

PROCEEDINGS.

ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 21, 1893, AT THE HALL OF THE
SOCIETY IN WORCESTER.

THE President, Hon. STEPHEN SALISBURY, in the chair.

The following members were present :¹ George E. Ellis, Edward E. Hale, George F. Hoar, Nathaniel Paine, Stephen Salisbury, P. Emory Aldrich, Samuel A. Green, Elijah B. Stoddard, Edward L. Davis, William A. Smith, James F. Hunnewell, John D. Washburn, Edward G. Porter, Charles C. Smith, Edmund M. Barton, Franklin B. Dexter, George P. Fisher, Charles A. Chase, Samuel S. Green, Justin Winsor, Henry W. Haynes, Solomon Lincoln, Andrew McF. Davis, Cyrus Hamlin, J. Evarts Greene, Henry S. Nourse, William B. Weeden, Daniel Merriman, Reuben Colton, Robert N. Toppan, Henry H. Edes, Grindall Reynolds, Frank P. Goulding, Hamilton A. Hill, John F. Jameson, Charles Francis Adams, Calvin Stebbins, Francis H. Dewey, Benjamin A. Gould.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

The Report of the Council was presented by Mr. FRANKLIN B. DEXTER of New Haven, Conn., who also read a paper on "Some Social Distinctions at Harvard and Yale before the Revolution."

At the close of the reading of the Report of the Council Rev. Dr. GEORGE E. ELLIS said :

"The baldest recognition of that distinction of rank is given in Sewall's Journal. He records that the minister of the Old South Church called a meeting of the members of the Church in connection with the choice of a colleague, and

¹ The names follow the order of election to membership.

very few attended the meeting so that in order to determine it they had to call another meeting. And the explanation was, and I think it was made by the father of Dr. Franklin, that Dr. Pendleton asked for a meeting of the *gentlemen* of the Church and Franklin's father said he did not claim to be a gentleman, and that was the reason that the infelicitous call of the Church led to such a small number being present.

"I recall an incident which some of you may not remember. When George Bancroft returned from Germany he made an effort in Harvard College to have the catalogue arranged not alphabetically but according to scholarship. That was resisted by what was called a rebellion in those days. I have reason to remember it for I had an older brother then in college who was a very good scholar, as was also my younger brother. He would have had no reason to object to being ranged in the order of scholarship. But the class had what was called an illegal meeting, that is, a meeting without permission of the faculty, to resist the matter, and my brother was made moderator of that meeting. I distinctly recall in my boyhood President Kirkland, who had been my mother's clergyman before going to the college, coming to see her to reconcile her to my brother's being sent off for that illegal moderatorship, and he found it difficult to do it. My brother, who was a very sensitive young man, said he would never return to the college."

The Report of the Treasurer was then presented by NATHANIEL PAINE, Esq.

The Report of the Librarian was presented by Mr. EDMUND M. BARTON.

On motion it was voted that the Report of the Council should be referred to the Committee on Publication for publication in the Proceedings.

Prof. HENRY W. HAYNES and HON. EDWARD L. DAVIS were appointed to distribute and collect ballots for President of the Society. During the collection of the ballots Dr. EDWARD E. HALE said:

“I should like to ask what became of the supposed American edition of the Pilgrim’s Progress which was supposed to be in the Brinley collection. In the second part of the Pilgrim’s Progress Bunyan says in the poetical introduction that it was reprinted in America. It was announced, twenty or thirty years ago, that a copy was in the Brinley Library, and I suppose some of the gentlemen who attended that sale would know.”

The PRESIDENT referred to the fact that Mr. ANDREW McF. DAVIS at the meeting in April called attention to the question of the amount of property that the Society was allowed to hold; whether it had acquired a strength not authorized by the Act of Incorporation, and a committee was appointed by the Council to investigate the subject. The committee had attended to the duty, and a report was prepared by Senator HOAR which he would read. The following report was then read:

“The Committee who were directed by the Council to inquire how much real and personal property the Society is authorized to hold, and whether it is desirable that further authority to hold property should be obtained from the Legislature, respectfully report:

“The Society was empowered by its charter, approved October 24, 1812, to take and hold real and personal estate, ‘provided that the annual income of any real estate by said Society holden shall never exceed the sum of fifteen hundred dollars, and that the personal estate thereof, exclusive of books, papers and articles in the museum of said Society shall never exceed the value of seven thousand dollars.’

“By the statute approved March 26, 1852, the Society is authorized to hold real estate the annual income of which shall not exceed the sum of five thousand dollars, and personal estate which exclusive of books, papers and articles in its cabinet shall not exceed the sum of one hundred thousand dollars.

“The Report of the Treasurer for the six months ending April 1, 1893, shows that the invested personal property of the Society including cash on hand then amounted to \$126,663.91, being more than twenty-six thousand dollars in excess of the amount allowed by law.

“The Committee understand that no person can raise any lawful objection to the holding of this amount by the Society, or to its acquiring and holding any further property, real or personal, except the Commonwealth. But such holding and acquisition are in violation of law, and the Society can be compelled by proper process instituted in behalf of the Commonwealth to keep within legal limits. This condition of things may deter some persons who might otherwise be disposed to make gifts to the Society.

“We therefore recommend that the Society petition the Legislature at the coming session so to amend the charter that the Society may hold property, real or personal, to an amount not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars.

