

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

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At a special meeting of the Council, held at the Society's Hall on the 30th day of March, 1883, a committee was appointed, in accordance with long established usage under the by-laws of the Society, to examine the Library and prepare the report of the Council.

The examination of the Library by this committee has usually been somewhat perfunctory in its character. The reports and statements of the Librarian as to the additions to the Library and its present condition have usually been received by the committee and a summary of them embodied in the Council's report. In April, 1873, however, the committee through its chairman, our faithful Treasurer, reported that they had made an actual physical examination of the library, that they had actually counted all the books in the upper hall, ante-rooms and lower hall, and also many of the unbound pamphlets; that the others had been estimated with sufficient care to enable the committee to report the whole number of volumes in the Library with substantial accuracy. This number was, as the result of the examination, reported to be something more than fifty-three thousand. It has increased steadily ever since, and the increase for each six months has been reported by the Librarian at the stated meetings of the Society. The present number, by computation based on these semi-annual reports, may be safely stated at about eighty thousand.

Mr. Paine, in that methodical and statistical report, called attention to the various classes of collections in the library;

its manuscripts, its books, its bibles, its newspapers, its cabinets and its duplicates. Under these respective headings he gave an excellent idea of the character of our resources and, to a considerable extent also, of their completeness. There has been some increase since in each of the departments, as well as in the aggregate, and as a whole, the library has made much progress in the decade just closed. The work of cataloguing, so essential to its effective working power, has been steadily, though not rapidly, progressing. Probably two or three years more will be needed for the completion of this work, but that already done has proved of great utility to all who have occasion to consult our treasures.

We have occasion at this time to report the first additions to the library under the provisions of the will of Joseph J. Cooke of Providence. The clause of the will in which the bequest to the Society is included is as follows:—

“ I give and bequeath to the Redwood Library and Athenaeum of the City of Newport, and the Athenaeum and Brown University and the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Providence Public Library, all of the City of Providence and all in the State of Rhode Island, to the *Worcester Antiquarian Society* of Worcester, the Library of Harvard University, the Historical Genealogical Society of Boston, all of Massachusetts, to Yale College of New Haven, and to Trinity College of Hartford, all of Connecticut, the sum of five thousand dollars each, *provided* that the same shall be used in payment of bills of any books which may be sold to them by auction by my executors or their successors, at any sale thereof, but not otherwise.”

The Society was represented at the auction sale of a portion of Mr. Cooke's library, in March last, and the Librarian's report gives some account of the results of that sale.

The administration of the library has been satisfactory. The office of Librarian has continued, as ever since the death of Mr. Haven, in commission, two members of the council constituting the library committee. Mr. Barton and Mr.

Colton have been diligent in their respective offices, and the work of arranging books, effecting valuable exchanges, and giving intelligent aid to those who have desired to make use of our collections, whether members of the Society or not, has been prosecuted with vigor and courtesy. The Council have recently thought it proper, in view of Mr. Barton's faithful services as Assistant-Librarian (under which title he has performed most of the practical duties of the office of Librarian since Mr. Haven's lamented death), to elect him to the office, to the practical administration of which he has proved himself sufficient, and his report to-day is made under the new and well-earned designation.

The library building and rooms have been kept in thorough repair and excellent order. The additions made to them recently through the munificence of our President, have made possible new arrangements for study and for access to books and manuscripts, which were in the highest degree desirable. It is proper that our members who live at a distance, and who have not visited the library for the last few years, should be informed that there are few places in the country where studies of an antiquarian and historical character can be so agreeably carried on as within our walls. Bright sunny alcoves, a temperature comfortable even in the extremes of winter, a distribution of books and pamphlets within convenient reach, with intelligent and cheerful guides to the more obscure, make this a place in which it is a pleasure to labor as an employé of the Society in its corporate capacity, or as a general servant in the household of liberal studies.

