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## York Institute: Something of Its Past, Present, and Future

B. R. Melcher

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# YORK INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS.

VOL. 1. NO. 1.

## YORK ♦ INSTITUTE:

SOMETHING OF ITS PAST, PRESENT AND

FUTURE,

BY

B. REDFORD MELCHER.

SACO, MAINE:

PRESS OF THE BIDDEFORD JOURNAL.

1884.

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**TEN CENTS.**

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publications. Address

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY,

YORK INSTITUTE,

SACO, ME.

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*Address delivered March 4, 1884, before the Society.*

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

It is fortunate that the name "York Institute" was given to this society. Had it been any less general, "York County Historical Society" or "York County Natural History Society," the association would have suffered by being regarded by some as too narrow in its designs. Under the former of these titles a few lovers of nature and science would have been repelled, thinking civil and political history to be dry, and to them nearly profitless; under the latter, others would have been kept away whose fondness was for men, places and events, rather than for God's humbler creatures and lower creations. As it is, the name is non-committal; in only one respect pointing to the particular, where it seems to confine us somewhat closely to whatever concerns York County. In this respect, however, it is only a seeming.

No one regards this Institute as an assemblage of individuals bent on dealing with special subjects and pet theories far above the reach of most persons. On the contrary, by the wisdom of its founders, room enough was

made for all subjects to get a treatment—for all persons to have a hearing should any desire to be heard, or should any subject seem to require discussion. York Institute, notice, is almost the only public place in these two cities where a free discourse on anything may be delivered, or where a free debate of any question may be had. It affords a grand privilege to all, and it is simply surprising that more do not avail themselves of the advantage.

Under the general name, then, of "York Institute" are banded together a number of gentlemen, who, while primarily organizing a scientific society for the collection, orderly arrangement, and preservation of samples of everything of scientific value belonging to this county, and for the regular giving of addresses on any and all scientific subjects; also did not forget that man is the chief of all created things, and that his history possesses higher and greater attractions in proportion as he is higher and greater than any of the creatures below him. These gentlemen, therefore, very wisely enlarged the scope of what otherwise might have been only a Museum of Natural History, and included as a part of its original design a department given to the civil and political history of the county, and State; so that the Institute was prevented from becoming special, and, at once, was made general. It reaches out in every direction for additions to its many collections, and its lectures and conversational discussions take a wider range each succeeding year of its existence.

You have heard that all knowledge is of two kinds, classified and unclassified. Not only has York Institute desired to have presented classified knowledge, or true science; but also some unclassified knowledge has been allowed to creep in among the sayings of this room. For example: the remark that "a banyan tree big enough to cover the whole of the City of Saco" had been seen by

one member, must be put among the many funny things of our Institute called unclassified.—My own numerous addresses might properly be consigned to the same list of things promiscuous. There, too, the wit and the humor of our gatherings belong.

But when we come to classified knowledge, then we reach the field occupied by the Institute. Would that this field of science universal might be not only occupied, but thoroughly possessed.

And yet how many things have been well unfolded in prepared lectures within these walls. You have here heard mathematical demonstrations by no means easy, and have seen them explained on the black-board. You have listened with close attention to lectures on geographical subjects, and have followed the speaker as he led you along by the help of maps and charts. You have had fine astronomical lectures; and, at times, visible illustrations of excellent character have accompanied them. The stereopticon has been of service more than once. You have been entertained in a high degree by some lecturers on physics; they taking such a subject as "Electricity," and giving experiments; or "Heat," or "Sound," and giving discussions. Even astrology was once introduced; and a brisk talk held, years ago, on the question of whether the unusual nearness of four great planets to the sun portended commotions, plagues, wars, troublesome distresses or—the end of the world!—and though many of these direful things transpired, you did not become astrologers.

"The Metric System" appeared with its advocate and its charts. Who can forget the graphic and exciting description of "Smuggling on the Maine Border," told by one of our number, a Government officer who had been detailed to suppress the evil? Chemistry and geology have not been omitted as subjects to be dealt with. Botany and



physiology have been expatiated upon ; as lectures on the "Circulation of Sap," and the "Duality of the Brain," will vindicate. Upon zo-ology, of course, we have had many, many papers ; while each fresh contribution of bird or other animal, has called forth sundry and varied comments, queries, and answers from ourselves, and then from the audiences, as they felt emboldened to join in the conversation. "The Geographical Distribution of Animals" has been lectured upon ; and dry as the subject would appear to be, the expressions of interest taken in it were earnest, and a continuation of the topic was asked. What eminently entertaining subjects one well-known University ex-president has chosen to bring us, and what beauty of language his pen throws around them !

