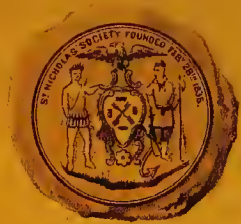
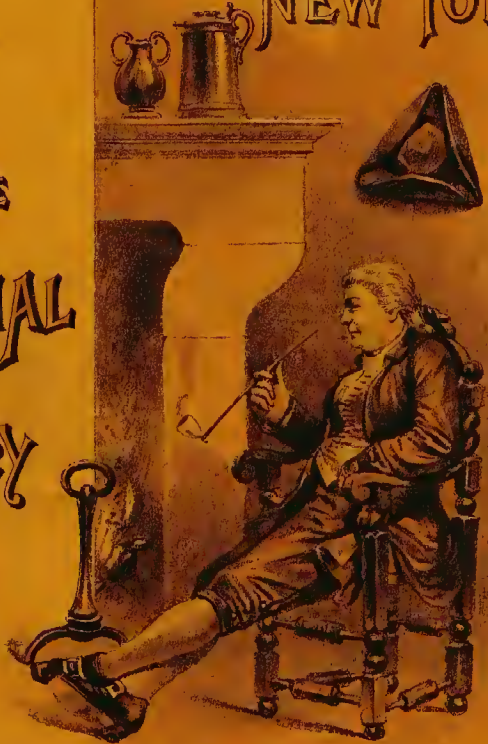


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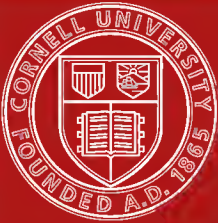
THE  
SAINT NICHOLAS SOCIETY  
OF THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK.

RECORD  
OF THE  
SEMI CENTENNIAL  
ANNIVERSARY  
FEB 28<sup>th</sup>  
1885.



FOUNDED  
Feb. 28, 1835.

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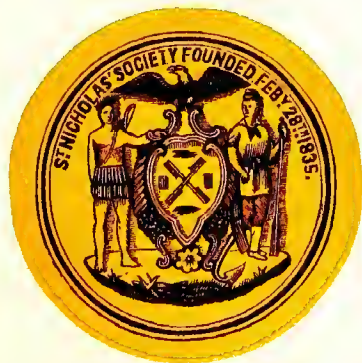
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RECORD  
OF THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
ST. NICHOLAS SOCIETY  
OF THE CITY OF  
NEW-YORK,



FEBRUARY 28, 1885.

*A. 14752*







### PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS.

**A**T a stated meeting of the Saint Nicholas Society, held at the Hotel Brunswick on the 4th day of September, 1884, the following resolutions and recommendations, presented by the Board of Officers, were unanimously adopted:

*“ Resolved,* That the Board of Officers do hereby recommend and advise that the Society celebrate on the 28th of February, 1885, its Fiftieth Anniversary, and

*“ Resolved,* That the Board also recommend that the President appoint a Special Committee of nine, to be composed of three officers, three of the Committee of Stewards, and three other members; and that said Committee take the entire matter into consideration, and report in writing to the Society, at its next stated meeting, such plan or

plans as the Committee may consider most proper to carry into effect the foregoing resolution."

Pursuant to the foregoing resolutions, the President appointed the following Committee: Messrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, James M. McLean, and Charles A. Schermerhorn, of the Board of Officers; Messrs. Stuyvesant Fish, E. Benedict Oakley, and James H. Beekman, of the Committee of Stewards; and Messrs. Alfred Van Santvoord, Edward N. Tailer, and John B. Pine.

At a stated meeting of the Society, held at Delmonico's on the 4th day of December, 1884, the above-named Committee rendered a report in writing, recommending that the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Society be celebrated by a Dinner, followed by an address or addresses, at Delmonico's, on the 28th of February, 1885; which report and recommendation were unanimously adopted, and the matter of arranging for the Anniversary was referred, with power, to the following Committee:

JAMES M. MCLEAN, Chairman.

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT,	ALFRED VAN SANTVOORD,
STUYVESANT FISH,	FREDERIC J. DE PEYSTER,
JAMES H. BEEKMAN,	ROBERT C. LIVINGSTON,
E. BENEDICT OAKLEY,	FORDHAM MORRIS,
EDWARD N. TAILER,	AUSTEN G. FOX.

CHARLES A. SCHERMERHORN, Treasurer.

JOHN B. PINE, Secretary.



## THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY.

**T**HE Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New-York was celebrated on the evening of Saturday, the Twenty-eighth day of February, Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-five, at Delmonico's, Madison Square, New-York City.

### LIST OF PERSONS PRESENT.

The following named gentlemen, seated at the President's table :

Mr. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, President of the Society.

Mr. BENJAMIN H. FIELD, a former President of the Society.

Mr. AUGUSTUS R. MACDONOUGH, a Manager and a former President of the Society.

Rev. THOMAS E. VERMILYE, D. D., Senior Chaplain of the Society.

Hon. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW, a Manager of the Society.

Messrs. ALEXANDER I. COTHEAL, and WILLIAM H. JOHNSON, two of the original members of the Society.

Mr. JOHN R. PLANTEN, Consul-General of the Netherlands.

Mr. J. W. HUNTER, President of the Long Island St. Nicholas Society.

Mr. JOHN REYNDERS, President of the Hoboken St. Nicholas Society.

Also the following named officers of the Society :

Mr. CARLISLE NORWOOD, Jr., First Vice-President.

Mr. JOHN C. MILLS, Second Vice-President.

