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SEPTEMBER MEETING.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, September 13, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; the President, the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the City of Boston; the City of Roxbury; the American Numismatic and Archæological Society; Brown University; the Essex Institute; the Massachusetts Horticultural Society; the Massachusetts Medical Society; the Mercantile Library Association of New York; the New-England Loyal Publication Society; the Society of Antiquaries of London; the Trustees of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art; the Proprietor of the "Savannah Daily Republican"; Mr. George Arnold; James B. Bateman, Esq.; James L. Butler, Esq.; Henry B. Dawson, Esq.; William W. Dougall, Esq.; Professor Daniel C. Gilman; Hon. Samuel Hooper; Adjutant-General William Irvine; Benjamin P. Johnson, Esq.; Nathaniel Paine, Esq.; Hon. John G. Palfrey; Hon. Alexander H. Rice; J. Mason Warren, M.D.; Mr. George Derby Welles; Hon. Henry Wilson; F. A. Wood, Esq.; Mrs. Joseph E. Worcester; and from Messrs. Green, Latham, C. Robbins, and Winthrop, of the Society.

The Corresponding Secretary read a letter of acceptance from George Peabody, Esq., who was elected an Honorary Member at the last meeting of the Society.

The President read an interesting letter addressed to him by the Recording Secretary, dated "London, August 8th, 1866," containing a relation of his visit to various memorable historic places in England and Scotland; and especially to the localities connected with the history of America, — particularly to Boston, to the old church in the parish of Austerfield, in which Bradford was baptized; to Scrooby, where Brewster lived, in whose house Bradford worshipped and Robinson preached; to St. Sepulchre's Church, in London, beneath the pavement of which John Smith, of Virginia and New England fame, lies buried.

Mr. BRIGHAM read a letter from Joseph Williamson, Esq., dated "Belfast, Maine, September 6, 1866," on presenting to the Society a copy of the "Hancock Gazette and Penobscot Patriot," of October 22, 1823, containing the following deposition relative to the sword said to have been worn by General Joseph Warren at the battle of Bunker Hill: —

THE SWORD OF WARREN.

In one of our recent numbers we stated having received documents in relation to the sword with which the lamented Gen. Warren fell at the battle of Bunker Hill. At the request of Captain Cornelius Dunham of this town, the proprietor of the sword, we this day publish a copy of the declaration establishing its identity. The original declaration, and the sword, are now in the possession of the Hon. William Davis of Plymouth, Massachusetts. With those who have long known Capt. Dunham, no doubt can exist of the correctness of his statement, according to his best recollections; nor of his sincere and firm belief that the sword he possesses is unequivocally the identical sword used by Warren, at the memorable battle in which he fell.

(COPY.)

I, Cornelius Dunham, gentleman, of the age seventy-four years, born in that part of the town of Plympton, now called Carver, in the county of Plymouth, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts; now an inhabitant of the town of Belfast, in the county of Hancock, State of Maine; being, by the mercy of God, of sound mind and memory, do declare, testify and say — that in the year 1775 I was in the capacity of seaman on board the schr. Priscilla of Plymouth, John Foster Williams, master, returning from the West Indies, via Philadelphia; being off Nantucket shoals about six or eight weeks after the memorable battle of Bunker Hill, we were captured by the British squadron which was then proceeding to take the neat stock from Gardener's Island, near New London.

A prize-master and crew were put on board said schooner, and ordered to Boston. Myself, my brother James, and Samuel Rider of Plymouth, being sick, were permitted to remain on board the schooner, which soon after arrived in Boston. We remained on board some weeks, and were then all taken to Halifax, in a schooner belonging to Samuel Jackson of Plymouth, which had been commanded by Capt. Cornelius White; but was then under the command of Lemuel Goddard.

After we recovered from our sickness we found some friends at Halifax; and I was there employed in the store of Mr. William Lambert, who may be now living in the city of Boston. While employed in Mr. Lambert's store, the servant of a British officer wished me to purchase of him a sword; and ascertaining by a certificate that he was authorized to sell it, I accordingly did purchase it. — After the purchase, he informed me it was the sword taken from "*Doctor Warren immediately after he fell at the battle of Bunker Hill.*" I had no suspicion of this fact till after I had paid him for it. I asked him if his master would vouch for the truth of what he had alleged. He answered me "he would." I then went with him to his master, whom I found to be an officer and a gentleman; who, according to my best recollection was a colonel, and about thirty years of age. The officer told me that he had taken the same sword from Gen. Warren, when lying dead on the battle ground; and that he gave it to his servant. The officer also informed me that "*General Warren fell not far from the Redoubt*" — these being the words he used, as I particularly remember; and that after the British entered the redoubt he saw Warren

