

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

DURING the past six months the Society has lost three members through death: Harold Marsh Sewall, of Maine, elected in 1919, died Oct. 28, 1924; Henry Cabot Lodge, of Nahant, the senior member elected in 1881, died Nov. 9, 1924; and Charles Pelham Greenough, of Boston, elected in 1891, died Nov. 21, 1924.

Sewall was in the Class of 1882 at Harvard. He had a commencement part and I remember that after he had gotten well underway he stopped short and seemed unable to proceed. John D. Long, then Governor, sat on the stage near the speaker and in a sharp whisper, which could be heard all over Sanders Theatre, said "Go on." Under this impulse, Sewall proceeded and finished his address, without the slightest hesitation.

Mr. Lodge was elected a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in December 1876 at the age of 26. He was editor of the *International Review* at the time of his election to this Society, and had been associated with Henry Adams in the editorship of the *North American Review*, and had been an instructor in American history for three years, ending with 1879, at Harvard University. He had also been a lecturer at the Lowell Institute.

He always gave his profession as that of "Literature." While he is more often thought of as a Statesman, he was also a very prolific writer. There have been few years between 1872 and 1924 in which Mr. Lodge has not published some book or article or made one or more notable addresses, and all this outside his work in Congress.

No student of American history could properly feel that he had exhausted his subject until he had carefully studied what Mr. Lodge has written upon the "English Colonies in America," his comments upon the "Federalist Party" and the "Essex Junto," and the "Hartford Convention" in his life of George Cabot; his lives of Washington, of Hamilton and of Webster; his articles and speeches upon the "Monroe Doctrine," the "treaty-making power of the Senate" and a great variety of kindred subjects, too numerous to mention.

His occasional memorial addresses were full of beauty and force, enriched by classical and historical allusions. Among them might be mentioned an address upon Abraham Lincoln in 1909 before a Joint Convention of the Massachusetts Legislature, and an address in 1910 upon the Unveiling of a Statue in Memory of John C. Calhoun, in the old hall of the House of Representatives in Washington; his address at Plymouth in 1920 upon the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims.

The new wing for additional book stacks which was finished last July has been partly filled, and during the winter more than seventy packing cases of books have been opened and the contents placed on the shelves. Many of these boxes had been in the building, unpacked, for two years or more, because of lack of space to place the books. The basement has been cleared, with the consequent lessening of the fire risk. The Society has acquired a large collection of duplicates, especially in newspaper files, which will be disposed of during the present year.

In January a new "Circular of Information" was published, giving a short historical account of the Society, a list of its various collections, a description of its publications, and an account of its funds and needs. We have had many requests for such a Circular, both from transient visitors who wished to know more about the Society, and from distant libraries and institutions

which were unfamiliar with the scope and extent of our collections. We were especially anxious to place in convenient form a statement of the Funds of the Society, thus emphasizing the disparity between our needs and our income, and making it clear that we are entirely dependent upon gifts and bequests for our support. The text of the Circular is reprinted as an appendix to this Report.

The Council has satisfaction in reporting a recent bequest, the second largest in our history. Mr. Henry F. DePuy, of Easton, Md., who died on Oct. 14, 1924, made this Society his residuary legatee, after the expiration of a life interest. Eventually this will amount to one-half of his estate, approximately \$150,000. Mr. DePuy had been for seven years a member and was particularly interested in our collection of early American imprints. He had done much bibliographical work, his "Bibliography of the English Colonial Treaties with the American Indians," being one of the most valuable. Few men in the country were more familiar with early American printing, and especially the printing done in New York and Philadelphia before the Revolution. He was a trained and accurate investigator, an enthusiastic student and an ever ready advisor of those who sought his help. He had a great mass of material in manuscript relating to pre-Revolutionary titles, all of which is now in the custody of this Society. His will contained the provision that the residuary trust fund, upon the decease of his sister shall "vest in and be paid to the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts, to be held by it absolutely. It is my wish, however, and I request, that said Society preserve the corpus of said fund and permit the income therefrom to be expended by its Librarian in the purchase of books and manuscripts relating to the History of America."

A gift of much value and importance has come to the Society during the winter from Samuel Lyman Munson, of Albany, a member of the Council. Mr.

Munson had made the largest collection of almanacs in America, and one which rivaled our own in value and importance. Not so strong perhaps in the 17th century issues, it surpassed our collection in the long series of almanacs issued by Benjamin Franklin, was especially strong in the almanacs of the South and West, and above all, possessed one of the finest known collections of English almanacs printed prior to the Revolution. With great generosity Mr. Munson offered to give to us every almanac in his collection which we lacked and further agreed to maintain with his gifts and advice the combined collection. The Society will thus obtain about 4000 almanacs, which makes our files of most all the long series of American almanacs nearly complete. This gift, one of the most valuable ever received by us, makes Mr. Munson one of the great contributors to our collections.