STEPHEN SALISBURY,
GEO. F. HOAR,
SAMUEL S. GREEN.”

The report was unanimously adopted.

The Committee on Election announced that Hon. STEPHEN SALISBURY had been unanimously elected President.

The PRESIDENT: “I express my thanks for this renewed manifestation of the confidence of the Society.”

On motion of Dr. SAMUEL A. GREEN, Dr. GREEN, Mr. ROBERT N. TOPPAN and Mr. SOLOMON LINCOLN were appointed by the President a committee to nominate the other officers.

On motion of Senator HOAR it was voted that the President and Recording Secretary should be directed to petition the Legislature, in accordance with the report presented, for an increase of the authorized capital of the Society.

Dr. HALE: “I had the honor of a conversation with

Bishop Whipple at Lake Mohonk, and he confirmed the view which I have brought before the Society before, that any well educated Ojibbeway Indians could understand Eliot's Bible. He has promised to send me some memoranda on the matter, and I should like to have permission to present those memoranda to the Publication Committee, and if they should think them important enough to ask that they may be printed as a part of our Proceedings."

It was so voted.

The chairman of the Committee on Nominations reported the list of officers for election. On motion the Secretary was instructed to cast a yea vote for the officers and the following persons were so elected :

Vice-Presidents :

HON. GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR, LL.D., of Worcester.

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D., of Roxbury.

Secretary for Foreign Correspondence :

HON. JAMES HAMMOND TRUMBULL, LL.D., of Hartford, Connecticut.

Secretary for Domestic Correspondence :

REV. GEORGE EDWARD ELLIS, LL.D., of Boston.

Recording Secretary :

HON. JOHN DAVIS WASHBURN, LL.B., of Worcester.

Treasurer :

MR. NATHANIEL PAINE, of Worcester.

Councillors :

HON. SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN, M.D., of Boston.

HON. PELEG EMORY ALDRICH, LL.D., of Worcester.

REV. EGBERT COFFIN SMYTH, D.D., of Andover.

SAMUEL SWETT GREEN, A.M., of Worcester.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS CHASE, A.M., of Worcester.

HON. EDWARD LIVINGSTON DAVIS, A.M., of Worcester.

FRANKLIN BOWDITCH DEXTER, M.A., of New Haven, Ct.

JEREMIAH EVARTS GREENE, A.B., of Worcester.
 GRANVILLE STANLEY HALL, LL.D., of Worcester.
 WILLIAM BABCOCK WEEDEN, A.M., of Providence, R. I.

Committee of Publication :

REV. EDWARD E. HALE, D.D., of Boston.
 NATHANIEL PAINE, Esq., of Worcester.
 CHARLES A. CHASE, A.M., of Worcester.
 CHARLES C. SMITH, A.M., of Boston.

Auditors :

WILLIAM A. SMITH, A.B., of Worcester.
 A. GEORGE BULLOCK, A.M., of Worcester.

The President announced that there were eleven vacancies in the list of Domestic Members. Foreign Members also were to be elected. The Council had prepared lists of names for the action of the Society.

The Secretary read the following names presented for Foreign Membership :

Protap Chunder Mozoomdar of India ; Rt. Rev. William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford ; Goldwin Smith of Canada ; Sir John Lubbock of London.

Messrs. GOULD, GREEN, STODDARD and MERRIMAN were appointed a committee to distribute and collect votes for the four Foreign Members.

During the collecting of the ballots Senator HOAR said :

“I would like to call the attention of the Society to a matter connected with the Levi Lincoln Fund for a thousand dollars, the interest of which was to be expended as a premium for the best written article on archaeological subjects. This money was received about twenty-five years ago. It now amounts to over three thousand dollars and gives an income of about two hundred dollars a year.

“The Council have endeavored in vain to find any mode of expending this income in this country according to the provisions of the gift. The wealth of papers which have

been furnished to the Society on archæological subjects by members and others gratuitously, has made it unnecessary and undesirable to offer money premiums for such papers. The Council made *one* effort to induce a very eminent antiquary on the Connecticut river, who was supposed to be in need of such assistance, to avail himself of the income of the legacy.

“Now it has occurred to me that this might be made an instrument for obtaining from England very important antiquarian and archæological information which we otherwise find it excessively hard to obtain. You heard how Mr. DEXTER in order to learn something in regard to the early graduates of one of the old universities had to enter into correspondence with a scholar at Cambridge, England. That, I suppose, was necessary for his paper. And every one who has had occasion to look into the life of any person belonging to our early history, knows how difficult it is to get any special information from Cambridge without the aid of some friend there. There are not even such publications relating to Cambridge University as there are relating to Oxford. It has occurred to me that with the income of this Lincoln Legacy we might employ some competent person who would get access to the records and give us everything we need relating to the parentage of the early New England men. That could be done under the supervision of our English members who would be glad to help in this. I think this would be a very valuable acquisition to our resources. I desire to call the attention of the Society to this way of disposing of the income of the Levi Lincoln Fund for some years to come.”

Mr. HENRY H. EDES: “I move that the subject be referred to the Council, with full powers.

