

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

If it is a subject of regret that the accessions to the library for the past six months as appears by the report of the Librarian are somewhat below the average of such accessions for the last few years, the result of chance, an ample consolation is to be found in a visible and marked increase in its use, the result of design. The small reduction in number of accessions is easily accounted for by the accident of the absence of two or three members who make it one of their objects in life to increase the value and number of our collections. The increased use is explained by the simple fact, which ought to be recognized by all our members and promulgated on every proper occasion, that here are to be found many almost invaluable aids to original investigation, primal springs of historical knowledge; that here most useful aid is given to all inquirers by the intelligent and faithful custodians of the library; that our collections are made easily accessible to visitors, even to those not members of the society; that the physical conditions which make work in a library comfortable, agreeable and safe, here abound—cheerful light, genial warmth, undisturbed quiet and seclusion. Few scholars who visit our treasures for the first time, fail to be in equal measure impressed and surprised by their originality and fulness. Our distinguished associate who has recently passed by his own desire from the chair of the President to that of the Second Vice-President, familiar as he has been for years with the general character and extent of our collections, found himself surprised at the sources of original information which opened themselves to him when he was employed in the preparation of his great

oration on the settlement of the Northwest Territory. These treasures must not be left to rust unburnished, but made to shine in use; and if the question were to be put to the judgment of those most familiar with them, it might well be answered that increase of use would be productive of more good in the world and to the public of whom institutions like ours must be held to be the trustees for very important purposes, than mere increase of average accessions. And yet too often, the estimate of the prosperity of libraries is based almost exclusively on this last.

The opportunity afforded by the different classes of collections in our library may well be illustrated by mention of a single one, to which, it is believed, the attention of the society has never been directed in any Council report. Probably in few places in the world is there so large a collection of reports and pamphlets on the subject of Insanity. The fulness and richness of this body of material is largely due to the zeal and thoughtfulness of Dr. Pliny Earle, for many years the distinguished head of the State Lunatic Hospital at Northampton, to whom the writer of this report was under infinite obligation during a term of ten years as trustee of two others of the Lunatic Hospitals of Massachusetts. In these days of original and daring investigation into the causes—moral, intellectual and physical—of mental alienation, when men of genius are spending whole lives in the study of the spinal cord alone, when the microscope is searching into the most secret recesses of the chamber of the mind and is almost as it were on the eve of establishing the connection of the visible with the invisible, it is of infinite value to have at hand and conveniently arranged for consultation, so great a body of statistics and statements of results both relative and absolute, bearing on the subject of insanity in all its recognized forms and varieties.

It is highly desirable that the fulness of the collections of a society like this should be generally known; hardly less so its deficiencies. The Librarian's report makes one or

two valuable suggestions on this general subject. For example, assume that we have a collection of authorities on any particular subject which is almost perfect; the nearer perfection is approached, the more vital and pressing the necessity of reaching it, even if the material necessary to complete it be among the more insignificant in inherent importance and value. Some other society has this, thinks little of it because it is so insignificant, would gladly give it to us in exchange for something which, valuable to it on the same grounds, is comparatively unimportant to us. This idea is not simply that of the ordinary system of exchange, but a modification or amplification of it, and some further suggestions upon this subject may be made by the Librarian in his report.

It is still true, as urged by the present writer in a former report, that our collections, almost if not quite without exception, are wanting in absolute completeness. But progress has been made, perhaps stimulated in some direction by what was then said, and it is in the power of our members to add greatly to this completeness, by gifts of books or pamphlets which may be needed, or by pecuniary additions to the book-buying fund; such additions to be devoted, if desired, to specific purchases.

The reports of the Librarian and of the Treasurer, which form a part of the report of the Council, show that the affairs of the Society, both intellectual and financial, are in good condition. The Society always wants money, wants a great deal of money, and could use it for the very best and most useful of purposes. It is however better at the present time to hold what we have with thankful spirit, and be satisfied that it is honestly and intelligently kept or disbursed, and that we are able to accomplish so much with resources so moderate. It would be desirable to incur a reasonable expenditure by fitting up more shelf-room in the lower hall, as the steady increase in the volume of our collections makes more available space necessary. There is no

more room above, and it is even indispensable to the proper care and arrangement of the Haven alcove, that additional accommodation be furnished below. Surely no member of this Society, who remembers—and none can ever forget—what Mr. Haven was and how fully the reputation of this institution is entwined with and based on his, will ever consent that his alcove, the best and most appropriate monument to his memory, should be marred in the symmetry of its beauty, by unseemly crowding, or intrusions neither homogeneous nor originally anticipated.

