

Charles Pickering
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Minister to Austria, where he remained till 1867. In 1869, he became Minister to England, but held that position only a little more than a year. His third and last historical work was the "Life and Death of John of Barneveld," published in 1874. The three histories cover the three-quarters of a century, from about 1550 to about 1620, and from this point he intended to go on with the History of the Thirty Years' War. But his work was ended. Sorrow came, his strength failed; and, after a year or two of decline, he died peacefully. As a historian, he is distinguished alike for his original researches and for the striking use of them, with loftiness of sentiment, and an ardent devotion to great principles, but not for calmness or the judicial character which gives a history, in which it is prominent, the strongest assurance of a lasting place in literature. No tribute to him, however brief, should pass over his devotion to his country. A true American notwithstanding his long years in Europe, a true republican in presence of all older institutions to which his historic tastes would be naturally drawn, he changed his skies without changing his affections. The very last recollection of him, with the present writer, is the ready and even enthusiastic use he made of his great influence in Holland to procure a government publication for one of our libraries.

CHARLES PICKERING.

CHARLES PICKERING, M.D., died in Boston, of pneumonia, on the 17th of March, 1878, in the seventy-third year of his age. He was of a noted New England stock, being a grandson of Colonel Timothy Pickering, a member of Washington's military family and of his first Cabinet as President; and he was elected into this Academy under the Presidency of his uncle, John Pickering. He was born on Starucca Creek, on the Upper Susquehanna, in the northern part of Pennsylvania, at a settlement made on a grant of land taken up by his grandfather, who then resided there. His father, Timothy Pickering, Jr., died at the age of thirty years, leaving to the care of the mother — who lived to a good old age — the two sons, Charles and his brother Edward, who were much united in their earlier and later lives, and were not long divided in death, the subject of this notice having been for only a year the survivor.

Dr. Pickering was a member of the class of 1823 at Harvard College, but left before graduation. He studied medicine, and took the degree of M.D. at the Harvard Medical School in 1826. Living in these earlier years at Salem, he was associated with the late William

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Oakes in botanical exploration; and it is believed that the two first explored the White Mountains together, following in the steps of the first botanist to ascend Mount Washington, Dr. Manasseh Cutler of Essex County, and of Francis Boott and the still surviving Dr. Bigelow. His taste for natural history showed itself in boyhood, both for botany and zoölogy, and probably decided his choice of a profession. He may have intended to practise medicine for a livelihood when, about the year 1829, he took up his residence at Philadelphia; but it is probable that he was attracted thither more by the facilities that city offered for the pursuit of natural history than by its renown as a centre of medical education. We soon find him acting as one of the curators of the Academy of Natural Sciences, and also as librarian, and with reputation established as the most erudite and sharp-sighted of all the young naturalists of that region. His knowledge then, as in mature years, was encyclopædic and minute; and his bent was toward a certain subtlety and exhaustiveness of investigation, which is characteristic of his later writings. Still, in those days in which he was looked up to as an oracle, and consulted as a dictionary by his co-workers, he had published nothing which can now be recalled, except a brief essay on the geographical distribution and leading characteristics of the United States flora, which very few of our day have ever seen.

When the United States surveying and exploring expedition to the South Seas, which sailed under the command of then Lieutenant Charles Wilkes in the autumn of 1838, was first organized under Commodore T. Ap-Catesby Jones, about two years before, Dr. Pickering's reputation was such that he was at once selected as the principal zoölogist. Subsequently, as the plan expanded, others were added. Yet the scientific fame of that expedition most largely rests upon the collections and the work of Dr. Pickering and his surviving associate Professor Dana, the latter taking, in addition to the geology, the Corals and the Crustacea, and other special departments of zoölogy being otherwise provided for by the accession of Mr. Couthouy and Mr. Peale. Dr. Pickering, although retaining the ichthyology, particularly turned his attention during the three and a half years' voyage of circumnavigation to anthropology, and to the study of the geographical distribution of animals and plants; to the latter especially as affected by or as evidence of the operations, movements, and diffusion of the races of man. To these the subjects of his predilection, and to investigations bearing upon them, all his remaining life was assiduously devoted. The South Pacific exploring expedition visited very various parts of the world; but it necessarily left out regions of the highest interest to the anthro-

