

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

THE Council have the pleasure of reporting to the Society the completion of another year of prosperity and usefulness. For the detailed evidence of these conditions reference may be made to the accompanying reports of the Treasurer and the Librarian.

Since the semi-annual meeting, in April, the Council have been apprized of two deaths in the membership of the Society,—that of Dr. J. Hammond Trumbull, a member of the Council for the last twenty-five years, and for the last twenty-three the Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, which occurred in Hartford, Connecticut, on August 5, 1897; and that of the Hon. Edward L. Pierce, who was elected to membership in October, 1892, who took part in the discussions at our last meeting in this room, and who died in Paris on September 7, 1897. An obituary notice of Mr. Pierce will be prepared by Vice-President Hoar for publication in the Proceedings.

Dr. Trumbull was elected to membership in April, 1855, and had consequently been associated with this Society for exactly one-half of the eighty-five years of its chartered existence, only five members of an earlier date being still borne upon our rolls. Suitable notice of the death of one so long a member and an officer of the Society was taken by the Council at a meeting held on October 2, the minutes of which will be prepared for publication; and the usual biographical memoranda are now presented.

James Hammond Trumbull was born in Stonington, Connecticut, on December 20, 1821. His father was Gurdon Trumbull, a man of rare balance and judgment, and of sound good sense. He held office as a Bank Commissioner in Connecticut, and afterwards as Commissioner

of the School Fund; and it was his interest in the early history of New England and the history of the American Indians, that first led his distinguished son to study in those lines. Gurdon Trumbull's father, John Trumbull of Norwich, was the editor and publisher of the *Norwich Packet* from its beginning in 1773 until his death in 1802. An elder brother of Gurdon, Henry Trumbull, was the author of a popular history of Indian wars; and another brother, Samuel, edited a newspaper in Stonington, where Gurdon was brought up and where he was postmaster under John Quincy Adams.

Dr. Trumbull's mother was Sally Ann Swan, daughter of Captain Thomas Swan of Stonington, and a descendant of several of the early settlers of that region, among them of Walter Palmer, from whom General Grant was also descended, and of Captain George Denison, a hero of the Parliamentary army, who was wounded at the battle of Naseby. A woman of unusual strength and sweetness of character, she impressed herself upon her children with the faculty of special sympathy with each in their special tastes and pursuits.

Our associate was of frail health in childhood, and was much indoors in his early life. He was prepared for college at Tracy's Academy in Norwich, Conn., and entered Yale in 1838, in his seventeenth year, but with mental attainments and capacities superior to those of most of his class. By the unusual range of his early reading also, and his exceptionally retentive memory, he was marked out from the first as a unique figure. Equally striking with his quickness and brilliancy, which speedily won universal admiration, were the lively sense of humor and love of fun and practical waggery which some of his classmates now recall as his most salient characteristics and which diverted him in part from the sober routine of the place. His brain already outgrew his strength, and in the earlier part of the Junior year he was obliged to withdraw from college.

For some time it seemed most improbable that he could ever resume study, but his own strength of will and his father's watchful devotion finally triumphed in his recovery. While debarred the use of books he turned to natural history for amusement, and assisted in perfecting the catalogues of the birds, fishes, reptiles and shells of Connecticut, compiled by the Rev. James H. Linsley (Yale College, 1817) and printed in the *American Journal of Science* in 1843 and 1844.

In 1847 he settled in Hartford, and for the next five years was assistant in the office of the Secretary of State. In the meantime he began the transcription of the early Colonial Records of Connecticut, the first volume of which (from 1636 to 1665) he edited and published at his own expense in March, 1850. A second volume (from 1665 to 1677) appeared in April, 1852. He was nominated for Secretary of State on the Whig ticket in 1852 and defeated; and declined the same nomination in 1853 and 1854. In 1854 he was appointed to the new office of State Librarian and was made a member of a committee to compile the Statute Laws of the State.