“Perhaps Senator HOAR may be aware that a most interesting volume of the Recollections at Cambridge, including the names of some of the earliest settlers of Massachusetts, is missing from the Cambridge archives. It is not generally

known in England except among some of the scholars and high officials at Cambridge. A gentleman high in the confidence of the University desired to borrow that volume for use in connection with some literary work in which he was engaged, and died without having returned it. His widow was very much incensed at being asked to return the volume, claiming that her husband had already done so. The officials at Cambridge never pressed it lest some accident should befall it. That is why Cambridge has not followed Oxford in giving the complete list of under-graduates."

The subject was referred to the Council, with full powers.

The gentlemen appointed to collect ballots for the Foreign Members reported, and the President announced the election of—

GOLDWIN SMITH, D.C.L., Toronto, Canada.

Babu PROTAP CHUNDER MOZOOMDAR, Calcutta, India.

Rt. Rev. WILLIAM STUBBS, LL.D., Oxford, England.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, D.C.L., Farnborough, England.

Dr. HALE: "Our Librarian, Mr. BARTON, has been so kind as to put into my hands a number of the very curious copies of the Pilgrim's Progress that exist in this library. In the second part, in the poetical introduction, are the following lines :

'Fright not thyself, my Book, for such Bugbears
Are nothing else but Ground for Groundless Fears.
My Pilgrim's Book has travell'd Sea and Land,
Yet could I never come to understand
That it was slighted and turned out of Door
By any Kingdom were they Rich or Poor.
In France or Flanders, where men kill each other
My Pilgrim is esteemed a Friend a Brother,
In Holland too, 'tis said, as I am told
My Pilgrim is with some worth more than Gold.
Highlanders and Wild Irish can agree
My Pilgrim should familiar with them be.
'Tis in New England under such Advance
Receives there so much loving Countenance
As to be trimmed, new cloathed, and dressed with gems.
That it might shew its Features and its Limbs:
Yet more; so commonly doth my Pilgrim walk
That of him Thousands daily sing and talk.'

“There is a distinct statement that there was then published in the seventeenth century an edition of the Pilgrim’s Progress in New England.

“In the old days when I lived here, and for many years afterwards, it was always said and believed that in the Brinley collection there had been a stray copy of this original New England edition. None of us ever saw it, but Mr. Brinley himself thought he had one. It would be far more precious than its weight in gold were such a copy to be found. The tradition existed that it was in this collection, but it seems that that tradition was like the one about the first edition of Mother Goose. I hold in my hands, however, a very valuable earlier edition of the Second Part of Pilgrim’s Progress, being the sixteenth edition with five cuts, with a note saying, ‘the Third Part suggested to be J. Bunyan’s is an imposture.’ Here I also hold in my hand the Third Part to which is added the twenty-first edition of Bunyan’s life. This is the one which, in the former edition, is said to be an imposture. I think perhaps Mr. BARTON might make a note with reference to this. I have been in the habit for forty years when preaching in the ancient churches of telling people that in the attics of their houses or their church libraries there might still exist the seventeenth-century New England edition, and if so it would be a most valuable addition to American bibliography.”

The gentlemen appointed to collect ballots for Domestic Members reported, and the President declared the following persons elected members :

WM. PRESTON JOHNSTON, LL.D., New Orleans, La.

REV. CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT, S.T.D., Cambridge,
Mass.

WILLIAM WATSON GOODWIN, LL.D., Cambridge, Mass.

HON. HENRY ALEXANDER MARSH, Worcester, Mass.

MR. FREDERICK ALBION OBER, Washington, D. C.

MESSE^S. ADAMS, W. A. SMITH, TOPPAN, C. C. SMITH and NOURSE were appointed to distribute and collect ballots for the next five gentlemen to be elected Domestic Members.

Dr. MERRIMAN: "I move that hereafter the Council be requested to present the names of their nominees on one printed ballot so that a single ballot can be distributed, and those who wish to vote negatively can do it by writing a word or by affixing a cross."

The PRESIDENT: "The matter will be presented to the Council for its consideration at the next meeting."

Mr. PAINE: "I have received a letter from our venerable associate, Dr. LUCIUS R. PAIGE, who regrets that he cannot be present. He says: 'I am still too feeble to endure much fatigue and excitement. I indulge a very forlorn hope that I may be able to meet the Society once more in Boston, but whether I attain ninety-two years is problematical. The will of God be done. Kind regards to you and to all of our associates in the Society.'"

The committee appointed to collect ballots reported, and the President declared the five following persons elected:

ALBERT SHAW, Ph.D., New York, N. Y.

Mr. HENRY PRATT UPHAM, St. Paul, Minnesota.