Mr. JAMES WM. BEEKMAN, Third Vice-President.

Mr. STUYVESANT FISH, Fourth Vice-President.

Mr. EDWARD SCHELL, Treasurer.

Mr. CHARLES A. SCHERMERHORN, Secretary.

ABRAM DU BOIS, M. D., Physician.

Messrs. JAMES M. MCLEAN, ROBERT G. REMSEN, EDWARD F. DE LANCEY, BENJAMIN L. SWAN, Jr., NATHANIEL P. BAILEY, and the Hon. ABRAHAM R. LAWRENCE, of the Board of Managers.

Messrs. FREDERIC J. DE PEYSTER, JAMES H. BEEKMAN, E. BENEDICT OAKLEY, ROBERT C. LIVINGSTON, and FORDHAM MORRIS, Stewards.

Also the following named members of the Society :

Mr. ALFRED T. ACKERT,	Rev. WILLIAM R. DURVEE,
Mr. CHARLES H. ADAMS,	Mr. J. B. DUTCHER,
Mr. JAMES M. BAILEY,	Mr. WILLIAM H. FALCONER,
Mr. GEORGE V. N. BALDWIN,	Mr. JAMES W. FELLOWS,
Mr. GERARD BEEKMAN,	Mr. WILLIAM H. FIELD,
Mr. HENRY W. BIBBY,	Mr. HAMILTON FISH, Jr.,
Mr. WILBUR A. BLOODGOOD,	Mr. JOHN FITCH,
Mr. JOHN BOGART,	Mr. CHARLES H. FORD,
Mr. RICHARD W. BOGART,	Mr. EDWARD L. GAUL,
Mr. CHARLES B. BOSTWICK,	JOHN W. GREENE, M. D.,
Mr. HENRY A. BOSTWICK,	Mr. JACOB L. HALSEY,
Mr. WILLIAM A. BOYD,	Mr. WILLIAM G. HAMILTON,
Mr. JOHN I. BROOKS,	Mr. EDWARD H. HARRIMAN,
Mr. SYLVANUS T. CANNON,	Mr. WILLIAM M. HARRIMAN,
Mr. AMORY S. CARHART,	Mr. A. W. HAVILAND,
Mr. LEONARD J. CARPENTER,	Mr. WILLIAM T. INNES,
Mr. WILLIAM E. CLARK,	Mr. JOHN B. IRELAND,
Mr. FLOYD CLARKSON,	WILLIAM H. JACKSON, M. D.,
Mr. A. T. CLEARWATER,	Mr. LYMAN A. JACOBUS,
Mr. J. H. V. COCKCROFT,	Mr. BRADISH JOHNSON, Jr.,
Mr. EDWARD S. DAKIN,	Mr. WALTER R. T. JONES,
Mr. EDGAR DE PEYSTER,	Mr. EUGENE M. KETELTAS,
Mr. HENRY DE PEYSTER,	Mr. HENRY KETELTAS,
Mr. FREDERICK W. DEVOE,	Mr. EDWARD KING,
Mr. GEORGE G. DEWITT, Jr.,	Mr. ROBERT LANE,
Mr. E. N. DICKERSON, Jr.,	Mr. EDWARD V. Z. LANE,
Mr. MENZO DIEFENDORF,	Mr. FRANK T. L. LANE,
Mr. LAWRENCE DRAKE,	Mr. P. VAN ZANDT LANE,
Mr. SIMEON J. DRAKE,	Mr. SMITH E. LANE,
Mr. HENRY DUDLEY,	Mr. ISAAC LAWRENCE,

Mr. EDWARD M. LE MOYNE,	Mr. ROBERT SCHELL,
Mr. WILLIAM T. LLOYD,	Mr. EDGAR S. SCHIEFFELIN,
Mr. JOSEPH B. LOCKWOOD,	Mr. GEORGE R. SCHIEFFELIN,
Mr. R. P. LOUNSBERY,	Mr. SPENCER D. SCHUYLER,
Mr. GEORGE H. MCLEAN,	Mr. GEORGE H. SCOTT,
Mr. JOHN MURRAY MITCHELL,	Mr. CLARENCE A. SEWARD,
Mr. GEORGE F. NELSON,	Mr. HENRY L. SLOTE,
Mr. HENRY A. OAKLEY,	CHARLES D. SMITH, M. D.,
Mr. J. SEAVER PAGE,	GOVERNEUR M. SMITH,
Mr. SCHUYLER L. PARSONS,	M. D.,
Mr. ARCHIBALD M. PENTZ,	Mr. L. BAYARD SMITH,
Mr. CHARLES E. PELL,	Mr. S. FRANKLIN STANTON,
Mr. GEORGE H. PELL,	Mr. W. E. DODGE STOKES,
Mr. EDMUND PENFOLD,	Mr. THOMAS STORM,
Mr. WM. HALL PENFOLD,	Mr. WALTON W. STORM,
Mr. R. N. PERLEE,	Mr. JAMES A. STRIKER,
Mr. JOHN B. PINE,	Mr. CHARLES C. SUFFERN,
Mr. GILBERT M. PLYMPTON,	Mr. SATTERLEE SWARTWOUT,
Mr. M. TAYLOR PYNE,	Mr. EDWARD N. TAILER,
Mr. HENRY REMSEN,	Mr. WILLIAM H. TAILER,
Mr. WILLIAM REMSEN,	Mr. GEORGE W. TALBOT,
Mr. JOHN L. RIKER,	Mr. RICHMOND TALBOT,
Mr. WILLIAM J. RIKER,	Mr. T. DEWITT THOMPSON,
Mr. WALTER RUTHERFURD,	Mr. LAWRENCE TURNURE,
Mr. EDWARD R. SATTERLEE,	Mr. EUGENE UNDERHILL,
Mr. GEORGE B. SATTERLEE,	Mr. ABRAHAM B. VALENTINE,
Mr. SAMUEL K. SATTERLEE,	Mr. WM. J. VAN ARSDALE,
Mr. G. S. SCHERMERHORN, Jr.,	Mr. GEO. W. VAN DERLIP,
Mr. E. E. SCHERMERHORN,	Mr. A. ERNEST VANDERPOEL,
Mr. EDWARD H. SCHELL,	Mr. VEDDER VAN DYCK,
Mr. FRANCIS SCHELL,	Hon. GEO. M. VAN HOESEN,

