

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

SINCE the last meeting of the Society there have been four deaths, three in our list of active members and one a foreign member. Alexander Graham Bell died on August 2, at his summer home in Baddeck, Nova Scotia. He was elected an active member of the Society in 1899. William Archibald Dunning died on August 25, 1922. He was elected to active membership in October, 1912 at the one hundredth anniversary of this Society at which meeting he represented the American Historical Association. Henry Herbert Edes died at his home in Cambridge on the 13th of October. He was elected an active member of the Society April 1885 and chosen a member of the Council October 1919. Biographies of these members will be written and duly recorded.

Henry Vignaud, elected a foreign member of this Society on October 21, 1896, died at his home in Bagnaux, Department of the Seine, France, September 19, in his 92nd year. Born in New Orleans, November 27, 1830, of an old Creole family, he was an officer in the Confederate army and later in 1863 became secretary of the Confederate Diplomatic Mission to France. From 1875 to 1882 he was second Secretary of the American Legation and later Embassy in Paris and from 1882 until his retirement in 1909 he was its first Secretary.

Early in his residence in France he became interested in the history of America. To quote his own words: "I started to write the history of America, but it was a vast subject. My attention was directed particularly to Columbus: so I neglected the rest and may never write it. The accepted history of Columbus—as

written by Washington Irving and his followers—is that he started across the Atlantic with the idea of reaching Asia. I have been constrained to show that he had no such idea. He sailed to discover the very island that he did discover. He knew that it was there. This I have come to believe by the study of his writings, by contemporaneous writings and by the documents of the time. His life was insignificant until he got that clew. It gave him a purpose and a livelihood. The purpose was to take possession of a valuable island in the Atlantic for one of the great Powers. And his livelihood was to raise money, meanwhile, on the secret. Even his brother receipted for a large sum from the King of France on account of discoveries—to be made. Where did they get their secret? ‘From an unknown Pilot’ is the answer of the documents that have come down to us. Las Casas says that it was ‘a certain pilot.’ Martin Behaim knew this pilot. Gomora promises to tell his name and does not. That is the secret on this subject.”

His first work on the subject, “*La Lettre et la Carte de Toscanelli sur la Route des Indes*,” was published in 1901 and was followed by several, one in English, the last being in 1911. His view has been carefully considered in John Boyd Thacher’s *Columbus*. He wrote also on Vespuccius and on the Expeditions of Scandinavians to America. In order to secure all possible information on these subjects he gathered together a library<sup>1</sup> numbering 14,000 volumes, of which he says: “From the beginning this library was formed solely to write the history of the discovery of America. I was a poor man. I had not the advantage of buying it all together. I had to watch my chance and pick up one book here, one atlas there. Nevertheless the library now contains all the original sources of information, in whatever language, mostly Spanish and Portuguese. Every book on the subject worth having is here.”

So highly was Mr. Vignaud esteemed that in 1909, when he retired from the embassy, Mr. Henry White,

<sup>1</sup>Now in the University of Michigan Library.

then American Ambassador to France, and members of the American Colony in Paris raised a fund as a gift to him which enabled him to live in quiet and comparative affluence during the remainder of his life.

Book collecting, in this age of specialization, is very different from that of a century or even a quarter century ago. Few individual collectors can be found today who gather books for the sole object of collecting. The study of a single printer or group of printers, of a specific class of imprints or a special period or a single historic character, as has been instanced in the life work of Henry Vignaud, these and similar objects actuate the present day collector. The same can be said of libraries like our own; each has developed or is in process of developing special fields in which it may lead others of its class. These fields are often restricted in scope, but on the other hand are developed more extensively and completely than ever before. The great object in view is practical and utilitarian: to enable those within its borders and those who are attracted to it because of its treasures to pursue their researches more thoroughly and more deeply than in any other library of its kind.

But while practical usefulness is and must always be the aim of such a society as ours, both in its collections and in the arrangement of its treasures for the convenience of those who use them, there are secondary interests which can be extracted from the books on our shelves by the general student not the least of which is a study of their provenance. An investigation into the history and origin of these books, from their type, their format and the differences in varying copies of the same edition as well as the inscriptions on their pages, may lead to a confirmation of historic facts as well as reveal many personal data of interest and importance.