The utility and security of the library building, regarded as a mere depository, are not to be overlooked, or undervalued. The precautions against loss by fire or other casualty are abundant, and it is almost impossible that any serious loss should be sustained. Hence the Council renew the appeal so often made before in reports of the Librarian and in their own, that our members will bear this custodial

office of the library constantly in mind, and intrust to its safe keeping all such materials of history as may be in their possession or control. In private keeping they are liable to waste or destruction from a multitude of causes which do not exist here. And materials, of little apparent value as they lie scattered here and there in the attics or waste places of individual homes, may prove and in some instances have proved of almost inestimable worth, when arrayed and grouped in their natural association here.

But the talent buried in the earth earned nothing, vastly better though it was to bury it there than to cast it into the sea. "*Nullus argento color est avaris abdito terris.*" As a depository our library building meets all the requirements of the Examining Committee, or of the Society. As a bright and pleasant workshop it elicited our unstinted commendation; when, however, we examined into the efficiency and completeness of the tools and machinery for carrying on actual work, the results of this examination were less satisfactory. The tools and machinery, though very abundant and very useful up to a certain point, yet lacked completeness in every department. There is no subject which can be exhausted here. Though this may perhaps be literally true of every library in the world, yet there are gaps in every class of our collections which ought, in justice to our claims and professions, to be filled; and they cannot be filled from the present resources of the Society. We run for luck, in the popular phrase. Occasionally in some package of books given will be found (as has been intimated) just what is invaluable in forming the missing link of an important chain. By the favorable chance of exchange a gap is sometimes filled. But in the absence of chances like these, we go on in incompleteness indefinitely. Increase in bulk we have to report (nay, it may go to the limit of unwieldiness), but not steady, orderly, symmetrical growth. The cause of this deficiency is obvious. We have been the recipients of *books*, and not of money

for the purchase of books. Our gratitude is not, therefore, the less to the givers who gave what they had to give. To the founder of this institution, whose collection was in truth both the foundation and the corner-stone of all, that gratitude has always been lively and abundant. And so, in proper degree, to all later givers. We desire the continuance and increased measure of such gifts in the interest of historical learning in general, and particularly in the interest of our own institution. But the great want developed by this examination is that of money for a purchasing fund, that we may not be dependent on the chance of donations, nor even limited by the necessity of expending a certain sum at the sale of a certain library, grateful as we have twice had occasion to be within a short time for this privilege; but that we may avail ourselves of the open market as purchasers, buying whenever and wherever what we need most, is for sale. The importance of a provision of this kind, to make one at least of our departments as nearly complete as the lot of humanity will admit, cannot be over-stated. What we need is a gift of money, devoted to no specified purchase, but with the question of its proper application left wholly to the discretion of the Council, saving only the general condition that it shall be devoted to the purchase of books.

To illustrate our necessity, take a single department which fell under the observation of the Committee of the Council. We justly pride ourselves on our collection of local histories. It is an excellent one, and the gift of money by our liberal and eminent associate, the late Judge Thomas, helped to make it what it is. But it is probably less comprehensive than that of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society and is, to say the least, rivalled in completeness by two or three others within the limits of this State. To the fulness of one or more of those collections we have had the pleasure of contributing, but it is not an unreasonable ambition that our own should

not only stand among the best, but attain an actual and undisputed preëminence.

It is distinctly understood that the writer of the report of the Council, and not the Council as a whole, is responsible for the individual views expressed therein. The present writer accepts the responsibility of farther inquiry as to how far the Society is coming short of the high ideal which it ought in some way to attain, and in danger of losing its position of leadership among the great institutions of the kind in our country. It has had and still has influence and power. Yet we cannot look complacently on and congratulate one another at each stated meeting on the success of the Society in its chosen fields, when newer associations are outstripping ours in the race of acquisition, of usefulness, of influence. To satisfy the aspiration of an honorable mind it must lead in something. To lose a position of actual leadership is, to those who have once maintained it, misfortune if not disgrace, and the satisfactions of respectable mediocrity are paltry. We have a great and aggressive name. Our enterprise assumes to lay hold of the resources, and claims the coopération and allegiance of a continent. Rev. William Jenks, in his first anniversary address preached in King's Chapel, Boston, October 23, 1813, said, with sententious complacency, "Your name embraces a continent." How, if proudly claiming to be national, we should prove in the end provincial? Is there real danger of this, and how shall it be met and obviated?