There is always temptation in a society of sufficient age to look back, at stated periods, to conditions as they were a century earlier, to ascertain how they compare with present conditions, what enterprises were interesting the people then and now. What problems were being discussed. I shall yield to this temptation only to the extent of a single incident. Then as now a Massachusetts citizen was President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, whose name appears on the roll of our membership, as does that of his brother and one of his grandsons. He took office on March 4, 1825, and in the following month of April, on the tenth day made the following entry in his diary: "Charles Cutts, the Secretary of the Senate, brought me the resolutions of the Senate advising and consenting to all the nominations I had sent with the exception of Amos Binney as Navy Agent at Boston which they postponed. Also the refusal of their advice and consent to the ratification of the Slave Trade Convention with the republic of Colombia." In the matter of confirming Presidential nominations and consenting to the ratification of treaties, the

Senate, then as now, seemed disposed to exercise its prerogatives.

Another temptation I shall yield to is to turn over the pages of our records and make therefrom some unrelated extracts which seem to me to be of interest.

As our semi-annual meetings are regularly held in the City of Boston, it may not be amiss to remind you that until 1832 the *annual* meetings were held here, usually at the Exchange Coffee House. At one of the early meetings it was Voted: "that as the capital of the Commonwealth generally offers the best means of ascertaining the real character and standing of such persons as may be proposed for membership in this Society and as the society are desirous that the utmost circumspection should be used in the admission of members, &c.—that action on the nomination for membership should only take place at a meeting in the town of Boston." The vote was later repealed and the restraining influence removed.

A committee appointed in September 1813 to give some account of institutions of a nature kindred to this reported through the President, Isaiah Thomas, as follows:

"From combinations of this kind, the old continents, within the last century and a half, have received and diffused more light and useful information in the arts and sciences, and in the natural, civil and religious history of the habitable globe, than had been exhibited to mankind for thousands of preceding years.

"The first society of scientific men among the moderns of which history gives us any certain information, was established near the close of the eighth century, by Charlemagne, at his imperial palace in France, by the recommendation of Alcuinus, one of the most learned men of the age. This society in time was productive of many others; few, however, appeared, which were of great advantage to the publick, or gained a permanent establishment, till the middle of the seventeenth century. Many literary and scientific

institutions were then formed, and afterwards greatly increased and spread through the several quarters of the globe. We will take notice of that class only of those societies, which had the same object in view, as the one of which we are members.

“Irish historians have asserted, that ‘there was an ancient college of antiquaries erected in Ireland by Ollamh Fodhla, one of its kings, several hundred years before Christ, for the purpose of composing a history of that country’; and to this, say they, ‘it is owing, that the history and antiquities of this kingdom may be traced back beyond that of most other nations.’ But the first society of Antiquaries, of which we have any authentic information, is that which originated in England in 1572, under the auspices of Archbishop Parker, Camden, Sir Robert Cotton, and others. Although it was not incorporated, its reputation gradually increased until the reign of James I, who, in turbulent times, ‘fearing it might canvass the secret transactions of his government,’ suppressed it. It was revived in the year 1717. From this time the importance of the society increased, and in 1751, it was incorporated by the name of ‘The President, Council and Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries’ in England. ‘It is now in a very flourishing condition, consisting of many learned and ingenious men of the nobility, gentry and clergy, whose business, as members, is to discover the antiquities of their own, as well as of other nations’. . . . They have weekly meetings. This society began to publish its discoveries in 1770, under the title of *Archæologia*.”

An institution similar to that of the Antiquarian Society in England, and for like purposes, was founded in Scotland in 1780, and received the royal charter in 1803.

There is a society of Antiquaries at Upsal in Sweden, which owes its rise to queen Christina, *but its establishment* to her successor, Charles Gustavus; its design is to collect and illustrate the antiquities of that country,

and the northern languages. Another was instituted at Copenhagen, in Denmark, in 1742; its immediate object is to make researches into, and explain the antiquities and history of that country. It is patronized by the king. An Academy of Antiquities exists at Cortona, in Italy, the members of which are very respectable, numerous, and not confined to that country. It was founded for the study, &c. of the Etrurian Antiquities; the chief officer is called Lucumon, by which name the ancient governors of Italy are said to have been distinguished.

There are in Europe many other similar institutions; all of which, having proper funds, have been very useful. Many more for want of funds were of short duration.

An institution of this kind was formed at Calcutta in the East Indies, called the Asiatic Society, by Sir William Jones, in 1784; the objects of which are the antiquities, history, arts, and literature of the continent of Asia.