A notable illustration of this is seen in the history of the 42-line bible. Until the discovery in the library of Cardinal Mazarin during the latter part of the eight-

eenth century of a two volume bible it was not known what book was first printed with movable types or what the date of its printing. On the last pages of another copy of that bible in the Bibliothèque Nationale was written in gothic hand that Heinrich Cremer had finished illuminating these volumes on August 15th and 24th, 1456. By this discovery the commercial beginning of the "Art preservative of all Arts" was definitely settled. Within the past 15 years an intensive study of the paper, the type and the format of this book and a minute comparison of a number of copies of it which were available have been made by German scholars. The results of that study have revealed that the paper was purchased in large amounts showing financial credit, that the type was found to be larger than necessary and was twice reduced until it made 42 lines to the page, that the book was printed on six presses and that the size of the edition was substantially enlarged during the process; conclusions which have justly challenged the admiration of the world. Interesting as this German investigation is and important as it is from the standpoint of the history of typography, it is certain that the book lover will be far more thrilled to look upon the inscriptions on those two last pages, worn, soiled and torn as they are, than by the wonderful technique of the German students. It is the personal element which appeals to us. The writer of this report will always remember the delightful evening spent in the library of Senator Hoar and with what emotion his host uttered the name of "John Milton" as he pointed to the autograph of that man on the title page of one of his books. Truly our heart makes itself felt as much as our intellect in these matters and books of association will always appeal deeply to the collector.

Every library has upon its shelves books containing the autographs of notable men, but it is given to few to possess a group of books which may be called an "association library." In his diary, Isaiah Thomas

wrote under the date, Nov. 11, 1814,—“Purchased the remains of the Mather library . . . between 600 and 700 volumes;” and on Dec. 14 of the same year we read, “the whole of the remains now presented to the society by Mrs. Crocker and Mr. Thomas consists of about 900 volumes.” In the room in our library devoted to this collection are gathered at present 852 of these books, the largest number of the Mather books known in any library, corporate or private, and others on the shelves of our stacks, added from various sources since the note in the Thomas diary, bring the total of bound volumes once belonging to the Mathers to about 1200 in number. These books contain almost without exception one or more autographs of the various members of this family and a practically complete verification of the history of these men, as stated in the valuable article on this subject by our associate Mr. Tuttle, can be drawn from these autographs, together with further information from other books listed since that article. More than a score contain the autograph of Richard Mather, the founder of the American branch of this family. In Ferriby’s “*Lawful Preacher*,” London, 1653, is inscribed “Richard Mather oneth this book,” but in all others the name alone appears. At his death in 1669 the books were divided among his four sons, a small portion only coming to Increase to whom belonged the score above noted. Later, acquisitions came from the other heirs and are represented in this collection by one or two with the autograph of Samuel, of Dublin and his son Samuel, of Windsor, Conn., of Nathaniel, of London and one with the name of Wareham whose father, Eleazer, died a few months after his father and did not therefore receive his share.

A large percentage of our books contain the autograph of the first president of Harvard College of American birth—Increase Mather—who wrote in his books “*Crescentius Mather*” almost without exception, although an occasional I. Mather does appear.

The fire of November 27, 1676, destroyed his home, but the diary of his son, Cotton Mather, records that not more than 100 of his books were lost out of a total of more than 1000 volumes. On the following day Mrs. Usher offered to replace these from the library of her former husband, President Leonard Hoar. Of the books from this source at least a dozen in our collection can be traced to that gift although none contain the name of the former owner. During the four years' absence of Increase Mather in London he must have purchased many books for quite a number are found in our list with his name and the date of their purchase there. While the books of Richard Mather contain his name alone, those of Increase have in addition to his own the names of the several successive owners among his descendants, often with the dates of their acquisition. The "Patriarchae" of Emanuel Thesaurus, for example, has on its title page, "Crescentius Matherus," "Cottonus Matherus," "Samuel Mather's Book 1722."

The greatest interest attaching to these books, however, centers about the history of Cotton Mather who, born in 1663 and educated by Ezekiel Chever, entered Harvard College at the age of eleven and graduated when fifteen years old. A list is given here of the books in this collection which were used by him during his college career:

1674. Dictionarie English and Latine, London, 1623. On its pages are inscribed: John Bellingham ejus liber, Anno Dom. 1655, I. Mather, Cottonus Matherus 1674, Nathanielis Matheris Liber 1682, and Samuel Mather's book 1717. This is an English-Latin dictionary of words and phrases and shows evidence of constant use.

Johannes Ravisius Textoris Epithetum Epitome, London, 1642, with the same inscriptions. This is a book of synonyms.

Johannes Ravisius Textoris Epistolae, London, 1668, with "Cottonis Matherus 1674; a series of letters on Latin Literature and authors.

