

HAROLD MURDOCK

Harold Murdock was born in Boston, January 16, 1862, the son of Rev. John Nelson and Martha Ann (Ballard) Murdock. After attendance at the Boston Latin School and at Colby Academy, he entered the banking business with Lee, Higginson & Co. in 1880. In 1890 he became connected with the National Exchange Bank of Boston of which he was president from 1899 to 1907, followed by the vice-presidency of the Shawmut Bank until 1920. He then took over the directorship of the Harvard University Press, reorganizing that concern on a sound financial footing, trebling its output of publications and raising to a high standard the excellence of its printing.

Mr. Murdock was well known as an author and collector. His first book, "The Reconstruction of Europe," with an introduction by John Fiske, was written when he was twenty-seven years old, and within ten years passed through nine editions. In 1906 he wrote the first of five publications for the Club of Odd Volumes, the "Historie of the Life and Death of Sir William Kirkaldy." This was followed by "Earl Percy's Dinner-Table," 1907, and "Notes from a Country Library," 1911, and "Earl Percy Dines Abroad," 1924. All of these volumes were a combination of fiction and fact, woven together by the facile and imaginative pen of Mr. Murdock. In 1927, he published for the Odd Volumes the "Late News of the Excursion of the King's Troops, April 19, 1775, as set forth in the Narratives of Lieut. W. Sutherland." This last publication was a by-product of his study of Massachusetts in the Revolution. In 1923 he wrote a valuable work entitled "The Nineteenth of April 1775," portraying the story of Concord and Lexington, and in 1927 another volume with the title of "Bunker Hill; Notes and Queries on a Famous Battle." Another subject in which he was interested was the Boston Fire, about which he produced a volume in 1919, entitled

"1872. Letters written by a Gentleman in Boston describing the Great Fire."

As might be inferred from the above publications, Mr. Murdock possessed a fine private library, featuring Colonial American history and Boston in the Revolution. He also collected English first editions, especially material relating to Samuel Johnson, and nineteenth century New England authors.

Mr. Murdock was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Club of Odd Volumes and the Colonial Society of Massachusetts. He was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1922 and frequently added to its library by gifts or rare Revolutionary items. His services to scholarship were recognized by Harvard University in 1916 by the grant of the honorary degree of A.M. He married, April 30, 1890, Mary Lawson, daughter of Rev. Albert G. Lawson of Boston, by whom he was survived, together with one son, Kenneth Ballard Murdock, also a member of this Society.

C. S. B.

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