

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

THE Council of the American Antiquarian Society respectfully submit their Seventy-fifth Annual Report.

Our Charter dates from October 24, 1812: so that this week completes three-quarters of a century of organization, and it might be instructive at the present anniversary, if time allowed, to sum up the results accomplished in this round of years. The last occasion for a like review was in connection with the semi-centennial commemoration of 1862; and the briefest comparison of the present condition of the Society with what was then reported will indicate sufficiently, perhaps, our satisfactory progress.

In 1862, the Society's library, the centre of its activity, was estimated at about 34,000 volumes; the number of volumes now is at least 80,000, not to speak of large additions of valuable pamphlets, while the facilities for making these acquisitions useful to all inquirers have more than kept pace with the increase in numbers.

The permanent fund of the Society had, in 1862, reached \$42,500; while the total is now nearly \$104,000. The component parts of this total were, in 1862, only four,—of which the Bookbinding Fund remains substantially unchanged, but the Librarian's and General Fund, the Collection and Research Fund, and the Publishing Fund, have risen severally to twice or thrice their former value, and no less than eight special funds have been established by as many benefactors.

During this twenty-five years, the Society's publications, which attest to the world its right to live, have comprised three volumes of Transactions and fifty-three numbers of

Proceedings,—in amount keeping pace with the increase in the Library and Treasury, and in value not falling below our own high standard.

In 1862, the Society already owned and occupied this building, in smaller dimensions, but was cramped in the provision for its growing collections. Five years later, our munificent benefactor, President Salisbury, presented an adjoining tract of land, with the nucleus of a building-fund, thus making possible the erection of the western half of this hall in 1877, by which means our shelf accommodations were nearly doubled, while the connected improvements have increased beyond measure the convenience and the safety of administration.

The changes thus recalled awaken at this turning-point of history our lively congratulations and hopes; but the personal changes which accompany, inevitably, every such passage of years supply the strain of melancholy from which few human joys are free. "Other men labored, and we are entered into their labors." Our very progress is the strongest reminder of the devotion and zeal of such friends as our late President and our late Librarian, in preëminent measure, and of others who were associated with them.

At the date of the meeting in October, 1862, three of the Society's charter members were still living,—of whom the last, the Hon. Levi Lincoln, died in 1868. The senior members at the present date, Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Winthrop, were elected forty-nine years ago; and besides these two twenty others remain with us who were active members prior to the semi-centennial meeting.

Of the officers in 1862, no survivors remain except Dr. Hale and Dr. Deane, of the Council and the Publication Committee.

Turning to the record of the six months just elapsed, the Reports of the Treasurer and the Librarian, which are submitted separately, give in detail the current history of the Society in these departments.

We add the customary minute of losses by death. Four members of the Society have died since April:—Ben: Perley Poore, Elias Nason, Charles Rau and Spencer Fullerton Baird.

Major Ben: Perley Poore, of the seventh generation from Samuel Poore, who emigrated to Massachusetts in 1638, and settled, in 1650, on Indian Hill in the present township of West Newbury, was born, November 2, 1820, on this farm (which has never been alienated from the family), and in the house built by the first settler.

His grandfather, Daniel Noyes Poore, was a graduate of Harvard in 1777, and a physician of Newbury, and his father was engaged in mercantile business in New York City. His mother, Mary Perley Dodge, was a native of Georgetown, D. C., and so it happened that in his sixth year he was taken to Washington on a visit, and thus his personal recollections of the Capital began at almost the earliest possible moment. Five years later, he accompanied his parents on a trip to Europe. He was then for a short time a pupil in Dummer Academy, near his own door, and later in a New York school, while his father was expecting for him an appointment to the United States Military Academy; but the preparation for West Point proved so distasteful to the youth that he ran away from school, and for nearly two years was not traced by his friends. Meantime he came to Worcester (about 1837), and apprenticed himself as a printer with Jubal Harrington, the publisher of the *Republican* newspaper. When discovered he was persuaded to return home and begin the study of law; but the taste for journalistic enterprise and for independence had seized him, and his father soon bought for him the *Southern Whig*, a newspaper published in Athens, Georgia, which he edited for about two years, or until 1842, when the Hon. Henry W. Hilliard, of Alabama, was appointed Minister to Belgium, and Mr. Poore was invited to act as Secretary of Legation.

Mr. Hilliard returned to America in 1844, but Mr. Poore remained abroad until 1847, travelling extensively, and spending some time in Paris in the study of law, with a purpose of practising in New Orleans. In November, 1844, he was authorized by the Massachusetts Historical Society to procure copies of manuscripts in the French archives illustrating the history of New England; subsequently the State assumed the expense of this agency, and a voluminous collection of transcripts now in the State House attests the agent's activity.