Wilhelm Scheckhard, *Horologium Hebraecum*, London, 1639, inscribed "Crescentius Matherus, Cottonus Matherus, E. D. P. 1674," A Hebrew grammar which he studied at the age of 11. Let me call your attention to the letters E. D. P. and to Mr. Brigham's most pertinent suggestion that they stand for *Ex Dono Patri*.

Archibald Simson, *Hieroglyphica Animalium Terrestrium*, Edinb, 1622. with the names: "Crescentius Matherus," "Cottonus Matherus 1674," "Nathaniel Mather 1681." A book on Natural History.

1675. Petrus Gassendus, *Exercitationes Paradoxicae adversus Aristoteles*, Amsterd, 1649, containing the names: "Cottoni Matheri Liber 1675," and "S. Mather, 1740."

Cornelius Schonaeo, Terentius Christianus, Cambridge, 1632. With the autographs of "Cottonus Matherus, E D P 1675," and "Nathanaelis Matheri Liber 1680," In this book Old Testament characters were treated in the style of the Comedies of Terence.

William Walker, *Phrascologia Anglo Latina*, London, 1672, inscribed "Crescentius Matherus," "Cottonus Matherus E D P 1675," "Nathanaelis Matheri Liber 1686," and "Samuel Mather."

1676. Gulemus Bucanus, *Institutiones Theologicae*, Geneva 1625, containing the names of "Crescentius Matherus," and "Cottonus Matherus 1676."

Petrus Galtruchius, *Institutio Philosophiae*, Cadoni, 1665. Three volumes from the gift of Mrs. Usher each with the name of "Cottonus Matherus 1676." Treatises on philosophy, mathematics and physics.

*Grammaticis Graecae Rudimenta*, by Richard Busby, London, 1671, with the names of "Crescentius Matherus," "Cottonus Matherus 1676," "Nathanael Mather 1682," "Crescenti Matheri ejus liber 1756," "Thomas Mather ejus liber 1753" and "Samuel Mather," showing that this work held its popularity for nearly a century and that this book had far better care than the school books of the present day receive.

1677. Publius Terentius, *Commediae Sex*, London, 1651, with the inscription of "Crescentius Matherus" and "Cottonus Matherus 1677."

These books were used undoubtedly by Cotton Mather and his successors during the college course and should throw light on the studies of that course and on the text books then used. The name of Nathanael, his brother, who graduated in the class of 1685, and the dates corresponding in time, confirm this statement.

It is well known that on his graduation Cotton Mather had been unable to overcome his habit of stammering and decided to study medicine and several books among those dated by him as of this year reflect this decision. It was this interest in and study of medicine which gave rise to his treatise "The Angel of Bethesda" the manuscript of which is in our possession and which reflects the medical practice of his day.

1679. John Evelyn, *Kalendarium Hortense*, London, 1676; has the name "Cotton Mather, 1679."

Edward Leigh, *Critica Sacra*, London, 1641; is a Hebrew dictionary and is inscribed, "Cottonus Matherus, 1679."

Marcus Plautus, *Comoediae XX*, Basle, 1523; contains the names, "Crescentius Matherus," and "Cottoni Matheri Liber 1679." Under this is written C. M. B. A. as a reminder of his degree of the previous year.

Johannes Baptista Porteus, *Humana Physiognomania*, with the name "Cottoni Matheri Liber 1679."

Thomas Sydenham, *Observationes Medicae*, London, 1676. On the title page is "Cottoni Matheri Liber—Aug. 26 1679" and "Thomae Matheri Liber 1752."

1681. John Clarke, *Formulae Oratoriae*, London, 1664. The names written are "Crescentius Matherus" and "Cotton Mather dedit pater 1681." This book was very popular and is described by George



E. Littlefield in "Early Schools and School books in New England." We are reminded by it of the fact that Cotton became assistant to his father at the North Church this year in spite of his infirmity which was eventually so far overcome that he was ordained in 1684.

In addition to the college books above mentioned with definite dates following his name, three others should be recorded because of their popularity at that time and many years later.

*Conciones et Orationes Latinis Excerptae*, Amsterdam, 1648, which has the names of "Crescentius Mather," "Cotton Mather" and "S. Mather, 1741" on its pages.

