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NOVEMBER MEETING.

A stated meeting was held on Thursday, November 10th, at 11 o'clock, A.M., the President in the chair.

The record of the preceding meeting was read.

The Librarian read his list of donors for the past month.

The Corresponding Secretary read a letter of acceptance from Mr. C. J. Hoadly, of Hartford.

The President read the following letter from Mr. Hoadly :—

HARTFORD, Nov. 2, 1870.

HON. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, Boston.

DEAR SIR, — I have directed Mr. S. S. Crosby, of 240 Washington Street, to present to the Massachusetts Historical Society a view of the once famous Newgate of Connecticut, taken from an old copper-plate, now in the possession of Mr. Samuel Hubbard, of this city. When the plate was engraved, or by whom, I am unable to say ; but it must have been done before 1802, because in that year the picket fence was replaced by a stone wall.

I visited Newgate last summer. The building in the centre still exists, but enlarged, and is occupied as a dwelling. There is a range of buildings on the south and west sides of the enclosure, which are not represented in the plan. Perhaps they were not built when the plate was cut.

The plate seems to be little known. I have conversed with several aged persons brought up in Simsbury and Granby, near the prison, who had never seen nor heard of it. Neither Noah A. Phelps nor R. H. Phelps, — both of whom have published histories of Newgate, — seem to have been aware of the existence of this view, for it is not mentioned in their books. . . .

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

CHARLES J. HOADLY.

He also communicated, from Count A. de Circourt, a copy of his interesting review of Dean Stanley's Memorials of Canterbury, as originally printed in the "Revue Brittanique."

Our associate, Dr. Dexter, presented a copy of a book, of which he is the author, entitled "The Church Polity of the Pilgrims, the Polity of the New Testament."

The President read a letter from our associate, John Foster Kirk, the author of "Charles the Bold," saying that he had changed his place of residence to Philadelphia, and therefore had ceased to be a member of the Society.

The President announced a new number of Proceedings (No. VII.), embracing the transactions of the Society for the months of June, July, August, and September, of this year.

He also called attention to a Parliamentary Blue Book, presented to him by Mr. Richard Almack, of Long Melford, County Suffolk, being the "First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts," appointed to search for documents in possession of private persons.

Mr. GEORGE T. DAVIS gave an account of the recent discovery of an original portrait of Sir William Phipps, in possession of a family in Boston: —

The discovery was the result of inquiries instituted by a native of Maine, Mr. Samuel J. Bridge, who was desirous of obtaining such a portrait, or a copy of it, for the State House at Augusta. Inquiries made through our Minister, of the Mulgrave family in England, in the mistaken idea that Sir William was connected with that family, were of course unsuccessful. A communication, published in a Portland paper, brought out the fact that a portrait, said to be of Sir William, was in the possession of a family of the name of Blackstone, formerly resident in Portland, and now in Boston, tracing its descent to Danforth Phipps, who was born in 1711, and of whom the tradition is that he was a relation of Sir William.

The owners of the portrait have a family Bible, printed in 1710, containing the usual family records, and showing the following facts: —

1. Their mother, Mrs. Lois Blackstone, born 1790, died in 1866.

2. Her mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Berry, was a Blackstone, born in 1764, died in 1846.

3. Her mother, Elinor Phipps, daughter of Danforth Phipps, born in 1733, died in 1807.

Their grandmother, Mrs. Berry, always kept this picture carefully as a portrait of Sir William, and as a picture coming by family descent.

It would seem then that the tradition is fairly enough traced to information received from Elinor Phipps, and so to a point of time within forty or fifty years of the date of Sir William's death in 1695.

An examination of the portrait itself tends to confirm the accuracy of the tradition. It represents a man about forty years of age, with periwig, bright armor on the arms and shoulders, and embroidered vest; giving the idea of a combination of military and civic position. It is very well executed, having on the back the name of Plaisted, which is probably the name of the artist.

The portrait is to be disposed of; and it is to be hoped that Mr. Bridge will succeed in his patriotic plan of obtaining a copy for the State House at Augusta, and that the picture itself will fall into the hands of some public body.