Mr. DAVID VAN NOSTRAND,	Gen. EGBERT L. VIELE,
Mr. KILIAN VAN RENSSELAER,	Mr. HERMAN K. VIELE,
Mr. ABRAHAM VAN SANT- VOORD,	Mr. GEO. AUGUSTUS VROOM,
Mr. ALFRED VAN SANT- VOORD,	Mr. C. C. WASSON,
Mr. CORNELIUS VAN SANT- VOORD,	Mr. HAMILTON F. WEBSTER,
Mr. GEORGE W. VAN SLYCK,	ROBERT F. WEIR, M. D.,
Mr. ABRAHAM V. W. VAN VECHTEN,	Mr. C. YATES WEMPLE,
Gen. STEWART VAN VLIET,	Mr. HENRY S. WEMPLE,
Mr. AMES VAN WART,	Mr. J. RUSS WEMPLE,
Mr. MAUS R. VEDDER,	Mr. DAVID B. WILLIAMSON,
Mr. J. D. VERMILYE,	Mr. D. D. WILLIAMSON,
Mr. T. E. VERMILYE, Jr.,	Mr. JOHN D. WILSON,
	Mr. CHARLES WISNER,
	Mr. WILLIAM H. WISNER,
	Mr. EDWARD I. WOOLSEY.

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At the conclusion of the dinner the Weather-cock of the Stadt-Heuyse was borne into the room, preceded by the Society's Trumpeter, and escorted by the Committee, and was placed upon the President's table.

The song, "Sancte Claus goed heylig Man!" was then sung by the Glee Club.

The President, thereupon, arose in his place, and delivered the following address:



ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT.

*Gentlemen of the St. Nicholas Society:*

**O**N Saturday evening, February 28, 1835, at the Washington Hotel, in this city, the Constitution of the St. Nicholas Society of the City of New-York was adopted and the first election of officers held. To-night we meet to commemorate our Fiftieth Anniversary.

I take pleasure in stating that our Society is in a flourishing condition. There are no vacancies in its membership. It has a permanent fund of over \$30,000 well invested. Its income is sufficient to meet all its needs, and, when called upon, to help such of its members as may require assistance. For these happy results we rejoice together this evening.



Of the twenty-five gentlemen who have occupied the honorable position of President, but ten are living, and of these, eight are now present. Of those who were members of the Society in 1835, eight are now living and two are with us on this occasion. The speakers whom we are to have the pleasure of hearing will tell us of the formation of the Society, and of its history through the past fifty years.

We had expected to have with us our first Secretary, the Hon. Hamilton Fish; but a severe and protracted illness deprives us of that pleasure. He drafted our Constitution and presented it at the formation of the Society, fifty years ago to-night. Since that date he has filled the highest positions of honor and trust. He has been successively Governor of our State, United States Senator, and Secretary of State in the Cabinet of General Grant; but to-night it is our duty to believe that the most distinguished of all his honors was the Presidency of the St. Nicholas Society.

What an eventful half-century it has been to this city! Many now with us recall its rapid growth, and can remember when the very spot on which we are dining was a farm in the country, far removed from the residences and business center. I think I may safely say, without egotism,—and we all know that the Dutch are a

modest race and speak only the truth,—that much of the growth and development of our city is due to the earnest and honest purpose of our Dutch ancestors; in laying the broad foundations they did. Yet how amazed would they be could they step on the scene to-day!

As perpetual reminders of our forefathers and their customs, the cocked hat, of the style worn on State occasions by Governor Peter Stuyvesant, is still an emblem of authority; our Trumpeter, as in olden days, leads to the banquet hall; the Weather-cock presented by Washington Irving is from the first Government House; the pipes, bearing the image of the ancient Knickerbocker, are now, as then, the helps to good fellowship and wise reflection; our badge bears the old City arms, and for our flag those arms are borne upon the tricolor of the Dutch Republic.

Among the names of those who have been members of this Society, will be found many who have been foremost in promoting the best interests of this city, and while, as all the sons of St. Nicholas should do, they have enjoyed the good things of this life, they have not neglected their duties as citizens and Christians.

Let us, therefore, in our rejoicings, recall, with love and tenderness, the memory of those who have passed from among us. Let this evening be remembered as a bright spot in our

existence, and let us go on with renewed and earnest effort, in our next half-century, toward accomplishing the objects for which the St. Nicholas Society was founded.

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At the conclusion of his address, the President expressed the regret of the Society at the absence of the Hon. Hamilton Fish, its first Secretary, and one of its original members, and stated that Mr. Fish had written a letter for the occasion, which would be read by Mr. Stuyvesant Fish, the fourth Vice-President of the Society.

