

## *Obituaries*

### CHARLES KNOWLES BOLTON

It would be impossible for me to write of Charles Knowles Bolton with detachment. For fourteen years he was my close neighbor in a small town, and for more than that the sharer of our professional interests and the enjoyment of his puckish comments on our world. It was a relationship not frequently found elsewhere than in the attachment of son and father.

C. K. Bolton, as he always called himself, was born in East Cleveland, Ohio, on November 14, 1867, a son of Charles Edward and Sarah Elizabeth (Knowles) Bolton. Of his two distinguished parents, C. K. was more influenced by his mother, a famous figure in the world of literature and reform. He was educated in the Central High School of Cleveland and at Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1890. That Summer he made the first of his several visits to England, a land which he came to know well from his leisurely wanderings about it, and into whose culture he fitted as comfortably as if he had not had many American generations behind him. During his first visit he prepared a bibliography of "Standard American Literature" for *Arnold's Literary List*. He came back to America undecided whether to try his hand at journalism, literary work, or publishing. On his first job he participated in the beginnings of *McClure's Magazine*, but in November an interview with Justin Winsor and an offer of a salary of \$600 a year took him to the Harvard College Library.

At Harvard, C. K.'s interests clearly lay in history and writing rather than the mechanics or the collecting side of librarianship. He finished a biography of *Saskia, the Wife of*

*Rembrandt*, which he had begun in England, and found a commercial publisher for it. A librarianship at Harvard seemed distant, so in 1894 he went to the Brookline Public Library where, although he was not particularly interested in the kind of service which it afforded, he could prove his ability as an executive. During his four years there he showed his amazing ability for holding offices in professional organizations, and exhibited his remarkable diversity of interests. These ranged from the study of posters as a phase of advertising to the writing of good poetry. His verse epic *On the Wooing of Martha Pitkin* (1894) went through several printings.

A. Lawrence Lowell having called William C. Lane from the Boston Athenæum to Harvard, in 1898 made amends by bringing Bolton from Bookline to replace him. It was the perfect fitting of the man and the institution. At Brookline, C. K. had sorted dirty pamphlets in his shirtsleeves, and, for lack of a suitable office, had been obliged to take important visitors to the basement for private conversations. He fitted much better into the charming surroundings of the Athenæum with its quiet, its leisure, its discriminating patrons and their diversified interests. Freed from the grind of administrative detail, he poured out articles and books, the most famous of which were *The Private Soldier under Washington* (1902), *Scotch-Irish Pioneers* (1910), *Portraits of the Founders* (3 volumes, 1918-26), *Bolton's American Armory* (1927), and *The Real Founders of New England* (1929). These were the fruits which ripened and were particularly good; in an amazing diversity of other fields he did tentative work. For example, in the study of bookplates and in a project for a census of Boston colonial newspapers he anticipated our activities.

His books were pioneer works, and most of them have been superseded by more thorough investigations of their fields

in smaller segments. C. K. lost interest in an area after he had explored it, and, like a sort of intellectual frontiersman, eagerly passed on to new fields, leaving the intensive cultivation to more plodding men. That is why few of the younger scholars appreciate his contributions.

Although he was not a joiner, C. K. took great pleasure in attending the meetings of professional societies, such as the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and in doing the hard administrative work of such institutions. He liked to run things. He was a vice-president of the Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for twenty-five years president of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, fourteen years senior warden of Christ Church, Boston, sixteen years trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, four years treasurer of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, eleven years professor of library history at Simmons, chairman of the Shirley town Republican Committee, treasurer of Trinity Chapel, Shirley, supervisor of the W. P. A. Survey of Early American Portraits in New England and New York, and sometime delegate to the Republican State Convention.

As early as 1915 C. K. gave as his permanent address Pound Hill Place, Shirley. He served on the school committee and the board of library trustees of that town long before his retirement from the Athenæum in 1933 and his subsequent removal, for year-around residence, to the country. With his wife Ethel, daughter of the historian Edward Stanwood, and an historian in her own right, he made Pound Hill Place a literary focus. Sunday afternoon tea usually found out-of-town visitors there, drawn by the friendships which the Boltons had made in the myriad fields of their interests.

C. K. began to correspond with the American Antiquarian Society on the subjects of his research fifty years ago, and he

might qualify as our most frequent correspondent in the years since. In 1906 he and Mrs. Bolton began riding over from Shirley on the trolley, bent even more on her research than his. He was elected to membership in October, 1918, and in our *Proceedings* for 1931 he published an article on "Nathaniel Bolton; a Forgotten New England Poet." After I became librarian, he rode over frequently with me to labor on his "Workers with Line and Color in New England, 1620-1870," a five-volume manuscript of great usefulness now in the Boston Athenæum. During the War his visits ceased because of difficulties of transportation, and after it his shyness about his failing hearing kept him away. He was always one of the most frequent participants in discussions at our meetings, so his absence was generally noticed. He died at Ayer, after a short illness, on May 19, 1950. He is survived by Mrs. Bolton and by two sons, Stanwood Knowles and Geoffrey.

C. K. S.

### FRED TARBELL FIELD

Fred Tarbell Field, the seventeenth Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, died in Newton, after a long illness, July 23, 1950. He was born in Springfield, Vermont, December 24, 1876, the son of Frederic Griswold and Anna Melanie (Tarbell) Field. After a school education at Vermont Academy in Saxton's River, he entered Brown University, where he was graduated with the degree of A.B. in 1900. He then took the three years' course at Harvard Law School and immediately entered the office of the attorney-general. Here he served under three attorney-generals, specializing in the field of taxation and earning a high reputation. In 1912 he entered private practice, a few years later becoming a member of the law firm of Goodwin,

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