The President read the following letter from our Corresponding Member, the Hon. Hugh B. Grigsby, containing more especially an account of persons of his acquaintance who had attained the age of one hundred years and more:—

EDGEHILL, NEAR CHARLOTTE C. H., VIRGINIA,
October 17, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. WINTHROP:

The tributes of your Society to the memory of the late John Pendleton Kennedy came duly to hand, and were welcome to me on many accounts. I followed your outline of his life very attentively, as

I am almost old enough to remember his entire career; and as I went along with you, I was struck with the reflection, which has doubtless often occurred to you, how contemporaneously all the events of a man's life, however separated they may be by the lapse of years when he is living, appear when he is dead, and constitute a symmetry of character, which our passions or interests or heedlessness prevent us from seeing while he is living and moving in our midst. I did not know him personally, but was aware of his connection with our Pendletons of Virginia. His mother's brother, the late Philip C. Pendleton, who died in 1863 or 1864, at the age of eighty odd, was a political associate of mine more than forty years ago; and in his latter days, of his own accord, invited a correspondence with me, which was continued until our recent troubles put an end to it. If your friend Kennedy took after the Pendletons, he must have been a tall and well-proportioned man. The Kennedys are of a stouter stature and more bulky. The man who first impressed immortality on the name of Pendleton, was Edmund, who was one of our members of the first Congress, was the chairman of the Committee of Safety while Virginia was passing from the Colony to the Commonwealth, was the president of the Virginia Federal Convention of 1788, and was president of our High Court of Appeals, — a great and venerable name indeed, in whose shadow repose some of the most endearing recollections of our honored past. I read with interest the remarks of Professor Lowell and of Mr. Hillard, and the letter of Dr. Holmes, and found much food for thought in what they said. I thank you again for your kindness in sending to me these memorials of your friend.

In the "Proceedings" of April of the present year, you refer to a discussion in the Society, held a year or two ago, respecting persons who are said to have reached one hundred years and more; and you mention the case of Captain Lahrbusch, who has entered his 105th year. I have the honor of knowing the old gentleman, whom I met at the residence of Admiral Farragut in June, 1867, and with whom I held a pleasant conversation. As I had never before seen any one above a hundred years old, I determined to be very observant of every thing that occurred. He is a very remarkable man, possessing the faculties of his mind and body in apparent vigor, and engaging with zest in current talk. I shaped my conversation in his presence purposely to draw him out, and to watch the operations of his mind; and I indulged in some playful sallies; and I saw that he was as fully abreast of the scene, and had as clear and as ready an appreciation of the point or play of

the moment, as any of the young and brilliant persons who were present. It is, I believe, no secret with him or with his friends, that even in his latter years he used opium in very large quantities, and that from conscientious scruples he resolved to discontinue its use; but, finding that his health gave way, and that he would certainly die if he abstained from it altogether, he gradually resumed the use of it, and ascertained the exact amount which was necessary to sustain him; and he has continued to use daily this amount, which is very considerable, but which I cannot recall, without increase or diminution to the present day. He is a gentleman of the old school in more senses than one; dresses with neatness and taste, and has a well-formed, intellectual, and much younger face than his years would lead you to expect. He is stout, and rather below than above the middle size, and has a very broad chest,—characteristics which, in my experience, usually attach to persons who possess great vigor and an erect posture in extreme old age. I have said that he was of the old school in his breeding. One instance will somewhat illustrate this remark: when I rose to take leave of him, knowing that the effort to rise from the chair was difficult and often painful to very old people, I approached him so nearly as almost to touch his knees with mine, in order to prevent his rising; but the old gentleman was not so easily satisfied; for he grasped my hand, and rose by its aid to his feet, and then, and not till then, would he bid me farewell, which he did, I must add, not only with a cordial squeeze, but in some very kind and courteous words. His name is not spelt quite correctly in the "Proceedings." It is "F. Lahrbusch," which I copy from a letter of his now before me. This letter is addressed to a lady whose friendship he valued highly, was written in October, 1867, and concludes with these words: "Now, my dear lady, my faithful friend, I pray God to have you in His holy keeping, and trusting on the continuance of your kind good-will and valued friendship, I am, dear lady, my kind Christian friend, yours till death."

You are aware that as people grow old, they are apt to write smaller and smaller. Such was the case with Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison and Governor Tazewell; and, though not old myself, I find such is my case, without an effort to the contrary. But the handwriting of Captain Lahrbusch is large, most distinct, and entirely free from tremulousness.

