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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NEW JERSEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

VOL. I.

1845-1846.

NEWARK, N. J.:
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1847.

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Vol. I.

1845.

No. 1.

FOR many years the formation of a NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY had been urged in the public prints in various parts of the State, and at different periods had engaged the attention of gentlemen feeling a warm interest in the subject.

No definite measures, however, were taken to combine and carry into action these views of individuals until January, 1845; when it was suggested by gentlemen of Monmouth County that advantage should be taken of the assembling at Trenton, in that month, of a Convention on the subject of Common Schools, to organize, at the same time, an Historical Society.

In consequence of this suggestion and a subsequent notice in the Newark Daily Advertiser, a meeting of a few gentlemen was held at Trenton, on the 13th of January, of which the Hon. PETER D. VROOM was appointed Chairman, and the Rev. ELI F. COOLEY, Secretary: but a severe snow-storm having prevented the attendance of many who wished to be present, nothing was done except to appoint a Committee to prepare a draft of a Constitution and By-Laws, to be reported at a subsequent meeting to be held on the 27th of February.

On that day a number of gentlemen from different parts of the State assembled at the City Hall, in Trenton, and the Hon. P. D. VROOM, Chairman of the previous meeting, not being present, STACY G. PORTS, Esq., was chosen to preside, and Mr. JOSEPH P. BRADLEY was appointed Secretary.

FROM REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

PRINCETON, *February 18, 1845.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

It was with much pleasure that I received your letter of the 10th instant, informing me of the plan to form a New Jersey Historical Society, and of the appointment made by a number of gentlemen, in whose wisdom and patriotism I have great confidence, to meet in Trenton on the 27th instant, then and there, if practicable, to carry the plan into effect.

I have, for a long time, wished an association of this kind to be formed; and, indeed, several months ago, expressed to my respected neighbor and friend, Richard S. Field, Esquire, my decided opinion, and earnest desire that something of this kind should be attempted. I am greatly gratified to find that a number of my enlightened and public spirited fellow citizens have taken hold of the subject, and appear resolved to do something effectual. I sincerely hope that their attempt will be crowned with success, and that great good will result from the association which it is proposed to form.

I have often lamented, as a citizen of New Jersey, that the lives and doings of so many eminent men connected with our earlier, and even our later history, are so little known, and are likely soon, if not recorded, to pass into irrecoverable oblivion. The annals of New Jersey furnish a considerable list of men who flourished from fifty years to a century and a half ago; men of powerful, cultivated and active minds, of whom we ought to have more authentic memorials than we now possess. Names which ought still to live in the memories of all who respect talent and worth, have either sunk into forgetfulness, or are cherished only in the recollection of a few who have taken peculiar interest in the character and services of departed public servants.

It is time—high time—to awake to the importance of this subject, and, while we may, to gather up the fragments which remain, that as little as possible may be irrecoverably lost. I cannot doubt that there are several hundred families in this State, in which many important pamphlets and papers exist, of no real value to their possessors, which, if inquired after, would be cheerfully given to be deposited on the shelves of a society where they would be at once carefully preserved, and ultimately turned to some good account. Surely there are to be found somewhere among the descendants of the former Governors, Judges, and Legislators of New Jersey, for 150 years past, many curious and precious documents, which might

easily be brought to light, and placed in the possession of such a Society as I hope to see formed by the present generation of eminent men in our State. I think these eminent men owe this service to themselves, to their state, and to their common country.

If I were 25 years younger than I am, I would make a free offer of myself,—not only as one of your associates, but as one of your *reliable working men*, to tug at the oar of labor on your behalf. But being now far advanced in my 76th year, and having very many of the infirmities which usually attend that age gathering around me, I dare not promise anything but my good wishes, my fervent prayers for your success, and my disposition to cheer on those who are able and willing to work in your service. I fear it will not be in my power even to be present at the proposed meeting. I find so much inconvenience, and even danger in exposure to evening air, and to lodging out of my own house, that I am afraid of taking any liberties of this sort. But my heart will be with you: and if the smallest opportunity of serving your Institution should ever occur, it will give me cordial pleasure to avail myself of it. I will thank you to subscribe my name to the Constitution which may be formed, and to consider me as one of your enrolled members, and responsible for the pecuniary dues attached to membership.

I take for granted that the collected wisdom at your appointed meeting will need no suggestion from me in reference to any point connected with your proposed Constitution. Yet, such is my deep interest in the cause, that I cannot forbear to throw out some hints in regard to three particulars.