By referring to these few of the many papers presented to the Institute in this way, its members may see what a variety of sciences has come in for a share of attention,—the science of life, of matter, of force, of space, and of time. What of the science of mind ? and the science of society ? No lectures on psychology, the real science of the mind, on logic, or on philology, to my knowledge have been delivered. And yet I do remember one on "Truth" by Professor Kinsman ; therefore you are asked to mentally supply where this hurriedly made list is deficient. A most delightfully attractive course of talks in the first of these sciences might be laid out, however, by starting the questions : What is reason ? What is instinct ? next, by comparing the workings of instinct in animals and man with reason working in man ; and, finally, by considering whether reason could be predicated of animals, and in what degree.

The science of society has received notice. Again and again have lectures been offered on the early history of the neighboring towns, as Wells and Kennebunk ; on York County, and on the State of Maine. These papers have



had regard to the ancient residences and their inhabitants ; to ancient manners and customs ; to the early history of discoveries, of minor events, of laws, of wars, &c. They have been a source of pleasure to not a few interested in preserving every remembrance of those who lived where we now dwell. The science of political economy has not been touched upon ; but has such a practical side to it, that it ought to be brought up forthwith.

Educational addresses have been in abundance. The listeners have been carried by a reverend gentleman to "Rome;" have sat at the feet of "Lucretius" with a New York judge ; have caught glimpses of "German Student Life" from a Connecticut pastor ; have been brought home to America by a teacher to hear the "Classics Defended," the "System of Public Schools Condemned," or "Industrial Education" upheld by a clergyman of this city. "Evolution," "Reconciliation between Science and Religion," "Telegraphy," "Rome's Struggle against German Unity," occur as titles, which, with the others before mentioned, will represent the varied nature and character that York Institute has allowed to the documents and utterances which have proceeded from its members and invited friends. It is my candid belief, that a more interesting and instructive list of subjects for a general society like ours to consider, than the one which the records show this society to have made for itself during the last half dozen years, would be very hard to suggest. Read the records, to catch an idea of the way in which the broad, original scheme has been carried out. "On Drawing" and "On the Elements of the Perspective," "On Comets," "On Magellanic Clouds," "On Leather," "On the Compass," "On Dualism in Nature,"—but this part of my paper must be dismissed. Please complete it from your memories, and make the list a perfect one.

While such an extended range has been noticeable in the

subjects presented, the intrusion of sectarianism in religion, and partisanship in politics, has been avoided. No good reason, therefore, could be brought forward by any clergyman or any politician for not joining the society. There have been offered as excuses for not belonging the sayings—I do not call them reasons—that “all science was irreligious,” that “York Institute was irreligious;” but how can any but the most ignorant, foolish, or prejudiced persons believe such nonsense. Is not theology itself a science? Even the parties making such declarations must have suspected them to be false, and must have offered them on the ground that “a poor excuse is better than none.”

These remarks upon the name of the society, and this brief glimpse of its past work hastily sketched in part only, pave the way to a consideration of its present and its future.

The collections of variegated minerals and beautiful shells; of rare coins and curious woods; of ancient and modern newspapers; of books and pamphlets received from the Government, public officers and private citizens—notably, from the latter, the famous, but too little appreciated, Judge Thatcher Documents, the value of which is inestimable to a society like this;—the striking mementoes of the different wars in which our nation has engaged, the other thousand and one things gathered from everywhere, and preserved by the society—these are here to-night completely surrounding you, to speak for themselves, and to testify as plainly as inanimate things can, that York Institute has no intention of being anything but a permanent institution. It has come to stay. It is a fixed fact, absolute, sure. Its present is safe enough.

Established in so old a part of the State there are special reasons why it should never be permitted to lan-

guish. Change its \$13,000 or \$14,000 cash into five or ten times the sum, and see what good it will accomplish. There are urging, pressing matters to be settled *now*, that must not be left for even the near future to decide. Pride should stimulate us, as one person, to gather *now* every trustworthy bit of information regarding the past history of the people of this county, everything relating to their social life; as their manners, dress, customs, sufferings, amusements, &c. These facts should not be left to die with those who possess them. They should be stored in the archives of this society, to furnish material for the future historian; so that he may make an accurate and faithful picture of what the life in this part of the nation once was. Without doubt New England soon will begin to seem to the young, growing West, about as ancient as Old England does to us. There are gentlemen present who should help in this work of gathering historical facts and I will venture, with some diffidence, to suggest how help can be given.

