

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

BY HERBERT B. ADAMS, SECRETARY.

The eighth annual meeting of the American Historical Association was held in Washington, December 29 to 31, 1891. There were two morning sessions at the National Museum, and three evening sessions at the Columbian University, where also convened, in different rooms at various times, the Modern Language Association, the Folk Lore Society, and the American Society of Church History. The American Forestry Association had business meetings in the Department of Agriculture and public exercises in the National Museum, following those of the Historical Association.

The gathering of these five different scientific clans in the Federal city, on the very same days, was a significant sign of the times. It indicates that Washington is becoming more generally recognized as the intellectual and social capital of the nation. No other city in the American Union could attract, in successive years, the same scientific bodies that now annually assemble in the National Museum or at the Columbian University. Every association that comes once to Washington is certain to come again. Some of them, like the American Historical Association, have come to stay. Chartered by Congress, this society is now required by law to have its principal office in the District of Columbia. Its printing and business management will henceforth be in connection with the Smithsonian Institution. Although the Association may occasionally take an excursion to some Northern, Southern, or Western city, Washington is now its permanent home. The next meeting will be in Chicago, at the time of the World's Fair, in 1893.

In view of coming events, which cast their Columbian shadows before, the historical paper which eclipsed all others in popular interest at the Washington meeting, and in the Associated Press reports that flashed over the whole country, was

President Charles Kendall Adams's account of "Recent Discoveries Concerning Columbus." Perhaps the best and fullest report was printed in the *New York Times*, January 1, 1892, the morning after the original paper was read.

Besides a true view of the landfall of Columbus, President Adams gave his audience, and at the same time the country at large, the latest and most authentic information regarding the recent discovery of the burial place and remains of the discoverer himself. It seems that those patriotic body-snatchers, who in 1795 undertook to remove Columbus to Spanish Havana from Santo Domingo, which by the treaty of Bâle had just become French territory, took the wrong coffin. Not until the year 1877 was the true Columbus rediscovered in another vault on the right-hand of the altar in the cathedral at Santo Domingo. There has been much controversy between the Cubans and the Santo Domingoans upon the exact location of the holy sepulcher of the western world, but Rudolf Cronan, a German traveler and historical critic, reviewed the whole question in 1891, and has now established the fact that the remains of the great discoverer are still lying in the cathedral at Santo Domingo.

Another paper of interest in connection with the Columbian year was that of Prof. Edward G. Bourne, of Adelbert College, Cleveland, Ohio, upon the line of demarcation, established in 1493, by Pope Alexander VI, between the Spanish and Portuguese fields of discovery and colonization. Mr. Bourne showed that the discovery of America was the result of the commercial policy of Spain which was seeking a sea route to the Indies. The Portuguese were pushing for the same region by expeditions down the west coast of Africa, where they had a commercial monopoly by papal decree. The papal bulls of 1493 attempted a compromise between the interests of the two rival countries. By the treaty of Tordesillas, in 1494, Spain and Portugal agreed to draw a line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, and thus to divide the field of discovery. This agreement gave Portugal her claim to Brazil; but the line was never actually drawn. If it had been drawn, it would now run about 150 miles west of Rio Janeiro. The western boundary of Brazil has never been "accommodated" to this imaginary line, as Rev. Edward Everett Hale has stated in the "Narrative and Critical History of America" (Vol. II, p. 596). Neither Spain nor Portugal attached any permanent importance

to the papal bulls of 1493. In fact, in 1750, both bulls and the treaties based upon them were declared null and void. The present boundaries of Brazil rest upon other than papal foundations.

A paper was presented by Walter B. Scaife, PH. D. (Vienna), upon the commerce and industry of Florence during the Renaissance. This Italian republic is of peculiar interest to Americans, because our country was named in honor of a Florentine citizen, and because the geographical knowledge of Florentine scholars was of very great service to Columbus in his voyages of discovery. Dr. Scaife interested his audience by showing that the Florentine people were, like the Americans, a practical body of business men. Their motto would please even our American farmers' labor unions. The Florentines were fond of saying: "Who wants his mind active must make his hands hard." Their industry was untiring until the Medici became fully installed in political power. Then luxury, laziness, and display became fashionable, as they are now beginning to be under the influence of American plutocrats.

A comparative study of the personal force in congressional politics was the well-written and well-read paper by Miss Follett, of the Harvard "Annex," upon "Henry Clay, the First Political Speaker of the House." He seems to have been much the same type of a presiding officer as was the Hon. T. B. Reed. Miss Follett showed that no other Speaker so well combined the functions of a moderator, a voting member, and a party leader as did Mr. Clay. He established the tradition that a party, in putting a leader in the Speaker's chair, does not deprive itself of his services on the floor. He exercised the right to speak in committees of the whole more freely than had any of his predecessors. He added to the previously existing body of Speaker's powers more than has been added by any of his successors. The willing acquiescence of the people in Clay's conception of the speakership is of great historic significance. He had unusual qualifications for his office. He possessed remarkable tact, great personal fascination, and an extraordinary instinct for good leadership.

Considerable prominence was given in the programme to Southern history. The president of the association, the Hon. William Wirt Henry, in his inaugural address, spoke of the influences, physical and institutional, which united to make the Virginians of the Revolutionary period. He dwelt upon their

practical training for home rule in the monthly county courts and legislative assemblies. The educational influence of William and Mary College in developing such men as Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall was also touched upon. In closing, Mr. Henry called renewed attention to George Washington's idea of a national university in the Federal Capital. The president of William and Mary College, Lyon G. Tyler, son of John Tyler, gave some entertaining extracts from the records of York County, Va.