1. I hope you will provide a shelf in your depository, and a pretty ample one, for documents relating to *Ecclesiastical history*. You must not set this suggestion down to the score of *professional bias*—far less to any desire for connecting *Church and State*, which may God forever avert from every part of our land! But because, in the progress of a state, Ecclesiastical matters are often found to be closely connected with its improvement. Suppose the future historian of New Jersey should take a notion to construct his work on the plan of Doctor *Henry's History* of Great Britain, he would find such a department in your collection not only important but indispensable.

2. Try, by all means, to have in every county in the state, a devoted, enthusiastic, active friend of your cause, who will take a deep interest, and spare no pains in searching out, and collecting every fragment in his county which may be adapted to promote the design

of the Society. Search for men who are *never idle*; who *love labor*; and, above all, who love to labor for the *public good*.

3. Will it not be desirable to connect with your plan some attention to the *Natural History* of the State? Who would consider the history of South Carolina or Georgia as well written, which should say nothing about the introduction of *Rice* and *Cotton* into those States respectively; or that of Pennsylvania, which should take no notice of her inexhaustible stores of *Coal* and *Iron*?

One word more. I have observed, in regard to all the literary and scientific societies with which I have ever been connected, that, however numerous the members, some dozen or two of them performed almost all the work. It will be so in this instance. I mention the fact for the purpose of suggesting to those who will be members of the New Jersey Historical Society, that those of them who love the cause which it is intended to subserve, and who are resolved zealously to bear it forward, must not rely upon others, or expect much from others; but be ever on the watch to do all they can themselves, as if ~~they~~ were the only members. May a blessing rest upon this enterprise! Sincerely and cordially,

Your friend and brother,

SAMUEL MILLER.

FROM HON. JAMES PARKER.

PERTH AMBOY, 18 Feb. 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have duly received your letter of the 10th inst. requesting my attendance at Trenton on the 27th inst. at the intended formation of an Historical Society for this State. I do not know that it will be in my power to attend, but you have my hearty good wishes in favor of the object which it is to promote, and any thing in my power will be gladly done to assist in its accomplishment.

The History of New Jersey is unknown even to her own sons; yet she has much to be proud of, and nothing that I know of to make us blush for her, in the oldest times or in those revolutionary struggles in which her people bore so conspicuous and honorable a part.

It is an honorable pride which would lead us to put upon record the scattered and forgotten evidences of our History, which would prove ~~as~~ worthy of a high place in the estimation of the world.

With my best wishes for the success of the undertaking,

I am, my dear sir, yours very truly,

JAMES PARKER.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

IN PRINCETON,

SEPTEMBER 4, 1845,

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

AN ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE N. J. HISTORICAL SOCIETY :

WE are associated and assembled for a noble purpose ; a purpose not unworthy of our regard, whether as Christians, as Patriots, or as friends of liberal knowledge. History is the record of God's providence in the Church and in the world. Of course, God is in history. And if, as alleged by an English poet, as illustrious for the wisdom and piety of his sentiments as for the vigor of his imagination, it be true, that "an undevout astronomer is mad ;"—it may, with equal truth, be said, that an undevout student of history is demented. He forgets its nature, its end, and its great and precious lessons ; and is just as much to be pitied as he who can gaze on the beauties and glories of creation, without ever recognizing either the wisdom or the benevolence of their almighty Maker.

Of faithful history it is not easy to over rate the importance. It was quaintly said by one of the kings of *Aragon*—"Dead men are our best instructors." This is only saying, in other words, that a large proportion of the best practical lessons of life are drawn from history. With living men, and present measures, there is, ordinarily, connected so much passion and prejudice, that we are not so apt as we ought to be to receive instruction from them. But when men are dead, and the ardent feelings commonly connected with their lives, and actions, and parties have passed away, we are then prepared to learn from them the important lessons which their actions, and the consequences of those actions often so impressively inculcate. Indeed there are many characters as well events which, I suppose, are never truly and impartially understood but through the medium of history, and sometimes of remote history. It really appears as if it were necessary, in a multitude of cases, that the rays of truth should pass through the prism of time before they can be so separated and arranged as to

impress an appropriate and faithful image on the field of vision. 'The eloquent and philosophical *Cicero* did not over rate the value of faithful history, when he said—"Not to know what happened before you were born, is to be always a child." But by a much higher authority it is enjoined—*Remember the days of old ; consider the years of many generations ; ask thy fathers, and they will shew thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee.** And in accordance with this divine injunction, it is worthy of notice, that, of all the inspired Scriptures, considerably more than one half is in the historical form.