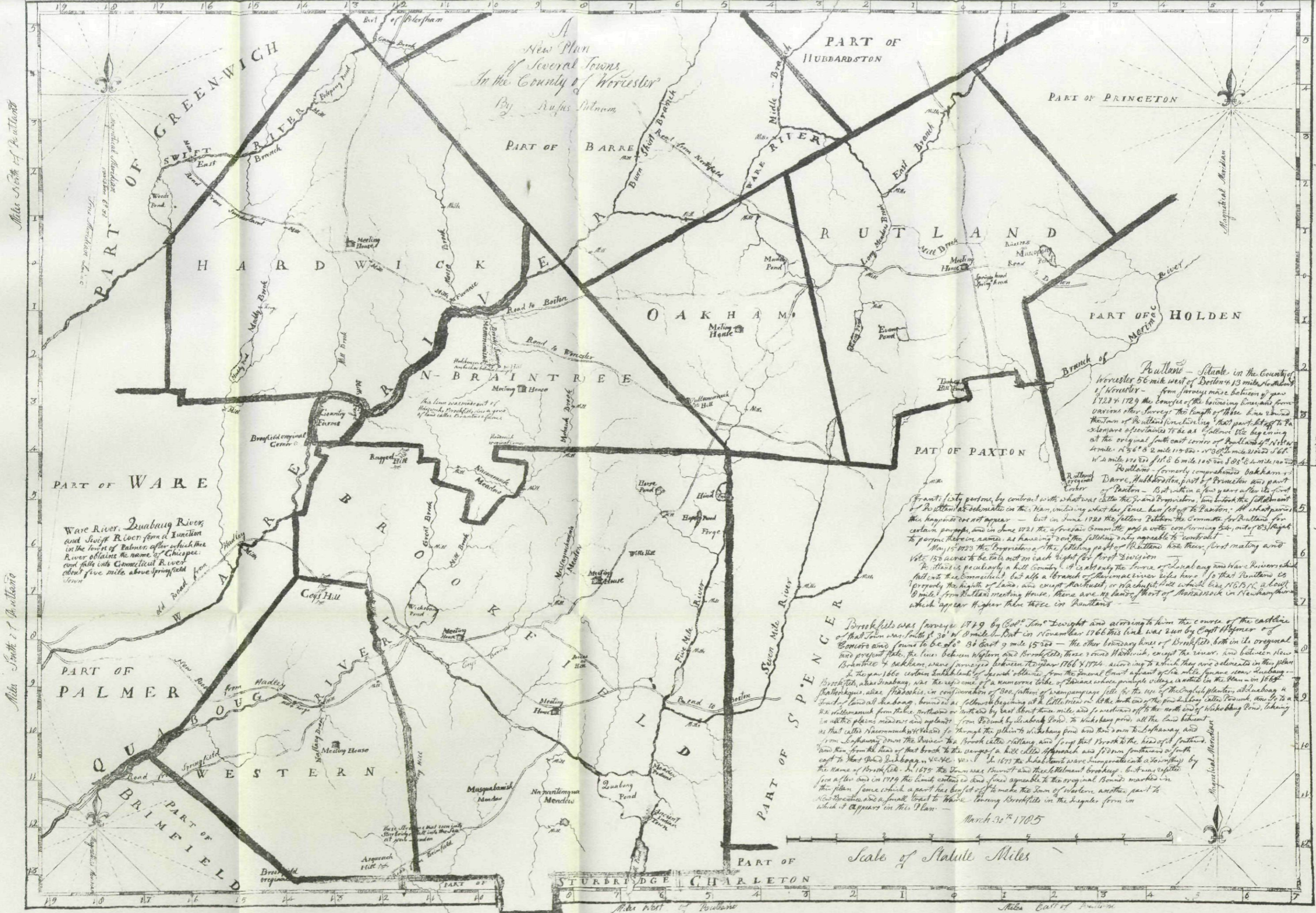
HON. SIMEON EBEN BALDWIN, LL.D., New Haven, Ct.

HON. EDWARD FRANCIS JOHNSON, LL.B., Woburn, Mass.

HENRY PHELPS JOHNSTON, A.M., New York, N. Y.

Senator HOAR: "I should like to hand to the Society a list prepared by the Secretary of State, Mr. Olin, of the Fast Days ordered and observed in the early settlement of the colonies, Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth. I had proposed to ask the Society to print this, but I think some additions might be found, and I move that it be referred to Mr. SAMUEL S. GREEN with the request that he prepare it for publication for the next meeting of the Society with such additions as he shall think proper."

And it was so voted.



A FAC-SIMILE OF A MANUSCRIPT MAP BELONGING TO THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Reduced to one-half of the original scale, 1893

Rev. CALVIN STEBBINS was then introduced who read a paper entitled, "Edmund Burke: His Services as Agent of the Province of New York."

A paper on "Wheeler's Defeat, 1675. Where? At Meminisset Meadow," was read by Dr. SAMUEL A. GREEN, as follows:—

"In the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society there is a manuscript map of a tract of country lying near the western border of Worcester County, which is of much interest and value. It is entitled: 'A New Plan of Several Towns in the County of Worcester,' and bears date March 30, 1785. The plan is 20 inches from top to bottom, and 28 from side to side, and represents a territory of about 18 miles by 26 in area. The lower right-hand corner is largely taken up with historical notes, which crowd out some of the places that otherwise would be named. It includes the towns of Rutland, Oakham, Hardwick, New Braintree, Brookfield (before it was cut up into smaller towns), and Western, now known as Warren, besides part of Princeton, Hubbardston, Barre, Petersham, Greenwich, Ware, Palmer, Brimfield, Sturbridge, Charlton, Spencer, Paxton, and Holden, though some of these parts are very inconsiderable. The main thoroughfares of the region are laid down on the map, as well as the rivers, mill-sites, forges, ponds, brooks, and meadows, besides various prominent hills. The roads leading from the neighborhood to Worcester and Boston are also marked. In many instances the names of ponds, meadows, etc., are Indian; and on the southeastern borders of Quaboag Pond in Brookfield is indicated the site of an old Indian settlement.

