

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN
FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

THE Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society was held in Recital Hall, Montreal, P. Q., on Wednesday and Thursday, September 13 and 14, 1893.

The Society was called to order at 11 A. M. by Prof. D. P. Penhallow, Second Vice-President.

In words of welcome, delivered on the part of the Montreal Branch, as President of that Branch, Professor Penhallow spoke of the extent of the field open to folk-lore research in Canada, and the necessity of placing on record traditions and customs which have descended from the earliest days of the French colony, and which are daily becoming more difficult to record. In the works of early Canadian writers is fortunately contained valuable information concerning the usages and ideas not only of the early French, but also of the Iroquois and other Indian tribes. In Canada the conditions have been such as to bring about complicated modifications of original Indian traditions, incident to their contact and alliances with the French. At a later period a large Scottish element was introduced and rapidly absorbed, while the rapid growth of the English population, and the interchange which is the rule in these latter days of easy migration, more or less modify what was once peculiar. The speaker mentioned the presence, within a few miles of the city of Montreal, of descendants of the Iroquois, from whom linguistic and ethnologic information is still obtainable. He alluded to the manner in which the history of the town was interwoven with the earliest records of Canada. It was from this point that Cartier surveyed the broad expanse of trackless forest and fertile plain, and saw at his feet the village of Hochelaga, where at a later time, through the enterprise of missionaries, was founded the beautiful city of Montreal.

The Chairman read the following letter from the President of the Society:—

CLINTON, ONT., *September 9, 1893.*

MY DEAR SIR, — I regret very much that the condition of my health will prevent me from attending our annual meeting and expressing in person, as I have already done by letter, my acknowledgment of the high honor conferred upon me in my election to the presidency of the Society. In saying this I may take the opportunity of adding my congratulations on the remarkable progress and prosperity of our Society during the brief term of its existence. Few of us, I think, were prepared to expect such a rapid growth of interest and influence as its proceedings have already called forth. And perhaps even to its earlier members (unless I am too hasty in

attributing my own shortsightedness to others) the full extent of the field on which we have entered is only by degrees becoming apparent. This, however, in the present era of rapidly expanding knowledge, is not at all surprising.

Our curt and pithy Anglo-Saxon expression, "folk-lore," which has had such general acceptance of late years, far beyond the limits of English-speaking communities, is only an abridged form of the title which is "writ large" by our brother-students of Latin Europe as the "science of popular tradition." Under either title, it must rank as one of the youngest of sciences. While popular tradition itself is as old as the human race, its scientific study may be said to have commenced with the present generation. One of its earliest votaries, even before it had acquired a name, was my late distinguished friend, the Hon. Lewis H. Morgan, who was able, by his admirable study of Indian traditions, to bring to light the marvellous history of the Iroquois League, — a disclosure which has had momentous results both for mental philosophy and for ethnology. I see with pleasure that so eminent an authority as Herbert Spencer has not hesitated, in his "Principles of Ethics," to accept Morgan's statement that "the great object of the confederation was peace, — to break up the spirit of perpetual warfare which had wasted the red race from age to age." And I learn with equal satisfaction by a recent letter from my esteemed friend, the Rev. W. M. Beauchamp, that his inquiries have satisfied him of the correctness of the opinion which I have maintained, on the authority of Iroquois traditions, that the justly venerated author of this confederation, the far-famed Hiawatha, was not, as some have thought, a mythological being or a poetical creation, but really an aboriginal statesman and lawmaker, a personage as authentic and as admirable as Solon or Washington. The important bearing of these conclusions on our estimate of the mental and moral endowments of primitive or uncultivated man is too clear to require explanation.

Recent discoveries in ethnology have immensely expanded the field of research which is open to the science of popular tradition, or folk-lore, on this continent. It is now known that the number of aboriginal linguistic stocks, or families of languages in America, entirely distinct from one another in words and grammar, exceeds one hundred and fifty, which is more than twice the number known to exist in all other parts of the globe. And ethnologists are now satisfied that the people of each linguistic family have, or had originally, their own distinct mythology, as well as their own peculiar social organization, customs, arts, and legends. How much of this store belongs to folk-lore is evident; and how actively the inquiries into this branch of knowledge have been prosecuted of late, the pages of our Journal will show. But not less important, and hardly less extensive, is the field which we gain from the effect of that strong political gravitation, the attraction of liberal institutions, which brings to our shores members of all the races of the Old World, and presents them here, with their peculiar traits and beliefs, to the keen search-light of a brilliant scholarship.

Such, as it seems to me, are the happy conditions under which our labors have been commenced, and which promise to our Association and its affli-

Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society. 293

ated societies a long and useful career in their efforts to contribute to the progress of that "science of man" which is now acknowledged to be the foremost of all the sciences.

Believe me to remain, with high esteem,

Very faithfully yours,

HORATIO HALE.

W. W. NEWELL, ESQ., Secretary American Folk-Lore Society, Montreal.

Mr. K. Boissevain was appointed to act as Local Secretary.