"History," as one strongly expresses it, "is the memory of the human race. Now let any man reflect, for a moment, what would be his situation if he remembered nothing. Let him extend this reflection to his family, to his neighbors, to his nation, to his species. The result is frightful beyond the power of imagination to paint." I had almost said, the bliss of heaven would cease to be bliss if memory were destroyed.

Hence that ardent and inextinguishable thirst for historical information which ever has prevailed and ever will prevail in enlightened and elevated minds. And hence, too, taking advantage of this thirst, so natural and so prevalent, the wonderful popularity of that immense mass and variety of *fictitious history*, which forms one of the distinguishing features of the last century ; and which has now reached an extent and diffusion truly alarming to the enlightened, and especially to the Christian philanthropist. The great evil of fictitious history is, that it stimulates unnaturally ; and, under the guise of entertainment, imparts illusion, intoxication, and finally, (as in the case of physical intoxication) debility and disease. The person who, at any age, and especially in the morning of life, when the bodily constitution is forming, instead of daily taking a proper quantity of wholesome food, should undertake to live habitually on confectionary, spices and ardent spirits, would undoubtedly be considered as acting an infatuated part. By taking this course, many a precious youth, naturally sound, athletic and promising, has been converted into a feeble and miserable valetudinarian, and been brought to a premature grave. In like manner, it is no less certain that the influence of fictitious history on the minds of those who are inordinately devoted to it, is deeply pernicious. It would, perhaps, be difficult to assign any single cause which has contributed so much to produce that lightness and frivolity which so remarkably characterize the literary taste of the day in which we live, as the unexampled multiplication, and the astonishing

* Deuteronomy, xxxi., 7.

popularity of this class of writings. They discourage the acquisition of solid learning; they fill the mind with vain, unnatural and delusive ideas; they deprave the moral taste; they are often framed in such a manner as to be systematic, and sometimes ingenious apologists for error and crime. They often exhibit virtue, and especially piety, as contemptible; and vice as attractive, honorable and triumphant. The omnipotence of Love over all obligations and all duties, is often zealously maintained; and the extravagance of criminal passion represented as the effect of amiable sensibility. Surely there is no risk of error in saying, that the habitual reader of such fiction is in a fair way to enervate his own mind, and to banish from it all masculine thinking, all correct sentiment, and all solid knowledge. A century, or even three quarters of a century ago, when you met with a diligent reader, an insatiable devourer of books, you might generally calculate on finding some robustness of intellect, or, at any rate, a large and valuable mass of information. Then the great standard masters of English literature were, as a matter of course, valued, studied, and made the basis of sentiment and diction among all the sober and reflecting, who laid any claim to literary character. Now, we have far more readers, and more incessant, unwearied readers, with far less of intellectual aliment and strength. Now we can shew thousands of men and women, young and old, who exhaust all the circulating libraries within their reach; who are, perhaps, seldom or never seen, out of company, but with a book in their hands; who, at the same time, if they have ever heard of such authors as *Bacon*, and *Shakspeare*, and *Milton*, and *Addison*, and *Pope*, and *Goldsmith*, and *Young*, and *Thompson*, and *Johnson*, and *Cowper*, have, perhaps, never read a page of any of their writings; and who have never, it may be, drawn from all the millions of pages which they have poured over, one solitary shred of valuable information; one sober dictate of practical wisdom; one solid attainment fitted to prepare them either for living or for dying; to act their part well in this world, or to get ready to enjoy that which is to come.

Now whatever has a tendency to break the charm of this love of fiction, and to give a taste for substantial, practical realities, cannot fail of doing good as far as it operates. We have associated and are come hither to promote the study of real history; the history of our own country, especially of our own State; to recommend an object of attention which cannot fail to exert a salutary influence on all, young and old, who engage in it; and which, while it benefits ourselves, like every other laudable pursuit, reflects an important benefit on the

community, which it is equally our privilege and our duty to serve. Let me assure my hearers, and especially the younger part of them, that if they were to devote an hundred years to the exhaustless stores of fictitious history, and should become perfect masters of this large department of English literature, they would, at the end of this long period, have made no attainment adapted to make them either wiser or happier. But every acquisition made in the knowledge of genuine history, is, in all cases, so much laid up for promoting the duties and enjoyments of life.

