

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

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The twelfth annual meeting of this national society was held in New York, December 29-31, 1896, at Columbia University. It was generally agreed that this was one of the most successful conventions in the entire history of the Association. Not only was the attendance of actual members the largest recorded in recent years, but the sustained interest shown in the various sessions was most remarkable.

The inaugural address of Dr. Richard S. Storrs, president of the Association, was given Tuesday evening, December 29, in the New York Academy of Medicine, at 17 West Forty-third street. There, in a beautiful hall, adorned with historical portraits, early assembled a large and representative audience. After a grateful acknowledgment of the honor of an election to the presidency of the Association, Dr. Storrs announced as the subject of his address the contributions made by plain, uncelebrated men to the development of these United States. He chose three examples to illustrate his theme. The first was the story of Eleazar Wheelock, the founder of the Indian school which grew into Dartmouth College, the alma mater of some of the foremost men in the history of this country. Among the alumni were Daniel Webster, Rufus Choate, Salmon P. Chase, and George Ticknor. Dr. Storrs showed the influence of Dartmouth on the schools and churches of New England and upon the political and military life of the United States. Colonel Thayer, the father of the United States Military Academy at West Point, was a graduate of Dartmouth.

A second example of far-reaching pioneer work was that of an Ipswich Congregational minister, Dr. Manasseh Cutler, born in Connecticut in 1742. He was a chaplain during the

American Revolution, an accomplished man of science and letters, a good diplomatist and politician. When the Government was financially embarrassed after the War of Independence, when old soldiers were clamorous for back pay, Dr. Cutler was instrumental in negotiating for the sale of 5,000,000 acres of public land in the West to the Ohio Company, with 1,500,000 acres more to the Scioto Company, thus relieving the Government of \$3,500,000 debt. It was the social tact and good diplomacy of Dr. Cutler which persuaded the Southern Members of Congress to vote for the antislavery clause in the ordinance of 1787, with its fugitive slave clause for a quid pro quo. It was this famous ordinance which provided for free republican government, free soil, and popular education in the great Northwest, the territory now included in the great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. By this ordinance, which satisfied the demands of Eastern settlers represented by Dr. Cutler, the great West was anchored forever to the Eastern Seaboard States.

Dr. Storrs did not have time to describe in detail the services of Dr. Marcus Whitman in saving Oregon to the United States and in pushing our western boundary to the Pacific Ocean. He urged the Association to encourage biographical studies of those comparatively unknown men who did pioneer work for their country and made our national history possible. Some of the greatest Americans, like Franklin and Lincoln, sprang from the common people.

A paper which excited great interest and a good discussion was that of Prof. John W. Burgess, of Columbia University, whose subject was "The relation of political science and history." He began by defining and distinguishing between these two sciences. The phenomena of history must be conceived under the category of time; that is, in the order of antecedent and consequent. This, however, does not distinguish history from other sciences. The phenomena of history must also be conceived under the category of cause and effect. The form of thought that gives us the best test is the category of self-progression. Historical wisdom does not consist simply in knowing what has happened under given conditions, but also chiefly in correctly apprehending the variations, however slight, in the ever-changing conditions, and the increments the variations in the succeeding events have produced thereby. The historical basis is the true basis of progress, and it is com-

paratively worthless unless it produces the spirit of time progress. History is the progressive realization of the ideals of the human spirit. Political science, on the other hand, is the science of the nation, country, State, and is tending to become the science of the human world-state. Constitutional law is the realization of the doctrines of political science. Most men instinctively feel that the facts of political science are facts about government; but the science also comprehends the facts about sovereignty and liberty. Certain principles have now become recognized as parts of political science, and in their light we must look at the past. Professor Burgess concluded by saying that while there are parts of history which are not political science, and while there is an element in political science which is not strictly history, yet the two spheres so lap over one another and interpenetrate each other that they can not be distinctly separated. Political science must be studied historically and history must be studied politically in order to gain a correct comprehension of either separate theme.