Doubtless the opportunities of the Society were great in its early days to establish itself on national foundations and gain an influence and a name. It would be mere commonplace to state how small the national domain was in 1812 compared to its present vast expanse. Moreover, there was no competition in this field, or next to none. The Society was an isolated peak, conspicuous in its solitude, and not merely one of a lofty chain. Isaiah Thomas said in 1813, "Among the numerous societies formed in the United

States for the promotion of literature, the useful and fine arts, and other valuable purposes, it appeared that one more might be added, which could also be truly beneficial, not only to the present, but particularly to future generations—a society not confined to local purposes—not intended for the particular advantage of any one State or section of the union, or for the benefit of a few individuals—one whose members may be found in every part of our western continent and its adjacent islands, and who are citizens of all parts of this quarter of the world.” It was a noble conception, for that early day, that of thus appropriating in the right of intellectual eminent domain the territory of the republic, and claiming the allegiance of its educated citizens. Nor were the considerations wholly fanciful, though they sound so quaintly now, which led to the establishment of the headquarters of the Society, not in one of the great sea-board cities, centres of population where the number of educated persons was large from whom support and coöperation in carrying on the Society’s work might be looked for, but in a small country town. Mr. Thomas says, in the same account in 1813 (and the occurrences of those days were adding a sanction to the suggestion), “For the better preservation from the destruction so often experienced in large towns and cities by fire, as well as from the ravages of an enemy, to which seaports in particular are so much exposed in time of war, it is universally agreed that for a place of deposit for articles intended to be preserved for ages, and of which many, if destroyed or carried away, could never be replaced by others of the like kind, an inland situation is to be preferred; this consideration alone was judged sufficient for placing the Library and Museum of this Society forty miles distant from the nearest branch of the sea, in the town of Worcester, Massachusetts, on the great road from all the Southern and Western States to Boston, the capital of New England.” These considerations might be less potent were the Society’s head-

quarters to be established anew. The security of our treasures would perhaps be greater in Boston or New York than it then seemed likely to be, and in case of successful invasion, our admirable railroad facilities would render it now a comparatively easy and agreeable excursion for the enemy to visit Worcester. Thus we lose the compensating advantage for the loss of a larger constituency of educated and earnest men grouped around the treasure-house of the Society, and coöperating in daily labors for its advancement. And it is, after all, on the labor of resident members that the prosperity of the institution, as a working power, must primarily depend. Say what we will in our reports and other publications as to the duty of distant members, it will be true for the future, especially now that every State has its own institution devoted to the promotion of archaeological research, that the men in each of those States who are most valuable associates, will be found devoting their best energies to their home institution.

It is reluctantly conceded, then, that this Society cannot probably long maintain its ancient prestige in the broad field of American Archæology. Yet must it claim and maintain a leadership in something. It must make vigorous and distinct growth in some direction, or its power and influence will surely decline; of these it may be said, as says the poet of the tender passion of love, "'Tis its nature to advance or die." The momentum ancient prestige imparts is great; the reputation eminent past service has earned is great: but these will not last forever unless we avail ourselves of other springs of influence and invoke the aid of new energies.