The plan of promoting any particular branch of knowledge by forming a permanent Society for its culture, was early adopted. In the reign of Charlemagne, in the eighth century, when the cause of liberal knowledge had a small and temporary revival, we read of a Society of learned men who associated under the patronage of that celebrated monarch, for the purpose of aiding each other in the pursuit of literature and science. The Society, however, was small and feeble, and, as might have been expected, accomplished little. Scarcely any thing more seems to have been attempted until eight centuries afterward, when some societies of this kind began to be formed in Italy. The first effective impulse for forming such Associations upon any thing like a useful plan, seems to have been given by the publication of the *New Atalantis* of Lord Chancellor Bacon, early in the 17th century. Since that time they have been multiplied to an extent which it would be both tedious and useless to attempt to enumerate in detail.

In forming the "NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY," our movement has been late and tardy, far in the rear of several of our sister States. But I congratulate you, my respected Associates, that the movement has been made, and that it has commenced with so much promise of vigor and success. True, indeed, it has been delayed too long for him who now addresses you, who, in the weakness of declining age, can scarcely hope to be able to co-operate with his fellow-members in any other way than by his good wishes and his prayers. This, however, is a matter of such extremely small importance, that it would never have occurred to him as a proper subject of reference, did it not afford an opportunity of expressing the earnest and delightful hope, that, when those who have nearly finished their course, shall withdraw from the field of toil, many a youthful laborer, of robust body and mind, and patriotic heart will arise to take their places, and do more and better than we, their predecessors, have ever done.

Instead of selecting any particular point in the history of our

State, written or unwritten, on which to dilate, I shall rather employ the hour allotted to this exercise, in offering some counsels, or rather suggestions, which, if acted upon, would tend greatly to the promotion of the cause which we are associated to prosecute. And

I. Allow me to suggest, that, in each county of the State, some enlightened and devoted student of the antiquities of New Jersey, be stirred up to undertake to write THE HISTORY OF HIS OWN COUNTY in as much minute detail as his materials will enable him.

The doctrine of the *division of labor* is one of the most established and important principles for augmenting the *quantity*, as well as improving the *quality* of human productions, both intellectual and mechanical. The amazing benefits which it has accomplished in the manufacturing world, are familiar to us all. May it not be also made to a considerable degree, available in the department of literature? Many a man may be willing and competent to tell the story of his Town or County, who would shrink from a larger and more complex undertaking. His very familiarity with every hill, and valley, and stream, and edifice, public and private, together with all the popular traditions concerning every thing—all familiar to his mind as household words, would undoubtedly give him advantages in his investigations which an inhabitant of another district could not possess. Further; in such an undertaking, every neighbor may be made a coadjutor in the enterprize; and even the garrulity of age may be turned to valuable account. Nothing more is necessary to the happy accomplishment of such a contribution to the historical wealth of the State, than that there be *one mind* in the district supposed, alive to the importance of the object; ever wakeful to seize and appropriate every particle of information within reach, and to press every body into an aid in the service. Such a mind may accomplish wonders whenever it undertakes in good earnest to labor.

I speak of the history of particular portions of the State in detail. It is, no doubt, familiar to the minds of those who have paid any attention to the history of the State in which we live, that several of the districts which compose it received a *stamp* at their first settlement, which conferred upon them a *peculiar character*, the effects of which remain, in some measure, to the present day. These ought to be recognized and carefully studied: and as no man is qualified to write the life of another, who has not succeeded in entering deeply into the proper estimate of his spirit, his talents, his governing principles, and his sphere of action; so none is prepared to write the history of *East Jersey*, who has not learned fully to understand, and

justly to appreciate the character of the first settlers, their origin, their opinions, and the motives and means of their settlement.* In like manner, the history of *West Jersey* forms an aspect of a very different character for the portrait painter. In fact, if we had a faithful unvarnished history of half a dozen of the earliest designated and most important Counties of the State, we should be amply furnished with the raw materials for a perfect history of New Jersey. One of the venerable Vice Presidents of our Society has performed a service of this kind, for which, as a Jerseyman, as well as a member of this Association, I feel much his debtor.† If some like-minded individual in every County in the State could be prevailed upon to take in hand the history of his own district, with as much minuteness and extent as his materials would allow, the general historian would be furnished with ample materials for going to work without delay.

II. Another important enterprize in aid of our historical cause, which I would earnestly recommend, is, that every pastor of a church in our State, of every denomination, should forthwith engage in the task of writing the history of his own congregation, and as soon as it can be carefully and advisedly prepared, committing it to the press.