In August, 1855, he married Miss Sarah A. Robinson of Hartford, and the following year he spent in travel in Europe and the East. He was again assistant to the Secretary of State from 1858 to 1861, and during this time issued, in March, 1859, the third volume of his transcript of the Public Records of the Colony (from 1678 to 1689), the further continuation of which was left to our associate, Dr. Charles J. Hoadly. In 1861 he was elected Secretary of State on the Republican ticket, and retained that office by annual re-elections for five years.

In the meantime he had been appointed in 1862 one of the Board of Trustees and the Librarian of the Watkinson Library of Reference, recently established in connection with the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, by a

bequest of Mr. David Watkinson. Here from the first he was charged with the responsibility for the selection and purchase of books; and when the Library was opened to the public in August, 1866, he assumed the active duties of Librarian. The service which he accomplished for Hartford and for a wider public in gathering that exceedingly choice collection of books can hardly be overestimated. He remained in full charge of the Library until the end of 1890, when his resignation on account of impaired health was accepted, and his title changed to Librarian *emeritus*.

His private studies and special interests included an unusually wide circle of knowledge. Natural history, especially conchology, early attracted him. For a time also mathematics seemed his special forte, and cipher-reading and cipher-writing remained always a delightful recreation. He inherited an ardent love for New England history, and identified himself at once on his removal to Hartford with the Connecticut Historical Society, which he served as Corresponding Secretary from May, 1848, until his election to the Presidency in 1863. The latter office he filled until his refusal to accept a re-election in 1889. About 1853 he became interested in the study of the American Indian languages, beginning with the Massachusetts dialect into which John Eliot made his translations. His studies in this field were laborious in the extreme, long continued, and exhaustive, and gave him for many years in the mind of the general public the easily remembered reputation of being the only person living who could read Eliot's Indian Bible. This claim to distinction became annoying to its subject and ceased as time went on to have even the semblance of truth which once belonged to it, but the fact will remain that here Dr. Trumbull was both the most noted pioneer and the most thoroughly equipped worker of his generation in a difficult field which has tempted few explorers.

He was known to all his friends as a bibliographer of distinguished acquirements, and in this respect his connection with our late associate, Mr. George Brinley, brought him prominently into notice. He had long been the intimate friend and trusted adviser of Mr. Brinley, at whose death in 1875 the duty devolved on him, as literary executor, of cataloguing and arranging for sale that marvellous American library, the dispersal of which in 1879-93 was so notable an event for book-buyers. The catalogue, in its perfection of detail and wide range of curious subsidiary knowledge, will always rank as an authority among bibliographical aids to American history. This perfection of detail, in what was at first thought intended merely for immediate use as an auction catalogue, suggests a main characteristic of the whole of Dr. Trumbull's literary work, which was symbolized even in his handwriting, neat and regular as copperplate,—namely, his unwillingness to rest satisfied with anything short of absolute accuracy and finish in whatever he gave to the public. One result of this high standard was that he was thus tempted to withhold from final shape much that he was admirably qualified to contribute to the common stock of historical learning. The books that he wrote were few and slender, and mainly, I suppose, from a dread of having to venture on some unfortified statements which some other scholar might in the future be obliged to question; though his daily occupations were (until too late) so engrossing that he might well have pleaded this as his excuse. Nevertheless, the amount of his published work, though by no means what he might have given us, is not inconsiderable. Besides his contributions to the Proceedings of our own Society, the most important of which was his Council Report in October, 1873, on the "Origin and Early Progress of Indian Missions in New England," his most notable separately printed works are these: A paper on "The Origin

of McFingal," reprinted from the *Historical Magazine*, January, 1868; one on the "Composition of Indian Geographical Names," from the Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, 1870; five valuable papers on subjects connected with the Indian languages of North America, from the Transactions of the American Philological Association for 1869-72; "Historical Notes on the Constitutions of Connecticut, 1639-1818," 1873; and "Indian Names in Connecticut," 1881.