before he fell. The officer remarked that he endeavored to prevent his men from firing, but could not; and that Warren, remaining too long on the ground he had defended, was shot dead in his view. The officer likewise informed me that Warren was buried in common with the rest of the dead. I had not been in possession of the sword an hour when I was offered a great price for it by a Mr. Robinson, of Philadelphia, who was very desirous to possess it; but I was not willing to part with it for any price. Mr. Lambert, seeing me so much attached to the sword, gave me a gun, and a French gentleman gave me, at the same time, a cartouch box.— On my return to Plymouth in 1777 I gave general information that I had purchased at Halifax the sword which the late Gen. Warren wore at the battle of Bunker Hill; and hundreds had knowledge of it as such, and frequently saw it. I never took the sword to sea with me, but left it at home as a precious relic. I once equipped myself with it and my gun, on the alarm of a descent of the British at Fairhaven; but before I reached that place, they had reembarked. The time of my purchasing the sword was after the British evacuated Boston, and before the fleet sailed from Halifax for New York.

From the information given by the British officer, I then had not, nor have I since had, the least doubt of this being the sword of the late Gen. Joseph Warren; and which is the same sword which I delivered to the Hon. William Davis and William Jackson, Esq. at Plymouth on the 15th August last, at the moment of my departure for this place.— During the period of forty-seven years that this sword has been in my possession, and proclaimed as being the sword of the late Gen. Joseph Warren, it has never been denied as such, and no claims have been made to any other sword as appertaining to him.— When I purchased the sword it was in good order; but during my long absence at sea, it has lost many of its ornaments.

Done at Belfast, in the State of Maine this fourteenth of September, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two.

(Signed)

CORNELIUS DUNHAM.

State of Maine, Hancock, ss. Belfast, Sept. 14, 1822. Then the above named Cornelius Dunham made solemn oath that the facts related by him in the foregoing declaration, by him subscribed, are true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me, (Signed) WILLIAM WHITE, *Justice of Peace.*

Mr. R. FROTHINGHAM presented to the Society the following copies of original papers now in the possession of J. Rhea Barton, M.D., of Philadelphia, relating to the origin of the Seal of the United States:—

Remarks on the Device of the Seal of the United States.

The escutcheon is composed of the chief and pale, the two most honorable ordinaries. The thirteen pieces paly represent the several States in the Union, all joined in one solid compact, entire, supporting a chief which unites the whole and represents Congress. The motto alludes to this union.

The pales in the arms are kept closely united by the chief, and depend on that union and the strength resulting from it for support, to denote the confederacy of the United States and the preservation of their union through Congress.

The colors of the pales are those used in the flag of the United States of America. White signifies purity and innocence; Red hardiness and valour, and Blue, the colour of the chief, signifies vigilance, perseverance and justice. The olive branch and arrows denote the power of peace and war which is exclusively vested in Congress.

The crest or constellation denotes a new State taking its place and rank among other sovereign powers.

The escutcheon is borne on the breast of an American eagle, without any other supporter, to denote that the United States of America ought to rely on their own virtue.

The pyramid on the reverse signifies strength and duration. The eye over it, and the motto "Annuit cœptis"—It prospers our endeavours— alludes to the many signal interpositions of Providence in favour of the American cause.

The date underneath is that of the Declaration of Independence, and the words under it signify the beginning of the new American Era, which commences from the date.

The Device for an Armorial Achievement and Reverse of a Great Seal for the United States in Congress assembled, is as follows:—

Arms.—Paleway of thirteen pieces Argent and Gules. A chief Azure; The Escutcheon on the breast of the American bald Eagle displayed proper, holding in his dexter Talon an olive branch and in his sinister a bundle of thirteen arrows, all proper, and in his beak a scroll inscribed with this motto "E pluribus unum."

For the crest.— Over the head of the Eagle, which appears above the Escutcheon, a glory, or, breaking through a cloud, proper, and surrounding thirteen stars forming a constellation, argent, on an azure field.

Reverse.— A Pyramid unfinished.

In the Zenith an eye in a triangle surrounded with a Glory, proper. Over the eye these words "Annuit cœptis." On the base of the Pyramid the numerical letters M.D.C.C.L.X.X.VI. and underneath the following motto — "Novus ordo sæclorum."

SIR,—I am much obliged for the perusal of the elements of Heraldry which I now return. I have just dipt into it so far as to be satisfied that it may afford a fund of entertainment and may be applied by a State to useful purposes. I am much obliged for your very valuable present of Fortescue "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ," and shall be happy to have it in my power to make a suitable return.

I enclose a copy of the Device by which you have displayed your skill in heraldic science, and which meets with general approbation.

I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

(Signed) CHAS. THOMSON.

JUNE 24, 1782.

In June 1782, when Congress were about to form an armorial device for a great seal for the United States, Charles Thomson, Esq. then Secretary, with the Hon. Dr. Arthur Lee and Elias Boudinot, members of Congress, called on me and consulted me on the occasion. The Great Seal, for which I furnished those gentlemen with devices, (*as certified by Chas. Thomson, Esq.*) was adopted by Congress on the 20th of June 1782. Mr. Thomson informed me, four days after, that they met with *general approbation*.

(Signed) W. BARTON.