"The map was given to the Historical Society among its very earliest accessions, by the Rev. James Freeman, D.D., on April 9, 1791, and is now found in a folio volume entitled 'Atlas Ameriquain Septentrional' (Paris, 1778), which was presented by William Tudor, at the same meeting. Probably as a safe and convenient place for use,

after its receipt by the library, it was inserted at the end of the Atlas, where many years ago it was bound up with the volume. For a long time the map was not catalogued separately, which furnishes the reason why, until recently, it has been overlooked.

“The plan was made with great care and skill by Gen. Rufus Putnam, a native of Worcester County, and a distinguished engineer and surveyor, whose patriotic services during the Revolution afterward gave him a high position in public affairs. In the year 1785, the date of the plan, he was living at Rutland, and previously at New Braintree, both of which towns are represented in the drawing, and presumably with strict accuracy. Its interesting feature lies in the fact that the place where Capt. Edward Hutchinson’s command was ambushed by the Indians in the summer of 1675 is carefully noted.

“In modern times the scene of this fight has been disputed, and been made the subject of long and earnest discussion. At the annual meeting of the Antiquarian Society, six years ago to-day, the attention of the members was called to the matter by two of our associates who on that occasion each presented papers dealing with the question. The Rev. Grindall Reynolds, the writer of one of these, following the authority of Mr. Temple, the historian of North Brookfield, leaned to the opinion that the ambush was laid on the easterly side of Sucker Brook, formerly called Great Brook, about two miles north of Wickaboag Pond in that town; while the Rev. Lucius R. Paige, D.D., the writer of the second, took decided grounds in favor of a spot near Meminisset Meadow in New Braintree, distant a few miles from the other place. Dr. Paige based his opinions in regard to the matter on Capt. Thomas Wheeler’s Narrative, published in Boston only a few months after the fight; and his views are entitled to great weight. He was born in the adjacent town of Hardwick, where he inherited all those local traditions which rightfully have so

much unconscious influence over our final judgment in many matters; and moreover he is widely known as an accurate writer and a zealous antiquary.

“In the present paper I have followed the spelling of *Meminisset*, as given on the map, although there are many ways of writing the word. Some of these forms begin with ‘M,’ while others begin with ‘W,’ which originally, perhaps, were different readings of the same capital letter as found in old manuscript.

“At a point on the Plan near the northern boundary of New Braintree, where the Swamp and the Hill are duly marked, the following legend in two lines, in rather large letters, appears: ‘Brook Swamp *Meminisset*,’ and at right angles, in smaller letters, is the inscription: ‘Hutchensons troupe ambushed between Swamp & Hill.’ This record bears out completely Dr. Paige’s theory in the matter. The site of the skirmish lies very near the crotch of the roads, one leading to Worcester, and the other to Boston, according to the map. Gen. Putnam had been a resident of New Braintree, and had known and talked with men there who themselves had known and talked with those living in the neighborhood at the time of the ambush. It is not likely that he would have made any mistake in regard to the place, as he was a man both of excellent judgment and historical accuracy. The testimony of this new witness was given just halfway between the occurrence of the affair and the present time, and in all respects seems to confirm the opinion of our venerable associate, as expressed in his paper presented to this Society, on October 21, 1887. While Dr. Paige’s views are in accord with those of the Rev. William Hubbard, who at the time of the events wrote a narrative of the Indian troubles, and with those of Gov. Thomas Hutchinson, who during the following century was the author of a *History of the Province*, he may well leave the question to future antiquaries, in the firm belief that their verdict will sustain his position.”

Rev. GRINDALL REYNOLDS: "In my paper you will remember I leaned toward the Wickabaug theory. My leaning was largely owing to the visit made to Brookfield under the guidance of our friend, Senator HOAR, because the Wickabaug location corresponds to the local descriptions of Capt. Wheeler. But I presume that this is absolute evidence."

The PRESIDENT: "The President is pleased to notice the presence with us of our old associate, Dr. CYRUS HAMLIN, and hopes he will speak to us to-day."

Dr. HAMLIN read a paper entitled "A Diplomatic Duel."

Senator HOAR: "I should like to express my great delight at the narrative given to us by our venerable friend which has all the charm which belongs to historic narrative given by wise and clear-sighted observers of the events in which they have borne a part. Sir Stratford Canning was undoubtedly one of the greatest characters in English history. I think we cannot, however, agree with all Dr. HAMLIN's emphasis on the Christian character of the man. If we read the various sketches and accounts of him that have been written since his death we cannot refrain from the conviction that he was not a little of a bully. One who wants to get both sides of his character will get a satisfactory view if he will read Sir Henry Bulwer's sketch of him, or Kinglake's *Crimea*, and the account of Sir Stratford's dealings with the Turkish authorities; and then turn to John Quincy Adams's diary and see how he got on when he tried the same method on him in 1821. There is a good deal of difference in the result of an interview between Canning and Adams, and between Canning and the Turkish minister.

"Since the last annual meeting of our Society, Mr. Edward L. Pierce has published his *Life of Charles Sumner*.

"I think this memoir will always hold its place as the standard authority not only for the life of his illustrious

friend, but for the history of the great revolution in which Mr. Sumner was the chief political leader. I am unwilling to mention these volumes without bearing my testimony to the admirable manner in which Mr. Pierce has accomplished his work. He was one of Mr. Sumner's most intimate friends,—perhaps during the latter part of his life, the most intimate of all his friends. But he has told his story with great impartiality, with a most anxious desire for the truth, and with most patient and laborious investigation.