The history of the several religious Societies in any State, is, virtually, the history of that State. As any people are in regard to the church of God, so they will commonly be found to be in regard to intelligence, to literature, to secular order and improvement, and to social happiness. Of course, he who faithfully elucidates the rise, progress and condition of ecclesiastical matters in any community, can never fail to pour a flood of light on the great interests of knowledge, civilization, wealth, prosperity, and social strength and enjoyment in that community. Whether he intend it or not, if he be skilful and faithful, he will have accomplished all this. If, therefore, it were in my power to stir up every pastor in the United States to write the history of his own congregation, and either print it, or send it, for safe keeping, to some appropriate depository, I should consider myself as rendering an essential service to the history of the United States, and as conferring a great benefit on our common country. And if I could, by this discourse, reach the ears and the hearts of all the ministers of religion in New Jersey, and prevail upon each one

* Since the delivery of this Address the first volume of the Society's Collections has been published, containing "East Jersey under the Proprietary Governments," by William A. Whitehead, and "The Model of the Government of East New Jersey," by George Scot of Pitlochrie, originally printed in 1685.

† "An Historical Account of the first settlement of Salem, in *West Jersey*, by JOHN FENWICK, Esquire, Chief Proprietor of the same, by R. G. JOHNSON.

to engage in the proposed enterprise with zeal, and without the loss of an hour, I should feel as if the task of this day had not been in vain.

I say, without the loss of an hour ; for every passing hour jeopard, if it do not destroy some precious document, the loss of which may essentially obscure truth, if it do not indirectly minister to error. That raging element, which pays no respect either to the policy of insurance, or to the claims of literature ; or the silent and less terrific corrosions of time, are, every day, placing beyond the reach of the lover of history materials which, however important, can never be recovered.

Here, then, in this peculiar and appropriate manner, every pastor in the State may help our Society, and, in so doing, may help himself, and, it may be, help the cause of religion, to an extent which he may not be able now to appreciate. Let every one, then, in the sacred office immediately commence the work. His inquiries will tend to wake up his own mind, as well as the minds of those parishioners and neighbors whom he may engage as auxiliaries in the collection of materials. If any ask me for a sample of what is to be desired on this subject—I answer—Let every pastor do for his own church what has been so well done for the First Church of Elizabeth-Town, and we shall have no more to wish in regard to that point.*

III. Let me go one step further, and entreat some competent person, who feels a sufficient interest in the subject, to form and publish a complete history of every College, every Academy, every High School, in short, every established Literary Institution, for either males or females, within the limits of New Jersey. We are, perhaps, so familiar with many of these Institutions respectively, that we feel as if we knew every thing about them that is important or interesting. But we forget that our children know less than ourselves ; that even now a thousand questions concerning them may be asked, which we ourselves may be wholly unable to answer ; and that, in a little while, if we continue to neglect the history of these Institutions, the number of these unanswerable questions will greatly increase. There are points even in the history of the College in the immediate vicinity of which we are assembled, though a hundred years have not fully elapsed since it was founded, which it were greatly to be wished that our venerable Fathers had recorded with more distinctness, and transmitted to us with more satisfactory precision.

Few understand the real importance of these historical records but those who have had occasion to explore the recesses of some obscure cavern of antiquity. In such an investigation, how precious is every

**Notes, Historical, and Biographical, concerning Elizabeth-Town, &c.* By NICHOLAS MURRAY, D.D. 1844. 12mo., pp. 166.

ray of light ! how invaluable every ascertained date, or prominent fact, which either accident or design may have left on record ! It were well if, in this respect, we could be induced to take counsel from the land of our Fathers. *There*, we know, that not only every county and every town, but every cathedral, almost every parish church, every college, every castle, every important school, and even every conspicuous ruin has been honored with its appropriate history, drawn up sometimes at great length, and with laborious accuracy, and often embellished with all the refined and splendid illustrations which the arts of painting and engraving can supply.

Happy would it be for the interests of liberal knowledge in our State, if every seminary of learning, every permanent public institution should find its appropriate and faithful historian, before its annals shall have passed beyond recovery. . . Let none say, of any public institution or place that it is too inconsiderable to employ the historian's pen.—When Romulus first established his little band of followers on the Palatine Hill, he probably never thought of recording the fact ; nor did any of his posterity think of such a record for centuries afterward. But had they been able to look into futurity, how different would their estimate have been ! How easy had it been to forestall all the doubt, speculation and controversy which, for more than twenty centuries have been wasted on the question concerning the foundation of the "Eternal City" !

There are few States in our Union the topical history of which is more closely interwoven with the story of our Revolutionary contest than that of New Jersey. The hills, the vallies, the towns, the public edifices, and even the otherwise obscure hamlets of a large part of our state, abound with memorials which bear a similar relation to the story of that great struggle by which the God of armies gave independence to our beloved country, that the shores of the Mediterranean do to the early history of the human race.

IV. There can be no doubt that the examination of our colonial Laws, and the early records of our colonial Courts, would furnish many facts deeply interesting to the students of the history of New Jersey.

