

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

SINCE our semi-annual meeting we have lost by death (August 11), one foreign member, Lord Houghton, better known in the literary world as the Right Honorable Richard Monckton Milnes, D.C.L., F.R.S., whose memory has special claims on our reverence and gratitude for his earnest, persistent and active sympathy with our country in the War of the Rebellion; a sympathy shared with him, indeed, by many Englishmen of commanding reputation and influence, but by very few of the hereditary aristocracy, and, so far as we know, by but one member of the House of Lords. He was born June 19, 1809. He entered Parliament in 1837, and continued to represent the same constituency till 1863, when a patent of nobility transferred him to the upper house. A statesman rather than a politician, he was at the outset a liberal conservative, and in later years has been reckoned as a conservative member of the Liberal party,—never casting a party-vote as such, but uniformly the advocate of freedom, education and progress. He has labored largely and successfully for improvements in the treatment and measures for the reformation of criminals, and has been a pioneer or a diligent helper in numerous philanthropic movements, in behalf of other nations, no less than of his own. His literary activity covered a wide range. He has written many articles on a great variety of subjects for the *Westminster Review* and for other periodicals. His narratives of travel in Greece and in the East were in their time of surpassing interest and merit, and if they are no longer much read, it is because in works of that class freshness is an essential factor of their popularity, and

in part, at least, of their actual value. . He was, also, the biographer and editor of Keats. He will be best known to posterity by his poems, and would be still better known had they been fewer. Some of his poems must live, and as for the rest, if they lack anything, it is that poetic fire, which, if it be not innate, neither genius, nor culture, nor enthusiasm can by any possibility kindle.

Had the writer known at an earlier period that the office of preparing the report of the Council would devolve upon him, he would have selected, as is usual, some topic of historical research, and have employed whatever ability he had in the attempt to do it justice. But as he was asked to perform this duty only on the tenth of August, with the certainty of spending a large part and the expectation of spending nearly half of the intervening time where he could have access neither to his own nor to any other library, he has been compelled to evolve a report, if not from his own inner consciousness, from his observation and experience as a reader and student of history.

I take for my subject the Fallacies of History, and my aim will be to show how history, whether written or unwritten, may be made virtually authentic, and may yield its maximum of instruction. Permit me to say at the outset, that I include biography under the general name of history, of which, as I shall attempt to show before I close, it is not the feeder, but the most significant, precious and fruitful form or department.

I would first speak of the personal equation of the writer of history. In astronomical calculations, in which the utmost accuracy is required, allowance is always made for the observer's personal equation,—for the ascertained degree of promptness and precision in his perceptive faculties, so that the same figures reported by two assistant observers would have a somewhat different estimate and registration at the hand of their principal. This equation is almost always a large one in the historian or biographer.

The pun on Macaulay's History of England, by which it was said to be *his story*, meant to satirize him, ought to be generalized as a well-nigh universal law. The story of a nation, an epoch, an individual man or woman, is almost always to a considerable extent an autobiography, and sometimes tells us more of the author than of his subject. Thus, to take an extreme case, Boswell's Johnson is but a caricature of the man whose mind the author was utterly incapable of sounding or measuring; but it gives us a life-like picture of the jackall biographer himself.

Great men equally with small men depict themselves in their histories. Our eminent associate, Bancroft, second to no historian in the thoroughness of his investigation, in conscientious accuracy of detail, and in artistical skill and pictorial power, yet cannot but look on every important personage or event with his own eyes. His may be the right view; yet in many cases it is a view which he would not have taken but for the combined influence of his familiarity with the ancient republics and his sympathy with the democratic party in our own.

We all want *chiaro-scuro* in the histories that we read; but the lights and shadows can be transferred to the printed page only from the writer's own mind, and though he does not make the facts, he does create, if not purposely, yet spontaneously and inevitably, the higher or lower relief in which they are severally presented to us. We must then apply the necessary reduction as we read. We are greatly aided in this by reading historians of diverse—when possible, of opposite—opinions and feelings. They often define, and sometimes neutralize each other's equations, and thus bring us much nearer the actual truth than either of them can have been. It must be always borne in mind that it is the very histories that are most worth reading—those written by men of strong opinions, attachments and sympathies—that most need to be controlled by parallel authorities, or, when that cannot be, by the careful estimate of

the writer's own position, of his mental parallax, of the deflection from a perfectly just view, inevitable for him, he being precisely the man he is.

