, with private teachers. Although at first he intended to study law, he gave up his legal career and entered upon a business life, at first in the dry goods business, then in the Portland Packing Company, and later in various financial undertakings in the city of Portland, in all of which he occupied positions of prominence and trust.

During the last part of his life, when he had accumulated considerable means, he devoted himself primarily to literary and historical undertakings. Being especially interested in the early history of his native State, he lived in London for two years, studying the British records of grants to the early Maine proprietors; then he perfected himself in French in order to read the "Jesuit Relations" in the original. He edited nearly all of the volumes relating to the documentary history of Maine published under the auspices of the Maine Historical Society, a monumental work in which Mr. Baxter's learning was of the highest value. He wrote two volumes for the Gorges Society, one on George Cleeve in 1885 and one on Christopher Levett in 1893; for the Prince Society he compiled three volumes relating to Sir Ferdinando Gorges. Two other valued historical works were

"The Pioneers of New France and New England," 1894, and "A Memoir of Jacques Cartier," 1906. Nor did he confine himself to historical work, as he wrote occasional poetry and in 1915 brought out a volume entitled "The Greatest of Literary Problems, the Authorship of the Shakespeare Works," a lengthy and painstaking exposition of the Baconian theory.

During his life he was the recipient of many honors and held many positions of importance. For six years between 1893 and 1905 he served as Mayor of Portland; he was President of the Maine Historical Society from 1890 until his death; from 1901 until his death he was President of the N. E. Historic Genealogical Society, and was President of the Portland Public Library, the Portland Benevolent Society and other local institutions. He was a member of numerous learned societies. In 1904 he received the honorary degree of Litt.D., from Bowdoin College. He married September 18, 1854, Sarah Kimball Lewis, who died in 1872; and secondly, April 2, 1873, Mehetable Cummings Proctor, who died in 1914.

Mr. Baxter was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1887. In 1897 he became a member of the Council and in 1912 was elected Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, remaining a member of the Council until his death. Until the very last years of his life he conscientiously attended the meetings of the Council, and his judgment and opinions were always of value. In 1899 he wrote a paper for the Society's Proceedings entitled "What caused the deportation of the Acadians," and also a paper on "The Writing of History." In his will he left to the Society his portrait, copied by J. B. Kahill of Portland, from the original portrait painted in 1883 by Vinton.

C. S. B.

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