We are in the center of a population of twenty thousand souls. Our county will embrace perhaps sixty-five thousand. Let these figures cause us to realize the importance of doing well the work contemplated; since the work is harder when done to please so many. The suggestion in this: Let these gentlemen whose memories go back the farthest jot down in note-books or diaries things worthy of remembrance, and donate to this society their personal records of men, places and events, with whom and with which they have been familiar. There should be passed a law, if nothing else will secure the end desired, *that no man shall die with an uncommunicated historical fact in his possession!*

Having one such fact in keeping, I am eager to divulge it, in order that my freedom to "depart in peace" may not be interfered with.



Half a dozen years since, I received in answer to some questions of mine, a letter from a fine, old gentleman, a gentleman of more than ninety years, and filled with the spirit of the days gone by. Among the several things of which he wrote, was this, which you will be likely to think worth knowing, and worth saving.

I had asked him if he remembered when Washington died. He wrote :

"Yes, sir, I remember very well when he died ; and the day he was buried they had an imitation funeral in Saco. They formed a procession and carried a coffin by four men as underbearers, with pall-bearers marching by their side. It was the style in those days. They marched to the old meeting-house that stood on the Common (where a school-house now stands) of which" (referring to the church) "I think Gov. Fairfield's grandfather was then the pastor ; and they had a funeral sermon and other services. I and other boys wore black crape on the arm that day."

Reflect a little, and it will not cause wonder that the boy's memory retained such an event. A funeral with a sermon is common enough now. The unusual circumstance would be its omission. But "formerly no religious services whatever were held at funerals. The first prayer at a funeral in Boston was in 1766, and the first funeral sermon was as late as 1783." So says the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, please produce the divers scraps of history, quaint, odd and charming, that you happen to have, and free your minds for the benefit of all concerned.

Some time back was mentioned "the future historian ;" but the fact is, the society needs an historian now. The future never comes. The historian should be even now busy treasuring up and arranging his items for the full history of the county. Moreover, he should be a man



heartily in sympathy with the people of the region, not a stranger eager for pelf. He should be wealthy enough to be practically above want. If he would accept the position, it would not be difficult to designate him.

Again, York Institute should be the depository of other historical facts. So long as questions in early Maine history are unsettled, this society will be needed, to help discover the truth, and to stand by it boldly. Why so? Because, if for no other reason, this is the oldest part of the State permanently settled; because, if here where her history almost begins, we have no concern or pride in the matter, no one else can be blamed for indifference towards the glorious State whose motto is the proudest: "Dirigo," "I direct." You see these things will forge to the front. The early history of our State must be written, and written aright, and of all other counties in the land the county that held within its limits *the first duly incorporated city on this continent*, ought to have something to say about the manner in which this history should be written; ought to feel an enthusiasm, a spirit about it, that would assert just claims and maintain them until granted.

York Institute, as this county's historic society, has certainly a very important duty and an excellent opportunity without searching further. These it must not shirk.

"Talk up Maine, if you Please" is an article in one of our local papers of recent date, and it will bear repetition.

"In the first place, Maine stands fourth among the thirty-eight states in the number of water-wheels and the amount of water-power she has in use. In her quarrying industries she ranks first in granite and third in slate, being exceeded in the latter only by Pennsylvania and Vermont. In shipbuilding she is third in the list, outranking all the States with the exception of New York and Pennsylvania.

Her fisheries are fourth in importance, being only exceeded by Massachusetts, New York and Maryland. Her production of manufactured lumber is only exceeded by six states—New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. In paper manufacture she is sixth in importance, being exceeded by Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. In the production of tanned leather she is fourth, being out-ranked by Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. In the manufacture of boots and shoes she is fifth in importance, being exceeded by New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut; and in the manufacture of woolen goods and mixed textiles she ranks seventh, being exceeded by the last mentioned states together with New York and Pennsylvania.”