Hence the paramount value to the historical student of a class of books that to the ordinary reader are dry as dust, — of annals, and journals or diaries. No man with imagination enough to give him a personal equation writes annals; and he who keeps a copious diary of events as they pass, though he be a partisan, a one-idea man, or bitterly prejudiced, can hardly fail to make an accurate record of facts in detail, because at the moment of their occurrence they stand out in their proper form, without perspective or coloring; while when they have happened long enough to be grouped, they may be placed in a light so strong or a shadow so deep as to throw them entirely out of line. Thus John Quincy Adams, with his intense capacity of scorn, contempt and antipathy, if he had written a history of his time, would have drowned fact in feeling, and would have exaggerated every human portrait that he drew; yet in his journal, emotional as it often is, the events of the passing day, even those that affected him most deeply, are related with unmistakable tokens of careful accuracy and authenticity; though this faithful record is often given of events or actors in them that, even in the not distant future, would have seemed to him other than they were.

To take another instance: Sewall's Diary in every significant entry shows the writer's often whimsical and absurd, often intense eccentricities; yet facts stand there as plain as they would in an official and unimpassioned record. He abhorred episcopacy hardly less than he abhorred Satan, and if in the last years of his life he had written a history of the birth and infancy of the Episcopal Church in Boston, the facts and characters involved in it would have been so thoroughly steeped and sodden in Puritanic prejudice as to have lost all traces of verisimilitude. But the most kindly historian of the Episcopal

Church might find in Sewall's Diary his perfectly trustworthy authority for dates, numbers, incidents, and details with reference to ministers, worshippers, the degree of influence of the Church in its early days, the impression made by its special observances, and its actual relation to the pre-existing churches and to the community. The Judge, indeed, makes his own comments on these things. On the text, "Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer," he takes occasion to "dehort" his children from keeping Christmas. Yet we learn from him who did and who did not keep it, and he is even at pains to count the loads of wood and the market carts to ascertain whether the dreaded infection of the obnoxious holiday has spread into the neighboring towns and corrupted bucolic households. In fine, in such a journal the personal equation is not wanting,—very far from it; but it stands by itself, and can be easily eliminated; while in a formal history it is incorporated in the body of the work, and needs, sometimes defies and baffles, skill and care in its separation. In the diary fact and feeling, the objective and the subjective, are like the fraudulent grocer's sugar and sand before they are mixed, side by side yet apart. In the history they are mixed, to the unpractised sense have become homogeneous, and, unlike the sanded sugar, have for the mixture a more vivid and appetizing savor.

As regards the entries honestly made in a journal, the only question is as to events beyond the writer's own personal cognizance, and learned by hearsay. As to these the writer may be credulous, and if so, he can be trusted only so far as he knows; or he may have a curious, investigating mind, indisposed to regard mere rumor as authentic, and always trying the witnesses and comparing their testimony when it can be done. This last seems to have been Sewall's habit. Credulous as to the super or extra natural, on the plane of common life he is wary, cautious, even judicial in his treatment of what comes to him from others,

and records for the most part what he not only believes, but knows. On the other hand, I could, were it proper, name a journal writer, whose manuscript will one day come to light, rigidly, conscientiously, minutely accurate as to all within his own immediate knowledge, yet in his simplicity of heart believing everything told to him, and so blending observation and report as often to make it difficult to discriminate between them.

Nearly allied to diaries are local and family traditions, I will not say unwritten (for everything appertaining to the past now finds its way to the press), but such as were simply oral till the present age of print. The credibility of a tradition—other things being equal—is in proportion to the number of persons to whom it properly belongs. A tradition which is in the keeping of a community, or of any considerable number of persons or families, is likely to suffer little or no change with the lapse of time. If it relates to persons, there are always those who feel interested in checking deviations from truth and fact, some unwilling to confer more and others resisting the conferring of less than due credit and importance on the prominent actor or actors, and thus by a balanced force preventing the original story from being tampered with in either direction. So too, with regard to places, houses, sites of events, there are equally those who feel intimately concerned in having the utmost possible told and believed, and those who are ready to resist and gainsay any such exaggeration. Then too, by frequent repetition in one another's hearing different narrators learn to tell the story in the same way, even in the same words, so that there grows up a common narrative hardly less precise in details and in terms than if it had been committed to writing. Commemorative discourses too, in many such cases, have served the purpose of fixing facts in the public memory. To be sure, the centennials and bi-centennials, which have drawn vast multitudes together, are of comparatively recent date, as are

the laboriously compiled town-histories that embalm local traditions. But occasions of less show, yet no less diligently prepared for, were not infrequent in earlier times; and especially in funeral sermons, in discourses on the anniversaries of special events, and in the retrospective views of local history for which our New England clergy were always glad to find opportunity, accuracy took the precedence of eloquence, and often furnished rich materials for the more elaborate oratory of later times. As to not a few of these orations our admiration has been divided between the orator's skill, grace and power, and his thorough acquaintance with all that could be known of his subject; but for this knowledge he has been indebted to faithful work that won no fame, not to original researches of his own.