Mr. Stuyvesant Fish then read the following letter :

LETTER FROM THE HON. HAMILTON FISH.

251 EAST SEVENTEENTH STREET,  
February 27, '85.

JOHN B. PINE, ESQ., *Secretary.*

*Dear Sir:* I have delayed until this late day an answer to the invitation of the St. Nicholas Society to their Semi-Centennial Anniversary Dinner in the hope that I might be able to attend, but the persistence of an illness which has confined me to my house for some weeks past leaves me no hope of being able to participate in the festivities and enjoyment of the occasion.

Having been one of five with whom originated the idea of organizing the Society, and who carried the idea into practical success, and being one of the very few survivors of those who attended the first meetings in "Washington Hall," it would have been a very great pleasure to me to witness, in my old age, the strength and vigor of the Society, at whose birth, fifty years ago, I was present, and whose infant utterances and early movements for many years I faithfully recorded.

Long may it prosper!

With friendly and brotherly wishes toward each and all of its members,

I am very sincerely yours,

HAMILTON FISH.

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The song, "The Rolling Zuyder Zee," was then sung by the Glee Club.

The President then introduced Dr. Vermilye, as follows:

We have with us our Senior Chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Vermilye, who has been a member of this Society for forty-four years, and its Chaplain for forty years, and to-day he is celebrating his eighty-second birthday.



ADDRESS BY THE REV. DR. VERMILYE.

*Mr. President, and Members  
of the St. Nicholas Society :*

**I**T is impossible for mere human nature, such as mine, not to feel a throb of the greatest delight to think that the St. Nicholas Society has gotten up such an entertainment as this upon my birthday. I know that the gentlemen have said, out of delicacy to my own feelings undoubtedly, that the intention is to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the St. Nicholas Society. Well, sir, the St. Nicholas Society to-day is fifty years old, and, I make a clean breast of it, so am I !

Mr. President, it is just about forty-four years since I was introduced into this Society by being made a Chaplain, and I recollect that the meet-

ings at that time were held down at the City Hotel, on Broadway, a block above Trinity Church. Mr. Julian Verplanck was then the President of the Society; in body and mind a fine type and personification of a true Dutchman. The Society from that time, and before that, in fact, has been distinguished by the presidency of men who would do honor to any association in this city, or anywhere else. They have been men signalized in the ordinary walks of life, who have brought fine reputations to the Society, and the Society has rightly and justly honored them. I see several of them present this evening, much to my sincere gratification. Bishop Onderdonk was then the Senior Chaplain; and allow me to say, with some little degree of pride, that I find in looking over the annals that the Chaplains have been the substantial part of the Society; for, they have held on while the other officers have fluctuated from year to year. After Bishop Onderdonk, Dr. Berrian was elected Chaplain, though I do not recall having seen him present on any of these occasions. He was followed by the Rev. Mr. Johnson, a very amiable and admirable man, who, however, did not continue long.

Dr. Noah Hunt Schenck was his successor; "a man formed in the very prodigality of nature"—a man whose personal appearance always attracted attention, being of fine, majestic proportions,

whose address at all times was gentle and courteous to all classes of men; whose countenance was beaming continually with intelligence, good nature and humor, just like beautiful sunbeams that play around the mountain top. Dr. Schenck was possessed of fine literary acquirements, without any tincture of pedantry; open-hearted and generous, without pretension, and despising everything like cant; a man who carried himself through the various spheres in which he was called to act, with dignity, with affection, with earnestness; and who seemed by his example, as well as his precept, to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way. In this place, and in all others which Dr. Schenck was called upon to occupy, his genial, kindly, welcome presence will never be forgotten; and I may say, without any disparagement to those who remain behind, hard will it be to fill fully the place of Dr. Noah Hunt Schenck.

Mr. President, I have often heard the inquiry made, "What is the object, the *raison d'être*, of the St. Nicholas Society?" Well, some would suppose that it is like all other institutions of the same kind—the main object in view being, of course, the annual dinner at Delmonico's. But the final cause of the St. Nicholas Society certainly is not to eat a fine dinner; this is not the end of our institution, and I should be very sorry that any one could imagine so. The higher ob-

ject of the Society undoubtedly is to cultivate those amenities of life which are the growth of our intercourse with our fellow-men, with our fellow-citizens—we who have been boys together. I have often met some of my old school-friends on these occasions. And whilst we have had these meetings very pleasant incidents have occurred. I recollect at one time Washington Irving was sitting as a guest at the officers' table, and in the course of the evening there was a cry, "Irving, Irving!" I well recall Irving, twitching about nervously, a strange, mystical smile covering his face; but he still kept his seat. The call went on, "Irving, Irving!" and finally Irving arose half up—"Mr. President and gentlemen," said he, "I am sure I am very much obliged to you for this kindly reception, but, Mr. President, you know very well I cannot make a speech"; and one of the most fluent and classical of our writers sat down. The same thing was characteristic of Addison and Cowper; the latter was obliged to give up his clerkship in the court, as he was too shy to read aloud the documents that came before him. I am sure that my friend on my left (Mr. Depew) will agree with me, that it is miserable to be shy.

Ogden Hoffman also filled the office of President. He was known as Hoffman the "golden-mouthed," whose voice was perfect music, and



who seemed to have an endless flow of the finest language. On one occasion he arose in the midst of the Society and made a remark or two, and was about to sit down, but they called all around, "Go on, Go on." "Oh yes," said Hoffman, "it is very easy to say, 'Go on,' but what shall I go on about?"—a most awful question for an extemporaneous speaker. My friend on my left will again agree with me that it is always an awful thing not to know what to go on about. But I can say that I never knew him at fault.