We have heard often and much of the "Blue Laws" of Connecticut, and of the trial and "hanging of Witches" in Massachusetts. What disclosures a careful examination of our own early annals might make in these respects, I am not prepared to say ; but I do say, that my early inquiries in another State, many years ago, satisfied me that some of the early colonial statutes of, at least *New York* and *Virginia*, were quite as intensely "blue" in some of their aspects as those of Connecticut, and that, with regard to trials and executions for

witchcraft, they were by no means confined to Massachusetts ; to say nothing of the still more numerous and quite as tragic scenes connected with that alleged crime which took place in Old England, about the same time, as well as a little before, and in which so great and good a man as Lord Chief Justice Hale officially participated. The truth is, the more we become acquainted with the history of our own State, the less we shall be disposed to indulge either wonder or censure at the early history of our sister States. If this suggestion be worthy of regard, then every Attorney and Counsellor at Law in our State may help us essentially, if he be only imbued with the spirit of a zealous and vigilant antiquary. A spirit, by the way, the indulgence of which may prepare him, not only to be an efficient auxiliary in our Association, but also to be a more enlightened and a more able professional advocate as long as he lives. Let me now descend

V. Another step lower in detail, and advise every individual, and especially every young man who wishes and aims to be something among his fellow-men, to keep up, by a *faithful diary*, the *passing history of his own life*.

The keeping a *diary*, and, indeed, the whole business of *autobiography* in every form, may, by levity or vanity, be made superlatively ridiculous ; or, by wisdom and fidelity be made to answer a most important purpose in forming the character, and regulating the life. The benefit which such a diary affords in after life, to him who keeps it, in the facts which it records ; the dates which it fixes ; and the numberless items of information which it secures for review, can be fully understood only by one who has made the experiment. And, what is worthy of notice, the more eminent and important the individual afterward becomes, the more precious to himself is such a record of his early life ; and, of course, the more precious to those who survive him. In the course of a long life, I have known such diaries to settle many important historical questions ; to terminate perplexing controversies ; to prevent law suits ; and to convey and perpetuate an amount of information which may be of inestimable value to individuals, to families, and, in some cases, to the whole community.

Nor is this all : the very keeping of such a diary is adapted to exert a salutary influence on the mind of him who keeps it. He who daily calls himself to an account for the manner in which he spends the day ; who makes a careful record of all its employments ; and who is constrained, for this purpose, often to "consider his ways," to deal much in self-inspection, and self-examination, and to ponder on what he has done, and is still called to do—cannot fail of being profited by such a task. If nobody else should ever derive benefit from his diary, he will,

assuredly, be himself a gainer by it. He who faithfully keeps such a "day book" of his life, cannot be a frivolous or disorderly person. In spite, I had almost said, of himself, he must lead a life, in some measure, systematic and regular. I do not assert that the experience of others has been in no case different; but I have never personally known any one who faithfully and constantly kept a daily record of his life, who was not a sober liver, an honored citizen, and a public benefactor.—We are told, indeed, that Lord *Byron*, with all his eccentricity and profligacy, constantly kept a diary. But the moral as well as the intellectual anomalies of that man's character were so enormous, nay so perfectly monstrous, that the usual estimates of human nature are found utterly at fault when his career comes into view.

I speak in the presence of a large body of young men, enjoying the advantages of the best mental culture. I will indulge the hope that a large portion of them are governed by a spirit of elevated emulation, who "seek," as Lord Chancellor Bacon expresses it, "to be eminent among able men." This, Bacon pronounces to be "a great task; a task which cannot be rightly pursued, without, in itself, conferring a public benefit." To every young man fired with any measure of this noble ambition, I would say, Commence from this hour to keep a faithful record of your daily employments. You cannot anticipate the amount of its utility, and the higher you may rise hereafter in honor and usefulness, the more precious will this record be found.—With regard to *others*, in such a body of young men, (I hope it is a small proportion of their number)—who, as the same illustrious writer expresses it,—aim at nothing but to be "a figure among cyphers."—What are they but a blot on all honorable reputation,—an incubus on their country's honor?

You will not, of course, consider me as advising *EVERY* young man, without discrimination, to record his daily doings. By no means. For the mere *fruges consumere nati*—who love neither knowledge, nor any thing else that is good—for *them* to attempt to keep an honest journal of their lives, would be a mockery of good sense, not worth the ink and paper employed in its construction, and, if faithful, capable only of recording their own shame.

