

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

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The American Historical Association has passed its first decade. Its eleventh annual meeting was held in Washington, D. C., December 26, 27, 1895, at the Columbian University, with headquarters at the Arlington. The short space of time between Christmas, which fell on Wednesday, and the end of the week necessitated the compression of the public exercises within the limit of two days. The programme was so full that it was found expedient to hold the Friday morning session in two sections, one devoted to American colonial history and the other to American political history. A short afternoon session, from 4 to 5, was held in the banqueting hall of the Arlington, Dr. J. L. M. Curry presiding. This session was specially devoted to European history. The two evening sessions, Thursday and Friday, attracted the largest audiences, although the section meetings were well attended. The usual number of members were registered.

On the opening night, the Hon. George F. Hoar, president of the Association, gave an eloquent and patriotic address in defense of representative government. He deprecated the growing tendency among some historical writers of imputing wrong motives to the acts of men in public life and of blackening the character of the dead. He maintained that the conduct of public affairs is growing better, purer, and wiser from generation to generation. The motives by which our public men are governed in the administration of national, State, and local affairs are honest and upright. No man can put a noble pride in a base history. He said he was willing to compare our representative government at its worst with any monarchic government at its best, when the authority of the monarchy is really felt. Senator Hoar paid a high tribute to the character of the men who legislate for our country, and said that

his remarks were based on an intimate acquaintance with the majority of them during the last thirty years. There has been a steady increase in the number of men who come to Congress to work wholly for the best interests of their country.

Senator Hoar's address occupied about an hour. He was followed by Prof. Edward G. Bourne, of Yale University, who gave an appreciative account of the critical methods of Leopold von Ranke, who had such a profound influence upon modern students of history. Mr. Bourne explained the origin of the historical seminary, now so common in German and American universities. Ranke's habit was to draw all his information from original sources. He was well versed in classical, mediæval, and early modern writings, but was entirely unacquainted with the results of higher biblical criticism. Although he wrote about the Hebrews in his *Universal History*, his knowledge of the Old Testament and of Semitic institutions was that of a former generation.

Gen. James Grant Wilson, president of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, read the last paper of the opening session, on "Arent Van Curler and his journal of 1634." It is published in the following proceedings.

The second day's session was opened promptly at 10 o'clock, Senator Hoar presiding until Dr. James Schouler was called to the chair. The colonial section, although held in a smaller room, seemed for a time to be more popular than the political section, which, however, under the guidance of Gen. John Eaton, soon recovered the lost balance. The two lecture halls were in such close proximity that members could easily pass from one to the other. This bicameral method has never before been tried by the Historical Association, but it proved an expeditious way of disposing of a long programme, which would otherwise have required an extra day in Washington.

In this connection it is impossible to give even abstracts of all the numerous contributions to the various section meetings. Some were read by title only. Others were greatly abridged in reading. Most of them are printed in the proceedings of the Association.

Among the noteworthy papers were two by Talcott Williams, of the Philadelphia Press. The first was upon the subject of "Raleigh's colony and its present remains." Mr. Williams and his wife had just come from a visit to the original site of the first English colony planted in the New World.

This site has lately been purchased by the Roanoke Colony Memorial Association, and it is hoped that the island may some day become attractive to historical pilgrims. Mr. Williams described the excavations which he had recently made on the site of Raleigh's fort, the lines of which can still be clearly traced. He discussed the probable approach of the early navigators, Amadas and Barlowe, and of Raleigh's expedition. The Indian villages on the island were also described and historical localities identified. A plea was made for contributions to enable the Memorial Association to erect a suitable monument. The second paper by Mr. Williams was read at the closing session. In a most interesting and suggestive way the question was discussed how far was "Primeval man a modern savage." The author called attention to the entirely different conditions of primitive men and modern savages. The latter live under constant pressure and aggression from without. The former had room for movement, natural expression, and free development. Mr. Williams criticised modern writers like Morgan, McLennan, and Lubbock, who assume too much in regard to the likeness of ancient and modern conditions of savage life. He maintained the dignity of human nature and the probability of a higher system of family morals for primitive society than is commonly allowed by anthropologists.