During his Presidency a Dutch ship, with a Dutch prince on board, came into the harbor, and this Society sent an invitation to him. Hoffman presided, and Webster sat on his right hand. Well do I recollect Hoffman, in the course of the evening, introducing Webster, and speaking of him as the Kohinoor of our great men and orators. Webster sat there, and never shall I forget his turning those two eyes of his, like two orbs, upon the speaker, seeming to pour out admiration upon him who thus brought up his name, while Hoffman wrought out his figures of speech to perfection.

I recollect when Mr. Benson was the President of the Society, that a gentleman, a guest of our body, sat beside him, and said to him in the course of the evening, "Mr. Benson, I find that nearly all people have some peculiar dish which is their national dish. What is the national dish of the

Dutch?"—he supposing, no doubt, that they lived on sauer-kraut, cold-slaugh, and dough-nuts. Mr. Benson made a neat reply, saying, "Sir, the national and peculiar dish of the Dutch is every other good dish of every other people."

Mr. President, I might go on with these incidents until you would really believe me to be more than fifty years old. But I wish to make one further remark. The object of the St. Nicholas Society, even above this social, kindly intercourse, and these meetings of the brotherhood, is to lay fresh immortelles upon the tombs of our fathers; to bring to mind again the men who founded our city, and the land which gave them birth, with all the grandeur and glory of their history, and thus to impregnate our own minds with the great thoughts and sentiments which actuated them, and under the influence of which this great empire was founded. Three hundred years—not more than three hundred years—ago, a shallop entered the harbor of New-York, and twelve men therefrom stood upon this broad American continent. At that time it was a vast wilderness, the solitude being only awakened by the hoot of the owl, by the roar of savage beasts, and the cry of more savage men. And now look at what has been accomplished in the course of three hundred years. You see this wilderness converted into a grand field for civilized man, a spirit of intercourse

spreading from ocean to ocean. And, sir, I think that New-York, and this Society, which is peculiarly a New-York Society, should realize that this city is the great gate for the United States and the whole continent of North America. There are, to be sure, wickets at other points; but this is the great gate of travel to and from Europe, and anything that interferes with the prosperity of the city of New-York should be a matter of deep solicitude to all our citizens. If there be any scheme by which the traffic from the western part of our continent is to be diverted from the city of New-York, I say the citizens should resolutely stand up in opposition to it. If the Pacific coast is to be drained in any other direction, and our railroads, and all the avenues by which traffic is carried to and from New-York, be thus injured and perhaps broken down, the citizens of New-York should look well to it. The time, in my judgment, will not have come until the continent is so well stocked with people, and so superabundant in its resources, that there may be need for other openings for our traffic.

But it is not merely in this material point of view that New-York stands first through the character of its original inhabitants, and from the fact that they laid the granite foundations of this government, whatever others may have done for the superstructure; it is likewise all-important

that we should realize the moral and religious influences which go forth from this great community, spreading over our whole country, and what those influences are to be in the future, not only in the United States, but for the civilization and freedom of the whole world. We live at a time when there is a great change going on in all departments of civil and political life, and projects are being formed to overthrow the principles which lie at the very basis of civilization. The sappers and miners of Satan are engaged in undermining the very foundations of society, that domestic love, social life, and civil and political welfare may be overthrown and perfectly destroyed. And what then is to come to us and to our posterity when they have accomplished their fiendish purposes? Let me ask: Is the city of New-York, the United States of America, to be made the vantage-ground from which they may play their infernal engines? Are we to submit that these influences shall go forth from us which shall be constantly jeopardizing the peace and prosperity of the United States and of the world? Shall we look on with indifference while the law should be invoked and enforced to put down those villainous schemes? When I see these men eliminated from our borders, when they shall be prohibited from landing here and carrying out their abominable schemes, then can we claim that

our country is the home of civilization and the source from which proceed only blessings to all the people of the world; then shall we justly say that our motto is "Onward and upward"; then shall it be written truly, "Excelsior."



The President then read the following letters :



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER OF THE NETHERLANDS.

Mr. de Weckherlin, Minister of the Netherlands, has the honor of acknowledging receipt of the kind invitation to the Semi-Centennial Anniversary Dinner of the St. Nicholas Society of the City of New-York on the 28th instant,—and regrets to state that previous engagements prevent him from being present at the said celebration.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 20, 1885.

LETTER FROM MR. WILLIAM H. BOGERT.

AURORA ON CAYUGA LAKE,  
February 24, 1885.

*My dear Mr. Secretary:*

I am honoured in the invitation, communicated through yourself, to attend the Semi-Centennial Celebration of St. Nicholas Society on the even-

ing of the 28th inst. For half the number of years attained by the Society I have been courteously and kindly welcomed as a guest at their Annual Festival. I can have no other than grateful associations with them. The St. Nicholas Society is another name for The Founders of the City of New-York. It has fully established itself,—I cannot quite see why it should write its date of origin as of 1835, when indeed the Society in its brotherhood established itself on Man-hada Island so soon after 1609. The Hollanders that faced the wilderness and the savage fraternised. It is an unbroken chain.

I observe that Mr. Washington Irving's portrait graces our card of invitation. Our character survived his humorous historical romance. The feigned name of his historian, Knickerbocker, has become the synonym of social distinction.

