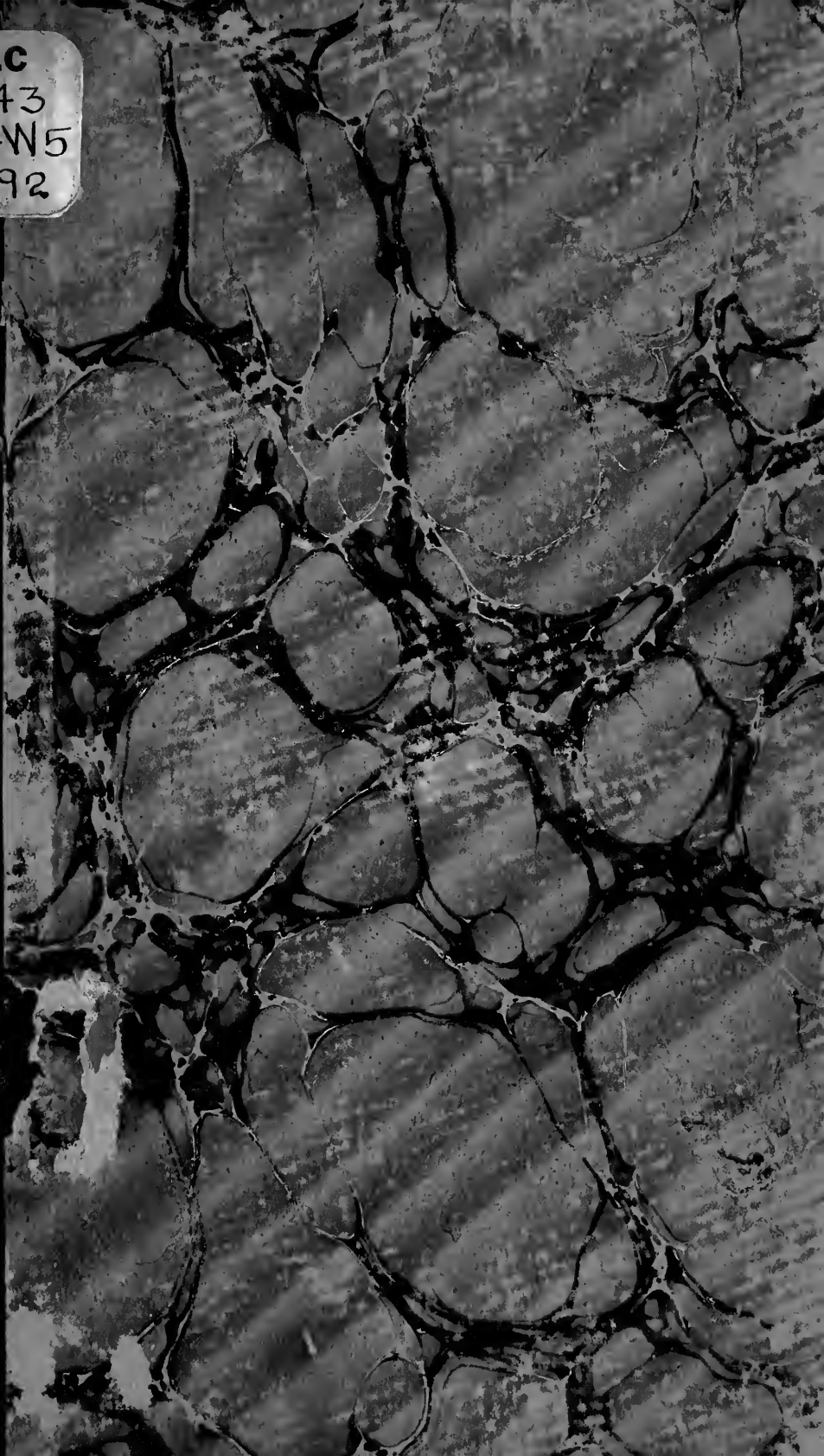


LC

243

P4W5

1892



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap......

LC 243

Shelf.....

P4 W5

1892

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

✓

During Mr. Winthrop's absence
P. marks were read by the Secret

*Introductory Remarks of HON. ROBERT C. WINTHROP at the
Annual Meeting of the Peabody Trustees, 12 Oct., 1892.*

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

A quarter of a century was completed on the 7th of February last since Mr. Peabody committed to this Board the great Trust which it is our privilege to administer. In the providence of God, the individual membership of the Board has been almost entirely changed during that period. Only three of the original Trustees are to-day on our roll. Hamilton Fish, the first Vice-Chairman from our organization in 1867; William M. Evarts, our second Vice-Chairman during the five years which have elapsed since the lamented death of Governor Aiken of South Carolina; and myself, to whom Mr. Peabody assigned the permanent Chairmanship at the outset, — are the only original members still remaining on the Board.

Governor Fish addressed to us a formal letter of resignation last October, which happily did not reach me until after our Annual Meeting was over. It is still in the hands of our Secretary, and may be read to you hereafter and go upon our records. But as it has not yet been presented to the Board, and of course has not been accepted, I venture to express the hope that if it be presented, as may be due to him, it will be indefinitely postponed. Our Board is numerous enough to allow of even more than one member *emeritus*; and there are certainly some names on our roll, placed there by Mr. Peabody himself, which we may well shrink from parting with, so long as a good Providence shall spare the lives and usefulness of those who have rendered them illustrious. Governor Fish, I need not say, has been a most valuable and efficient Trustee;



LC 2343
PAW 5
1892

and although, like myself, he has not been, and is not now, exempt from the infirmities and trials of advanced age, his advice and counsel would be sought and would be accepted as confidently to-day as it has been during the long period of his active and faithful service.