I now proceed to give you an account of a centenarian, a neighbor of mine, Mr. George Foster, who resides about ten miles from my house, but whom, though I have frequently sent kind messages to him,

I had never seen until the 28th of May last, when I made him a special visit. But, as it occurred to me to report his case to you, I determined to make him another visit, to look into his case minutely, and to consult all available authorities; and on Friday last I performed my purpose. I rode to Keysville, and despatched my servant to the house of Mr. James A. Foster, the oldest son of the centenarian, who resides four or five miles from his father, with a request that he would accompany me on a visit to the old gentleman. He soon arrived, and we set out on foot for his father's house. As Mr. Foster, Jr., was sixty-five years old, I offered him my horse; but he said that, as the way was on the railway bed, it was safer to go on foot, and we accordingly made our jaunt of three miles in a little while, in full conversation about his father. When we approached the house, we saw the old gentleman looking into his corn-crib, which was sixty or seventy yards distant from his dwelling, at a load of very fine corn which had just been deposited in it. He received us cordially, and invited us into the house; and by the aid of my arm and his staff, he made his way without difficulty or fatigue. When we reached the narrow steps of his porch, he withdrew his arm from mine, and, dropping his cane, he caught hold of the rail on either side of the steps; and though he was somewhat slow in his movement, he reached the platform unaided, without any serious exertion of his strength. His daughters, Mrs. Hudson, who was seventy-six on the 6th instant, and Miss Eliza H. Foster, who was fifty-four in July last, received us kindly, and we were all soon seated, including the old man and his son, around the capacious fireplace. I introduced the topic of the Revolution of 1776, and mentioned, among other things, that the British had never set foot in the County of Charlotte. Mr. Foster, who was born on the 22d of May, 1768, and was eight years old at the Declaration of Independence, observed that he remembered very well when the Delaware Blues came up and encamped on the hill in Mr. Crawford's present plantation, on which his father then lived. I told him that, although I had conversed with several citizens of the county who had served in the war, and who were older than himself at the date of that event, I had never heard that fact before; but that I knew a detachment of French soldiers had encamped at the Court House. He said that he remembered the arrival of the French very well,—that they remained some weeks in the country,—but that the Delaware Blues encamped for a day or two only. Let me add that these forces were sent from the coast to aid General Greene, when pressed by Cornwallis, who was stopped south

of the Dan, by a fresh in that stream, and were afterwards recalled. Thus the recollection of Mr. Foster has saved a waif from the past, which otherwise would have been lost for ever. As Mr. Foster was born in 1768, he was thirteen in 1781; and in answer to my inquiries, he observed that he remembered distinctly — to use his own words — “when Washington whipped Cornwallis at York.” I also tested his recollection of several prominent characters, such as John Blair Smith, who was second president of Hampden Sidney College, and a leading clergyman in all this region of country, from 1779 to 1790, when he removed to Philadelphia, and whose influence is still felt among us, and learned from Mr. Foster that he could recall him distinctly, and had heard him preach. Having thus satisfied myself of his knowledge of men and things from 1778 to 1790, I asked his son to let me look at the family Bible. One of the ladies instantly went into the next room, and brought out the venerable book, which was a quarto, and was printed in Edinburgh in 1785. I turned to the births, and found the following record, which I copy entire: —

“George Foster, son of Josiah and Elizabeth Foster, was born May 22, 1768; and Sally, his wife, was born the 16th of October, 1773 (and died July 12, 1858, aged 85).

1. Rebecca G. Foster was born 23d of September, 1792.
2. Amy J. Foster was born October 6, 1794 (Mrs. Hudson, who was present).
3. Susan D. Foster was born April 2, 1801.
4. Mary I. Foster was born Nov. 5, 1808.
5. James A. Foster was born April 30, 1806 (was present at my interview).
6. Martha A. Foster was born Sept. 30, 1808.
7. Adrian W. Foster was born March 2, 1811.
8. George I. Foster was born Aug. 8, 1813.
9. Eliza H. Foster was born July 15, 1816 (was present at my interview).
10. Sarah Foster was born March 24, 1819.”