A year and a half ago there died a man who had made the reputation and influence of this Society the objects of forty years of scholarly toil. We have not undertaken in all respects to fill his place. His office was called the Librarian's. He was so much more than that, as hardly to seem in his later years of service, and in the popular sense

of the term, a librarian at all. As such his place has been filled, and adequately filled. But the strict line of duty of the pains-taking librarian in so large an institution as ours, and the faithful discharge of it, may well fill the measure of an honorable ambition for a useful life. We want, in addition, not instead, the devoted service of a man of high education, of intellectual power and leadership, somewhat known already, and with promise of growth and development. The title by which his office shall be known is immaterial—Director, Superintendent, Regent, Censor, Rector. By whatever name known, his office must be to maintain, by his scholarship, his intellectual presence and dignity, his love of and devotion to the studies of this Society, his high personal character, and his relations to scholars, the standards of influence and authority which Mr. Haven set up. Competent to represent the Society at the gatherings and conventions of scholars abroad, he must have the qualities of personal magnetism which make personal association and coöperation agreeable, and receive scholars at the library with a scholar's welcome.

Such a man would not be willing to undertake for us the manual duties of a librarian, pure and simple. Those duties, in view of the size of the library at present, are sufficient for the two gentlemen who now so satisfactorily discharge them. And Mr. Haven would never have undertaken them in their present extent. Not only was he an exceptional, almost unique, man, but the circumstances of his life were exceptional also. He came to the library when it was of infantine proportions, himself a young man, a little older than the library itself. He grew with it and, *pari passu*, its material and his intellectual growth proceeded. So that in a greater measure than would at first be noticed, each threw light upon the other, and shone with a lustre not wholly its own. And surely it is not too much to say that without the aid of Mr. Haven's personality and peculiar powers and devotion (suppose,

that is to say, that the Society had relied for its standing and influence on the aggregate of its deposits and the two stated meetings of each year), this institution would have had hardly more than a local reputation, certainly one wholly incommensurate with the pretensions of its name.

Not perhaps exactly such a man, yet some man giving every promise of success and distinction in this field can somewhere be found, approached, brought into the service of the Society, for that service is most attractive. The question is simply one of pecuniary means, and to a Society which has for forty years given such proof of disposition and power, the means ought not to be long wanting. There is nothing visionary about this. Wealth abounds. Capital is pulling down its barns and building greater. Possible Mæcenases have built palaces in our cities and villas by the sea, and Horaces in abundance, even if now mute and in some sense inglorious, are ready, with their support, coöperation and encouragement, to write and sing. There would seem few fitter objects to-day, within the realm of learning and scholarship, to bring to the attention of rich and liberal men, than the endowment of this Society with what might be termed a "Rector's Fund" of fifty, sixty or seventy-five thousand dollars, the income of which, with some small measure of private resources, would enable a genuine and enthusiastic man of high qualifications, to devote himself to maintaining, even extending, the reputation of the Society for high attainments in broad and liberal studies, as well as for the safe keeping and orderly arrangement of articles deposited in its vaults and alcoves.

Failing in this (if in so honorable and necessary an attempt the possibility of failure can be contemplated), and in addition to this provision if obtained, we must secure a sum of twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars for the purpose of maintaining some one or more of our departments at the highest point of excellence. Thus, after all, what we want is money. Although "there needs no ghost, come from the

grave, to tell us that," let Isaiah Thomas add his testimony. "It is almost needless to observe (he says in October, 1813), that a Society of this kind cannot be supported with any degree of respectability or usefulness without funds; donations, legacies, contributions and royal patronage are the support of those in Europe, and have raised them to a state of eminence, and it is not doubted that there are persons in America who are as public spirited as those in Europe."

The man who could announce a sentiment like this at that early period of our country's history, and give practical evidence of his sincerity by the gift of a large percentage of his property, could not fail to believe, with the writer of this report, that at this day a fund of seventy-seven thousand dollars is utterly inadequate to support this Society, to use his own words, "with any degree of respectability;" and that we must, in some way, carry into actual accomplishment one or the other of the objects herein set forth, or be content as time passes, to lapse into a sluggish and pretentious, even though still barely respectable, mediocrity.

The writer has expressed the foregoing views on his own responsibility, because he has had some reason to believe that had they been some time since thus proclaimed, a part at least of the wants indicated might have been supplied from a source, now alas! no longer available, and in the hope that they may attract the notice, and receive the practical approval, of some generous patrons of sound learning. He has set forth the *minimum* of our needs, as they have impressed themselves on his mind.