This paper by Professor Burgess led to a lively discussion, which was begun by Prof. H. Morse Stephens, of Cornell University. He began by criticising political science as represented by the Oxford translation of a well-known German writer, Dr. J. C. Bluntschli. He said that Professor Burgess had given an answer to the question "What is Political Science?" but the answer was not altogether satisfactory. The political scientists claim too much for themselves. They cut up the imperial body of history, taking all the vital elements for themselves, and leave the rest as a so-called "residuum" for history. President Gates, of Amherst College, was inclined to take a somewhat practical and utilitarian view of the subject. Prof. Simeon Baldwin, of Yale University, said that the facts of history do not materially change, but the attitude of the human mind toward those facts undergoes marked changes with the progress of time.

The subject of the teaching of history occupied the attention of the New York meeting during an evening conference at Columbia University. The discussion was opened by Prof. H. B. Adams, of the Johns Hopkins University, who called attention to the popular methods of teaching history in England by means of reading circles under the direction of Oxford and Cambridge tutors and by means of summer meetings like those at Ochester and Cambridge, which he visited last summer.

The object lessons in English history afforded by pilgrimages to cathedral towns, ruined castles, and monasteries are most instructive. The speaker undertook to defend the Freeman motto that "History is past politics and politics are present history." He frankly admitted that all history is not past politics, but some history is. Political history is one of the most vital currents of the world's life. Without government and civic society there can be no lasting civilization or culture. But this contention does not imply that history is exclusively politics. It includes the development of religion, art, education, culture, civilization—in fact, the whole life of man in society. Perhaps the highest conception of history is sociological. It is the duty of the historian to show how human society came to be what it is to-day. History is the evolution of mankind. The German Droysen defined history as the self-knowledge of humanity.

Prof. E. Emerton, of Harvard University, thought that mottoes and definitions are dangerous, but proceeded to give an approximate definition which excluded any political bias. His definition laid stress upon the recorded facts of the past in their relation to great masses of men. Professor Emerton criticised the American tendency to seminary methods of teaching history as somewhat top-heavy. He said there ought to be in historical teaching three stages of progress, which may be roughly characterized as (1) the acquisition of facts or historical information; (2) the interpretation of proper understanding of facts, and (3) research, or discovery of new historical truth. Prof. Charles M. Andrews, of Bryn Mawr College, made an able plea for the study of general history, particularly of European progress after the fall of the Roman Empire. Professor McMaster, of the University of Pennsylvania, showed what could be accomplished in the teaching of American history, and outlined the results which a teacher ought to obtain with his class. Prof. J. H. Robinson, of Columbia University, read a suggestive paper on the teaching of modern European history from original sources.

Considerable discussion was occasioned by Professor Turner's excellent paper on "The West as a Field for Historical study," which was read by his friend, Mr. R. G. Thwaites. The contention was that Western history should be viewed in a large way as national and institutional history, and not merely as antiquarian or border history. The discussion was

carried on by Professor McLaughlin, of the University of Michigan, and Prof. Woodrow Wilson, of Princeton, both of whom made strong appeals for the independent treatment of Western history, instead of regarding it as an appanage of the East. Indeed, Professor McLaughlin contended that our national history can be best understood from Western points of view. It was always the consciousness of a vast Western inheritance which made national unity and republican expansion historic possibilities. Professor Wilson added a plea for the proper treatment of Southern history by men who really understand it and sympathize with it. He thought the Scotch-Irishman would be the coming historian, and said there is nothing for the Southerner to apologize for in writing Southern history. A man might as well quarrel with his own nature and that of his ancestors as for the true historian to find fault with the people he attempts to describe.

It is impossible in this connection to give abstracts of the various papers. The following is a rapid enumeration of the subjects and authors: (1) The Melanchthon Quartocentenary, by President E. D. Warfield, Lafayette College (a subject discussed by Prof. Henry M. Baird); (2) The Anti-Rent Episode in the State of New York, by Dr. David Murray; (3) A Know-Nothing Legislature, by Prof. G. H. Haynes (a curious anticipation of modern Populism); (4) Peale's Original Portrait of Washington (shown to be defaced, not destroyed), by Charles Henry Hart, who is editing for McClure's Magazine an interesting series of historical sketches and portraits; (5) The Use of History Made by the Framers of the Constitution, by Prof. E. G. Bourne, of Yale University, whose paper was discussed by Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, of Philadelphia, with special reference to the sources of our Congressional Government; (6) The Capture of Port Royal and Its First English Governor, by Gen. J. G. Wilson; (7) Schemes for Episcopal Control in the Colonies, by Arthur L. Cross, of Harvard University; (8) A Plea for the Study of Votes in Congress, by Dr. O. G. Libby, of the University of Wisconsin; (9) The Northern Lake Frontier During the Civil War, by J. M. Callahan, of Johns Hopkins University, a paper discussed by General Carrington; (10) Langdon Cheves and His Administration of the United States Bank, by Miss Louisa P. Haskell, of Radcliffe College, the only lady upon the programme, whose excellent paper and good reading inspired Dr. Storrs to tell a good story, "Why do we have