The Permanent Secretary read the report of the Council adopted at its meeting.

During its sixth year the American Folk-Lore Society has continued to present a steady, if not rapid, increase in numbers and usefulness.

In the last Annual Report mention was made of the recommendation of a Committee on Rules and Incorporation of the Society appointed in 1891. The Committee came to the conclusion that the purposes of the Society could best be served by obtaining a special act of incorporation from the Legislature of Massachusetts. During the present year such an act has been obtained, conferring special privileges on the Society, of a character not before granted by the Legislature of the State, allowing the Society to hold its meetings wherever it may seem most advisable, without thereby affecting the legal character of the action taken at such meetings.

During the past year the number of local branches has been increased by the organization of a branch in New York city. This branch begins its career with every prospect of usefulness, being at present represented by about one hundred members in the general society, in addition to Associate members not appearing on the roll of the Society. In the course of the next year it is expected that additional branches will be formed, experience having proved this to be the only way in which sufficient support can be obtained for the operations of the Society.

The membership list, in the course of the year, has been increased by about one hundred names, the number appearing on the books of the Secretary being about five hundred and sixty.

For several years proposals have been made for printing a series of monographs on folk-lore, to be entitled "Memoirs of The American Folk-Lore Society." The first of these volumes, bearing the name of "Folk Tales of Angola," collected and edited by Mr. Heli Chatelain, late of Loanda, Africa, is now passing through the press, and will be ready for delivery by the end of the year.

This collection, which includes the native Kimbundu text, as well as a literal English rendering, and which is illustrated by copious linguistic and ethnographic notes, will be contained in about three

hundred printed pages of the size of the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*. The material is absolutely new, no gathering of Angolan tales having hitherto been made, and will be found of service to students of comparative folk-lore, as well as a useful illustration of West African life and thought.

It is proposed immediately to follow this work with two others, namely, a collection of French dialectic tales of Louisiana, by Prof. Alcée Fortier, of Tulane University, New Orleans, and a comparative study of Afro-American animal tales, by Prof. Adolf Gerber, of Earlham College, Richmond, Ind. The relation of the subjects will bring into connection these three treatises tending to elucidate the obscure questions concerning the origin and history of these tales, so closely allied in all times of civilization and in all regions of the world.

Other works are offered to the Society in a state to justify immediate publication ; and the volume of important material thus ready for the printer, and depending for its appearance on the decision of the Society, is the best evidence of the necessity for the existence of the organization, and constitutes the strongest appeal for its support and enlargement.

In order to meet the large additional expense which must result from carrying out the scheme indicated, the Committee on Publication, at the last Annual Meeting, presented a plan, including the formation of a class of subscribers, who should pay annually ten dollars, and who should be entitled to receive all publications of the Society. In response to the communication of this plan to members, through the mails, a number of such subscriptions have been received. It has been thought wise that such subscriptions should apply to the year 1894, covering all dues for that year. The attention of members of the Society is earnestly called to this manner of sustaining its enterprises. If the number of members of the Society can be raised to one thousand, and the number of subscribers of this class to at least one hundred, the Society will have at its disposal adequate means for its work of publication. Such enlargement, with the present membership, ought not to be difficult of accomplishment. It will be observed, in case the proposed system is carried out, and as many as three, or even four, numbers of the *Memoirs* shall appear annually, that the subscribers will receive an ample return for their outlay.

It is proposed that single copies of the *Memoirs* shall be furnished to members at a price below that for which these will be offered to the public.

The Constitution adopted at the last Annual Meeting proposed the election of twenty-five Honorary Members, whose names are to

be presented to the Society by the Council at any Annual Meeting. The Council will propose only a partial list of names, in order to allow vacancies to be filled at subsequent meetings.

The Council would call attention, as has been done at every Annual Meeting, to the work in the field of aboriginal American mythology and tradition, as that part of the labors of the Society which is most important, and which can least bear being deferred. The discoveries made in these investigations, during the last few years, have been so remarkable, that it may be said with confidence in no part of the world has so much been done toward the elucidation of difficult problems of psychology and primitive worship. These successes intensify the demand for more extended research, and for an application of more generous energy. Every year which goes by, without the fuller improvement of the unsampled opportunities open to inquirers in the American field, constitutes a loss to all posterity of information absolutely needed for the composition of the history of ideas, and for tracing out the lines of human development. A future time will be desirous to devote thousands of dollars to researches, for which it will then be too late, but which can now be promoted by the expenditure of hundreds. In the direction of research, as well as in that of publication, there is an absolute necessity for the wider activity of this Society. It thus becomes the duty of every one of its members to see that everything possible is done in order to enlarge the number of inquirers, and to preserve the vanishing knowledge, the loss of which will hereafter be the subject of keen regret.

On motion, the Report was adopted.

The Chairman read the act of incorporation, as follows —

[CHAP. 389.]