“It is not my purpose to review this book here, but only to call attention to a single matter which affects seriously the reputation of an honored President of this Society. Mr. Pierce says, Volume III., page 159 :

“‘The President, in August, 1846, signified to Congress that a cession from Mexico was a probable mode of concluding peace, and with that purpose in view called for two million dollars. An appropriation bill being reported in the House, Wilmot of Pennsylvania moved, August 8th, an amendment, known afterwards as the “Wilmot Proviso,” prohibiting slavery forever in the territory to be acquired. It passed the House with the general support of both Northern Whigs and Democrats, but a vote was prevented in the Senate by the “unseasonable loquacity” of John Davis of Massachusetts, who was still talking when the session expired.’

“In support of this statement Von Holst's Constitutional History of the United States, Vol. III., pages 287-289, is cited. Von Holst is speaking of the bill appropriating two million dollars to be used by the President in obtaining from Mexico an adjustment of the boundary between the United States and that country, and for paying to Mexico an equivalent in money for any portion of her territory which she might be willing to cede to the United States. To this bill had been attached in the House of Representatives, a condition known as the ‘Wilmot Proviso,’ enacting that slavery should be forever prohibited in all the territories to be acquired from Mexico. This bill was under con-

sideration in the Senate when the House adjourned without day. The following is Mr. Von Holst's narrative :

“‘The unseasonable loquacity of John Davis prevented the bill of the House from coming to a vote in the Senate. Although he was repeatedly reminded that there was not a moment to spare, and although he repeatedly promised to end in good season, he spoke right on until he was interrupted, in the middle of a sentence, by the announcement that the House had adjourned *sine die*. A Senator from Massachusetts had literally talked the Wilmot proviso to death by a most sensible speech in its favor. On him were now poured out all the vials of wrath, not of the friends of the proviso, but of the Administration. They were thinking only of the two millions, or at least they acted as if they were thinking only of these.’

“‘This charge found extensive currency at the time. It seems due to Mr. Davis that there should somewhere be put on record the material for its confutation. The Society reprinted, in its Proceedings for April, 1887, a brief sketch of John Davis from a forgotten work entitled ‘Gallery of American Portraits,’ by George Watterston, of which the following is the principal part :

“‘He does not often address the body to which he belongs but when he does it, it is with great ability and effect. He is sedate, grave and circumspect, reflecting intensely on the subject brought up for discussion, and speaking only when it is of such a nature as to require the lights and energies of superior minds. On such occasions he investigates profoundly, prepares himself with facts to illustrate and develop, and comes forth as a most eloquent and powerful advocate. His mind is capable of constant, laborious and intense application; is clear, acute and vigorous; not easily swayed by ingenuity, or led astray by feeling; seeking truth, through all the meanders of subtlety, and drawing her into light, and presenting her in all her native and undisguised loveliness. Like the well trained hunter, he is never driven from the pursuit of the game by false scents, but perseveres, whatever may be the irregularity of the course or the obstructions of the way, till he brings out the

truth, and exposes the fallacies of those who have endeavored to conceal it. His information on the great questions of national policy is extensive and accurate, and his reasoning solid and irresistible. His positions are laid down broadly, and demonstrated with clearness. He never loiters on the outskirts of his subject, or strives to amuse his hearers by pretty conceits or idle verbiage. He deals in demonstration, and when he brings his proposition to a close, it is like the *quod erat demonstrandum* of the mathematician. Almost every mind is satisfied, or finds it difficult, if not impossible, to extract the wedge he has driven in. His speeches are fine specimens of practical logic and accurate reasoning, close, clear and conclusive. Mr. Davis does not deal much in theory; he is more practical than speculative, and bends his whole powers to produce conviction, without aiming at beauty or splendor of diction in what he says. His thoughts are "apples of gold," but not "in a net-work of silver." His style is plain and unostentatious, and suited to the weight and gravity of the subject which he discusses, and though correct, is not very flowing or ornamented. His frame is large and apparently muscular; his countenance grave and marked by the traces of thought, and exhibits great shrewdness and penetration. As a legislator he is vigilant and active, always at his post, and always prepared to support or resist, by his eloquence or vote, any measure which may be introduced into the House that he conceives to be conducive or injurious to the interests of the nation.'

"Mr. Davis died forty years ago. . The persons now living who remember him, and the persons who have heard of him from his contemporaries, will agree that the above is an admirable and truthful portraiture. Mr. Davis was a man of great practical wisdom, infrequent speech, compact, clear and convincing in statement and reasoning. There never was an American statesman to whom unseasonableness of speech, or loquacity could, with less probability, be ascribed. He was never accused of either, so far as I believe, on any other occasion. I have often heard my father, who was his contemporary and who had frequently encountered at the bar Daniel Webster, Jeremiah Mason, Franklin Dexter,

Rufus Choate, Charles Allen, Elijah H. Mills and the other great New England lawyers of that time, say that he thought Mr. Davis the most formidable antagonist it was ever his fortune to meet at the bar.