Various institutional studies of interest and value were presented. Prof. H. L. Osgood, of Columbia College, gave a "Classification of colonial government," showing that the proprietary system and the royal province are practically the same form, and that the term "corporation" correctly describes only Massachusetts previous to 1684, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Virginia, under the London company, and Georgia, under the trustees, were essentially proprietary and should be included under the class of provinces. So must New Plymouth. Corporations were the earliest forms of the American Commonwealth. Dr. B. C. Steiner, of Baltimore, gave an historical account of "The electoral college for the senate of Maryland." Dr. J. S. Bassett, of Trinity College, North Carolina, outlined the history of suffrage in his State. In 1776 the aristocracy took control of the assembly, only landholders voting for members of the senate. The system was modified in 1835 and again in 1848. Final reform in the suffrage was not accomplished until 1857. Dr. Jeffrey R. Brackett, of Baltimore, gave a graphic

account of the struggle of democracy versus aristocracy in Virginia in 1830. After the Revolutionary war a minority of landed proprietors governed the State. An extension of the suffrage was finally made to resident housekeepers, heads of families, and taxpayers. Mr. H. A. Cushing, of Columbia College, discussed the "Political activity of Massachusetts towns during the Revolution." He showed that from the day of Samuel Adams's coup d'état in Salem to the inauguration of Governor Hancock the true center of Massachusetts politics was the town meeting. Town republics maintained an unbroken activity during the whole Revolutionary period, which saw the closing of the royal courts, the destruction of the legislature, and the deposition of royal officials. "The land system of provincial Pennsylvania" was described by William R. Shepherd, of Brooklyn, N. Y. "Colonial culture in North Carolina" was illustrated by a native of that State, Dr. S. B. Weeks, now of the Bureau of Education.

A paper on the "Agreement of 1817, concerning the reduction of naval forces upon the American lakes," was read by J. M. Callahan, of Johns Hopkins University. The American lakes were the scenes of desperate conflict in the war of 1812. The idea of mutual disarmament by England and the United States on this lake frontier was proposed by J. Q. Adams to Lord Castlereagh, to avert the evil of rival naval forces. After long debates and vexatious delays an agreement was reached in April, 1817, to reduce the forces of each power to four vessels and to limit their duties. With the exception of brief intervals, the United States vessel *Michigan* has long been the only American naval vessel on the lakes. Each country has indeed modern revenue cutters on the lakes, but war vessels for the sea are not allowed to be built by lake companies. This has caused some dissatisfaction, but the agreement has been, on the whole, very advantageous. For eighty years the vast commerce of the lakes has been perfectly safe without the rivalry of expensive armaments.

The political aspects of the homestead law agitation were vigorously presented by Prof. B. S. Terry, of the University of Chicago, who is elaborating a monograph upon this important subject. A very entertaining and instructive paper entitled "Light on the underground railroad" was read by Prof. W. H. Siebert, of Ohio State University, who has made extensive and original studies both of routes and men connected with the

escape of negro slaves to Canada. The old lines of escape traversed various States from New England to Iowa, and terminated at various points along the Canadian frontier. Maps and pictures were shown by Mr. Siebert that ought sometime to be reproduced. Among the photographs were those of escaped slaves now living in Canada, and pictures of various Quakers who harbored runaways, and even of the caves and houses where they found refuge along the lines of the underground railroad. It is computed that at least 29,000 fugitives found freedom by routes leading through Ohio. The curious manuscript record of an old Quaker was shown, indicating that forty-seven different runaways were sheltered at various times from April 14 to September 10, 1844. Many refugees did not go to Canada, but settled in friendly neighborhoods where they were protected by Covenanters and Methodists as well as by Quakers.

Dr. James Schouler, of Boston, read an excellent paper upon "Historical testimony." He said that our common law pays a delicate compliment to writers of history in permitting their works to be cited in court with something of the authenticity of official documents. This privilege should confirm us in the conviction that the truth of history is, above everything else, what historians should strive after; and writers should make all needful correction after publication, as opportunity offers or later knowledge comes to them. Nor can we pay the common law a better compliment in return for its flattering confidence than to adapt to our own use for investigation some of its familiar rules and methods for eliciting the truth from testimony. Primary and secondary evidence should be kept distinct in the mind; and we should consider the competency of each witness and his probable bias. We should also regard the presumptions and burden of proof where witnesses disagree, and respect at all times the judgment of history.