Reference has been made on an earlier page of this report, to the collection of local histories in the Society's library, on which we justly pride ourselves, but which is less complete than it should be. Yet to no institution is completeness in this department more essential than to this, whose studies have so close a relation to the effects of the system of town organization and government, socially,

commercially and politically, upon the whole country. The studies incident to our membership lie naturally in that direction, and the opportunities afforded here for following them out, ought to be practically unlimited. To what valuable end these special studies have been pursued may be seen in Chief Justice Parker's "Origin, organization and influence of the Towns of New England," Justice Gray's learned dissertation in the note to *Commonwealth vs. Roxbury*, Volume 9 of Gray's Reports, the reports of the Council in April and October, 1870, by Judge Henry Chapin and the Hon. Richard Frothingham, respectively, in Mr. Frothingham's other writings, and later, in the admirable papers of our associate, Prof. Herbert B. Adams. The subject of the influence of the town organizations and the town meeting on New England history and government, in whatever manner treated, is full of interest, and can never lose its charm. It connects itself with the framework of our government, and the intelligent observer, whatever may be his opinion as to the birthplace of the theory of town governments, will hardly deny that in this country, and especially in New England, that theory has been developed in practice with the fullest and most successful results.

But this report must not linger in this field of inquiry or dwell on the political influences which have emanated from our towns. Space only remains to illustrate from the losses this Society has sustained during the past month, the contributions of the towns of New England to the social and commercial strength of the community at large. Till within the period of six weeks, not a single member of the Society had died since the annual meeting. Had this remarkable exemption continued, this report would have comprised a brief review of the Memorial of the late Abbott Lawrence, so admirably prepared by Hamilton Andrews Hill, Esq., who presented a copy to the library, for which the Council duly returned their thanks. Mr. Lawrence was a member and friend of this Society, and a

worthy representative here, as in the world at large, of his native town of Groton.

But, long before the preparation of this report was begun, on the 7th day of March, 1883, Nathaniel Thayer, A.M., died in Boston. He was born on the 11th of September, 1808, in Lancaster, a town lying in the same valley as Groton, and rivalling it in the picturesque beauty of its scenery, the fascinating characteristics of its history, and the high character and honorable distinction of its sons. He came of a most reputable New England ancestry, and his family had long had a strong hold on the University, and honorable place on her catalogues. His father was the Rev. Nathaniel Thayer, D.D., whose ministry in Lancaster covered almost the period of half a century. Dr. Thayer was graduated at Harvard in 1789. A most attractive picture is drawn of him in the *Life of Timothy Pickering*, as a young and earnest man beginning his Christian ministry in the picturesque valley of Wyoming, one of the most beautiful and in some sense classic spots in America. From that valley he soon went to the valley of the Nashua and entered at Lancaster on his life's ministry. His father was the Rev. Ebenezer Thayer, who was graduated at Harvard in the class of 1753, and was a tutor there while Timothy Pickering was in college, as a memorandum by Pickering's own hand relates. His father in turn was Nathaniel Thayer, whose brother, Rev. Ebenezer Thayer, was graduated in the class of 1708.

The writer's memory just reaches back to the last days of Dr. Thayer's ministry in Lancaster, and faintly recalls his countenance, so full of grace and heavenly benediction. His son Nathaniel received only the education of the academy of his native town, the instructions of his father, and the influences (so much of an education in themselves) of a refined and cultivated New England home. He early left Lancaster, to enter upon commercial life with his brother John Eliot Thayer, who had established himself in a pros-

perous business in Boston. The successes of these brothers in carrying out the purposes of their business lives, rival the suggestions of romance, and constitute not only a material but an intellectual triumph. They were based on almost unerring prophecies of the future growth and greatness of the country. They had