As to family traditions, of course there is always room for them to grow unchecked, and the reduction to be made from them will bear a close proportion to their antiquity. They can seldom be trustworthy as original sources of history, and though they may sometimes be of value in corroborating facts derived elsewhere, they oftener themselves need corroboration.

Monuments and memorials of all kinds, fixed or movable, natural or man-made, are of evidential value in confirming local traditions, in proportion to their publicity. A rock, a hill, a ford, where a whole community believe an event to have taken place, at once attests the event and locates it; for unless it occurred and occurred there, it is impossible to account for the unanimous belief which could not have grown up while there were persons in the neighborhood who knew it to be false, and could hardly have sprung into being at any subsequent period without having its unauthentic origin perceived and exposed. So with any artificial monument, relic, memento, article of furniture or of apparel, to which a story is attached, if it be public property, it is difficult to suppose that it could have

ever been received for what it falsely purports to be; for there must have been fair show of evidence in its behalf prior to its acceptance, and if there had been counter-evidence, traces of it would still remain in the public mind. But the case is very different as to articles in the possession of a family. As to these it is fully as probable that the story attached to them grew out of them as that it originally belonged to them. An old bureau or chest of drawers is among the possessions of an old family. It *may* have belonged to some ancestor that had a place in history. The secret drawer in it *may* have been the depository of some document which needed concealment. This is the hypothesis of one generation. In the next the potential mood is changed into the past tense of the indicative, and in the next following there is a coherent story of the document, its hiding and its discovery. The unnumbered chairs that were brought over in the Mayflower gained that distinction in this way. A century ago, it was thought barely possible that a very odd old chair might have formed a part of the freight of that most capacious of vessels; for the owner's grandfather's cousin had married the cousin of a descendant of one of the Pilgrim Fathers. It took some thirty years to determine definitely the stages of transmission, and perhaps thirty more to consolidate them into a chapter of family history, which now it is treasonable to call in question. On the other hand, the articles of furniture in Pilgrim Hall are probably all of them what they are said to be; for their history did not grow up under the careful nursing of a fond family, but was investigated by skilled antiquaries, who would have faithfully tested the validity even of general repute instead of yielding easy credence to private opinion. An individual may be easily deceived, while a society of intelligent men is duped with difficulty. In saying this I am reminded of a case in point. A lady eminent for her philanthropy, a few years ago, sent to the Massachusetts Historical

Society a small piece of coarse cotton print which she said that she had obtained at Mount Vernon, and had ascertained to her entire satisfaction that it was a part of the curtains of Washington's death-bed. Had she kept it and transmitted it, her heirs or assigns would have cherished it as a most precious relic. But as it was passed round for inspection, one member called attention to the device which constituted the figure of the print, namely, Fame blowing her trumpet, and a scroll proceeding from it with the name of Washington. Now as so modest a man as Washington would rather have died than live under such a curtain; and as if he died under it he must have lived under it, the Society of course regarded the relic as supposititious.

To take another illustrative instance, the president's chair at Cambridge must needs have a history. It is so stately, ornate, and skilfully wrought, that it may well have been a throne, and can never have been of plebeian destination or ownership. Yet because it has been the property of an intelligent corporation, no one knows whence it came or how. Had it been private property as long, we should by this time have learned when it was made, what court it had graced, which of the owner's ancestors had brought it to America, and how it came into his possession. In fine, we may safely say, in general, that a memorial of any kind made, erected or acquired by a community or a body of men, is a trustworthy historical document; while one that has been transmitted in a family for several generations very probably gave birth to the chapter of history which it is supposed to commemorate.