“While Mr. Davis remained a member of the Whig party until his death, there can be no question that he sympathized with the prevailing opinion of Massachusetts in opposing the extension of slavery into the territories. He refused to join Mr. Webster in supporting the compromises of 1850. The archives of this Society contain the evidence that that difference led to a personal estrangement between him and his great colleague.

“I think a brief narrative of the facts will show not only that Mr. Davis had no intention of defeating the prohibition of slavery in the territories, but that his action in fact in no way contributed to that result.

“Von Holst is one of the most sensible, careful and painstaking writers upon American political history. Indeed, Von Holst, De Tocqueville and Bryce are the only foreign writers on American institutions whose work is of much value. Von Holst and Bryce have occasionally fallen into errors which seem to be owing to the influence upon their judgment of the class of persons with whom they have chiefly associated here. It is creditable to them that their errors of this kind have been so few. Justice to Von Holst requires the statement that his charge against Mr. Davis is but the repetition of that which was made at the time by the anger and disappointment of the supporters of the administration. But nothing can seem more ludicrous to the men who knew John Davis than to impute to him either loquacity or error in judgment in determining what course was likely to accomplish any object he had at heart. He was clear-headed, hard-headed, shrewd, circumspect and exceedingly tenacious of any object of his desire. An examination of the legislative history of the Wilmot Proviso will acquit Mr. Davis, I think, of this charge and will show

that he acted on that occasion, not only honestly but wisely in the interest of freedom in the territories.

“It is true, as is said by Von Holst and Mr. Pierce, that the bill which placed two millions in the hands of the President, to be used at his sole discretion in negotiating for peace and acquiring territory, went to the Senate from the House with the proviso prohibiting forever slavery in the territory to be acquired. But the motion to which Mr. Davis spoke was a motion to strike out that proviso, and the vote which he prevented by a speech of fifteen or twenty minutes only, would have been a vote on that proposition. Mr. Davis doubtless expected that if the Senate came to a vote the proviso would be stricken out, that the House would be compelled, in the short time before final adjournment, either to accept the amendment, striking out the condition, or to let the bill fail, and that the result would be a concurrence with the Senate and the passage of the bill, putting this extraordinary power into the hands of President Polk without the condition for securing freedom. The precise thing happened at the next session, and cannot be related better than in Mr. Pierce’s language :

“‘The struggle was renewed at the next session, 1846–1847, on appropriation bills providing the means for negotiating a treaty, but though the proviso at different times passed the House, in which the Northern members were largely in a majority, it was as often rejected in the Senate which was more equally divided between sections, and less susceptible to a popular pressure. Uniformly the House receded from its position and the proviso was lost. Thus the question was left open for the national election of 1848.’

“The Senate and House had agreed, by a concurrent resolution, upon an hour for adjournment, being 12 o’clock on the 21st day of August. Under this resolution it became the duty of the presiding officer in each house to declare it adjourned without day when the appointed hour came, unless the resolution should be rescinded by a like concurrent vote. Fifteen or twenty minutes before the hour fixed

the bill above mentioned was taken up for consideration. It was in charge of Mr. Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama, Chairman of the Committee on Finance, one of the ablest and most influential of the Southern Democratic leaders, thoroughly earnest, without disguise, in his support of the Southern policy of acquiring territory from Mexico for the purpose of making new slave States. It is utterly incredible, either that Mr. Lewis would have consented to the passage of the proviso excluding slavery from the territory to be acquired, or that he did not perfectly understand the parliamentary method of accomplishing his own purpose. He moved to take up the bill, and immediately moved to strike out the proviso, which was as follows :

“ ‘ Provided, that as an express and fundamental condition of the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico, by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and of the use by the Executive of any moneys hereafter appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.’ ”

“ No Southern Democrat could have gone home to face his constituents if he had consented to the passage of that resolution which they not only regarded as an affront to the South, but which would have baffled the purpose for which they had involved the country in war and for which all their political effort for years had been directed. Mr. Lewis on being asked by Mr. Davis to state his reason why the proviso should be stricken out, replied that there was no time now for giving reasons or making explanations. He undoubtedly hoped to get a vote in the Senate without debate, that the Senate would strike out the proviso, and that thereupon the House, on the ground that the measure would be lost unless it receded, would abandon its position. This actually happened, in regard to this bill, at the next session, as Von Holst states in regard to similar measures bearing

on the same subject. This appears from Mr. Pierce's narrative. Mr. Davis spoke but about fifteen minutes in all. When Lewis found that he was determined to debate the measure and so prevent a vote on the pending motion to strike out the provision, he implored Mr. Davis to yield that he might introduce a resolution rescinding the order for adjournment. If that had been done, what took place at the next session, namely, the passage of the bill without the proviso, would have taken place then. Mr. Davis firmly and wisely refused to give way. He did not prevent the passage of the Wilmot proviso, which never could have passed through the Senate, as then constituted, and never would have been signed by President Polk if it had passed. He prevented the Senate from striking out the Wilmot proviso, and the House from concurring in the bill to give the extraordinary power to the President of expending two million dollars for foreign territory for the purpose of making it a part of a slave empire.