During these years he began his career as a newspaper correspondent, furnishing the *Boston Atlas* with a series of letters under the signature of "Perley," afterwards so well known. He continued his connection with the *Atlas* after his return, and in December, 1848, assumed editorial management of the *Boston Daily Bee*, adding to this labor the next month a new venture in the form of a Sunday newspaper, called *Perley's Sunday Picnic*. His irregular training had not fitted him for successful business management, and in less than a year he gave up these enterprises. One more attempt followed, in 1850, when he started the *Boston Sunday Sentinel*, which was soon merged in another paper; and after this he confined himself to a more congenial field. His first letters as a Washington correspondent appeared in the *Atlas*, but in 1852 he undertook a similar service for the *Boston Journal*, to which paper, until his retirement in 1883, his dispatches signed "Perley," as accurate as they were entertaining, added an unflinching attraction.

Shortly before the Rebellion he was appointed, under Mr. Corwin's chairmanship, clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, and in 1861 his friend, Senator Sumner, procured for him the corresponding Senate clerkship. From this position he was transferred a year later to that of clerk of the Senate Committee on Printing, in which he continued (with one brief

interruption) until his death, thus having charge of the publication of several most important compilations: such were, his edition in two large octavos of the Federal and State Constitutions and Colonial Charters, published in 1877, and his useful Descriptive Catalogue of Government Publications from 1774 to 1881, which appeared in one volume quarto in 1885. He also edited from 1867 the Congressional Directory, which under his hands took a much improved form, and he assisted in many historical and literary investigations, the results of which were credited to others. In these relations he enjoyed a familiar acquaintance with national leaders, and amassed the stores of information from which he drew for his latest original work, Perley's *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis*, published in two volumes in 1886. He was the author of numerous other volumes, most of them historical in their nature.

His tastes were such as to make his election to membership in this Society, in October, 1874, a source of great pleasure, and so lately as at our last annual meeting he was present and took part in the discussions of the morning. His health had been impaired already by serious illness, from Bright's disease, in the spring of 1884. He recovered from that attack, but his final illness, from the same cause, began on May 17, 1887, and terminated in his death, at Washington, on the 28th of the same month, in the 67th year of his age.

The military title by which he was known was a reminder of his organizing in 1861 a battalion of riflemen in Newbury, which formed the nucleus of a company in the 8th Massachusetts.

His wife, who survives him, was Miss Virginia Dodge, of Georgetown, D. C. Their children were two daughters, now deceased.

The Rev. Elias Nason was elected into this Society in October, 1865, and died in Billerica, Massachusetts, June

17, 1887, in the 77th year of his age. He was born in Wrentham, Massachusetts, April 21, 1811, the son of Levi and Sarah (Nelson) Nason, and the great-grandson of Willoughby Nason, who settled in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1712. In his infancy the family removed to the neighboring town of Hopkinton, where some of his early years were spent on the estate once occupied by Sir Henry Frankland. At the age of fifteen he was set to learn the business of paper-making, at a mill in Framingham, but his desire for education overcame all difficulties, and by teaching he gained the means for preparation for college at a school in Amherst, whence he went to Brown University, where he was graduated in 1835. In February, 1836, he was persuaded by relatives in the south to remove to that section, where he remained until July, 1840. During this time he pursued theological studies, edited (in 1837) the *Georgia Courier*, in Augusta, taught for three years in Waynesboro', in the adjoining county, and began his career as a public lecturer. After returning to Massachusetts, he was engaged for four years as a teacher in Newburyport. In the summer of 1849 he was licensed to preach by the Essex North Association of Congregational Ministers, and in the ensuing fall was appointed principal of the Milford High School. This post he held until his ordination as pastor of the Congregational Church in Natick, May 5, 1852. He was there brought into intimate relations with his distinguished parishioner, the Hon. Henry Wilson, of whom he afterward helped to write a campaign biography. Mr. Nason left Natick in November, 1858, to accept a call to the Mystic Church in Medford, and two years later he was transferred to the pastorate of the First Church in Exeter, N. H., where he continued until May, 1865. During the war he served on the United States Christian Commission, and wrote and spoke extensively for the Union cause. On leaving Exeter, he settled in (North) Billerica, Massachusetts, where his residence continued until his death, though

for much of the time he officiated regularly in vacant churches, in Massachusetts or Connecticut.

He was an industrious compiler and a fluent writer, and among his numerous publications the following of special historical interest will be remembered:—*Life of Sir Charles Henry Frankland* (1865), *Our National Song* (1869), *Memoir of Mrs. Susannah Rowson* (1870), *Gazetteer of Massachusetts* (1874), *History of the Town of Dunstable* (1877). He left in manuscript, incomplete, a *History of Hopkinton*, and a *Nason Genealogy*. He was also for many years a frequent lecturer before lyceums, on historical, musical and variously practical themes.