Fancy to yourselves for a moment, a specimen of the contents of a diary kept by *such* a student. Think of the following as a quotation from it. "Had a little conflict to-day with the College authority. Was frowned upon and reproved by the President for using disrespectful language and conduct in the class. Mem. I must take the first opportunity to insult the President, and to shew him that I consider such conduct on his part as not to be borne by a young man of

spirit." Or again, suppose we imagine such an entry as this—"Have been for sometime more and more displeased with the College, and my connection with it. The Faculty are so tenacious in insisting on diligent study and good order,—for neither of which I have any taste, that I could not any longer endure it. Besides, those vulgar fellows called *creditors*, have been, for a number of weeks past, so incessantly following me with their duns—conduct which has always appeared to me a thing of exceedingly bad taste,—that I have had no peace of mind for weeks. I, therefore, took 'French leave' of the Institution this morning, before day light, and happily escaped Faculty, Creditors and all; and now feel myself an honorable freeman." I ask again, can we imagine a diary, kept by a student in this or any other College, to furnish such an extract as that which you have heard? Never! Never! Why? Because no one who really kept such a record, ever did such things.

Do you wonder, then, my respected Associates, that I earnestly recommend to every man who has a spark of noble emulation burning in his bosom, and especially to every young man pursuing a liberal education, with a view to rising in the world, to keep a daily faithful record of his employments, his attainments, and his plans and habits of living. I should be at a loss to mention any thing, short of real Religion, more likely to fix the attention; to generate habits of industry and order; to inspire a sense of responsibility; and thus to prepare for acting a useful part on the great theatre of life.

From all that has been said, I trust it will appear, that it is in the power of every class, and of all ages of our fellow citizens to help us in the great cause for which we are banded together. Not only those who occupy public stations, and who are accustomed to act for the community as well as for themselves; not only the aged, many of whom are laden with the treasures of tradition; but every farmer, every merchant, every mechanic, every minister of the gospel, every teacher of youth, nay, every youth himself who desires to cherish a taste for liberal knowledge, and for elevated action, may yield solid aid in the cause in which we are engaged; and, in so doing, they will never fail to help themselves. But it is to be deplored that, although the field is so widely extended, so endlessly diversified, and so plainly open for laborers, so few are disposed to enter it, and partake in gathering the harvest, "*Manus desunt poscentibus arvis.*" Ours will be the task to inform all around us *how* they may help, and to *excite* them to labor. Cannot the Executive Committee, as one means of giving impulse to our machinery, engage, in each County in the State, an enlightened, public spirited individual, who would take pleasure in becoming a

centre of influence, and of deposit for our Society, who, as he moved about among his neighbors, would delight in giving to every one with whom he met, an impulse, a lesson, and a task ; and who would take care to return from every excursion, whether of business or of pleasure, laden with some memorials of the olden time.

To these suggestions I beg permission to add some remarks on two points which appear to me to be worthy of notice, and of no little practical importance, in entering on our labors as a Historical Society.

I. The first is, that we *guard with sacred care against suffering our Institution to be pressed into the service of party politics*. The spirit of conflict between political parties is one of the most reckless, blinding, unrelenting, all-grasping, and all-devouring spirits that ever agitated the human mind. There is nothing too sacred to be perverted by this spirit, and made subservient to its most nefarious projects. Now if there be any human association which ought, with scrupulous care, to hold itself aloof from the influence of this spirit, it is that which is here assembled. Professing to be associated for the purpose of collecting and recording **FACTS—SIMPLE FACTS**—whatever may be their import, and on whomsoever they may bear—how incongruous, nay, how dishonest, for such an Association to lend itself to the prejudices, the sinister purposes, and the violence of political partizans, whose very element it is to make truth subservient to the honor of favorite names, and to the schemes of lawless ambition !

The spirit of the *Crusades*, which pervaded and convulsed Europe, in the eleventh and following centuries, and which drained Western Christendom of so many millions of her population and her treasures, was a tremendous spirit. It was blind, fierce, and utterly fanatical ; but it was *honest*. I speak now of the *earlier stages* of that great and wide-spread Mania. It was *honest*, that is, the great mass of the leaders and the led really meant what they said. I wish it were possible, with truth, to say the same of the genuine spirit of political party, especially in its more concentrated and malignant forms. In its warfare against truth—simple, pure truth—it is really an awful spirit. Now the discovery and establishment of simple, unadulterated truth is the great object of our association. With *us* every fact and every character should be examined and recorded with the rigid conscientiousness of **MEN ON OATH**. Be not over confident, my respected Associates, that you will never be importuned to depart from this principle : but I would deliberately say, rather **DISBAND**, than yield to an influence so utterly subversive of the very first principles of your organization.