Since the last meeting of the Society, four of its members have died, of whom, in accordance with custom, brief biographical sketches will now be given.

Dr. Edwin H. Davis.

Edwin Hamilton Davis, who was born at Hillsborough, Ross County, Ohio, on the 22d of January, 1811, and elected a member of this society on the 28th of April, 1858, died at his residence in the city of New York on May 15, 1888. The first school he ever attended was situated very near an Indian mound, one of the group at Circleville, Ohio, a circumstance which may have drawn his mind at that early age into the channels of his subsequent investigations. He graduated at Kenyon College, Ohio, in 1833, and at the Medical College at Cincinnati in 1837, practising his profession thereafter at Chillicothe, Ohio, till 1850, at which time he was called to the chair of *Materia Medica* and *Therapeutics* in New York, and became also one of the conductors of the *American Medical Monthly*. Dr. Davis continued the practice of his profession in the city of New York for more than thirty years, and his professional life was not without distinction. He was the author of an able report on the *Statistics of Columbus in Ohio*, published in 1850, and made occasional contributions to scientific and medical journals. As early as May, 1841, he performed

the operation for *strabismus*, which he claimed was the first operation of the kind in Ohio, and the second, but by a few days, in the United States.

But Dr. Davis's reputation with eminent scholars rests not on professional achievements, but on his researches and publications on Antiquarian subjects. While still a student at Kenyon he explored the mounds in that neighborhood, reading a paper on the subject at the Commencement in 1833. It is said that some suggestions made by Daniel Webster, who was then making a tour in the West, stimulated him to further researches. Certainly he spent a great deal of time in the practical study of Indian mounds, opening nearly two hundred of them, and gathering together many relics which form part of the collection of Blackmore's Museum at Salisbury, England, a duplicate of which may be found in the American Museum of Natural History, New York. He delivered a series of lectures on this subject before the Lowell Institute in Boston, in 1854, which were afterwards repeated elsewhere. It was Dr. Davis's high privilege to have his name transmitted to posterity on the title-page of the first of the twenty-five volumes of the noble "Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge." His great work, entitled "Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley," is in itself the best and most appropriate monument to the zeal, industry, intelligence and attainments of Dr. Davis.

Sydney Howard Gay.

Sydney Howard Gay, who was born in Hingham, Massachusetts, May 22, 1814, and elected a member of this society at the April meeting in 1878, died at his residence in New Brighton, Staten Island, New York, June 25, 1888. He was a son of Ebenezer Gay, of Hingham, a lawyer of good standing, and grandson of the Rev. Ebenezer Gay, whose name is so well known in the clerical annals of New England as pastor of the First Church in Hingham, a

position which he held for more than sixty-nine years. Mr. Gay was not only distinguished for the fact of the unparalleled length of his pastorate, but for his wit and social charm; qualities in respect of which the subject of the present sketch was his worthy representative. He was moreover the representative by descent, of much that was most eminent in Colonial and Provincial life, and in his veins flowed the blood of Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Colony, of Increase and Cotton Mather of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, of Nehemiah Walter, the colleague of Eliot the apostle, and of James Otis of Revolutionary fame.