“ The faith, the vigor bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,”

and, those doubts resolved, they threw themselves into the boldest action. They pushed the highways of a nation's future commerce across the waste and into the wilderness, and, undismayed by the prophecies of the timorous, conquering obstacles, and even stimulated by unexpected difficulty, their irrepressible enterprise went “sounding on a dim and perilous way.” The financial results of their sagacity and bold fidelity to its teachings need not be dwelt on here. We do not here pay court or tribute to material wealth, or refer to it save as the result and illustration of intellectual power. Not less familiar are the ways in which that wealth was used for the amelioration of private distress, and the promotion of great public charities. In humble homes, not less than in stately mansions, was this benevolent presence a familiar visitor. He walked with the widow and the fatherless in secret and unpretentious sympathy, and stood by the bed of suffering whenever the voice of early friendship, even though long unheard never forgotten, called him to its side. His life, so far as he could choose its external demonstrations, was as unostentatious as that of any one of his boyhood's companions who had never “grasped the skirts of happy chance.” He made no undue assumptions, for himself, based on the possession of vast material wealth, and his modesty of expression on subjects not directly within the range of his own pursuits was proverbial. Those expressive words of Cicero in the Orator, admirably describe this marked feature of his character: “*Est summa laus non extulisse*

*se in potestate, non fuisse insolentem in pecunia, non se praetulisse aliis propter abundantiam fortunae, ut opes et copiae non superbiae videantur ac libidini, sed bonitati ac moderationi facultatem et materiam dedisse."*

Mr. Thayer was for several years a member of the Corporation of Harvard University, which conferred upon him in 1866 the Honorary degree of Master of Arts. He was also a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

On the 31st of March, 1883, the Rev. George Allen, who was born in the town of Worcester on the 1st of February, 1792, died in the city of Worcester. He was educated at Leicester Academy and Yale College, where he graduated in 1813, and studied theology at Union College. His active ministry was mainly confined to the town of Shrewsbury, though for more than a score of years, after failing health and sight compelled his retirement from the pulpit, he was the chaplain of the Lunatic Hospital in Worcester. He was elected a member of this Society in 1860, but for reasons discreditable neither to himself nor the Society he declined membership, though he was always a warm friend, taking more practical interest in its welfare than many of our local members. He was an elegant classical scholar, a profound student of theology and ecclesiastical history, and a writer of clear, vigorous English. Nothing could be more simple and unostentatious than his whole life and character. In the modest self-reliance of genuine attainments, and the independence of thought and expression worthy of one in whose veins flowed blood kindred to that of Samuel Adams, he may be ranked with the poor scholar who "stood erect and self-confident before kings." But he made parade of nothing, sought no opportunities of display, preferred the intellectual and spiritual wealth to the material which had no charm for him, and when ninety-one years crowned with learning, virtue and piety had rolled by, he "fell asleep."

On the next day, April 1, 1883, the Hon. Isaac Davis, LL.D., who was born in the town of Northborough on the 2d day of June, 1799, died at his home in the city of Worcester. As he was a member of the Council, the President called that body together, and made a communication with reference to the death of Col. Davis and incidentally that of Mr. Allen, which, with the action of the Council thereupon, is transcribed on their records and will be printed in our Proceedings.

Col. Davis was educated at Brown University. Although his family connection was respectable, the necessities of a numerous household left small room for pecuniary contributions to the education of the sons. He attended school during the winters, after the fashion of early times and primitive opportunity, at the district schools of his native town. Both at the academy at Leicester where he subsequently spent a short time in fitting for college, and at the University, he contributed by his own labor as a teacher or otherwise, towards the expenses of his education. He had in early as in later life a resolute will, which sustained him in struggle and self-sacrifice, and a determination to succeed which made success possible and inevitable. He studied for the Bar, to which he was admitted in 1825. Those were the days when priority of attachment was worth something to creditors, and brought substantial results, and advantages which could not afterwards be frittered away by proceedings under insolvent laws. Mr. Davis was adapted to a practice where the qualities of great vigilance, tireless industry, and unremitting energy, were called into play. He was the contemporary of some of the ablest men who ever practised at the bar of Worcester. Judged by the multitude of his entries, he surpassed them all in the number of his clients and his grasp on the practical business of the profession. Though he may not properly be said to have been learned in the law, yet he seized strongly on the practical principles which made the law useful as an aid to

actual business. He used it as a servant, and made it a bearer of burdens, and it rendered him faithful service because he was a faithful and diligent master. The men in middle life to-day have never met him in actual practice, and what they can say of him therefore as a practitioner, is the abstract and summary of traditions and gleanings from the records and dockets of the courts.