Let there be added to this short piece the following: In the total amount of water-power she is first of all. She has so many lakes as to have been termed the “Lake State.” She is the mother of the “Maine Liquor Law.” She is in intelligence the whitest State in the Union! *Talk up Maine, if you please.* Yes, Maine needs good words spoken of her. Her sons should speak for her nobly. Hitherto, as a rule, they have been too modest by half. In a world where nothing is lost by boldness and cunning, modest worth is apt to be slighted. What has been recorded may be “a survival of the fittest,” it is quite as likely to be “a survival of the brassiest,” or the smartest. Let me refer to some of these historical matters too little talked of, and too much kept in the back-ground. Enter one of the Grammer schools of — city. Take the United States History. Here is one. Opening at page 18th we find the words “Puritans, 1620,” and “Plymouth Colony” filling the entire space called by the U. S. Government the “Gulf of Maine.” The last name is not down. Besides, all the settlements made on the coast of Maine

are completely ignored. But examine the map more closely. At first glance, you try to satisfy yourself that the omissions are because it is a map of permanent settlements merely; but no. You will find in conspicuous type the names of even ordinary discoverers of lands and islands, head-lands and straits. Then, if it was injustice not to mention any of the early settlements in Maine, one as early as 1607, and others before 1620, is it not a double injustice that in a map including early discoveries also, not the slightest attention is paid to the repeated and notable discoveries on the Maine coast? In history one expects fair play. It is not always obtained, however, without trouble.

On page 38th, in a foot-note of three lines, is a mere mention of the "Popham Colony." It got in by squeezing. It has also squeezed into the revised edition of Bancroft's History of the United States. It has been a fact fighting for its life for recognition. It has won. It is now an acknowledged fact. You may soon expect to see "Pemaquid" in the histories. On page 41st no notice is taken of Gosnold's visit to Maine; but his trip to Cape Cod our Massachusetts friends will find inserted. How rejoicing to those favoring "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!"

On page 42d you will detect an error: "Puritans settled at Plymouth" should be "Pilgrims settled at Plymouth;" and then a glaring mistake—"first English settlement in New England, Dec. 21st, 1620"—the fact being that the colony on the Kennebec antedated this by thirteen years! Permanent settlements are elsewhere spoken of.

Again, see page 53d, and read that Capt. John Smith "examined the coast from Penobscot to Cape Cod, drew a map of it (the famous 1614 map on which he put down "Plimouth" six years before the Pilgrims landed there,)



and called the country New England." *Did* he? A half-truth is the worst sort of a falsehood. From the words would you not infer that Smith named the country New England? Who did? It was first named New England by Sir Francis Drake, who was the first, of whom we have any account, to set his foot upon its shore, in the year 1586. Smith himself says: "New England is that part of America in the Ocean Sea opposite to Nova Albion, in the South Sea, discovered by the most memorable Sir Francis Drake, in his voyage about the world in *regard whereof this is still stiled New England.*" Says one: "The noble and generous-minded Smith, unlike Americus, would not permit or suffer his respected friend and contemporary to be deprived of any honor due to him in his day; and to this we may attribute the revival of the name New England in 1614."

Again, on page 55th of the school history, are you told that Samoset, the Indian who one day shouted to the Pilgrims, "Welcome, Englishmen!" was in truth Lord of Pemaquid? Pemaquid was in Maine. There was space enough on the page for a big picture of the scene and the words, "Plymouth, 1621;" but none for the discovery made by a distinguished member of the Maine Historical Society, and of this Institute, who was also at the time of his death a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, that Samoset was the veritable *Lord* of a tribe of Maine Indians. He was a somebody, instead of a nobody. How came Samoset to speak his broken English? or did you neglect to think about it? English has to be learned, even broken English, even single words. They come not by inspiration. Did not this Indian learn his English in Maine of Maine settlers? The date is 1621. They had been there. They, perhaps, were still there. Why not say it? This Indian's visit was a noteworthy one. It subsequently led to a visit of Massasoit, and later on to a



treaty of fifty years. Fifty years of peace do much to establish a colony.

On page 59th we read: "The Boston colony built a ship the first year after its settlement." That would be in 1631. Why print the fact; unless to give the impression that here is the record of the first ship built on this continent by the English? One surely gets that impression especially when after diligently turning over the leaves, he finds nothing said of the building of any other vessel. The first English built ship was the "Virginia," and Fort Popham in Maine was the place. Give the Kennebec the glory, and Maine her due! If either vessel should be specified, why not the one of the two constructed twenty-four years before the other? "It is the first step that costs." Shall we mention the ordinary, and shut out the extraordinary? Maine men are pleased that the Kennebec, celebrated for its fine vessels, was the pioneer in the art of American ship-building.

