

PORTRAIT OF JOHN BELLOWS.

[FROM A NEWSPAPER REPORT IN THE *Gloucester (ENG.) Journal* OF
JAN. 10, 1903.]

A most interesting function took place at the Guildhall, Gloucester, on Tuesday afternoon, the occasion being the unveiling of a portrait in oils of the late Mr. John Bellows, and the presentation of the picture to the Corporation, on behalf of the subscribers. The company present was an influential and representative one. On the motion of the Mayor (Ald. E. Sidney Hartland), seconded by Mr. F. A. Hyett, the Lord Lieutenant of the County (the Earl of Ducie), was asked to preside.

His Lordship said he felt it an honor to be called upon to perform the ceremony for which they had assembled that afternoon. He had had the good fortune to know the late John Bellows for forty years or more. They had many tastes in common, and often met and corresponded, and he learnt to know not only his personal worth, but his great ability. John Bellows was a many-sided man, and he did not think any one person could have really known him thoroughly. He was a traveller, linguist, antiquary, and many other things. Apart from his relation to the City and County of Gloucester, he was widely known as editor and proprietor of Bellows's French Dictionary. That was a book of great intrinsic merit, and he expected everybody knew it. If Dr. Johnson had lived, even he would have commended it, although he might have had something sarcastic to say about the effeminacy of the present race that required a dictionary not to weigh more than five or six ounces. (Laughter.) John Bellows was known not only in this country, but in the United States, where he was known as well and probably better than in England. He (the speaker) supposed that some of them might have come across the passage in one of Mark Twain's works in which he spoke of the dictionary and the desire of young English and American ladies to perfect themselves in French. In the passage referred to, Mark Twain said that he once saw a young lady at church with what looked like a prayer book, but it was not a prayer book, it was "John Bellows's excellent French Dictionary." (Laughter.) In "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the author, speaking of John Bellows, thus referred to him:—"One of the scholarly printers and publishers, who honor the calling of Aldus and the Elzevirs." His lordship went on to

speaking of the professional assistance the late John Bellows had given him in little matters of printing and books. He said he always felt safe in his hands, and not only was there never a mistake, but generally speaking some great improvement on what he (the speaker) had suggested. In unveiling the portrait, which hung on the wall of the Council Chamber near the fireplace, to the right of the Mayoral chair, the Lord Lieutenant said the subscribers had asked him to offer and to entrust the portrait to the Mayor, Corporation, and the citizens of Gloucester, with the hope that it might long remain there as a faithful portrait of one of the most eminent worthies of the county. (Applause.)

The Mayor said: On behalf of the Corporation and the citizens of Gloucester, I have much pleasure, albeit a melancholy pleasure, in accepting the portrait which you, my Lord, have presented on behalf of the subscribers. And perhaps, though myself a subscriber, I may venture, as the mouthpiece of the city, to express the appreciation which I am sure the general body of the citizens will feel for the gift. Hung as you see, in a place of honor in the Council Chamber, this portrait will constantly recall to those who knew him in his habit as he lived, and will preserve for future generations, the semblance—the outward bodily semblance—of one of whom living we were all proud as a fellow-citizen, and of whom dead we all think as one who in these modern days, by his character and his deeds, worthily sustained the ancient glories of the city of Gloucester. But alas! it cannot preserve the magic of his presence and his speech. . . . But perhaps I may be allowed to try to describe in a few words the impression made by John Bellows upon one who first met him in his latter years, after his early struggles were over, and his position in life and in letters was assured. To such a one his most obvious characteristic was his intense individuality. There was no mistaking him: he was John Bellows, and nobody else. His lean, tall figure, slightly bent, his quaint garb, his bright and earnest eyes, arrested the attention at once. When you got into conversation with him, no matter about what, his quiet manner, his old-world speech and courtesy, his wide knowledge and accurate memory, his readiness to listen, as well as to talk, his kindly witticisms, and his endless store of facts and anecdotes, constituted an unbounded charm. Further acquaintance made known a character of the deepest and most solemn convictions, sharply defined beliefs carried out in daily life with punctual and even ritualistic formality, but all controlled and brought into harmony by an overflowing kindness, a spontaneous love for his fellow-men that impelled him not merely to avoid offence, but to seek for their highest good. It was a revelation. You felt that a new planet, as brilliant as unexpected, had swum into your ken. You had found an unique personality, the impress of which