Dr. Jeffrey R. Brackett, a graduate of Harvard and Johns Hopkins universities, presented an objective review of the Virginia secession convention of 1861. His paper was a brief résumé of one of several studies which he is now making in the political history of the border slave States for the period immediately preceding and covering the civil war. Mr. Brackett attempted to show the character of the so-called "Union men" of Virginia in the spring of 1861. He said that four-fifths of the convention were opposed to secession. They wished to preserve the union by constitutional methods rather than by an appeal to force. After Mr. Lincoln's call for troops Virginia conservatives voted for secession.

President James C. Welling, of the Columbian University, traced at some length the history of slavery in the Territories, and showed the nature of that irrepressible conflict of American ideas represented by free soil and slave labor. The civil war was as inevitable as the war of the Revolution, and the issue was no less certain. Mr. W. E. B. Du Bois, A. M., fellow of Harvard University, read a scholarly and spirited paper upon the "Enforcement of the Slave Trade Laws." From 1770 to 1789 the slave trade was prohibited by all the colonies. South Carolina reopened the traffic in 1803. Mr. Du Bois showed that the prohibitory act of 1807 was not enforced. More stringent legislation began in 1818, and the slave trade was classed with piracy. Nevertheless the infamous business was continued, for the United States would not permit the right of search. Even the treaty with England in 1842 failed to suppress the slave trade. Vessels were fitted out for this traffic in every port from Boston to New Orleans. Mr. Du Bois estimates that, from 1807 to 1862, not less than a quarter of a million of Africans were brought to the United States in defiance of law and humanity. Mr. A. R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, gave a striking review of lotteries in American

history. He showed that they were once regarded with great favor in all the older States and colonies. The good people of Plymouth and Massachusetts, as well as the Father of his Country, took stock in lotteries. They were once everywhere organized by statutory law; but now they are everywhere illegal or discountenanced, except in Louisiana, which is still in the slimy coils of a rich gambling corporation, a monstrous anaconda called a State lottery.

In the year 1843 Wisconsin thought of annexing, for economic reasons, northern Illinois and what is soon to be the center of the world. If Wisconsin could not have Chicago with all its neighboring lands, she proposed to "be a State out of the Union." In short, though yet a Territory, she would temporarily assert independent statehood. This interesting subject of rudimentary "State Sovereignty in Wisconsin" was tersely presented by Prof. C. H. Haskins, on behalf of Mr. A. H. Sanford, a member of Prof. F. J. Turner's Seminary of American History in the university at Madison. The Wisconsin territorial legislature based its claim to Illinois land and to State independence upon provisions of the ordinance of 1787, which, as regards Western territory, was thought to be superior to the Constitution. It was held that under the ordinance Wisconsin had the right to be a State outside the Union. This legislative view was not supported by the public sentiment in Wisconsin, nor were the alleged rights of Territories under the ordinance ever upheld by the Federal courts.

The following papers on colonial history, or kindred topics, were also presented: "Earliest Texas," by Mrs. Lee C. Harby; "Governor Leete and the Absorption of New Haven Colony by Connecticut," by Dr. B. C. Steiner, a graduate of Yale and Johns Hopkins universities, now lecturing at Williams College; "Lord Lovelace," by Gen. James Grant Wilson; "Louisbourg and Memorials of the French Régime in Cape Breton," by Dr. J. G. Bourinot, C. M. G., of Ottawa, and "Characteristics of the Boston Puritans," by Prof. Barrett Wendell, of Harvard University. The paper last mentioned excited more than usual interest on account of the critical analysis of Puritan character. Mr. Wendell illustrated from the life of Cotton Mather the intense idealism of Puritan faith, and, at the same time, its anthropomorphic limitations.

An able paper of legal character was presented by Prof. Simeon E. Baldwin, of the law department of Yale Univer-

sity. He discussed historically the "Visitorial Statutes of Andover Seminary," and found their prototype in the ancient principles of visitorial jurisdiction, as laid down in the rules of English universities. The old custom of appointing visitors for educational institutions was transmitted to William and Mary College, in Virginia, as well as to New England. Prof. John Bassett Moore, formerly Assistant Secretary in the State Department and now professor in Columbia College, read a valuable paper upon the "United States and International Arbitrations." From unpublished materials, to which he has had access in Washington, Mr. Moore reviewed the experience of this country with Great Britain, France, Spain, Mexico, and South American Republics in settling our international disputes by an appeal to reason instead of to force. In view of our present disagreement with Chile, and her apparent disposition to submit to arbitration, Mr. Moore's paper is of peculiar significance. President Angell, of the University of Michigan, emphasized the importance of studying American diplomatic history, and noted the honorable part which our country has taken in the development of modern international law. One of America's greatest diplomatists, Benjamin Franklin, was made the subject of a special paper by Dr. C. W. Bowen, who exhibited a series of Franklin portraits at an evening session of the association.

Mr. William Van Zandt Cox, chief clerk of the U. S. National Museum, read an interesting paper entitled "A leaf of local history," in which he described a collection of early maps of the city of Washington, presented to the Museum by Mrs. Elizabeth J. Stone. He made special mention of a weather map, made in 1822 by Robert King, jr., who, with his brother and father, was one of the early surveyors of the city. This map, by an ingenious method, records the direction of the wind, the humidity, changes of the moon, and the temperature for the year 1821 in Washington.