men?" (11) The Influence of the American Revolution on England's Government of her Colonies, by Prof. G. B. Adams, of Yale University; (12) The Government of Federal Territories in Europe and America, by E. C. Burnett, of Brown University; (13) Life of Medieval Students Illustrated by their Letters, by Prof. C. H. Haskins, of the University of Wisconsin. A paper by Gen. A. W. Greely was read by title. Two valuable manuscripts, by P. Lee Phillips, Library of Congress, came too late for insertion in the programme.

Prof. J. Franklin Jameson, of Brown University, chairman of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, established by the Executive Council one year ago, reported progress. The objects of the commission are the collecting of information regarding manuscript materials for American history in private hands, the preservation of these materials, and the making of them available to historical students. The commission reported a satisfactory year's work in the collection of information. Circulars have been sent out, largely to libraries and societies on one hand and to individual possessors on the other. The replies have been numerous and full, and the commission are in possession of a very large body of facts on their subject. They have also prepared a bibliography which will show, as nearly as possible, all the printed guides to archives, lists of their contents, or descriptions of other collections of manuscript historical material. This, it is hoped, will help all workers in American history.

The commission recommended the immediate beginning of the work of printing some of the most important and interesting of the materials which have been found. They hope to do for America what the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, established in 1869, has done for England. The publication of their first report, they expect, will increase public interest in their work and elicit many further responses to their inquiries. The commission propose to print, as a specimen of the work they intend to do, a collection embracing series coming from various geographical sections and illustrating various portions of our national history. From the Public Record Office in London they have obtained a series of transcripts of the letters to the Foreign Office from Phineas Bond, British consul at Philadelphia from 1787 to 1812; from Canada, a correspondence showing a curious intrigue of an anonymous party or parties in Pennsylvania, in 1756, with the French

Government; for New England, an interesting collection, from widely scattered repositories, of the letters of Stephen Higginson, of the Essex Junto; from the Middle States, a selection from the correspondence of Mahlon and Philemon Dickerson; for the South, extracts from the journal of Edward Hooker, exhibiting South Carolina legislation and politics in the years 1805 to 1808; for the West, the papers giving the history of the expedition against Louisiana planned in 1793 and 1794 by Edward Charles Genet and George Rogers Clark.

The most conspicuous social feature of the convention was the Association breakfast, in the banquet hall of the Windsor, just after the Wednesday morning session. Over one hundred subscribing members and their friends, including several ladies, enjoyed a delightful repast. Dr. R. S. Storrs, the president of the Association, sat at the high table with other speakers and one or two specially invited guests of the Association. Dr. Storrs said some good things for the encouragement of the society in its patriotic work. He thought there was great need of cultivating the historical spirit in a democratic people. We are too mercurial in our national temperament. We are subject to great exuberance of feeling in one direction or another. History tends to correct political faults by giving a certain ballast of temperament. The presiding officer called upon Mr. E. T. De Lancey, who represented the New York Historical Society; upon Mr. Winsor, vice-president of the Massachusetts Historical Society; upon Edward Eggleston, who is facile princeps in American culture history; President Gates, of Amherst College; Dr. William A. Dunning, of Columbia, and Prof. H. Morse Stephens, of Cornell. After the Association breakfast there was a meeting of the guarantors of the American Historical Review. Prof. W. M. Sloane was reelected one of the editorial board.

The following invitations to the American Historical Association were duly presented by the secretary:

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

*170 Second Avenue, New York, December 26, 1896.*

On behalf and in the name of the New York Historical Society, I have the honor to invite the members of the American Historical Association during their sojourn in this city to visit the library and museum of the New York Historical Society at any time between the hours of 9 a. m. and 5 p. m.

Yours, truly,

JOHN A. KING, *President.*