Two papers of biographical interest were presented. One was by Martin I. J. Griffin, of the American Catholic Historical Society in Philadelphia, upon "Commodore John Barry," concerning whom Mr. Griffin is writing a full biography. The second paper was by the Rev. Dr. W. O. Winslow, of Boston, upon the "Part and place of Governor Edward Winslow, in Plymouth Colony." The author paid special attention to the public services of Winslow in developing the territorial and colonizing policy of Massachusetts and in representing colonial

interests in England. In the united leadership of Brewster, Bradford, Winslow, and Standish lay the foundation of the Pilgrim State. In their peculiar work as statesman and soldier, Winslow and Standish displayed qualities as indispensable as those of the other two, and performed an even more distinctive part than they. One kept and promoted peace; the other prepared in peace for war.

Mr. Gaillard Hunt, of the Department of State, read a paper upon "Locating the capital." He alluded to Jefferson's famous dinner party given to Hamilton and the Potomac Members of Congress, and to the bargains made for delivering votes for placing the Federal city on the banks of the Potomac in return for votes for the assumption bill. Mr. Hunt described the extent of the District of Columbia and Washington's negotiations with the landowners, together with the work of the two chief surveyors, L'Enfant and Ellicott. Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, of Philadelphia, brought out some very interesting facts regarding the manuscript journals of the Continental Congress and the unpublished papers connected with its proceedings. There are various published editions of the journals, but all of them are inexact and incomplete. The editors often took liberties with the original text and left out very important parts of the original record. Dr. Friedenwald urged that steps be taken to secure a trustworthy and complete edition of these documents, which are fundamental in our Congressional and Revolutionary history.

"A plea for the study of the history of northern Europe" was made by Dr. A. C. Coolidge, of Harvard University. He showed the reasons why such study is of especial value to Americans. The importance of Russia in modern politics was emphasized. The antagonism of the German and the Slav is as intense as ever. The influence of the Scandinavians and the Slavs upon western countries is worthy of our attention. The endless variety of detail in the political history of Scandinavia, Poland, and Russia put us on our guard against the dangers of hasty generalization. Moreover, the constitutional development of these northern countries is full of suggestive interest.

A valuable study in comparative politics was that of Mr. Oswald G. Villard, of Harvard University, on "The German Imperial court," as compared with the American Supreme Court. Instead of 9 members the German court has 84, organ-

ized in ten senates, each presided over by a senate president and the whole by a president corresponding to our Chief Justice. Six of these senates deal wholly with civil cases, which must have passed through two State courts to reach the Imperial court. The other four senates deal with criminal cases which may be appealed direct from the State court next above the police justice, corresponding to the general sessions court in New York or the superior court in Massachusetts. All questions involving interstate relations, or those of a State to the Imperial Government, are wholly beyond the competence of the Imperial court and rest with the federal council.

A graphic study of "The French revolution as seen by the Americans of the eighteenth century," was read by Prof. Charles D. Hazen, of Smith College. A great variety of interesting evidence was drawn from American literature of the revolutionary period. Whichever side Americans adopted for the time being they adopted it with vehemence. Their attitude was marked by no greater moderation than that of the English or the French themselves. The French revolution left no one indifferent either in the Old World or in the New. Another paper of international interest was that by Dr. Frédéric Bancroft, of Columbia College, on "The French in Mexico and the Monroe doctrine." He described the attempt of France to acquire territory on this continent and to maintain a representative on the Mexican throne. During the civil war our Government refrained from interference, but immediately afterwards gave Louis Napoleon to understand that his forces must be withdrawn. Curiously enough, there was no mention of the Monroe doctrine in those days; but, as Mr. Bancroft pointedly said, it was probably understood as well then as now, perhaps better. Gen. Marcus J. Wright, of the War Records Office, described an interesting diplomatic incident in 1861, when President Lincoln and William H. Seward, our Secretary of State, obtained redress, through the American consul-general at Alexandria, from Mohammed Said, the Viceroy of Egypt, for an act of persecution against a Christian missionary in Upper Egypt.

At the closing session, which was attended by an appreciative audience, various reports and announcements were made. The treasurer's report, by Dr. C. W. Bowen, showed that the total assets of the Association now amount to nearly \$8,000. The