This Bible was presented to Mr. Foster by his wife's father on his marriage in 1791, and has been in constant use ever since. The first four or five entries were made in pale ink, and are indistinct, but may be read; and many years ago Mr. Foster copied the whole in darker ink on the reverse side of the leaf. You perceive that I had this interview in the presence of three of the children of Mr. Foster, whose ages were seventy-six, sixty-five, and fifty-four, and who have been for many years consistent members of the church, and of great worth in their neighborhood. I will also state that Mr. Foster has lived an active, temperate, and industrious life, on the land given him by his father on his marriage; that he has been ever esteemed a man of integrity and

piety, having been a member of the Baptist Church for seventy years ; and that his daughters and son, who were present, have been members of the same communion from their earliest life.

The *physique* of Mr. Foster differs very much from that of Captain Lahrbush. He is five feet ten, tall and thin, and stoops considerably, walking and sitting, while the Captain is short, and as straight as an arrow. Mr. F. has lost his teeth within a few years past ; his eyes are gray, and the lids are drawn closely when he looks about him. He has a benignant smile, and relishes any amusing thing uttered in his presence. He has had slight bilious complaints occasionally ; but he says that he never has been dangerously ill since he had "the fever" in 1794. He has no present organic disease, and no bad habits, and may live for years to come. He sleeps well, enjoys his food, and moves freely about the house and yard without assistance. While I was chatting with the ladies, he arose quite briskly from his chair, walked into another room, filled his pipe, and, resuming his seat, lighted his tobacco, and enjoyed a pleasing smoke ; and when he had done, he knocked away the ashes very carefully, and put his pipe in his pocket. Neither Ralph nor Ebenezer Erskine, who wrote those fine stanzas on tobacco, and loved a pipe, could have done the thing more graciously.

In addition to what I have already written, I will give what in the Scotch law are called *adminicula testimoni*, — adminicles of testimony, — or some odds and ends that tend to establish Mr. Foster's age, apart from his family records. On the wall of his front room is a large sampler, worked by the needle, and containing moral sentences and striking dates ; and among the latter is this : "George Foster, born May 22, 1768." Now this sampler was worked by a grandchild of the patriarch more than twenty years ago, when he was not over 80, which is not deemed remarkable in this county, as I may presently show.

George C. Smith, Esq., is aged about fifty-five, has for thirty years been a member of the Baptist Church, has attended the same church with Mr. Foster since 1843, a space of twenty-seven years, and watched his progress to ninety, and to his present age of one hundred and two.

William Cardwell, Esq., will be seventy-one on the 7th of November next ; was born, and has always lived, within nine miles of Mr. Foster ; has known Mr. F. from his own childhood ; recollects Mr. F. as a middle-aged man, when he could first recall him ; remembers his arrival at the age of ninety, and has chronicled his years to the present time.

But the strongest testimony, apart from records, is that of Mrs. Lucy Bailey, who resides within one mile of Mr. Foster; is his relative, has been a member of the church for over sixty years, and is now eighty-seven years old, retaining her faculties in as great a degree as has, perhaps, been seen in our time. She states that she has known Mr. Foster all her life, that she has always known his age, and that from her own observation alone she knows that he cannot be less than one hundred and two years old.

I can also state that I have resided within ten miles of Mr. Foster for thirty years, that I have always known him as an extremely aged man, that I remember his arrival at ninety, and at one hundred, and that I have often sent kind messages to him.

Mr. Foster, Jr., mentioned a fact concerning his father, which may be sustained by the public records. He says that his father was draughted into the militia, and sent to Norfolk in March, 1813; and that he became forty-five, or muster-free, on the 22d of May following, and returned home. Add the interval from 1813 to 1870, and we have the one hundred and two years.

When I speak of distance, as, for instance, of nine miles, I refer to the state of facts with us, and not with you. Nine miles with us may often be measured by four or five estates, that is, by the intervention of not more than four or five farmers. I live within a mile and a quarter of my nearest neighbor, because the sites of our dwellings are within that distance; but if my neighbor had built on the western extremity of his land, and I on the eastern extremity of the land on which I live, there would have been an interval of six miles between us.

Excuse this long epistle, and believe me,

Ever truly yours,

HUGH BLAIR GRIGSBY.

To the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, Boston.