would be an abiding possession. You might have been disposed at first to think him eccentric. If so, you were soon undeceived. Eccentricity is the masquerade of little minds. John Bellows was too great for that. His manners, dress, and speech were the outcome of a large and vivid personality, expressing itself in its own way, because it could not do otherwise. Such a nature could not go exactly the way that others went. It had to be its own pioneer. "Thorough," therefore was not his policy—it was himself. No compromise was possible. Whether it were the making of a dictionary, or the living of a religion, the advocacy of a policy of state, the pursuit of a scientific enquiry, or the earning of his bread, thoroughness was everywhere and at all times much more than a matter of conscience: it was a necessity he could no more escape than he could escape his own soul. This was what marked him out from common men, this was what sundered him sometimes, to his sorrow and theirs, from those he loved, and with whom he was in general agreement and sympathy. On this rested all his achievement; on this his commercial success; on this the literary and scientific attainments which have made him a world-wide name. Moreover, he carried it into a region where few men have the leisure or the will to carry it—he carried it into his charities. He was not one who, after a life of ill-doing, would buy salvation for his soul, and local immortality for his memory, at the cost of his kindred and dependants, by means of inordinate bequests for so-called charitable purposes. Rather than that he would have buried himself in oblivion; he would have prayed for annihilation. Laborious journeys, often fraught with imminent personal danger, to the battle-ground between France and Germany during the war of 1870, many years later to the Caucasus, and later still to the Balkan peninsula, witness to the spirit in which he performed what he conceived to be a solemn duty. Those journeys may have overtaken his physical powers; they may have helped to exhaust his frame whilst his mind was still in the plentitude of vigor; but they earned him the gratitude of thousands, and they permanently associated his name with the efforts for which his country is famous, to raise the fallen and to bring hope to the miserable. It was an honor to have such a man as fellow-citizen, to look into his eyes, to clasp his hand, to hold friendly intercourse with him. The skill of the painter here keeps for us and for our children some faint idea of his presence. His French dictionary is a monument of his originality, his tenacity, his industry, his conquest of difficulties.

The following letter was received from Senator Hoar:—
"Worcester, Mass., July 18th, 1902. My dear Mr. Mayor,—I have seen in a Gloucester paper an account of a meeting for the purpose of getting money for a portrait of the late John Bellows,

to be placed in some appropriate place in your city. I should send a contribution at once but that I think it likely that the money needed has been long ago contributed. If that be not true, my wife and I will be glad to be permitted to make a moderate contribution. We had the great pleasure of a visit from Mr. Bellows and his wife last year at my home in Worcester. And I have more than once been at his house near Gloucester. His friendship was one of the delights of my life. He made a great many friends during his late visit to the United States. He seemed to me to be a man of rare accomplishments, of great original genius, and of a sweet and loving nature. Everybody here who met him became attached to him, even if the meeting were brief. As I daresay you know, Harvard University gave him a degree. It was a well-deserved recognition of his accomplishments as a scholar, especially of his knowledge of Roman antiquities, and of the early languages which were the roots of our noble English tongue, and his great service to scholars in his wonderful French Dictionary. If you will kindly let us know whether a contribution will still be welcome, we shall regard it as a great privilege to be permitted to unite with his neighbors in that mark of respect to him.—I have the honor to be, with high regard, faithfully yours.—GEO. F. HOAR.”

[Other eloquent tributes to the character and learning of Mr. Bellows were paid by the vice-chairman, Mr. F. A. Hyett, the Rev. Canon Bazeley (Honorary Secretary of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society), Dr. C. Callaway of Cheltenham, President of the Cotteswold Field Club, Mr. — Ellis, Rev. Canon Scobell and other gentlemen.

The report says that the portrait was on every hand declared to be a good one. The artist was Mr. Percy Bigland.—*Committee of Publication.*]

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