On the same page, Sir William Phips is styled "royal governor of Massachusetts, Maine and Nova Scotia." Who, from the book, would know him to be Maine-born and bred? Was he the first and only native American ever knighted in England? Or were there two others—Maine Men? Isn't so strange an occurrence worth recording? Was he a Kennebecker? Were they?

Four lines on page 29th will explain to you in italics: "*Saint Augustine is the oldest town in the United States.*" Lower down you read that Santa Fé "is the second oldest town in the United States." The dates—I do not vouch for them—differ by seventeen years—1565, and 1582. Now where are we to turn for a line or two about the first incorporated city in America, the city of Gorgeana, founded in 1641, a city of this county's past history? I should not have presumed to ask. It was a Maine city; to be sure the first, but of no account. But why could

not space enough have been spared to include it, if the list of first old things was to be a complete one?

What State pride would ever be encouraged in the Maine school-boy's mind, if he had to rely solely on his United States history to tell him what his State had been celebrated for? Would he ever find it out? Legislators might do much worse than insist upon a law compelling increased attention to the matters of our State history. Teachers should be required to secure to their pupils by talks or text-books such information as will fully supply the deficiencies, and awaken a zeal and a love for home surroundings.

It is indeed grand to know that Maine men were the first by land to resist British tyranny in the Revolution.

Says Sparks' *American Biography*: "Most readers of American history give Massachusetts the honor of making the first armed resistance to British rule in the Revolution, at the battle of Lexington, fought April 19th, 1775. But true history gives that credit to Maine. In 1774, John Sullivan, a lawyer and a native of Berwick, Me., afterwards a distinguished general in the revolutionary war, raised a force and attacked Fort William and Mary in Portsmouth harbor, which he captured and took possession of one hundred barrels of powder, fifteen cannon, and all the small arms and other stores. The ammunition was carried into the country, and part of it concealed under the pulpit of a church at Durham, N. H. This ammunition was used the next year at the battle of Bunker Hill. This was the first act of armed hostility committed in the colonies."

It is indeed grand to know, that when the British flag was struck for the first time *on the ocean* to Americans, it was to the patriots of Machias, Maine, under the leadership of six brothers, the O'Briens. The ship was the *Margaretta*. Why not teach it? Will it hurt? How other States would boast of it!

It is a matter of some pride for the lovers of the "Maine Liquor Law" to know, that the honor of making the first such law belongs to Pemaquid. September 11th, 1677, was the date of the council's order, which reads :

"No Rum to be drank on this side the ffort stands."  
Is this in the boy's text-book? It is good enough to be.

Massachusetts like a kind mother, gave us educational laws. We return our best thanks. They are good laws. Everything done in that State is spread upon the page of history in a blaze of light. But who expects to find at school in a book the bewildering, true statement that "*Pemaquid was once the metropolis of all the region east of New York before Boston was settled?* Boston was settled in 1630, only ten years after Plymouth; but Pemaquid was the *metropolis*—of all the region—before Boston was settled! Which was the mother then? It begins to look as if Massachusetts was the eldest daughter of Maine, and Maine somehow parent. Clearly Pemaquid with its paved streets may claim its antiquity as greater than Plymouth. But who ascertained the truth of the above statement? An honored member of this society and of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and his book Thornton's "Pemaquid" will amply repay one for its perusal.

The first church service of the Pilgrim colony is put down as a notable event, but it was *not* the first in New England by English settlers. The first church service in the region was in Maine, the year 1605, at Calais, and the second service was that of the Church of England, and it was in Maine, at Fort Popham in 1607. Should these things be deemed unworthy of record?

Who saved the Pilgrims in that bitter winter of 1622, when food from the East was brought in a shallop? Do you find an answer in the school history? Manna once fell from invisible hands to persons in dire distress, and there is no need of inquiring whose were the hands. But



here was food that saved a colony. Whose hands sent it? Elicit the truth; even if it be that settlers of Pemaquid, Sheepscott Farms, Monhegan or elsewhere, were "the friends in need who were the friends indeed."

Washington's riding up and down the lines after one of the hardest fought battles of the Revolution, and exclaiming, "God bless the Massachusetts line," never fails to nerve the average Maine man when he for the first time discovers that the praise was bestowed on troops from York and Cumberland counties. And now my last question, on this point, comes to you? *Does general history point to the spot where the feet of the pioneers of English colonization first pressed American soil?* No. It was the Isle of Monhegan. An unfortunate Maine island!