He was married, in November, 1836, to Miss Mira Ann, daughter of John Bigelow, of Framingham, one of the owners of the paper-mill where he learned his trade. She survives him, with three of their four sons and two daughters.

Dr. Charles Rau, Curator of the department of Antiquities in the United States National Museum at Washington, died on the 25th of July, 1887, at the age of 61.

He was born in Belgium in 1826, and was a nephew of Karl Heinrich Rau, the distinguished Professor of Political Science at Heidelberg. In 1848, he came to this country, and for some time found employment as a teacher in or near St. Louis, as afterwards in New York City. While living in the latter place, he began to contribute to the Annual Reports of the Smithsonian Institution articles upon archæological subjects, to which his maturer studies had been devoted. By this means he became known, both in this country and in Europe, as an authority in this department of science, especially in the study of the American stone age; and in 1876, he was attached permanently to the Smithsonian Institution as Assistant in Archæology. His appointment as chief of the archæological division of the National Museum, an outgrowth of the Smithsonian, followed in 1879.

Dr. Rau's shorter contributions to the Smithsonian Reports, from 1863 to 1877, have been collected in a volume entitled *Articles on Anthropological Subjects*. He also published, in the *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, an account of the *Archæological Collections of the National Museum* (1876), a monograph on the *Palenque Tablet* (1879), and a memoir on *Prehistoric Fishing* (1884). Some valuable *Observations on Lapidarian Sculptures* appeared in volume V. (1881) of the *Contributions to North American Ethnology in Powell's Survey*. Besides these Government publications, a series of articles which he wrote in 1875 for *Harper's Magazine* was reprinted in 1876, with the title, *Early Man in Europe*. At the time of his death he was engaged on an encyclopædic work, designed to cover the whole field of American archæology.

His scientific method as an investigator and his thorough knowledge of and devotion to his subject insure for him special and honorable remembrance.

During the spring and early summer of 1887, he was ill from pulmonary disease. He also suffered from stone, and went for treatment to Philadelphia, where he died. He was never married.

Dr. Rau was elected a member of this Society in October, 1878.

Professor Spencer Fullerton Baird was born in Reading, Pa., February 3, 1823, the son of Samuel Baird, Jr., a lawyer of Reading, who died some ten years later. His first name was derived from a direct ancestor on his mother's side, the Rev. Dr. Elihu Spencer, of New Jersey.

He was graduated from Dickinson College, at Carlisle, Pa., in 1840, having exhibited already a zeal for natural history which determined his future career. His prime interest was in ornithology, but for several years after graduation he gave himself to general studies in zoölogy and botany, and to long pedestrian tours for the collection of specimens; he pursued, also, a partial course in medicine.

From such occupations he was soon called to a Professorship of Natural Science in Dickinson College, and after a brief tenure of this position left it in July, 1850, to accept the Assistant Secretaryship of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, with which his name and work were thenceforth identified. In May, 1878, after the death of Professor Henry, he was elected by unanimous vote of the Regents, Secretary of the Institution, and in this office he continued till his death.

Latterly much of his time was absorbed in the duties of U. S. Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, a position to which he was appointed by President Grant in 1871.

In summarizing his qualifications as an officer of the Smithsonian, his lifelong friend, Professor Dana, emphasizes justly¹ "his breadth of knowledge in the sciences of nature, his sympathy with other workers over the land, his indefinite powers of work, his systematic methods, and his eagerness to make the Institution national in the highest sense of the term, and also scientifically and practically useful." Along with the multiform activity imposed by these standards were his unsalaried services as Commissioner of Fisheries, devoted especially to the philanthropic purpose of enlarging that valuable section of the food-supply of the world.

His personal contributions to the literature of science were voluminous and important,—the most elaborate being his account of the Birds of North America, prepared in conjunction with Messrs. Cassin and Lawrence in 1858, and his more complete History of North American Birds, issued in 1874, with the assistance of Messrs. Brewer and Ridgway. His original work in the description of North American mammals and reptiles was also of signal value; and his numerous official Reports abounded in original matter of the first quality. From 1870 to 1878, he was the scientific editor of the periodicals issued by the Harpers of New York,

¹Amer. Journal of Science, Oct. 1887, 320.

as also of their Annual Record of Science and Industry, and used the opportunity to bring out a vast amount of instructive, critical work.

Professor Baird's scientific eminence was recognized by many foreign societies, which enrolled him in their ranks. His membership in this Society dates from April, 1880.

His manifold and responsible public labors, with unremitting private studies, undermined his health. When he went in June, 1887, to Woods Holl, Massachusetts, the chief summer-station of the U. S. Fish Commission, he was evidently much broken: and his death occurred there, on August 19th, in the 65th year of his age.

He married Mary, daughter of Inspector-General Sylvester Churchill, of the U. S. Army, who survives him with one daughter.

For the Council,

FRANKLIN B. DEXTER.

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