The Society will meet on Saturday, in the plenitude of prosperity. The language, the names, the associations of the centuries, give dignity to your gathering. Ours is a history whose past grasped a struggle for freedom and whose present is its enjoyment.

Regretting that I must deny myself the pleasure of being with you,

I remain, my dear Mr. Pine,

Respectfully your friend,

WILLIAM H. BOGERT.

The President then said :

The weather-cock which we all see on the opposite side of the room has, within a few days, been presented to the Society, and I call upon Mr. Mills, our Second Vice-President, through whom it was given, to read the correspondence.

Mr. John C. Mills replied as follows :

I have the following letter from Mr. Welch, late proprietor of the St. Nicholas Hotel :

LETTER FROM MR. URIAH WELCH.

NEW AMERICAN, RICHFIELD SPRINGS,  
February 18th.

JOHN C. MILLS, Esq. :

*Dear Sir :* As the St. Nicholas Hotel no longer exists, it seems to me proper to send to the Society which took such an interest in laying the corner-stone, its emblem of good cheer,—the old Weather-cock,—so long a prominent object on Broadway.

Leaving the particular manner of placing it in the custody of the St. Nicholas Society to yourself,  
I remain,

Very truly yours,

URIAH WELCH.

In reply to Mr. Welch's communication I said to him, that I would deem it an honor to make the presentation, and I felt confident that the



Society would highly value the gift. I also took the liberty of saying — perhaps drawing largely on the imagination — that we would soon have a home of our own, and that on the top of its flag-staff the old weather-cock might once more bask in the sunshine and battle with the storm. I fear, however, that for many years to come he will repose, with other relics of the Society, in the vault under Mr. Treasurer Schell's Savings Bank. Nevertheless, I have the honor, on behalf of Mr. Welch, to present you with the weather-cock.

It was then moved and seconded, that a vote of thanks be tendered to Mr. Welch, and the motion was carried with much applause.



The President then introduced Mr. Depew.



ADDRESS BY THE HON. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen :*

**I** TRUST we will not have many recurrences of Semi-Centennials, because they seem to lead to a plenitude of weather-cocks, and the staid and consistent characteristics of our Society do not encourage too many emblems of that nature.

I do not stand here to-night, as did my friend Dr. Vermilye, to recall from personal recollections the first landing of the first Dutchman in New-York, nor am I one of the several gentlemen on this platform who, in middle life, inaugurated this Society fifty years ago, and are still in a state of good preservation. The Committee have arranged with commendable discretion, and with that sense

of propriety which characterizes the work of all our committees, a memorial which recalls and distinguishes in a peculiar way the thoughts and aspirations of the members present at the first meeting of this Society. The day after that first and memorable gathering, the gentlemen present on that night gave an order to the proprietors of the Gobelin Tapestries to have woven in wonderful and enduring pictures, the portraits of those sons who were expected to succeed the fathers who founded this organization ; and in the rosy cherubs playing amidst the tropical foliage of the tapestries which adorn the galleries, and which were borrowed from Sypher, you will find correct representations of the Beekmans, the Fishes, the de Peysters, the Livingstons, the Millses, and the rest of them, as they appeared at that early day. The artist, being a Frenchman, supposed that perpetual summer reigned in these latitudes. But, gentlemen, we meet here to-night not to be facetious, and there falls upon me the duty of delivering the historical address, which in its character is necessarily serious. We all of us, for fifty years, have been having a good time,—that is, all those who are fifty years old ; I am not,—and the object of our gathering on all festive occasions has been to have a good time. A Scotchman cannot thoroughly enjoy himself, for he is continually plunged in dejection and gloom in the effort to grasp the

jokes which he don't understand ; and the English and the French recall with sorrow the land from which they fled. But these, our festive occasions, are free from griefs, and are marked by no jealousies or strifes. We meet as becomes those who have life to enjoy, and know how to enjoy it, and we do it on these and all other occasions, where our circumstances will permit. Our fund of thirty thousand dollars has accumulated from the fact that the Committee appointed by the Society to seek out the objects who should be the recipients of its assistance, have never been able to discover one worthy of its charity within the limits of their view. He was always just beyond. But for once in fifty years, you will pardon me if I am serious. Gentlemen who are present representing other nationalities and societies will forgive us, if once in half a century we lay aside our characteristic modesty, and emulate their frequent examples by speaking of ourselves: It is emphatically our night and our Hall. We are met to recall the purposes and history of the Saint Nicholas Society, to commemorate the object for which it was organized, and the excellence, the nobleness, and the virtue of the ancestry from whom we sprang.

In the ordinary life of a nation or a municipality, fifty years have been but a day. The original conditions of our American existence have destroyed the value of time as an element of

progress and development. Cities whose founders are still living rival in population and prosperity the oldest and most successful capitals. This Society was organized to "collect and preserve information respecting the history, settlement, and manners of New York, and to promote social intercourse among its native citizens." Its first half-century, though devoid of incident to itself, covers a period of municipal growth unparalleled in history. For more than a hundred years in different forms the descendants of the early inhabitants have sought to preserve the traditions of the fathers. "Rivington's Gazetteer" reports a celebration of the Sons of St. Nicholas at Waldron's tavern, a road house on the Brooklyn side, in 1763; and again in 1784 that old chronicle records that the anniversary of St. Nicholas was celebrated "by the descendants of the ancient Dutch families." Doubtless each recurring birthday of our patron saint has for over two hundred years received appropriate recognition in festival and speech.