He edited, with copious introductions and notes, a reprint of Roger Williams's "Key into the Language of America," for the Narraganset Club in 1866; Thomas Lechford's "Plain Dealing," in 1867; Abraham Pierson's Indian Catechism, for the Connecticut Historical Society in 1873; and "The True-Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven and the False Blue-Laws invented by the Rev. Samuel Peters," in 1876. His name also appears as the editor of the "Memorial History of Hartford County," published in two volumes in 1886, but it is understood that his assistance in this work was limited to a partial reading of the proof-sheets. The first volume of his edition of the Colonial Records, issued when he was twenty-eight years old, established on a firm basis his reputation as an exact historical scholar. Three months later, in June, 1850, he was elected a Corresponding Member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and in August received the degree of Master of Arts from Yale College. Of the Historical Society he lived to be the oldest member in order of election. Yale was proud in 1862 to enroll him in the ranks of his former college class, and in 1871 gave him the degree of LL.D., which was given him by Harvard in 1887, in which year also he was made Doctor of Letters (L.H.D.) at Columbia. He was appointed Lecturer on the Indian Languages of North America at Yale in 1873, and held the office until 1885, but was not called upon for any duties. Of his connection with learned societies it

may be enough to add that he was chosen a member of the American Oriental Society in 1860; was one of the original members of the American Philological Association in 1869, and its President for the year 1894-95; and was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1872.

Dr. Trumbull's latest contribution to our Proceedings was the Report of the Council in October, 1884, including "First Essays at Banking and the First Paper-money in New England," one of the incidental subjects which he had studied exhaustively; and the meeting of October, 1885, was the last that he attended. After retiring from his duties at the Watkinson Library in 1890 he left Hartford but seldom, and steadily grew more feeble. An attack of the grip in the early summer of the present year weakened him still further, and a day or two of unconsciousness was followed by his death at his home in Hartford, on August 5, in his 76th year. His widow and only child, a daughter, survive him.

Those of us who knew him in his prime can never forget his striking personality,—suggestive perhaps of the aboriginal race whose tongue he had done so much to preserve,—the overflowing fulness and allusiveness of his conversation, often by his auditor's choice in the form of a monologue, and the pungency of his wit. His writings display his characteristic accuracy in minute details and the wonderful range of his knowledge. Sometimes he may have seemed at his happiest in pricking some historic bubble or in tracking to its source some odd linguistic usage; but these were rather the occasional diversions of an incessantly active mind, while his solid contributions to the sum of human learning, though unfortunately limited in amount, are substantially worthy of his fame and of the best standards of American scholarship. He held a unique place in our republic of letters, and his death has left a wide gap in the list of those American scholars whose work is known and prized on both sides the Atlantic.

At a special meeting of the Council, held October 2, 1897, President SALISBURY spoke as follows:—

Gentlemen of the Council of the American Antiquarian Society:

I have the sad duty to call your attention to the great loss the Society has met in the death of our associate, the Honorable James Hammond Trumbull, LL.D., of Hartford, Connecticut, a member since April, 1855, a Councillor since 1872, and Secretary of Foreign Correspondence since 1874. He died at Hartford, August 5, 1897, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Dr. Trumbull was a leading American scholar, well known throughout this country and Europe for his knowledge of history, science, genealogy and literature. He was especially versed in the languages of the North American Indians and was the highest known authority in that department.

The service of Dr. Trumbull to the Society was conspicuous in frequent participation in discussions at stated meetings and in monographs on historical points of interest, generally relating to the colonial period. Among the titles of his communications we find, "The Name Massachusetts," October, 1867; "Remarks on Indian Inscriptions," October, 1870; "Japanese Admixture in the Northwest," April, 1872; "List of Books and Tracts in the Indian Language, printed in Cambridge and Boston from 1653 to 1721," October, 1873; and on "The Christian Name of José Glover," April, 1875.

Dr. Trumbull prepared the Report of the Council in October, 1873, and chose as his subject "John Eliot and his Works," giving new light on the life of this apostle of civilization. In October, 1884, Dr. Trumbull again and for the last time read the Report of the Council upon "New and Supplementary Facts in regard to early Paper Money," and gave a very learned commentary on the early money of the colony.