Thomas Drax, *Calliopeia*, London, 1662, inscribed: "Cotton Mather this is his book," "Nathanaelis Matheri Liber 1680," "Samuel Mather his book 1684," *me jure tenet et vindicat anno Jesu Christi 1684*," "Samuel Mather His book 1749 Given Him by His Honored Father"; a very popular Latin and English dictionary of words and phrases.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with title page and first three leaves wanting but inscribed with the names of Cotton Mather, S. Mather, Thomas Mather and Increase Mather 1751. This book recalls the epitaph by Cotton Mather on Ezeikel Cheever in which he writes "he construed Ovid's *Metamorphoses*."

A score of books with the date of 1681 witness the fact he was already founding his library at the age of eighteen. In 1682 he learned that there were a number of duplicates in the Harvard College Library in consequence of gifts from Sir John Maynard and others and, requesting the privilege of examining the library for them, he secured 96 for his own library. Of these we have in this collection eight, one of which in particular is of importance, as has been pointed out by Mr. Brigham, because its title page has the name of Sir John Maynard carefully erased and the inscription of Harvard College treated in the same way.

Its significance lies in the fact that but few books survived the fire which destroyed the Harvard College Library in 1764 and that these eight are as truly a part of the original library as the other survivors.

From this time his acquisitions must have been numerous and rapidly obtained but except the few dated from 1683 to 1685 there are none with which to follow this growth until the year 1700, when he received an unexpected gift of forty books from the library of President Chauncey, a fact which he records in his diary with deep feeling. A dozen or more of these remain with us bearing the name of Charles Chauncey, or his son Elnathan. In 1724 because of debts incurred through his wife's estate his finances were seriously imperiled and he wrote in his diary, July 31, that he had offered to his creditor to give up his library "which tho' so very dear to me above all temporal possessions I offered to Depredation." Fortunately a few of his parishoners collected a sum amounting to more than 200 pounds and paid the creditor. In return for this great kindness he preached a sermon on "The True Riches" and when the discourse was printed he presented a copy to each of those who contributed to the fund, which saved his books, with their names written "in the Front of the Dedication."

Many of the books from those of Richard down record themselves as the gift of the author. An interesting example of this is "Walter Stewart's Collections and Observations Methodized, Edinburgh, 1709." In this book is written "To the Reverend Cotton Mather, Doctor in Divinity and minister of the Gospel at Boston in New England, Feb. 26, 1726, at Glasgow this book is sent by its author. Wa. St."

The same detail could be followed, if time permitted, in tracing the books belonging to Dr. Samuel Mather, son of Cotton, and his son, Samuel, the Loyalist, through whose daughter, Mrs. Crocker, the collection was secured.

Many of these books also are of great interest in themselves and are deserving of special notice, two of which only will be brought to your attention. A sermon entitled, "Good things to Come, by P. G. B., London, 1675" contains a note by Isaiah Thomas, "books by this author are scarce," and the statement that the author was Praise God Barebones, which recalls the leather merchant who gave his name to the unfortunate constituent Convention of Cromwell in July 1653, and called the Barebones Parliament. In the book entitled "Four Sermons by William, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph, London, 1712" sent to Cotton Mather, is written on the first leaf, "This book . . . especially the preface . . . is sent for your perusal" and below "The House of Commons on June 10, (the Pretender's Birthday) voted the preface of this book is so seditious and malicious I ordered it to be burned in ye Palace-yard by the hand of the common hangman and the sheriffe of the city to assist at the execution."

Another "Association Library" on our shelves was also the gift of Isaiah Thomas. Among the two or three thousand presented to this Society at its foundation are 619 volumes whose titles are recorded in the manuscript catalogue written by Mr. Thomas as "Printed by Isaiah Thomas or by him and the various companies with which he was connected." These books were bound at his own bindery in full calf with gold tooling on the back, a binding so marked as to be easily distinguished on our shelves, and each contains his bookplate or signature and the price at which the book was then valued. These details show with what care and interest Mr. Thomas gathered and prepared for preservation his own imprints for the shelves of the Society which he was intending to establish.

Turning now to more recent times the Council acknowledges with pleasure the gift of a modern "Association Library" which also is unique in its kind. Miss Frances C. Morse of Worcester has presented to this Society, during the present year, a number of

volumes which belonged to her sister, Mrs. Alice Morse Earle, whose writings on the social side of Colonial times have crystallized into permanent form much interesting and important information. To the ordinary collector an association book contains the autograph of the author, some note about him or a letter inserted which was written by him or in rare cases which may refer to the book itself. The 151 books in this association library of Mrs. Earle are gifts to her by the authors themselves with due inscription and in many cases with letters of much interest. As is natural a number of these books are written in the same field as hers. It is natural also that many should have been received from women authors, and we find among them such well known names as: Jane G. Austin, Alice Brown, Margaret Deland, Mary Halleck Foote, Ellen Thornycroft Fowler, Caroline Hazard, Sarah Orne Jewett, Eliza Pinckney, Agnes Repplier, Edith Wharton and Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

Among the men whose books are represented here are: Charles Francis Adams, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Grant Allen, Frank Bolles, William Dean Howells, S. Weir Mitchell, F. Hopkinson Smith, Rev. Richard S. Storrs, Oscar S. Straus, Andrew W. Tuer, Barrett Wendell and John Muir.