“Mr. Davis had, as appears from his speech at the next session, the hope that a vote might be taken in the Senate, when there would be time only to pass the bill as it came from the House, but not sufficient time to send it back to the House with an amendment. This would have put upon the slave-holding party the distinct responsibility of rejecting a measure in the interest of peace, unless they could secure new territory for slavery. But there was a difference of about eight minutes in the clocks in the two chambers. So the adjournment of the House took place and the legislative power of the Senate was ended by the announcement that the House had adjourned. Mr. Davis was disappointed in that particular. But it was a matter of comparatively little importance.

“Von Holst says, in the passage that has been cited, ‘On him were now poured out all the vials of wrath, not of the friends of the proviso, but of the Administration. They were thinking only of the two millions, or

at least they acted as if they were thinking of these.'

"It is strange that so industrious and discriminating a writer should not see that the fact that Mr. Davis's course caused the 'vials of wrath, not of the friends of the proviso, but of the Administration' to be poured out upon his head requires some better explanation than that he gives. It was because he had baffled the purpose for the time being, not of the friends of the proviso but of the friends of the Administration, that the wrath was poured out upon him from that quarter. The friends of the Administration were not at that time thinking 'only of the two millions' for which they did not care a straw. They were thinking of acquiring from Mexico the territory—to get which the war had been waged—to be made slave territory, and they knew that Mr. Davis had prevented the passage of a measure authorizing its acquisition which, if it had passed at all at that session, would have passed only without the proviso, or condition, as it did at the next. The men whose anger was poured out upon John Davis understood the matter then and saw it in all its relations quite as distinctly as the ablest student of history sees it now. Who was the Senator who had charge of the measure in the Senate and whose frequent and impatient interruptions of Mr. Davis showed the eagerness of his desire? It was Mr. Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama, the same gentleman who had moved to strike out the proviso which the House had attached to the bill, and who very well understood the condition of the measure and the certainty that the House would recede, if he could get the Senate to vote in time.

"Mr. Davis explained the matter himself in a speech in the Senate, made February 27, 1847. This explanation being in the middle of a speech of some length has probably escaped the attention of the writers to whom we have referred. This explanation, although we have it in the imperfect reporting of that date, is, in substance, what has been given before. Mr. Davis adds that there was a difference

in the clocks in the Senate and the House, and leaves us to understand that he expected there would be a vote upon the bill, but that he meant to take up so much time there would be no opportunity to amend it and send it back to the House.

“ It seems to me, therefore, quite clear that if Mr. Davis had refrained from speaking the Senate would have struck out the proviso, if it had come to a vote, and the House would have concurred, as actually happened at the next session. It is impossible for any person who knows how the Senate was constituted at that day, to believe that the South would have abandoned the object for which the Mexican war was instituted and consented to the exclusion of slavery from the territory to be acquired. Mr. Davis’s action seems to me to have been wise and timely. It is, I suppose, needless to say that while I have deemed this statement to be due to the truth of history, and to be required as an act of simple justice to a great statesman and honored President of this Society, that it comes from a person too young, at the time of Mr. Davis’s death, to have had any intimate personal acquaintance with him, and from a person who differed from Mr. Davis in opinion as to the best political method of dealing with the engrossing and vital question with which the American people were dealing during the years which were the last of Mr. Davis’s political life, and the beginning of mine.”

(Wilson’s History of the Slave Power in America, Vol. 2, p. 17.)—

“ It was taken up in the Senate on the last day of the session, which was close at noon, and a motion was made to strike out the proviso. John Davis of Massachusetts took the floor, and, he declining to yield it, the bill and proviso were lost. Mr. Davis was much censured at the time for not permitting a vote to be taken. But, whatever were his motives, it is probable that a vote could not have been reached on the motion to strike out the proviso; and, if it had been, it would have unquestionably prevailed, as there was a majority of slaveholders in that body, and the exigencies of the system would not have allowed them to see the purpose of the war thus defeated. It has indeed been since affirmed by Mr. Brinkerhoff that there was ‘ a well-ascertained and unan-

ymous determination on the part of the Democratic senators of the free States to stand by the proviso, and that those of Delaware and Maryland would have voted with them.' But surely Mr. Brinkerhoff must have been mistaken. It is barely possible that Democratic senators from the free States would have voted for that measure, but their previous and subsequent conduct does not justify the belief that they would have done so. Mr. Pierce of Maryland and the two Delaware senators are not living to speak for themselves but the subsequent course of Mr. Pierce and John M. Clayton gave no assurance that they would have voted for the proviso had it come to a vote. The probability is strong that they would have voted against it, and Reverdy Johnson, in a letter written in April, 1873, states in the most unequivocal language that he should not have voted for it."

Dr. ELLIS: "Probably I am the only one here who remembers meeting Mr. Davis in this hall."

Dr. E. E. HALE read a few lines which he had received from our associate, Mr. EDWIN D. MEAD, referring to a movement now in progress to secure a permanent monument to General Rufus Putnam. He continued: "I understand that the spirited Society of Antiquity at Worcester has appointed a committee to have the matter in charge, and to secure his house in Rutland to be preserved as a centre of historical monuments. It is said that the whole farm can be bought for three thousand dollars. I am anxious that it should appear in our records that we interest ourselves in this important matter, and I believe that the patriotism of Worcester County can be relied on to assist in this work. I make no motion, for I do not think the Society can act as a Society."

On motion it was voted that all the papers and remarks which had been presented be referred to the Committee on Publication.

Dissolved.

JOHN D. WASHBURN,
Recording Secretary.

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