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pological investigator, those occupied in early times by the race to which we belong, and by the peoples with which the Aryan race has been most in contact. Desirous to extend his personal observations as far as possible, Dr. Pickering, a year after the return of the expedition, and at his own charges, crossed the Atlantic, visited Egypt, Arabia, the eastern part of Africa, and western and northern India. Then, in 1848, he published his volume on "The Races of Man, and their Geographical Distribution," being the ninth volume of the Reports of the Wilkes' Exploring Expedition. Some time afterwards, he prepared, for the fifteenth volume of this series, an extensive work on the Geographical Distribution of Animals and Plants. But, in the course of the printing, the appropriations by Congress intermitted or ceased, and the publication of the results of this celebrated expedition was suspended. Publication it could hardly be called: for Congress printed only one hundred copies, in a sumptuous form, for presentation to States and foreign courts; and then the several authors were allowed to use the types and copperplates for printing as many copies as they required and could pay for. Under this privilege, Dr. Pickering brought out in 1854 a small edition of the first part of his essay, — perhaps the most important part, — and in 1876 a more bulky portion, "On Plants and Animals in their Wild State," which is largely a transcript of the note-book memoranda as jotted down at the time of observation or collection.

These are all his publications, excepting some short communications to scientific journals and the proceedings of learned societies to which he belonged. But he is known to have been long and laboriously engaged upon a work for which, under his exhaustive treatment, a lifetime seems hardly sufficient; a digest, in fact, of all that is known of all the animals and plants with which civilized man has had to do from the earliest period traceable by records. When Dr. Pickering died, he was carrying this work through the press at his own individual expense, had already in type five or six hundred quarto pages, and it is understood that the remainder, of about equal extent, is ready for the printer. This formidable treatise is entitled "Man's Record of his own Existence." Its character is indicated in the brief introductory sentences: —

"In the distribution of species over the globe, the order of Nature has been obscured through the interference of man. He has transported animals and plants to countries where they were previously unknown; extirpating the forest and cultivating the soil, until at length the face of the globe itself is changed. To ascertain the amount of this interference, displaced species must be distinguished, and traced

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each to its original home. Detached observations have already been given in the twenty-first and succeeding chapters of my 'Races of Man;' but, when such observations are extended to all parts of the globe, the accumulated facts require some plan of arrangement. A list will naturally assume the chronological order, beginning with Egypt, the country that contains the earliest records of the human family, and receding geographically from the same central point of reference."

Then, starting with "4713 B.C.," and "4491 B.C., beginning of the first Great Year in the Egyptian reckoning," he begins the list, which, under the running heading of "Chronological Arrangement of Accompanying Animals and Plants," first treats of the vegetables and animals mentioned in the book of Genesis, and of the "Commencement of Bedouin or Nomadic Life in the Desert;" passes to the "Colonization of Egypt," and to critical notices (philological and natural-historical) of its plants and animals, as well their earliest mention as their latest known migrations; reaches the beginning of the Christian era at about the 470th page; and so proceeds, till our wonder at the patience and the erudition of the writer passes all bounds. We are ready to agree with a biographer who declares that our associate was "a living encyclopædia of knowledge," — that there never was a naturalist "who had made more extended and minute original explorations;" and we fully agree that "no one ever had less a passion or a gift for display;" "that he was engaged during a long life in the profoundest studies, asking neither fame nor money, nor any other reward, but simply the privilege of gaining knowledge and of storing it up in convenient forms for the service of others;" that "the love of knowledge was the one passion of his life," and that "he asked no richer satisfaction than to search for it as for hidden treasure." He was singularly retiring and reticent, very dry in ordinary intercourse, but never cynical; delicate and keen in perception and judgment; just, upright, and exemplary in every relation; and to those who knew him well communicative, sympathetic, and even genial. In the voyage of circumnavigation, he was the soul of industry, and a hardy explorer. The published narrative of the commander shows that he took a part in every fatiguing excursion or perilous ascent. Perhaps the most singular peril (recorded in the narrative) was that in which this light-framed man once found himself on the Peruvian Andes, when he was swooped upon by a condor, evidently minded to carry off the naturalist who was contemplating the magnificent ornithological specimen.

Dr. Pickering married in the year 1851, and leaves a widow, but no children to inherit this honored name.

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