To pass to another topic, the numbers in history very often crave allowance for the personal equation. The ancients, in the infancy of history, had no conception of the meaning and the power of numbers, and there are cases in which a reduction of ninety per cent. would not be excessive. We also encounter in some quarters, as among the Hebrews, superstitious notions as to the impiety of

counting, and numbers from such sources are of course of no historical value. There are many cases in which honest and careful writers show the marks, without the numbers, of authenticity. Critics of the Colenso school entirely overshoot their aim in impugning the antiquity of the Hebrew records on the ground of loose numerical statements. The more closely this argument is pressed, the more strongly does it tell in favor of the very great age, and therefore of the historical value, of books in which no one now imagines that the numbers were divinely dictated, but in which the writers may have related facts for which they had good authority, yet with utterly vague notions about the numbers connected with them. In modern history numbers are often very pliant, and take shape from the author's unconscious cerebration. Especially is this the case as to battles and military operations. In the history of Indian warfare our fathers undoubtedly often magnified the numbers of their savage foes, especially as their rapid and versatile movements must by multiplied reappearances have often largely increased their force in the estimate of those whom they assailed. But of regular troops, of which it might seem by no means difficult to obtain a nearly accurate enumeration, the two parties commonly give widely different reports, both of numbers and of casualties, and the truth is undoubtedly in most cases nearly midway between them.

I would next speak of the false perspective almost inseparable from history. The world, the race, the nation, the community at any one time always deserves a fairer record than history gives it. History deals with events, the greater part of which are disturbances, a very large proportion calamities, —with specific states of public feeling, oftener than not of discontent, —with men in conspicuous and commanding positions; of whom it is the best that require to have the least said about them, the worst that fill page after page with their evil counsel and ill-

doing,—with wars, as to which the reader is so placed as to foreshorten to his eye the intervals of peace, and to keep the garment rolled in blood always in sight. Scanty record is made of the happy homes, quiet lives, kindly social relations, philanthropic services within a limited sphere, upright men, honorable women, well-ordered families, that have been scattered, and not sparsely, over a land or an age of which we know familiarly all the oppression and wrong, strife and guilt, want and woe. It must be remembered that the consequences of great crimes and of atrocious series of crimes have been of comparatively small extent. The vilest of the Roman emperors made, indeed, and multiplied illustrious victims, most of them illustrious, but chiefly in Rome; while in the provinces they were not only innoxious, but the subjects of certain kinds and amounts of panegyric, and some of them were popular even in the imperial city, in those more obscure social strata where cupidity, suspicion and malice found no prey worth their pursuit. So has it been in all time,—not that there has been any lack of evil purpose among the scourges of their race; but there are in the very constitution of society and in the power for evil of individual men metes and bounds which verify the words of the Hebrew poet-seer, “The remainder of wrath He will restrain.”

As to war in its moral aspects I cannot express as strongly as I feel its intrinsic absurdity and barbarity; and if holy prophecy is ever to become history, as I believe it will, the age when a usurping emperor and an ambitious prime minister could procure the sacrifice of myriads of human lives in a dispute without merit on either side will be regarded in the same category—if not on a lower plane—with the epochs of the far less atrocious slaughters in cannibal warfare. Yet war, with all its horrors, affects the homes, the social condition, the actual prosperity of a country, much less in fact than in history. The battle-

fields and the tracks of desolating armies, though on the printed page they occupy a large place, are but a very small part of a great country. Then, too, the cost of war consists more in the transfer than in the destruction of values, and of the values destroyed, food and clothing would be equally consumed in peace, though under different conditions. The money that goes so lavishly from the public treasury goes for the most part to citizens of the country, many of whom it makes suddenly rich; while, if funds be borrowed for use in war, they are a present source of wealth; for while a country's credit is good, incurring a national debt is simply using in advance the gains of future years, to the detriment, it may be, of posterity, but to the abnormal profit of those concerned in spending it. It must be remembered also that the wealth on which a nation depends for comfortable living is not its hoarded capital, but what is raised and produced from year to year, so that as to mere subsistence a famine would be a greater calamity than a war. War also stimulates industry and enterprise, and while persons of fixed incomes complain of war-prices, those very prices are to large classes of the community a token and a means of prosperity. Our war of the Rebellion was disastrous, indeed, to the South, yet not as a war, but as a revolution, annihilating what had been the chief element and instrument of productive industry. Had not slavery been abolished, a large amount of property would have changed hands, but there would have been no general or permanent distress or impoverishment. On ethical grounds we might well wish that prolific nature and elastic humanity would not so strenuously resist and so vigorously repair the ravages of war; for in that case wars would not last so long, or be renewed on so trivial pretences. But it is the province of history to describe things as they are, not as it were well that they should be. Moreover, in this matter history has infected ethics; for in the diatribes against war the chief stress is laid on the physical

harm which it inflicts, not on the divine law of nature and of revelation, "Thou shalt do no murder," which, if incumbent on men individually, is no less so on them collectively, and in either case can be superseded only by the necessity which is its own law, and under which society has the right to defend itself against crime, and the state to defend its own existence against destructive forces from without and from within.