On June 1, 1814, this Society "voted that a committee be appointed to devise ways and means for raising funds to erect a suitable edifice to contain the library and museum, and that the President and Professor Park be requested to prepare a nomination list of five members as suitable persons to serve on said committee and submit the same to the Society at their next meeting." In the "Journal of the Sub-Council of the American Antiquarian Society in the vicinity of Worcester, Mass., beginning with their first meeting, February 15, 1815," under June 6, 1815, is the following: "Voted that Judge Bangs be a committee to draw up a subscription paper for lottery tickets to be presented to the members to sign in order to raise a fund for building an edifice for the library and cabinet, and for other purposes." Judge Bangs reported to the Sub-Council, June 26, 1815, "that on consulting the laws of the Commonwealth, he was of the opinion that a lottery of the kind proposed would be illegal

unless a grant for the purpose could be obtained from the Legislature." On January 2, 1816, "the Sub-Council took under consideration a draft of a petition to the Legislature of Massachusetts, praying for aid in erecting a building, etc. The petition as amended met their approbation, and the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means was requested to copy it, get it signed by the committee, and have it presented." February 5, 1816, "the petition to the Legislature, presented by the Society's Committee on Ways and Means, for building, etc., to grant a lottery for that purpose, was taken into consideration. The petition being now pending in the House of Representatives, it was voted that it is highly necessary the petition should be supported in this crisis of its passage; that the Hon. Levi Lincoln be a committee for that purpose, and that the President be requested also to attend on the Legislature respecting this business." March 4, 1816, "the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means reported the progress of the petition for a lottery, in the Legislature." May 8, 1816, "the petition to the Legislature taken under consideration. Hon. Mr. Lincoln, Jr., and the President, and the Hon. Francis Blake, were requested to continue their aid to the committee respecting this business."

No further action appears in the records.

It is not recommended that the Committee charged with the duty of securing an increase in the endowment of the Society pursue this method, so much in vogue a century ago.

In a communication from the President, Isaiah Thomas, on October 24, 1814, he said: "If each member would, at his leisure, collect and send at least annually, something worth preserving to the Library or Museum, although the value of the gift be small, the stock of books and of articles in our cabinet would, in a few years, appear highly worthy of the inspection of the most profound antiquary of this or any other country.

I am requested, also, to suggest for your consideration, the expedience of admitting as members of the Society some gentlemen who reside in various parts of Europe, the East Indies and China; and, should it not be one of our first endeavors to extend membership to gentlemen of distinguished characters in Spanish and Portuguese America, particularly in the dominions of the former, where, it is believed, many valuable antiquities of this continent may be procured." This suggestion in part has been the policy of the Society.

Mr. Haven in his report of October 1859, tells with what care Mr. Thomas preserved the fugitive records of the past.

". . . . Dr. Thomas, with his wonted forethought and habit of preservation, was accustomed to lay aside little bundles of exchange papers that escaped the scissors or were rescued from the waste-box of his printing-office—wanting in sequence and miscellaneous in name and nature though they might be—mingled with extras and broadsides and handbills, and other ephemeral shapes in which the news of business of the day embodied themselves. To these have been added, from time to time, similar parcels of incomplete and unassociated materials, till a large room was nearly filled with such deposits. . . . By slow degrees, the various and complicated materials were reduced to order according to their affinities; many valuable volumes were made complete; and sometimes duplicate triplicate, and even quadruplicate files were produced. The remnants of the regular series were assorted, as far as they would admit of combination; and, finally, the miscellaneous specimens were distributed under the heads of the different States or countries from which they emanated."

The zeal of our members at one period seems to have abated, for on October 23, 1817, the Treasurer stated that very few pay the annual assessment and suggests striking from the roll those who have never attended a

meeting or paid an assessment, and on February 1, 1819, an address was made expressing "confidence that those members, if any, who may have become languid will be reanimated in its service."

The jealous care with which our collections were guarded in the earlier days appears in a vote of the Sub-Council, so-called, a body composed of those officers living in Worcester, recorded at a meeting held July 17, 1823, namely: That the library of the Society be opened to none but literary characters, that the key be kept at the house of the President and that he be authorized to call on the members of the Council and the Secretaries in town, to wait on gentlemen, who may wish to visit the library whenever he may think it proper.

Our sometime Librarian, Mr. Baldwin was a natural antiquary and genealogist. Wherever he might happen to be he visited the burial places, copying names and epitaphs, examined the town records and interviewed aged men. Among the entries in his diary on all sorts of subjects is one of considerable local interest, dated April 29, 1829: "The canal boat 'Washington,' the first built in Worcester, is carried through the streets on wheels from near the Gaol to the basin near the distillery, where it is to be launched. There are banks of snow yet in the Main St. and the going very bad."

