

LETTER FROM HON. GEORGE BANCROFT TO  
REV. DR. PEABODY.

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NEWPORT, R. I., 19 October, 1884.

REV. DR. A. P. PEABODY,

*My Dear Sir:*

My acquaintance with Stephen Salisbury, the late President of the American Antiquarian Society, began in very early life. As boys, I might almost say as children, more than seventy-five years ago we were constant playmates, being very near neighbors. Our friend was born of parents who had already passed the earliest years of mature life. He was their only surviving child, and was therefore very carefully and delicately bred. He had the great advantage of home life under its purest forms, and this reflected itself upon his character from childhood to the last.

I went to Exeter, which divided us for two years. We met again in college, where our intimacy ripened, for in our first year we were chums. This close relation certainly makes me the best witness of his uniform, never-failing evenness of temper and fidelity to the duties of college life. In the whole year that we were together in the same room I never heard him utter an uncivil or rough or fretful or in the least degree angry word to any one, or knew him for a moment to lose his self-possession. He preferred after the freshman year still to live in an apartment outside of the college; I ventured as a sophomore into Massachusetts Hall; but we remained as closely united as before; and I remember once when he had a slight touch of typhoid

fever, I for a few days played the part of his nurse and companion. During all the four years of his college life he remained the same, leading a most regular, studious and exemplary life, and I cannot recall that he ever did anything that was wrong.

After we left college many years passed away during which we rarely or never saw each other. In later years we met repeatedly, and he confided his inmost thoughts to me. He had become more conscious of his powers and had the clear resolute purpose of employing them. He not only acted from a strict sense of duty, but he had consciously formed a system of life and plan of efficient action. The longer he lived, the more he developed his faculties and increased their power.

The older he grew the freer was his mind; his understanding more vigorous; his aims larger and higher; his view of the world and his relations to it broader; his will more resolute. He is one of the few men whom I have known who in their progress to old age always grew more liberal and more and more wakeful to the duties of life. He is gone, and one more tie which bound me to this world is broken. He was the last survivor of the friends whom I have known from childhood.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

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