Some of the accompanying letters are so interesting and so characteristic of the writers that they deserve a place in this report. William D. Howells wrote in his "Literary Friends and Acquaintances,"

DEAR MRS. EARLE:

I am truly glad you like this book of mine. There are times when I like it myself and I liked writing it very much.

Yours sincerely

W. D. HOWELLS.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote:

I will with pleasure exchange old lamps for new: The old lamp being a London edition of some of my poems and the

new lamp your "Customs and Fashions in old New England." I prefer to send you the "Sisters Tragedy" instead of "An Old Town by the Sea" which is a much lighter matter.

Very cordially yours,  
T. B. ALDRICH.

Hamilton Wright Mabie's letter was:

I am glad that you find my books worth reading, they are very unsatisfactory to me. I am always hoping that the next will be really good: but that is still a matter of hope and not of achievement.

How well you are doing in your own work! I was saying in the office only a day or two ago, that you had such an attractive field and that you were getting so much out of it.

You are not only giving us delightful reading, but you are turning all manner of side lights on history; lights that shine upon hidden places and into old homes and bring out ancient sweetness and character.

Yours sincerely,  
HAMILTON W. MABIE.

John Muir's letter reads:

The *Century* sent me your review of my first little book with others and I liked yours best because you seemed to have read between the lines the love of nature I enjoyed but was afraid to tell. I am sure you love trees and therefore I send with this a talk of mine about the Conifers growing on the Sierra, in response to the only invitation out of hundreds to speak in public in spite of desperate shyness. If you ever come to California, do come to my house and let me show you some of God's fine wild things this side of the continent.

Ever very truly yours  
JOHN MUIR.

These letters show in what respect Mrs. Earle's writings were held as well as reveal the personality of the authors whose books she received and because of this fact the collection forms a unique and valuable addition to our library.

Among the many single volumes in our library containing autographs and inscriptions three are worthy of mention here because their author was a friend and admirer of Mr. Thomas. The titles are: *Experiments and Observations on Electricity, London, 1774; Mara-*

time *Observations*, Philadelphia, 1786; *Stilling the Waves*, London, 1774. They are the works of Benjamin Franklin and on the title page of the first is written: "J. Flagg presented to him by his Hon'd Uncle, the author, Sept, 1. 178-". The remaining figure has been destroyed in binding, but as Mr. Flagg was his uncle's secretary during 1785-6 the date is thus limited. The interest to us lies in the fact that, during this period, Franklin when showing his nephew the Baskerville bible said that Isaiah Thomas was the Baskerville of America. This narration is given here in detail as the definite source of the above statement which has been so frequently quoted. An inscription in the hand of Thomas states that these were given to the American Antiquarian Society by Mr. Flagg in 1824.

These four types of association books in our library have been brought to your attention in order to show that the secondary pleasures in this part of our collections have also a definite practical value.

One hundred years ago our books, presented by Isaiah Thomas, numbered a little more than 2000 volumes; today more than 200,000 are on our shelves with a substantial yearly increase which is direct evidence of the position this Society holds in the public mind.

While our membership is considerable, in the ultimate analysis the largest responsibility falls upon two persons: our president, and our librarian. The exact knowledge which the latter has of the books on our shelves, the remarkable skill he displays in securing at reasonable prices the additions which are made and the personal reputation he is gaining for himself and for us by his bibliography of American Newspapers, all these redound to his credit and our benefit and deserve full recognition. The number of newspapers alone which began with the gift by Mr. Thomas of 539 volumes is today over 11,500 volumes, more than half of which number have been added in the past dozen years.

But after all the policy of this Society is determined by its president and the fifteen years of faithful and unremitting labor of the present incumbent has brought such success as could never have been hoped for without his interest, persistence and enthusiasm. It remains for us as individuals and as a Society, to hold up his hands and share as far as we are able his responsibility and thus lighten the burden resting on his shoulders.

CHARLES L. NICHOLS,  
*For the Council.*

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