He entered Harvard College at the age of fifteen, but was compelled, through failure of health, to retire in the course of his Junior year, and did not graduate with his class. The college authorities subsequently conferred upon him the degree of A. B. and his name stands enrolled upon the catalogue of the alumni with the class of 1833, of which he was a member. After some time passed in travel, during which his health was re-established, he was in a counting house in Boston, and a little later entered his father's office as a student. A peculiar and to his mind insurmountable obstacle presented itself to his proposed professional career. The subject of human slavery,—its inherent wrong and fearful consequences to master and to slave,—had taken strong hold upon his mind and conscience. That system was recognized by the Constitution of the United States. The oath to support the Constitution was a pre-requisite to admission to the bar, and that oath his conscience forbade him to take. This then was an absolute barrier. "He would not make his conscience blind," and accepting the logical consequence, abandoned his professional studies, and allied himself with the abolitionists, then a small, unpopular party, under the lead of Mr. Garrison. The sacrifice was great, but it is not known that Mr. Gay ever doubted in later years that he had followed the dictates of not only a clear but an enlightened conscience. It is remarkable that

three of the most accomplished gentlemen of Massachusetts, almost contemporaries, of similar tastes, and acting under similar convictions of duty, should have withdrawn themselves from the ordinary paths to distinction and made the abolition of slavery a leading, if not paramount, object of their lives, Mr. Gay, our late associate the Author of "Wensley," Edmund Quincy, and the peerless American orator, Wendell Phillips.

In 1842 Mr. Gay entered the service of the American Anti-Slavery Society, as a lecturing agent. In 1844 he became the editor of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, of New York, which position he retained till 1857. The literary tone of this publication was very high, and Edmund Quincy was a frequent contributor. In 1857 he joined himself to the *New York Tribune* as a member of the editorial staff, and in 1862 became the managing editor. The war of the rebellion was then the great engrossing subject of thought and effort throughout the land. All Mr. Gay's powers were enlisted in advocacy of its vigorous and unrelenting prosecution. He traced its origin to slavery, his life-long abhorrence. He believed that it was the ordained means for the abolition of that crime against humanity. Reverses did not dishearten him, nor abate the vigor of his appeal, or his confidence in the ultimate result. It is difficult to over-state the value of his services to the National cause throughout the entire period of the civil war. He remained at the head of the editorial department of the *New York Tribune* till 1866, and in 1867 removed to Chicago, becoming the managing editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and continuing in that position till the great fire of 1871. He wrote the first published report of the Chicago Relief Committee, of which he had been one of the most laborious members. A little later he returned to New York, becoming the managing editor of the *Evening Post*, holding that position for two years.

It was the natural result perhaps of this association, that

with Mr. Bryant he became engaged upon the work known as the Bryant and Gay's History of the United States. Mr. Bryant being applied to to undertake the preparation of this history, suggested application to Mr. Gay, consenting to aid in the work should Mr. Gay be the author. The result was a publication to which Mr. Gay contributed very much the largest share. Mr. Bryant wrote the preface to the first volume. Several other gentlemen made contributions to the body of the work but much of the labor of authorship was done by Mr. Gay, and all the responsibility was borne by him, and he edited the whole. In 1884 he wrote the "Life of James Madison," and when his health finally failed in 1885, was writing a life of his friend Edmund Quincy, which could not have failed to be a valuable and most charming addition to the series of "American Men of Letters." Besides these books he wrote many articles, reviews and book notices,—chiefly, of late years, on historical subjects.

The last three years of Mr. Gay's life were marked by physical weakness, prostration and even helplessness. But he bore what he was called upon to bear with infinite patience, and was borne to his final earthly resting place, in Hingham, which, by a rare felicity, was in the very spot above which he was born. The Gay homestead was burned some seven years since. The Hingham Cemetery Company being then in need of more room purchased the estate and added it to the burial-ground; and the lot in which Mr. Gay is buried occupies the precise site of the dwelling-house.

Hon. Ebenezer Torrey.

Ebenezer Torrey, who was born in Franklin, in the County of Norfolk, Massachusetts, August 16, 1801, and elected a member of this Society at the April meeting in 1856, died at his home in Fitchburg on the 15th of September, 1888, in the house he had lived in for more than sixty

years. He was fitted for college at the Leicester Academy, and at the Academy at Lancaster, of which Mr. Solomon P. Miles, a distinguished educator, was then the head. He entered Harvard College at the age of seventeen, and graduated in the class of 1822.

After graduation, he went to Fitchburg and became a student of the law in the office of John Shepley, Esq. Mr. Shepley was at that time a prominent member of the bar of Worcester County, though subsequently, at about the time of Mr. Torrey's admission to the bar in 1825, he removed to the State of Maine.