Another fallacy of history attaches itself to prominent historical personages of resplendent merit and of signal demerit. Such characters become mythical. Even what calls itself biography dares not to put in the shadows or the lights that would bring their subject within the limitations in one or the other direction of actual humanity. Thus the Washington of American history is an ideal man, and he has almost ceased to interest the present generation because he is incommensurable with the best men they know, and therefore inconceivable. A few years ago I had some correspondence with one of his grand-nephews, who sent me, as an autograph and a precious memorial of his uncle, a ticket of the Mountain Road Lottery, bearing date 1768, and signed by George Washington as manager. It was only to his credit that, at a time when lotteries were sanctioned by the best public opinion, this young Virginian should have been selected for so responsible a charge. Yet now that lotteries are rightly under the ban of a more enlightened sentiment, no historian would venture to connect that revered name with the outlawed wheel of fortune, though the record would be a noteworthy waymark of the progress of society, and though nearly a half-century later Harvard College raised funds by a lottery, of which I have a ticket signed by a venerable clergyman of unimpeached standing as manager. There lingered in the families of early members of Congress traditions of Washington which were never committed to writing, which only exalt his character by showing that he had passions like those of

other men, which he had brought under mastery only by the most resolute and persevering self-discipline,—that he had fought and won in a more arduous conflict than that of the battle-field, in the warfare and victory within his own soul. In his case, however, there can be no excess of eulogy; only we would prefer a life-like picture of the greatest and best man of his age to a drawing out of line of a non-human nondescript.

But it may be questioned whether there has not been an exaggerated laudation in the case of some of his distinguished fellow soldiers and patriots. Hamilton's services to the country have not been overrated; but as to his personal character he owes much of his posthumous reputation to his good fortune in being slain by a worse man than himself, who yet would not have had the opportunity of killing him, had the two men not been too nearly on the same moral plane to exempt Hamilton from the insult of a challenge or to permit him to refuse it on the ground of principle. As for Burr, whose name certainly deserves enduring ignominy, there is no vice attached to his memory, debauchee and duellist as he already was, which did not equally stain his character when he received the same number of votes with Jefferson for the Presidency of the United States, and when in the House of Representatives he received eleven out of twelve Massachusetts votes. As for his subsequent treason (so-called), I doubt whether it can be proved to be different in kind from the certainly extra-legal enterprises which issued in the annexation of Texas, received the sanction of the government, and were defended by the war with Mexico. Burr was doomed to exceptional infamy, because, being a very bad man, he had sold himself to and had been sold by both political parties, and thus had neither to whitewash him or to apologize for him.

The mention of Hamilton and Burr reminds me of the difficulty in the way of authentic history growing out of strong party animosity. No attempt is made to write a

permanent history of events as they pass; but contemporary documents furnish the materials on which the future historian must rely, and those documents may be mere travesties of facts and gross caricatures of persons. Thus the more honest and impartial the historian, the less worthy of confidence his history may be. The authorities for a portion of the early history of our country after the adoption of the Constitution are, for the most part, newspapers compared with which the vilest journals of our day are clean and pure, and pamphlets of which it is hard to say whether virulence or vulgarity is the predominant characteristic. The men whom we have most admired are placed before us in a garb in which we cannot recognize them; and had they been what they are made to appear, our government would have collapsed and perished for lack of men fit to administer it, in the life-time of the generation that witnessed its birth. A vessel heaped with filth from one of the city sewers would be as fair a representation of the soil of Worcester as these documents give of American life and character at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century. Meanwhile, the actual history of the Federalist party, which, whatever may have been its errors, had in it more of public virtue and of private worth than any party that has succeeded it, remains unwritten, while those who remember its latter days and its great men who survived it are fast passing away.