II. The second caution to which I beg leave to call your attention, is, that, in reading modern historians, in the English language, especially those prepared for popular use, in our own country, it is important to be on our guard against the mistakes and the confusion arising from the want of distinction between the *old and new style in Chronology*.

It is well known that *Julius Cæsar*, a few years before the incarnation of Christ, finding the Roman Calendar in a state of deplorable disorder, assembled a number of learned men at Rome, who, after long and careful deliberation on the subject, applied a correction which was deemed sufficiently accurate to assume a systematic character. They made the year to consist of 365 days and 6 hours. This is between 11 and 12 minutes more than the true solar year; so that, under the operation of this system, in 130 years, a full day accumulated above the accurate estimate. The consequence was, that, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, it was found that the Calendar had gotten wrong by the accumulation of 10 days. To rectify this disorder, the Roman Pontiff adopted similar means to those to which *Julius Cæsar* had resorted sixteen centuries before. He collected a number of learned men in his Capital, and, by their counsel, framed a plan for disposing of the supernumerary days which had already accumulated, and to prevent, by a judicious interposition of leap years, any such accumulation in future.* The Calendar, thus corrected, was called the *new style*, and is that system of Chronology by which we are now governed. This new mode of reckoning commenced in Rome, as is generally known, in 1582. It went into operation in some of the Roman Catholic States immediately, and in all of them without the loss of much time. The Protestant States were slow in receiving it; nor were they simultaneous in adopting it. Great Britain did not recognize it as regulating her Calendar until 1752; that is, *one hundred and seventy years* after its original construction. This, of course, led to a very serious discrepancy, during the greater part of two centuries, between the system of dating on the part of British and American writers, and those who were subject to the Roman Catholic States of Europe. It will scarcely be believed, unless by one whose attention has been particularly drawn to the

* It must not be supposed that the Reformation of the Calendar in the time of Pope Gregory, assumed and adopted the *precise* arrangement which obtained in the time of *Julius Cæsar*. The truth is, that, while the general principles of the *Cæsarian* plan of correction were adopted, it was determined, for ecclesiastical reasons, that the Equinox should be restored to the same day of the month of March on which it fell at the *Council of Nice*. Had the correction in 1582 been made with strict reference to the former system, the supernumerary days thrown away must have amounted to at least *twelve*, instead of *ten*, as the slightest computation will demonstrate.

subject, what a wonderful amount of *anachronism* in the pages of some of our most popular, and indeed excellent historical writers, has grown out of this diversity of chronological reckoning. Sometimes in the same extended narrative; on the same page; nay, within half a dozen lines of each other, we find them, in some dates of the same story, following the French, Spanish and Portuguese writers, all of whom adopted the new style, subsequently to 1582; and, in other dates, following the British authorities, who, up to 1752, were always governed by the old style; or the dates of the Protestants of Germany, Denmark, &c., who adopted the *new style* at different periods. And, in some cases, these are so strangely mixed up together, as very seriously to mislead all but the most careful readers, and, indeed, even these readers have rarely at hand the means of preventing their being misled, and of conducting them to accurate results. This difference of reckoning is never less than ten or eleven days, which, in many cases of controverted chronology, may be highly important. But in some cases, for reasons which I will not now stop to explain, it may import a difference of more than a year, which may lead to error not a little mischievous, as well as perplexing. It ought to be borne in mind that these discrepancies in *dates* have crept into the works of some of our best historians. They are to be found in the work of the faithful and laborious *Smith*, the respected historian of our own State. They are to be found in some of the best manuals prepared for our Academies and Schools: and, indeed, it is no easy matter either to detect or avoid them, without a degree both of skill and vigilance in Chronology which is seldom possessed.

Such, my respected Associates, is the great field in which we are called to labor, and in which it will be our policy, as well as our duty to engage as many co-workers as we can find or make. But while we strive to engage the co-operation of as many as possible, let each one labor as if all depended on himself. In every efficient and useful Association with which it has been my privilege to be connected, in the course of a long life, the mass of the work has been done by a few men, who had both a taste and a zeal for labor. Let each of us aim to be *such* a member of this body—ever at work—ever stimulating others to work,—but resolving that whatever else may fail, the work, by Divine help, shall not cease, but go on. One of the most honorable characteristics of a genuine Patriot, and especially of a Christian Patriot, is, that he is a **WORKING MAN**—ever planning and laboring for the enlargement of the field of knowledge, and ever willing to exert himself and make sacrifices for promoting the improvement and happiness of his fellow men.