Less than five years remain, gentlemen, before two-thirds of our Board, as it shall be constituted on the 7th of February, 1897, will be at liberty, agreeably to Mr. Peabody's Letter of Instructions, to close this Trust, and to distribute the whole Fund. I have little expectation of being present when that decision and distribution shall occur, and I would gladly be spared from contemplating so protracted a life. But certainly there is no association which I shall part from with more regret than this; nor shall I leave any title to remembrance more precious, when a good Providence shall release me, than the relation I have held to the work for which this Board was constituted. I look back on the five-and-twenty years during which I have presided over this Trust, and given my best thoughts and my most careful attention to its administration, as the most satisfactory, if not perhaps the most conspicuous, service which I have been permitted to render to my country during the more than eighty-three years of my life. I say service to my country; for the cause of Education, wherever it is prosecuted, and under whatever auspices promoted, is nothing less than the cause of the whole country.

It has sometimes been supposed and represented that we were engaged in a mere Southern work, and that Mr. Peabody's endowment had only a sectional object. In the primary, pecuniary aspect of that work and of that endowment such an impression was indeed not only natural but just. Every dollar of the income of the Fund which we hold was solemnly consecrated to Southern education, and has been exclusively employed for Southern schools and colleges, and will continue to be so until the Trust is

closed. But no one with a heart or an eye for the honor and welfare of our republic can regard Southern colleges or schools as sectional institutions. The influence of education, or of the want of education, on the welfare of our land can have no territorial limits or boundary lines. The schools of the South—not excepting Hampton and Tuskegee—are schools of the Union as much as the schools of the North and West, and are as essential to the stability of our free institutions. Colleges in South Carolina or Tennessee or Virginia are United States colleges, and are as important to the welfare of the country as Yale or Harvard or Columbia. Illiteracy and ignorance are no mere local dangers, whether among whites or blacks. They are dangers to law and order and true liberty everywhere ; and he that does most to eradicate them anywhere may claim no second place on the roll of a comprehensive patriotism.

It was this comprehensive patriotism, this national spirit, which animated Mr. Peabody to make this magnificent endowment and establish this great educational Trust. I had it from his own lips when he committed the scheme confidentially to my consideration four or five months before it was promulgated. And in his memorable letter of Instructions he says emphatically: "If this endowment shall encourage those now anxious for the light of knowledge, and stimulate to new efforts the many good and noble men who cherish the high purpose of placing our great country foremost, not only in power, but in the intelligence and virtue of her citizens, it will have accomplished all that I can hope."

The Congress of that day rightly interpreted Mr. Peabody's gift, and presented to him an elaborate and costly gold medal in the name of the people of the United States. He was thus enrolled at once as a benefactor, not of the Southern States only, but of the whole nation. His hope has been fulfilled. Through the instrumentality and influ-

ence of this Trust, as administered primarily by the accomplished Dr. Barnas Sears, the first General Agent of our Board, school laws and school systems of the most effective kind were established wherever they did not previously exist; and more recently Normal Schools and Colleges and Institutes, under the devoted supervision of Dr. Curry, are making provision for that which is indispensable to the success of any school system, — the Education of Teachers.

Much has, indeed, been done by others, whom we gladly recognize as fellow-workers in the cause in which we are engaged; and much remains to be done by us all. Illiteracy and ignorance may be imported into all parts of our land; we cannot exclude or even quarantine them. But there is no excuse for their being indigenous. Let an industrial and agricultural element be liberally infused into our educational system, as our worthy friend General Armstrong has recently so warmly recommended, and nothing more would seem to be wanting to it, except a larger measure of that pecuniary aid of which Mr. Peabody gave the grandest example.

By an unforeseen but by no means unwelcome or inappropriate coincidence, we meet here in New York on one of the days which has been selected by this great commercial metropolis for celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. The grand procession is being marshalled beneath these windows while we are entering on our deliberations. It commemorates the day, — the 12th of October, 1492, — on which Columbus is recorded to have made his discovery of the New World according to the calendar in use at the time. The President of the United States, making due allowance of nine days for the change of calendar, agreeably to the Resolution of Congress, has appointed the 21st of October as a general holiday for the American people. In his admirable proc-

lamation for that purpose, after speaking of Columbus as the pioneer of progress and enlightenment, he proceeds as follows: "The system of universal education is in our age the most prominent and salutary feature of the spirit of enlightenment, and it is peculiarly appropriate that the schools be made by the people the centre of the day's demonstration." "Let the national flag," he adds, "float over every schoolhouse in the country, and the exercises be such as shall impress upon our youth the patriotic duties of American citizenship."

Beyond all question, the discovery of this great country and continent, — if I may not say hemisphere, — whether according to old style or new style, the Julian or the Gregorian calendar, is pre-eminently worthy of commemoration and celebration by the whole American people; and nothing could be more fit than for the schools to be made the centre of the day's demonstration. It will be a signal recognition of the great truth that Education is to be the main hope of our country in the future, as it has been our main support for the past. With the blessing of God, and a thorough system of popular education, we may look forward safely and confidently to the maintenance of our free institutions. The future of the country is in the very schools which we are establishing and supporting, and in those which others are maintaining, and shall continue to maintain, in all quarters of the land.

Thus far the discovery of America has been an incalculable blessing to the world. If it is to be so in all time to come, Education, with God's blessing, will decide. We may thus pursue our work, gentlemen, with the proud consciousness that we are doing something for the enduring welfare and glory, not of the Southern States of the Union only, but of our whole country and of mankind.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 783 364 2