But it was not until fifty years ago to-night, that, with Constitution and definite purposes, a society was formed to perpetuate the memories of old New York and the virtues of its founders. Washington Irving walked into the assembly carrying the gilded rooster which had served as a weather-vane upon the old stadthuis, or city

hall, from the first settlement of the city, until the needs of a larger population required a new structure. He was so overcome with fright that he forgot the little speech he had prepared and broke down during the first sentence. But this ancient bird, built in Holland after an old model, looking down for a century upon the city's daily life, its steady growth, the gathering of patriots, the conventions and congresses which preceded and formulated the republic, and now the silent Mentor at our meetings, speaks more eloquently than any records or musty documents of the sources of our strength. It saw the land from which we sprang. It marked the storm signals for the early mariner sailing in and out our harbor, and under its weather eye political clouds burst first in protest and then in arms, to be followed by the pure atmosphere and clear sunlight of liberty.

Our Society may properly trace its origin to 1609, when our Dutch ancestors first established on Manhattan Island their colony. The Puritan proves his claim to have originated and inspired all that makes our country free, intelligent, and great, by the repetition of the history, principles, and characteristics of his forefathers. It is often better for fame to have eminent historians than to have enacted history. The judgment of mankind upon nations and peoples of the past is never formed from original sources, but made up from

the accepted picture of the most popular artist. While the Pilgrim fully merits most of the praise, which has crystallized into settled opinion, it has been his wonderful fortune to have the highest genius, eloquence, thought, and philosophical acumen devoted to throwing about himself, his mission, his words and creations, now as they assert in course of partial realization in our institutions and progress, a meaning, a self-denial, and prophetic construction for humanity, of which Brewster and Carver and Captain John Smith never dreamed.

The Dutch settlers, on the other hand, by the magic pen of the father of American literature, became the victims of a caricature which captivated the fancy of the world, and made the most potent factors in the founding and development of the freedom and prosperity of our country, the accepted subjects of good-natured ridicule and merriment. Two generations have been laughing at a marionette, whose antics have concealed the most important figure in the preservation of civil and religious liberty.

Pliny says of this indomitable people, that though dwelling in marshes and subsisting on fish, they resolutely refused to become absorbed into and enjoy the benefits of the great Roman empire. Their conquests were beneficent victories over nature, and not bloody confiscations of subject

peoples. They won their country from the ocean, and by their dykes set bounds to the waters. They have pumped out the Haarlem Sea and the Zuyder Zee, and transformed their depths into fruitful soil. They alone for a thousand years have enforced upon Neptune, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Though their country is only one-fourth the area of the State of New York, they fought for sixty-eight years to secure their independence against the power of Spain, then the strongest nation in Europe. And they won, because with them was liberty of conscience, and of the individual, and universal education; while the Spanish despotism crushed in dungeons, and punished with torture and the stake, enlightenment, religious liberty, and opinion. When the rest of Europe was in intellectual darkness, Holland had her universities, and a system of general education upon which our common schools are founded. While learning languished elsewhere, Grotius promulgated a system of international law, Erasmus taught Greek to Oxford, Zacharias Janssens invented the telescope and the microscope, whose revelations created modern science, and Lawrence Koster discovered the art of printing. When Koster made a Bible for five crowns, which before him had cost the ransom of a prince, the American republic first became



possible. For a time free thought was impossible in England, or upon the Continent, and Holland became the bulwark, the refuge, and salvation of humanity. The spirit of her sons was illustrated at the siege of Leyden. There was but little food, and that the vilest offal; starvation and pestilence afflicted the inhabitants; but when the Spaniard proposed surrender and generous terms, with submission to king and creed, "No," they replied, "we will eat our left arms and fight with our right, and set fire to our houses, and die in the flames, before we will be slaves." When, for their heroic defense, they were asked what should be their indemnity and reward, they answered, "Give us a national university." They gave to England that Bill of Rights which is the basis of Puritan liberty, and to us our form of government. In 1579 the seven provinces of the Netherlands formed a republic at Utrecht, and adopted for their motto, "Unity makes might"; and in 1581 they promulgated their declaration of independence in these memorable words: "The people are not made for the prince, but the prince for the people, who always have the right to depose him if he should oppress them." This grand formula of liberty the Dutch asserted and maintained with their swords, a hundred years before the English declaration of rights, and two hundred years before the American declaration of independence, and at a time

when the belief was universal that kings were gods anointed, and could do no wrong. Here was the inspiration of Cromwell, Milton, and of Hampden, of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Adams.

This was the people who in 1609 settled upon Manhattan Island, and founded our city and State. They bought twenty-two thousand acres from the Indians for sixty guilders, and upon an honest title founded their city. They had circled the globe with their colonies; with their three thousand ships and a hundred thousand sailors they were the chief of maritime powers, and controlled the commerce of the world; but they had no country save that submerged land, where Puritan and Huguenot, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew, have found hospitable and tolerant asylum. Their coming was attended by no loud professions of their virtue or their mission, but their object was to extend the trade of Holland, and by increasing the wealth and opportunities of her people to add to their happiness; but the things above all others which they guarded and maintained were the common school and religious liberty. The first Dutch governor brought with him a dominie and a schoolmaster, each the first of his class on this continent, and Everardus Bogardus, the preacher, and Adam Roolandson, the teacher, were the pioneers of our American civilization. In this free