In 1854, in the report of the Librarian, Mr. Haven, reference is made to works which treat of the origin of population in this country, and while it was admitted that "such theories had fallen into some disrepute, in consequence of the absurdities those who adopted them were often led into by attempting to prove too much," it is added that "the probability that the lost tribes of Israel found refuge in America has been more elaborately argued by the learned of former times and more generally credited in this country, than any other hypothesis of the origin of its inhabitants," an hypothesis, I may add, which seems to find some confirmation in these latter days.

Judge Ira M. Barton, in the Council Report of April 25, 1855, says, "To render progress palpable, we must take stand on points more remote from each other. Count, for example, from the first eight years of the existence of this Society, when its meetings, its library and its Cabinet, all had accommodations in the private rooms of the mansion of its hospitable founder on Court Hill in Worcester, to the present period, that finds us with an ample hall on the same beautiful eminence, containing a library of more than twenty thousand volumes, with a capacity to receive other twenty thousand; and the progress of this Institution becomes not only palpable, but extraordinary."

At this point, somewhat remote from 1855, we may compare the present possessions of the Society—152,226 volumes, 234,832 pamphlets, 100,000 manuscripts and many thousands of maps, broadsides and engravings—and exclaim with Judge Barton "the progress of this Institution becomes not only palpable but extraordinary."

Dr. Samuel A. Green called attention in the Council Report of October, 1875, to the influence of the telegraph on human affairs. "If the ocean telegraph had been in operation at that time," he said, "the battle of New Orleans, in 1815, would not have been fought. It occurred a fortnight after the treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, though the tidings of this treaty were not received until a month after the battle. The chances are that Andrew Jackson would not have been president of the United States if he had not gained the battle, nor would Martin Van Buren have succeeded to the same high position if he had not been associated with him. This will serve as an illustration of the influence the telegraph may have on human affairs." This now seems like a voice from prehistoric man.

At the October 1892 meeting, the Reverend Edward Everett Hale having read a paper on "The Results of Columbus' Discovery," Mr. Charles Francis Adams said: "I am prepared to maintain, after listening to

Mr. Hale's paper, that the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, he then sailing in the employ of Spain, was a misfortune to mankind, and a misfortune of a very lasting as well as serious nature."

I close my meanderings through these records of many years with a quotation from Mr. Haven's report of 1858. It was repeated in the Librarian's report of 1893 when but nine of the members who survived were elected before the former date, and I think that I may safely repeat it here, as but ten of our present membership were members in 1893:

"The American Antiquarian Society is quiet and undemonstrative in its nature and self-supporting in its system. It is neither stimulated by a surrounding atmosphere of redundant learning and ambitious scholarship, nor fertilized by the flow of annual subscriptions into its treasury from a numerous body of associates. It has not the advantage of a large and wealthy connection, made active and enterprising by the habits of business and liberal expenditure incident to a populous commercial city. Its operations are controlled and bounded by stated and limited resources. It is not unlike a country gentleman living upon his estate and within the income it produces. It owns the house it occupies and the soil on which it stands. It can afford something to secure the requisite care and productive management of its various possessions, make moderate provision for any required increase of accommodations, and within its precincts, can exercise a hearty though unostentatious hospitality. It can occasionally purchase a few books such as may be needed for immediate use, or when prompted by the occurrence of rare opportunities. It can progressively assort and put into binding the pamphlets and periodical publications that accumulate from the gifts of its friends, and find or make a place for accessions of whatever kind, that may be intrusted to its keeping. It can to a certain extent employ an annual sum in researches for the promotion of archaeological and his-

torical information and, in a limited way, it can publish and distribute memoirs and papers which it is deemed desirable thus to perpetuate. Within restrictions as to numbers prescribed by its constitution, it can invite gentlemen with whom it desires to be connected, to occupy the vacant places in its list of members and to share whatever interests, responsibilities or honors may belong to that position. The Society can claim that it is free from debt; that it is in the condition and has the will for wider and more active exertions in proportion as its means may be enlarged and as junctures may occur; that its policy is liberal if conservative, whose aim is not merely to increase its store but to extend and diffuse the common and general utility of its collections. It will be seen that these circumstances furnish the elements of durability and of substantial usefulness, but not the groundwork of display. They foreshadow a healthy growth that may not only be permanent but become conspicuous, while sudden or extraordinary claims to public attention are in keeping with neither its character nor its principles of action."

If our present accomplishments and ambitions should seem to have outrun the modest limits prescribed by Mr. Haven, it should be remembered that his views were expressed nearly seventy years ago.

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For the Council.

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