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:—

SECTION I. Frederick W. Putnam, Daniel G. Brinton, Otis T. Mason, Horatio Hale, William Wells Newell, John H. Hinton, Franz Boas, H. Carrington Bolton, Alexander F. Chamberlain, Stewart Culin, J. Owen Dorsey, Alice C. Fletcher, J. Walter Fewkes, Alcée Fortier, George Bird Grinnell, David P. Penhallow, and their associates, the officers and members of the society known as The American Folk-Lore Society, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation by the name of The American Folk-Lore Society, for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and publishing the folk-lore mythology and legends of the American continent, and for the further and incidental purposes of receiving, purchasing, holding and conveying real and personal property; with all the duties and privileges and subject to the restrictions, duties and liabilities set forth in the general

laws which now are or hereafter may be in force and applicable to such corporations.

SECTION 2. Said corporation may have and hold by purchase, grant, gift or otherwise, real estate not exceeding fifty thousand dollars in value, and personal estate not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars in value, and said corporation may hold its meetings without the Commonwealth.

SECTION 3. Any two of the corporators above-named are hereby authorized to call the first meeting of the said corporation at any time during the year eighteen hundred and ninety-three, by notice thereof by mail to each member of the said society.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon its passage. [*Approved May 26, 1893.*] [Statutes of Massachusetts, chap. 389.]

A committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. John Reade, Mr. H. Carter, and Mr. W. W. Newell, to nominate officers for the ensuing year, and report on the following day.

The Chairman read a list of nominations for Honorary Members, as approved by the Council.

No other business coming up, the session was concluded.

In the afternoon, at 2 P. M., the Society met to hear and discuss papers. The following papers were offered:—

Dr. John Reade, Montreal, P. Q., "Canadian Folk-Lore."

J. M. Lemoine, F. R. S. C., "On the Origin of Some Popular Oaths."

Heli Chatelain, late United States Commercial Agent at Loanda, Africa, "Some Causes of the Retarded Development of African Civilization."

At 8 P. M. the Montreal Branch invited visiting members to an entertainment, of which the programme was as follows:—

8 P. M. 1. A paper by Mr. H. Beaugrand, entitled "Indian Writings and Hieroglyphics," illustrated by lantern views. 2. Old Canadian Folk Songs, under the direction of H. St. Pierre. 3. Lantern Views of Street Criers, with the Street Cries reproduced by Phonograph. 4. General Conversazione.

On Thursday, September 14, the Society met at 10 A. M. The Committee on Nominations having made a report, the following officers were elected for the year 1894:—

PRESIDENT: Prof. Alcée Fortier, New Orleans, La.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT: Washington Matthews, Surgeon and Major, U. S. A., Fort Wingate, New Mexico.

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT: J. Owen Dorsey, Washington, D. C.

COUNCILLORS (to serve for three years): Dr. A. F. Chamberlain, Worcester, Mass.; Prof. M. M. Curtis, Cleveland, Ohio; Prof. F. W. Putnam, Cambridge, Mass.

CURATOR: Stewart Culin, Philadelphia, Pa.

Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society. 297

According to the Rules, the Secretary, Treasurer, and six Councillors hold over.

The Chairman reported the nominations for Honorary Members, as made by the Council, and thirteen Honorary Members were elected, as follows :—

John Batchelor, Hakodate, Japan ; Prof. D. G. Brinton, M. D., University of Philadelphia, Pa. ; Prof. J. C. Coelho, Lisbon, Portugal ; Henri Gaidoz, Paris, France ; G. Laurence Gomme, London, England ; Horatio Hale, Clinton, Ont. ; Dr. Jean Karłowicz, Warsaw, Poland ; Dr. F. S. Krauss, Vienna, Austria ; Dr. Kaarle Krohn, Helsingfors, Finland ; Dr. Giuseppe Pitrè, Palermo, Sicily ; Major J. W. Powell, Washington, D. C. ; Paul Sébillot, Paris, France ; Prof. Edward B. Tylor, Oxford, England.

The meeting proceeded to the additional papers on the programme, as follows :—

William Wells Newell, Cambridge, Mass., "The Study of Folk-Lore, its Material and Objects."

Dr. A. F. Chamberlain, Worcester, Mass., "Mythology of the Columbian Discovery of America."

Mrs. Fanny D. Bergen, Cambridge, Mass., "Dextral and Sinistral Circuits."

Mrs. Ellen Powell Thompson, Washington, D. C., "Notes on Irish Folk-Lore."

Prof. Adolf Gerber, Richmond, Ind., "Brer Rabbit riding on Brer Fox to his Lady-love, a comparative Study."

"Five Short Louisiana Folk-Tales, Dialect, and Translation," Prof. Alcée Fortier, New Orleans, La.

The selection of time and place for the Annual Meeting of 1894 was left to the Council.

On motion of Dr. A. F. Chamberlain, a vote of thanks was passed to the Montreal Branch, for its courtesy.

The meeting then adjourned.