When starting on this paper I had no intention of instancing so many cases of neglect or of apparently wilful injustice to our good State; but do you not agree, that as long as these things remain neglected, unrecognized and untaught, this York Institute has a duty to perform of the highest character? Its duty is one of widespread publication after patient, special and thorough investigation.

There is another duty for the society, namely, to preserve facts regarding prominent people in the county.

When a boy, one poem, almost a hymn in sentiment, used to affect me wonderfully. It seemed to swing me away out of myself, and has not yet lost its power. Its title was,

#### TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Wake your harp's music!—louder,— higher,  
 And pour your strains along;  
 And smite again each quivering wire,  
 In all the pride of song!  
 Shout like those godlike men of old,  
 Who, daring storm and foe,  
 On this blest soil their anthem rolled  
 Two hundred years ago!



From native shore by tempest driven,  
 They sought a purer sky,  
 And found, beneath a milder heaven,  
 The home of Liberty !  
 An altar rose,—and prayers ;—a ray  
 Broke on their night of woe,  
 The harbinger of Freedom's day,  
 Two hundred years ago !

They clung around that symbol, too,  
 Their refuge and their all,  
 And swore while skies and waves were blue,  
 That altar should not fall.  
 They stood upon the red man's sod,  
 'Neath heaven's unpillared bow,  
 With home, a country and a God,  
 Two hundred years ago !

Oh ! 'twas a hard, unyielding fate  
 That drove them to the seas,  
 And Persecution strove with Hate,  
 To darken her decrees ;  
 But safe above each coral grave  
 Each looming ship did go ;—  
 And God was on the western wave,  
 Two hundred years ago !

They knelt them on the desert sand,  
 By waters cold and rude,  
 Alone upon the dreary strand  
 Of oceaned solitude !  
 They looked upon the high blue air  
 And felt their spirits glow,  
 Resolved to live or perish there,  
 Two hundred years ago !

The warrior's red right arm was bared,  
 His eyes flashed deep and wild ;—  
 Was there a foreign footstep dared  
 To seek his home and child ?

The dark chiefs yelled alarm, and swore  
 The white man's blood should flow,  
 And his hewn bones should bleach their shore,  
 Two hundred years ago !

But lo ! the warrior's eye grew dim,  
 His arm was left alone,  
 The still black wilds which sheltered him  
 No longer were his own !  
 Time fled, and on the hallowed ground  
 His highest pine lies low,  
 And cities swell where forests frowned  
 Two hundred years ago !

Oh ! stay not to recount the tale—  
 'Twas bloody, and 'tis past ;  
 The firmest cheek might well grow pale,  
 To hear it to the last.  
 The God of Heaven who prospers us,  
 Could bid a nation grow,  
 And shield us from the red man's curse,  
 Two hundred years ago !

Come, then, great shades of glorious men  
 From your still glorious grave ;  
 Look on your own proud land again,  
 O bravest of the brave !  
 We call you from each mould'ring tomb,  
 And each blue wave below,  
 To bless the world ye snatched from doom,  
 Two hundred years ago !

Then to your harps,—yet louder,—higher,  
 And pour your strains along !  
 And smite again each quivering wire,  
 In all the pride of song !  
 Shout like those godlike men of old,  
 Who, daring storm and foe,  
 On this blest soil their anthem rolled,  
 Two hundred years ago !

To my astonishment, I afterwards discovered that the author was a Biddeford boy, Grenville Mellen, a son of Chief Justice Prentiss Mellen, the poet who wrote the ode on Boston's two hundredth anniversary of settlement, the man who, in his time, "occupied a position much like that which Dr. Holmes fills now," and that he lies buried in a place utterly forgotten and unknown. What a shame that it should be so! All his poems and all the facts of his life should be in the safe custody of this society. Here is a person dying as late as 1841, a man of letters,—for, besides writing poems for the leading magazines and annuals, his books brought him into wide and favorable notice,—here he is—allowed to be dropped from memory! I cannot leave him thus coldly. I plead for his fame, that it may not die. I give you the titles of his poems of note: In 1826, "The Rest of Empires," before the Peace Society at Portland; in 1828, "The Light of Letters," before the Athenaeum Society of Bowdoin College; in 1827, "Our Chronicles of Twenty-six;" in 1833, "The Martyr's Triumph," "Buried Valley." He wrote a volume of prose, "Sad Tales and Glad Tales." He wrote an ode "The Pilgrim Fathers," for the New England Society's annual dinner in 1832, at New York. He wrote another ode for the New York Historical Society's banquet in 1839. Have we these poems in our collection? Have we all the knowledge we should have of other distinguished men and women of this county? York Institute's duty is to save these men and women from oblivion. If any remissness has been in the past, let no charge of indifference and neglect stain the society's future.