For the active practice of law in the courts, Mr. Torrey had little taste. He became early a wise and safe adviser, and in 1827 formed a partnership with Nathaniel Wood, and the firm of Wood & Torrey became well-known as among the leading practitioners of the county. The court business was done almost entirely by Mr. Wood, whom the members of the county bar not past middle life remember well as an earnest and devoted advocate, trying his cases with great vigor, and commanding many of the resources which avail most before the jury, and always enjoying the confidence of his client, and the respectful attention of the court. But much of the success of the firm, even in its court cases, was based on Mr. Torrey's calm and judicious opinions as to the strength of the case itself, independently of the power of the advocate or the chances of forensic battle.

These very qualities in Mr. Torrey, sound judgment and thoughtful forecast, to which was added an unsullied integrity, adapted him to service of the community, perhaps less brilliant, certainly not less honorable, nor conferring less of genuine distinction than that rendered by his partner. From an early age his life was largely devoted to the safe and discreet management of financial institutions, to the discharge of important public trusts, and to advice and supervision in large corporate affairs.

On February 28, 1832, Gov. Lincoln signed the Act of Incorporation of the Fitchburg Bank. Mr. Torrey was one of the incorporators and secretary of their first meeting. The directors chose Mr. Francis Perkins president, and Mr. Torrey cashier, a position he held till Mr. Perkins's death in 1859, when he was chosen president; this office he retained till the day of his death, in daily attendance upon its duties; having thus completed, in the two most important positions in the bank, a continuous term of service of more than fifty-six years.

The Fitchburg Savings Bank was incorporated in 1846. Mr. Torrey's partner, Mr. Wood, was its first president, and Mr. Torrey its first treasurer, succeeding Mr. Wood, after his death, as president. The latter office he held but a short time, remaining however a trustee till his death.

In 1829 he was elected a director of the Worcester Mutual Fire Insurance Co., an office which he held for forty-nine years, succeeding the late Anthony Chase in the presidency in 1879; and retaining that position till his death.

He was elected treasurer of the town in 1840, continuously re-elected till 1872; then City Treasurer, which office he held till 1874, when he declined re-election, having served an aggregate term of thirty-four years. In this position, as in all the others, his fidelity was proverbial, and his absolute integrity never drawn in question for a moment.

Mr. Torrey was never a seeker for public office, nor were such duties greatly to his taste. He was a staunch and steady supporter and advocate of the principles of the Whig party, which in its best days included so much of the intellectual and moral strength of the State. The firm of Wood & Torrey was in this respect a house divided against itself. Yet it fell not, because its main objects and ambitions were not political. Mr. Torrey was the Representative of Fitchburg in the Legislatures of 1831 and 1847, and was a Senator of Worcester County in 1849. In 1852

he was the Presidential Elector for the Ninth District of Massachusetts, voting for Gen. Winfield Scott, the Whig candidate. In 1853, he was a member of Gov. Clifford's council, and in 1854 of that of Gov. Emory Washburn, his warm and life-long friend. Upon the dissolution of the Whig party, Mr. Torrey joined himself to the Republicans, but was never a candidate for office at their hands.

Though not a contributor to the published Proceedings of this Society, he was an interested member, regarding his membership as an honorable distinction, and encouraging its officers by frequent and hearty good words. He was also for several years one of the Auditors.

Dr. Joseph Sargent.

Joseph Sargent, who was born in Leicester, December 31, 1815, elected a member of this society October 22, 1860, a Councillor in October, 1863, and in every succeeding year, died at his home in Worcester on the 13th October, 1888. The Council at their meeting on the 20th of the same month adopted resolutions expressive of their appreciation of his character and life, which, together with the remarks in support of them, are made part of the records, and will be published with the proceedings of the Society.

Dr. Sargent filled a very large place in the community, and his death produced a profound impression of grief and loss, which was not confined to the inhabitants of this city and county where he lived, nor even to those of the State of Massachusetts. The proceedings of the Council dwell mainly on the characteristics and qualities of mind and heart which so conspicuously distinguished him. It is the object of the present writer to group together the leading facts of his life, so far as the same bear relation to this Society, and to the public, professional, business, charitable, religious and intellectual interests with which he was connected.