But in the affairs of business and finance, for which a knowledge of and training in the profession of the law is so valuable a preparation, Col. Davis was most able and successful. He was possessed of a clear foresight, and great courage. He had a power of judging men, and a discriminating sagacity, that told him whom it was probably safe to stand by, and what were the chances to be declined. It is only just to say that probably more than one of the great enterprises and industries of the city of his adoption, owe their power and prosperity to-day to his early, brave and judicious support.

For he was a man of large public spirit as well as individual boldness, and preferred building up his own city to spending his energies in the stranger's fields. It is said too that he aided many young men to start their fortunes here, advancing money on security which depended for its value on their success, and at rates of interest not oppressive, when neither the character of the security nor the rate of interest offered sufficient attraction to men of less public spirit and private sympathy. Thus it may be said that few if any of those who were his contemporaries, or of those who have been his successors, in the ranks of the educated and professional men, have done as much as he to promote by direct and indirect means the material welfare of his city.

Thus was he a marked man among his fellow-citizens, holding the offices which from time to time were conferred upon him in a community where his party was seldom in the majority, yet none of them for long periods nor with many years of aggregate service. But he was vigorous in

administration and left a mark behind him. Though a party man he was not the slave of party. He was one of the early subscribers to the Kansas Relief Fund. His support of the government at the breaking out of the war in 1861, though a member of the democratic party and in some sense its representative in the mayoralty of Worcester, was hearty and effective, and is never to be forgotten in forming an estimate of his character. This is to be said of him with truth, that he was loyal in spirit and strenuous in action, that no amount of pressure from those with whom he had been intimately associated in party counsels could sway or swerve him a hair-breadth from the line of patriotic duty; that he was a fearless man, who when assailed never apologized for the positions he had taken, but defended them with vigor, ingenuity and ability.

During his long life he was connected, in the relation of President or Director, with many important corporations, the presidency of one of which he retained till his death. He was the senior member of our Council, and took a lively interest in the welfare of this Society. His frequent gifts of interesting articles, of books and of money, have heretofore received honorable and grateful mention; and Columbian University in 1846, and Brown University in 1860, conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Holmes Ammidown, Esq., who was born in the town of Southbridge on the 12th of June, 1801, died in St. Augustine, Florida, on April 3, 1883. His life had been spent in active commercial pursuits until 1870, when he retired from business, and passed the remainder of his days in the quieter pursuits of historical research, specially in the preparation and compilation of his "Historical Collections," of which two volumes have already been published. A third volume of the Collections has been left in manuscript, and will probably in due time be published uniformly with the others. He also built in his native town a library building, of which

he gave the town the free use, so far as it was needed for library purposes.

Mr. Ammidown was a type of the many men of New England who went out from the small towns to build up the commercial enterprises which have made our cities great. His early education was not extensive. He attended the schools of his native town, finishing his education at Nichols Academy in the neighboring town of Dudley. He gave his energies successfully to the sale of miscellaneous merchandise in a country store in Southbridge. In 1836 he went to Boston and established a very important and successful business in the department of dry goods. In 1865 he removed to New York, and was a partner in a leading firm of which his name stood at the head, till his retirement from business. In Southbridge, for which he never lost his affection, he did many works of enlightened charity, and in Florida, where he passed several winters in his later years, he was an instrument of good in the beneficent field of educational enterprise. And, dying in that distant land, he was buried with many demonstrations of respect and affection by the side of his kindred, in the town of his early and constant love.

For the Council,

JOHN D. WASHBURN.

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