The frequent attendance of Dr. Trumbull at our meetings and his readiness to assist our members in special investigations endeared him to his associates, while his extended reputation for learning and for correct historic criticism was of great value to the Society.

Vice-President HOAR said :—

In the death of our late Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, Dr. J. Hammond Trumbull, the Antiquarian Society laments the loss of one of its oldest and most distinguished members.

Being led by circumstances and by inherited tastes to devote his early attention to American history, his stores of accurate and comprehensive knowledge made him for the latter half of his long life one of the foremost authorities in that large field, down to the minutest details. A special aptitude for the study of language was exercised notably in the domain of the neglected dialects of the American Indians, of which he became an acknowledged master and the chief exponent in his generation. Gifted with unusual powers of observation, with an exceptionally retentive memory, with a rare discrimination both for facts and principles, and with a true genius for patient labor, he held his many-sided knowledge at quick command, and was generous beyond expectation in his help to countless other workers in widely various lines of inquiry.

As a Society we took a just pride in his eminence in those studies which it is one of our objects to foster, and we are distinctly the poorer as his name passes from our living membership.

Mr. SAMUEL SWETT GREEN said :—

It has been a common experience of persons making investigations to find themselves greatly aided by the books and papers printed by Mr. Trumbull.

The President has spoken of his service in unfolding the

significance of the name Massachusetts. I remember that I felt a thrill of delight when, many years ago, I took up one of the early numbers of "Old and New," a magazine which it will be remembered was edited by our associate, Dr. Hale, and found in it a learned and most satisfactory article on the meaning of the Algonkin term Manitou, which gave to it a signification conformable to the primitive notions of the North American Indians instead of the common definition which called for ideas in those peoples which belong only to a high state of civilization.

It has been a great privilege to be able to send to Mr. Trumbull to find out the meaning of an Indian name. Thus in connection with the account of the two hundredth anniversary of the naming of the town of Worcester, in 1884, it gives added interest to the admirable oration of our distinguished associate, Mr. Hoar, to find appended to his mention of the early name of Worcester, Quinsigamond, a copy of a letter from such an authority as Mr. Trumbull, giving different forms of the word and showing that its meaning is fishing place for pickerel.

Not only as a philologist did Mr. Trumbull make us a grateful debtor, but as an antiquary. When making an investigation in early Massachusetts history it always has proved most profitable to hunt up any illustrative matter that he had prepared. I remember with gratitude that when making such an investigation I found exact and full information regarding writings of John Cotton and certain other ecclesiastical worthies of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay in notes to his edition of "Lechford's Plain Dealing."

In his knowledge of Americana Mr. Trumbull was perhaps unsurpassed. Nobody interested in early American publications can be without his catalogue of the books of our late associate, George Brinley, made when they were offered for sale by auction. Mr. Trumbull did a valuable work as librarian also. To say nothing of his labors while for a short time librarian of the State Library of Connecti-

cut, he did excellent service in bringing together the important collection of books in the Watkinson Library in Hartford. I spent two days in examining the library twenty-five or more years ago, and was struck at that time with its richness in various directions. It was particularly valuable even then, in the departments of philology. Within two or three years, finding that some of the large libraries could send me no books to give information regarding Esquimaux notation, I sent to the Watkinson Library and there procured several volumes which furnished satisfactorily the knowledge sought for.

Mr. NATHANIEL PAINE also made a few remarks, alluding to his long and pleasant acquaintance with Dr. Trumbull, and to his indebtedness to him for valuable information freely given at various times. He said that Dr. Trumbull rendered our late librarian, Dr. Haven, great assistance in preparing for the press his *Ante-Revolutionary Publications*, published with the second edition of Thomas's *History of Printing*. He called special attention to Dr. Trumbull's bibliographical work, conspicuous in the preparation of the Brinley catalogue, a work of the greatest value to all interested in early American imprints, and to all persons who are pursuing bibliographical studies. The librarians of the country very gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Dr. Trumbull, and consider his publications as most valuable books of reference.

For the Council,

FRANKLIN B. DEXTER.

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