and tolerant atmosphere the witchcraft superstition never found lodgment. The unfortunate victims fleeing to New-York for their lives from New England were warmly welcomed, and only by threat of war did Governor Stuyvesant rescue his sister-in-law, Judith Varlet, from the clutches of the fierce sectaries at Hartford, who had determined to burn her as a witch, because the Connecticut swains had lost hearts and heads for the Dutch beauty, who safely returned, married a Dutchman, and became the ancestress of some of the noblest people in our State. While the Puritan colonies were in their wild terror imprisoning and executing the suspected, and every family was at the mercy of the accuser, the Dutch and Huguenot ministers of New Amsterdam unanimously resolved that "the apparition of a person afflicting another is very insufficient proof of a witch, and that a good name obtained by a good life should not be lost by mere spiritual accusation." Baptists, and the dissenters of every creed, fleeing from Massachusetts, were given homes and lands, the deeds declaring that they should "enjoy in peace the free exercise of their religion." The only effort to curb heresy which was affecting the prosperity of the Dutch church was made by Peter Stuyvesant. But the sturdy old governor received from the home government so sharp a reprimand, that neither by him nor any man has the right of

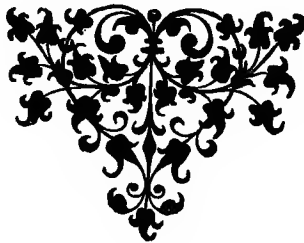
freedom of worship and opinion ever been questioned in New-York. In words which should be put upon our public buildings in letters of gold they wrote: "The consciences of men ought to be free and unshackled. Such have been the maxims of prudence and toleration by which the magistrates of this city, Amsterdam, have been governed; and the consequences have been that the oppressed and persecuted from every country have found among us asylum from distress. Follow in the same footsteps and you will be blessed."

When the English conquered New-York in 1664, the city had about a thousand inhabitants, and three hundred houses; but there were three public, one Latin, and twenty private schools. The accession of William of Orange to the English throne brought here about five thousand more Dutch, and with the increase of the means of education the society of New-York was the most learned and cultured in the country. Both men and women were familiar with the classics and the modern languages. The English paid little attention to education, and it continued under Dutch auspices until ten years after the Revolutionary war. The formation of the Free School Society in 1810 was a remarkable example of the Dutch faith in universal education. For fifty years almost unaided it furnished the means for popular learning, and only surrendered its great

and magnificently administered trust when the state was prepared to undertake this its most important duty.

Upon this broad basis of civil and religious liberty, of toleration and education, was formed the metropolis of the New World. Here, nearly a hundred years before the Boston Tea Party, Jacob Leisler began the battle of colonial rights. Here, forty years before the declaration of independence, the trial of John Zenger established the freedom of the press upon principles which have since been incorporated in every State in the Union. Eleven years before the battle of Lexington, the Assembly of New-York protested against the Stamp Act, and organized the colonies for resistance to British aggression, and the Stamp Act Congress, sitting in this city, first boldly proclaimed that taxation without representation is tyranny, and paved the way to American independence. When the last British soldier had embarked at the Battery, those two most prominent citizens of New-York, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, began the publication of the *Federalist*, which out of the chaos of confederation organized a constitutional republic. The government of the United States which began life in this city, with the inauguration of Washington in Wall Street, reflected in every part the influences of Dutch examples. Its federal form, its toleration of creeds, its hospitable in-

vation to the oppressed of all lands, its liberal views on trade and commerce, its official terms and titles, came from the home of the first settlers in New-York. They proclaimed no mission for themselves or mankind, but without boasting, with modesty, industry, and inflexible principle, they so builded their part of our great temple of liberty as to deserve the undying affection and reverence of their descendants, and the respect and gratitude of the world. This city and State which they founded, and in which, in their spirit, the peoples of every nation and of every faith enjoy equal privileges and freedom, with their sons, are their monuments. When William of Orange received the crown of England in the old hall of Westminster, and the charters of English liberty were read to him, with his hand on his sword he swore, "I will maintain." To-night we take up anew the glories, the traditions, and the lessons of old New-York, with the solemn oath, "We will maintain."





### MOTION OF THANKS.

At the conclusion of Mr. Depew's address, Mr. Augustus R. Macdonough rose and said :

Mr. President, while those eloquent accents are yet ringing in our ears, as they have deeply thrilled all our hearts, it seems only fitting that this Society should express its appreciation of the service done us by our Committee in arranging this evening's brilliant entertainment.

I therefore move that the thanks of the St. Nicholas Society be offered to our orators, and to the Managing Committee. And in making this motion, Mr. President, I am not merely stirred by the emotion of the moment, but I speak with the deep conviction that our orators have nobly demonstrated and illustrated that truth known to all of us, and which should be better known to all

others; and that is, that in the progress of this great city, in the magnificent advance which she has made, and is still making, in prosperity, in intelligence, in greatness, as it has always been in the past, so will it always be in the future, that in that grand march the Dutchman keeps the van.

The Hon. Abraham R. Lawrence seconded the motion, and moved that the Record of the Anniversary be printed, which amendment was accepted, and the resolution being put to vote, was adopted unanimously.

The President then declared the meeting adjourned, and the Anniversary was concluded by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."







At a stated meeting of the St. Nicholas Society, held on the 5th of March, 1885, the printing of the Record of the Society's Semi-Centennial Anniversary was referred, with power, to the following Committee :

Charles A. Schermerhorn, Esq., Secretary of the Society ; John B. Pine, Esq., Secretary of the Semi-Centennial Committee.

















WASHINGTON HOTEL, BROADWAY.  
NEW YORK.