He was the son of Col. Henry Sargent of Leicester, a man of prominence, who exercised much influence in all the public affairs of his town and county. A bright and somewhat precocious lad, he early developed the disposition for study, entered Harvard College at the age of 15, and graduated in the class of 1834. The relations he established with the institution and with his classmates were among the happiest and most abiding of his life. After graduation, he began the study of medicine with Dr. Edward Flint of Leicester, a prominent and successful practitioner, and after remaining there about a year, continued the study with Dr. James Jackson of Boston, attending the course of medical lectures there and also at Philadelphia, and receiving the degree of Doctor of Medicine from his Alma Mater in 1837. He was almost immediately thereafter appointed to the position of House Physician in the Massachusetts General Hospital, and in 1838 visited Europe and remained for two years, continuing his studies mainly in the hospitals of Paris and of London. Returning to this country in 1840, he established himself in practice in Worcester, where he early obtained the leadership in the profession, a position he held unchallenged for the period of nearly or quite a generation. In 1850 he again visited Europe, and was engaged in professional study and observation there for nearly a year, and still again in 1868. The fruits of this study and observation in larger fields were manifest through his life, in the ease and certainty with which he assumed and held the highest rank in the profession, and enured to the lasting benefit of thousands of the sick and suffering among whom his daily labors were wrought.

It is remarkable that amid the engrossments of so extended professional and other intellectual pursuits, he should have been able to develop so decided a capacity for actual business—using that term in its more restricted and literal sense,—and to be recognized as a man whose associa-

tion in such enterprises was very valuable. Probably in these he found a relaxation from professional labor, a welcome variety, and so turned to them the more readily the powers of his quick and versatile mind. The Life Assurance Co., the Gas Light Co., the Institution for Savings, the Worcester Bank, all availed themselves of his services in the capacity of President, Vice-President, or Director; and he held other business relations, not few nor insignificant.

In institutions whose purpose was principally or wholly eleemosynary, his co-operation was justly considered of great value. The Lunatic Hospital, the City Hospital, and the Memorial Hospital, were in turn objects of his interest and fostering care. In each of them he served several years as Trustee and was one of the Board of the Memorial Hospital from its incorporation in 1870 till his death. He was the originator of the plan of the Medical Improvement Society in 1845, and member or Councillor of several of the well known associations for the advancement of professional learning and practice in the county and State. His influence in the profession, among his contemporaries, and especially upon the younger members, was of the highest tone, and for effective power and result has hardly ever been equalled in the State.

As a member of this Society and a Councillor, he has been valuable and valued—a faithful attendant, and useful contributor. Three reports of the Council which he made in different years attest the versatility of his talent and his ready adaptation of style to subject. These have all been published and form part of our Proceedings. The founding of a new religious society in the city of Worcester in 1845 called out the largest sympathy, and the most earnest co-operation on the part of Dr. Sargent, one of the very few men on whose efforts and zeal the results of the enterprise depended, and by whom it was carried through to permanent and marked success. With no less enthusiasm he

identified himself early with the great moral and religious movement which had for its distinct and definite object the abolition of human slavery, and, amid the doubts, perplexities and obloquy which from time to time attended the progress of that movement, continued in constant and unshaken faith to the end.

To the University recently established in the city of Worcester, of which he was early elected a Trustee, he gave much thought, as a possible means of the greatest intellectual good, an institution for the advancement of learning on the higher planes, and the enlargement of the boundaries of human knowledge. The views he held and from time to time expressed, as to the present opportunities such an endowment as this affords, were marked by luminous intelligence, the largest liberality, and bright, courageous hope. Probably no man of his years was more imbued with the enthusiasm of youth in intellectual things. Venerating the ancient ways as admirably adapted to their times and the objects sought through them, he yet saw and was not afraid to be known to see, that new occasions bring new duties, and that time makes ancient good uncouth. These things are stated here not by way of eulogy, since eulogy is in no sense the object of these sketches; but because, being true, they may serve as an encouragement to associates who are so rapidly coming into the places of seniority, to grow old as wisely, as liberally, as nobly as did he.

For the Council.

JOHN D. WASHBURN.

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