But what shall this future be? Of one thing I am certain: it will exceed our present expectations greatly. Napoleon said: "Give me nine men and I will make a monarchy." The Institute has had its "nine men;" and



while there may not be so vast a result as a monarchy ahead, it will surely be said of them, that "they builded better than they knew."

Most plans of the future it is well to hide. Metellus Pius, waging war in Spain, and being asked what he was going to do the next day, said: "I would *burn my tunic*, if it could tell."

Acting under such a wise commander's advice I shall leave to more practised hands the delineation of what is in store for this society. Something, however, may be predicted almost to a certainty.

There will be a fire-proof building for York Institute with a central hall twice as long as wide. There may be a gallery above, and side alcoves below. There will be a working-room for the preparation of specimens for the lectures, and a waiting-room for the lecturers themselves. There will be one microscope or more to allow an examination of the structure of animals, minerals and plants. The collections of the society will be arranged so that they may be studied; the books, documents and newspapers, especially placed where they may be easy to consult. Photographers will give occasionally pictures, having historic value. Money bequests to the society will be more frequent and generous. There will consequently be regular courses of lectures, and well-paid talent brought in. The library will have full sets of valuable historical publications, where now broken ones exist. People in the county will send us precious old deeds, old bills, pamphlets, pictures and books, instead of selling them for waste paper; and the people in these two cities will, with unanimity of spirit, bestow liberal praise upon the efforts of this society.

The York Corporation has ever been its staunch friend; therefore let the building of the future be located upon this island. It will then also be in full sight of all trav-



elers entering and leaving Saco. It can then receive the visits and contributions of many of our summer visitors.

In one case of valuables will be a few of our Maine emeralds, also a few of the pearls from the Maine coast, similar to the one sold years ago to the Empress Eugenie for fifteen hundred dollars. Near by, in the mineralogical section, will be very appropriately placed a bust of Professor Cleveland, of Bowdoin College, "the father of American mineralogy." Opposite, among the birds, will be the familiar portrait of Audubon, a never failing reminder of the skill and deftness of one of our number, the artist.

In the botanical department Maine's celebrated lady botanist will be represented by her portrait and by many of her beautiful water-color paintings of Maine wild flowers. The Maine plant, *Pedicularis Furbishae*, named after her, will be there, the first plant ever named in honor of a woman in America!

A bust of the immortal Maine poet, Longfellow will meet the gaze of the visitor and remind him of the first American whose imperishable fame has won for him a place beside England's worthies in Westminster Abbey.

And so I might go on with suggestions and speculations did time permit.

In conclusion it may be asked: "Until this future is realized, upon what should the members of York Institute chiefly rely?" An incident will furnish a good answer, in lieu of a better one.

While other peoples wore a foreign yoke,  
 And prostrate lay beneath the conqueror's feet;  
 The Swiss, true scions of an ancient stock,  
 Did their own freedom steadfastly maintain,  
 And never bowed the knee to any prince,  
 But freely chose the Roman Emperor's sheltering shield.

\* \* \* \* \*

One Roman-Austrian sovereign thus received  
 The ancient charters of the cantons in his hands.  
 But when at Rheinfeld, at the Emperor's court,  
 Swiss messengers from many towns were found,  
 As was their wont in each new reign, to get  
 And bring again their parchments duly signed, —  
 With cold and empty comfort they were dismissed :  
 "This time the Emperor had no leisure, but  
 He'd think of them at some convenient season,"  
 Put off, rebuffed, to them Duke Hansen cried :  
 "*Best help yourselves ! Best help yourselves !*"  
 'Twas echoed : "*Right and justice 'tis in vain  
 To look for from the Emperor. Help yourselves.*"

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

Then fought the Swiss for Switzerland. They "helped  
 Themselves." One glorious struggle, and they all were  
 free.

So the members of this society will do best to culti-  
 vate self-reliance, and thus deserve the highest success.