It may be doubted whether a perfectly fair history of our great Rebellion will ever be written. From the South we can not expect it. But what Northern historian will dare to tell, as it ought to be told, the shameful story of the sycophancy of Northern statesmen which by base compromises and concessions nursed the slave-power into its capacity of rebellion? Nor yet shall we want posterity to know that, notwithstanding the patently adverse meaning of the Constitution, the right of secession was claimed by

our best and most patriotic men during the last war with Great Britain, that even as late as the admission of Texas it was not regarded with disfavor, and that at all Southern seminaries of learning the prior claim of the state over the nation to the allegiance of its citizens had been still inculcated as incontrovertibly sound doctrine. These considerations do not, indeed, absolve the leaders of the Rebellion of their manifold truculence and treachery; but they do exculpate the multitudes of peaceable and well-meaning citizens, and even the officers in the army and navy, who, when on the actual secession of a State the conflict of allegiance arose, did what they had always been taught to regard as their duty even more than their right. Instances of this kind within our own familiar knowledge may well lead us to question the authenticity of portions of earlier history that belong to periods of civil strife, whether of words or of arms. The very conditions of such times can hardly have failed in a greater or less degree to corrupt the original sources from which historians have been compelled to draw.

If there be truth in what has been said, there is at best only limited and approximate truth in what calls itself history. But let me say, and it will be my last topic in a paper already long enough, the most authentic and instructive form of history is biography,—the journals or autobiography of men too wise to deceive themselves and too honest to deceive others, and lives of distinguished or representative men written by competent and dispassionate biographers. A man who holds in his time and community a foremost place so enters into relation with all the phases of society and of public life, is brought into intercourse with so many persons, is so affected by passing events, or so aids in bringing them to pass, that a sketch of him is a negative of his surroundings, from which they may be photographed with the nearest approach to accuracy. Then too, such a man is made by antecedent history, and helps

to make subsequent history, so that the photograph reaches in both directions beyond his lifetime. Thus Plutarch's Lives are the best ancient histories that we have, because, instead of chronicling events, they show us what we are most concerned to know,—man in history, how history made men, how men made history. We have, especially under the authorship and editorship of Mr. Sparks, a not dissimilar service performed for American history; for not only in his Washington and Franklin, but in the numerous memoirs, prepared under his direction, of lesser, yet important and influential men in various departments of life, we have more exact and realizable views of society and of events than the best formal history can possibly give us. In this respect our mother country is preëminently rich, and I do not know an epoch or section of English history which I cannot read the most instructively in the lives of those who bore part in it; while such series as Campbell's Chief Justices, or Hook's Archbishops of Canterbury—both of these, indeed, needing large allowance for the personal equation—might almost take the place of works purporting to be continuous history.

As a familiar instance of the relation which biography bears to history, I might again refer to that marvellous autobiography, Sewall's Diary. This for the time that it covers is almost a history of Massachusetts, and it gives some realistic and instructive pictures, the like of which we can find nowhere else. When we learn that, though he was, perhaps, the richest man in Boston, his ink froze in his wife's room while he was writing; when we find that, not for pleasurè, but for business, the water-passage between Boston and Cambridge was often resorted to, and are told of instances when the vessel, with reverend and honored freight, was cast away on this passage under circumstances of imminent peril,—we can imagine how hard life was in New England a century and a half ago,—of how little worth in point of comfort and enjoyment this

earthly existence must have seemed; and we are better able to account for and to excuse the indifference to life manifested in the sanguinary laws of our fathers, and in modes of thought, feeling and action in accordance with these laws.

At this point I was intending to close my report by an illustration of the wealth of materials which a single biography may furnish for general history, in the case of a biography which I believe to be in existence, and which I supposed to be in print till I sought for it in vain in our libraries,—that of a former member of this society, whom I recollect as having seen in my early boyhood, Rev. Manasseh Cutler. The son of a New England farmer, first a lawyer, engaged for a time in the whale fishery, chaplain in the army of the Revolution; an honorary member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and as such, assisting in *post mortem* examinations conducted by some of the most distinguished members of the faculty; the earliest of American botanists, making some important and permanent additions to the pharmacopœia in the department of medical botany, and utilizing the silk of the common *Asclepias* or silk-weed in ways which would not have fallen out of use but for the increased production of cotton; reading before the American Academy papers on transits and eclipses, and furnishing for that body minute and carefully tabulated meteorological observations; lobbying with the Continental Congress for the Ohio grant, and superintending its settlement in person; a member of the Congress of the United States for two successive terms in the earlier years of the present century; for more than half a century exercising the functions and practising the generous hospitality of a country clergyman; intimate with men in public office and with men of science from Franklin downward; always, even in old age, in advance of his time, keeping, too, a journal covering, I think, nearly his whole life, certainly its most important portions,—he came into contact with almost

1885.]

Report of the Council.

29

every interest of which history takes cognizance, and his life, if we had it, would at many points teach us more, and more vividly and impressively, than we could by any possibility learn from the most elaborate and faithfully written impersonal history.

For the Council,

ANDREW P. PEABODY.

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