

THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

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NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

THE Ninth Annual Meeting was held in the Donavan Room, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 28 and 29, 1897.

The Society met for business at 11 A. M., December 28. The President, Mr. Stewart Culin, took the chair, and introduced President Daniel C. Gilman, of Johns Hopkins University, who welcomed the Society to the hospitality of the University.

The Permanent Secretary presented the report of the Council, which was read and accepted.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

The Annual Meeting of 1897 marks the completion of the tenth year of the Society's existence, organization having been effected at Cambridge, Mass., January 4, 1888. The proposal for the formation of the Society, dated May 5, 1887, designated as its principal object the establishment of a Journal of a scientific character, designed primarily for the collection of the fast-vanishing remains of folklore in America, including relics of old English lore, lore of negroes in the Southern States of the Union, lore of the Indian tribes of North America, and lore of French Canada, Mexico, etc. As a secondary object was indicated the study of the general subject, and publication of the special results of students in this department. The Journal of American Folk-Lore, established in accordance with this design, has reached its tenth volume.

In reviewing the work accomplished during the decade, members of the Society have much to regard with satisfaction. The Journal has been able to present a body of material universally acknowledged to contain valuable additions to knowledge, and frequently cited by writers who are concerned with the various departments of investigation which find part of their subject-matter in oral tradition. Beyond such contribution, the Journal has been instrumental in

giving a stimulus to researches of this sort, and not in North America only. If the vast compass of the domain of folk-lore has not been surveyed with adequate precision, it is owing to the very small number of special students in this field, a deficiency due to the scanty provision for anthropological study made by universities and learned institutions ; this neglect is explained by the conventional character of the scholarship of the last generation, too much occupied with examination of the literary records to appreciate the equal importance of the direct contemplation of nature. On the whole, the pages of the *Journal* furnish evidence of continued increase in intelligence and ability, and greater exactness of research into early tradition.

With equal pleasure may be pointed out the useful character of the series of *Memoirs* of the Society, published since 1894. The first of these volumes continues to be the publication which casts more light than any other on the mental conditions of West African races, whose tales and superstitions were considered to be so closely connected with negro American folk-lore as to come within the scope of the operations of the Society. The second volume gave specimens of the curious mixture of dialect and traditional fiction which had grown up among French-speaking negroes of Louisiana ; the third gave interesting examples of the folk-music of the same race, — a music which to the disgrace of American musical scholarship remains imperfectly collected and studied ; the fourth, although intended to contain only one part of the material, constitutes the most considerable collection of English superstitions which has hitherto been published ; the fifth, treating certain legends of the Navahoes, is universally accepted as one of the best tribal studies ever made, and as a most valuable model of ethnographic research in this field.

The truth of the doctrine, laid down in the announcement contained in the first number of the *Journal* of the Society, that humanity is a whole, the study of which is only rendered possible by records of every part of that whole, is daily becoming more evident in proportion as anthropologic method, which treats human societies and ideas as developments which seek their explanation in a comprehensive view embracing the lower as well as the higher divisions of the race, supersedes the methods of philosophic speculation, or of literary investigations content to obtain partial and inaccurate explanations from the literature or archæology of favored races.

On the other hand, if, in the course of the decade, there is much to be regarded with satisfaction, there is in the history of the Society much also which cannot be so considered. It is not creditable to American scholarship and intellectual activity that a society which

ought to count membership by thousands is only able to do so by hundreds. The number of annual members now on the roll, including libraries subscribing, scarcely amounts to five hundred. With a fee of only three dollars, the means thus supplied are inadequate even to publication, and leave no ability to promote research. In review of past experience, it scarce seems likely that this number can be adequately enlarged; yet it is necessary that a great expansion should take place if the Society is to prosper and do its work. It often happens that persons qualified to be useful in the task of collection, and who would be glad so to occupy themselves, are debarred from carrying out their intentions by reason of inability to meet the small expenses involved. A modicum of pecuniary assistance would often conduce to results of permanent utility. Adequate membership would permit of such succor.

As the easiest means of obtaining additional support has been recommended the establishment of local societies, which should hold independent meetings, while at the same time contributing to the support of the general society. Several such societies have been established and proved successful. But it is with regret that a tendency must be noticed on the part of such organizations to neglect that sufficient contribution to the publishing organization which renders them of assured utility. A compromise ought at least to be attained, in virtue of which each local body should furnish a generous number of members to the Society, and subscriptions to its Journal.

The establishment of an annual subscription of ten dollars, paid by subscribers who receive all the publications of the Society, but who avowedly make such payment for the sake of forwarding its interests, rather than with the expectation of entire remuneration through the publications, has rendered possible the publication of the series of Memoirs, which has now reached five volumes; an extension of such subscription is requested, as the easiest method of securing the continuance of the series.

Herewith is communicated the substance of the Report received from the Treasurer:—

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand December 28, 1896	\$1,958.58
Fees of annual members	1,284.90
Life Membership	50.00
Subscriptions to the Publication Fund	378.00
Sales through the Secretary	32.00
Sales through Houghton, Mifflin & Co.	528.95
Repayment of charge paid by Treasurer	1.25
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	\$4,233.68

DISBURSEMENTS.

To Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for manufacturing and mailing Journal (Nos. 36-38)	\$1,164.45
To Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for manufacturing vol. v. of Memoirs	1,304.05
To the Permanent Secretary for clerk hire	300.00
To the Permanent Secretary for postage, stationery, and printing of circular	81.55
To the Treasurer for printing cards, etc.	19.25
Expenses connected with the Eighth Annual Meeting	43.03
Paid to J. Teit for manuscript	50.00
Repayment for vol. iv. of Memoirs, not delivered	3.00
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	\$2,965.33
Balance to new account, December 28, 1897	1,268.35
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	\$4,233.68

(It will be observed that the diminution of the balance in the treasury, as compared with that available at the corresponding period of the previous year, is due to the publication of a volume of the Memoirs more elaborately illustrated, and involving larger outlay than usual in the series ; but it is expected that the expenditure will gradually be made up by the sales of a volume which will be of continuing value.)

On Wednesday, December 29, the Society proceeded to the election of officers. The Permanent Secretary reporting that he had received no nominations for officers, according to the privilege of making written nominations accorded by the rules to each member, the nominations of the Council were announced : —

PRESIDENT, Dr. Henry Wood, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT, Prof. Charles L. Edwards, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, O.

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT, Miss Alice C. Fletcher, Fellow of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Washington, D. C.

COUNCILLORS (for three years), Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. ; Prof. Otis T. Mason, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. ; Miss Alice Mabel Bacon, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va.

The Permanent Secretary and Treasurer hold over.

The Permanent Secretary was instructed to cast a ballot for the officers as nominated.

Announcement was made of the Publication Committee for 1898 (appointed by the Council) : Dr. Franz Boas, Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y. ; Dr. D. G. Brinton, Philadelphia, Pa. ;

Dr. Alexander F. Chamberlain, Clark University, Worcester, Mass. ; Prof. Frederic W. Putnam, Peabody Museum of American Ethnology, Harvard University ; and the President, Permanent Secretary, and Treasurer *ex officio*.

The following papers were presented before the Society : —

MISS ALICE M. BACON, Hampton, Va. Methods and Work of the Hampton Folk-Lore Society.

MRS. FANNY D. BERGEN, Cambridge, Mass. Experiences of a Collector of Folk-Lore.

DR. FRANZ BOAS, New York, N. Y. The Transformer and the Culture Hero in American Mythology.

DR. H. CARRINGTON BOLTON, Washington, D. C. Relics of Astrology.

DR. CHARLES C. BOMBAUGH, Baltimore, Md. The Bibliography of Folk-Lore.

DR. DANIEL G. BRINTON. Survivals in Funeral Customs and Death Superstitions.

MRS. WALLER BULLOCK, Baltimore, Md. On the Collecting of Maryland Folk-Lore.

DR. ALEXANDER S. CHESSIN, Baltimore, Md. Russian Folk-Lore.

MR. STEWART CULIN, Philadelphia, Pa. American Indian Games. (Presidential Address.)

MISS ALICE C. FLETCHER, Washington, D. C. The Significance of the Scalp-Lock, a Study from the Omaha Tribe.

DR. CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON, Baltimore, Md. Old Babylonian Legends.

PROF. OTIS T. MASON, Washington, D. C. The Jackknife, and How to Whittle.

DR. J. H. MCCORMICK, Gaithersburg, Md. Folk-Lore of Gems and Minerals.

DR. WASHINGTON MATTHEWS, Washington, D. C. Ichthyophobia.

MISS MARY WILLIS MINOR, Baltimore, Md. A Folk-Tale.

MR. WILLIAM WELLS NEWELL, Cambridge, Mass. Opportunities for Collecting Folk-Lore in America.

MISS ANNIE WESTON WHITNEY, Baltimore, Md. The Bean in Folk-Lore.

PROF. LEO WIENER, Cambridge, Mass. Folk-Lore and Folk-Songs of Russian Jews, collected in America.

PROF. THOMAS WILSON, Washington, D. C. Memorial Notice of Capt. John G. Bourke.

REV. CHARLES JAMES WOOD, York, Pa. Descents into Hell.

DR. HENRY WOOD, Baltimore, Md. Poe's Fall of the House of Usher ; a Study in Comparative Literature and Folk-Lore.

At the conclusion of the meeting, on the afternoon of Wednesday, December 29, was adopted the following resolution, presented by Miss Fletcher :—

“Resolved, That the members of the American Folk-Lore Society would express their thanks to the Baltimore Folk-Lore Society, and their appreciation of the hospitable entertainment received during the Annual Meeting of 1897. Their thanks are also due to the President and Faculty of the Johns Hopkins University for their courtesy in affording so delightful a place of meeting, and to the Woman’s Literary Club and the Arundell Club, of Baltimore, for the graceful hospitality which gave to the visiting folk-loreists so agreeable an opportunity for social enjoyment.

“To these organizations is due in a large measure the profit and enjoyment derived by the Society from its meetings, and the new inspiration for work along their chosen lines with which its members return to their homes.”

An invitation was received from the Cincinnati Branch of the American Folk-Lore Society, and also from the mayor of Cincinnati, to hold in that city either the tenth or eleventh Annual Meeting of the Society. The Secretary was directed to return thanks for the invitation, and the determination of the place and time of the Annual Meeting of 1898 was left to be hereafter arranged by the Council, as circumstances should render advisable.