

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

VOL. VI. JANUARY—APRIL, 1855. No. 53.

Stated Meeting, January 5.

Present, twelve members.

Judge KANE, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The report of the judges and clerks of the election held this day for officers of the Society was read, from which it appeared that the following named gentlemen had been elected :—

President.

Alexander Dallas Bache.

Vice Presidents.

John K. Kane,
Robley Dunglison,
John F. Frazer.

Secretaries.

Charles B. Trego,
E. Otis Kendall,
Frederick Fraley,
John L. Le Conte.

Members of the Council, for Three Years.

Thomas Biddle,
Isaac Lea,
Alfred L. Elwyn,
John Bell.

For Two Years, in place of Henry Reed, deceased.

George Tucker.

For One Year, in place of Jacob G. Morris, deceased.

Robert Bridges.

Curators.

Franklin Peale,
John C. Cresson,
M. Fisher Longstreth.

Treasurer.

Charles B. Trego.

Letters were read:—

From the Geological Society of London, dated Somerset House, Nov. 2, 1854, returning thanks for Vol. X. Part 3, of the Transactions, and Nos. 49, 50, of the Proceedings of this Society: and—

From A. D. Bache, Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey, dated Washington, Oct. 10, 1854, accompanying a donation for the Library.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society. No. 40, Vol. X. Part 4. London, Nov. 1854. 8vo.—*From the Society.*

Rapports présentés au Conseil Général de l'Asile des Aveugles de Lausanne, par le Comité, le Medecin et le Directeur de cet établissement, pour les années, 1850, 1851, 1852.

Rapport du Comité de l'Asile des Aveugles de Lausanne, pour l'année 1853, présenté au Conseil Général de cet établissement. Lausanne. 8vo.—*From the Committee of the Blind of Lausanne.*

American Journal of Science and Arts. Second Series. Vol. XIX. No. 55. January, 1855. New Haven. 8vo.—*From Profs. Silliman & Dana, Editors.*

Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History. Vol. V. Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5. Oct. Nov. 1854. Boston. 8vo.—*From the Society.*

Documents relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York: edited by E. B. O'Callaghan, M.D. Vol. IV. Albany, 1854. 4to.—*From the Trustees of N. Y. State Library.*

United States Coast Survey Maps, as follows: General Chart of the Coast from Gay Head to Cape Henlopen.—Wellfleet Harbour, Massachusetts.—Mouth of Connecticut River.—San Diego Bay, California.—Bay of Monterey, California.—Alden's Reconnaissance Chart, Western Coast, from San Diego to San Francisco, California.—Santa Barbara, California.—Reconnaissance from

Gray's Harbour to Admiralty Inlet, Washington Territory.—Shoalwater Bay, Washington Territory.—False Dungeness Harbour, Washington Territory.—Cape Flattery and Nee-ah Harbour, Washington Territory.—*From A. D. Bache, Superintendent U. S. C. S.*

Genealogy of Warren, with some Historical Sketches: by John C. Warren, M.D. Boston, 1854. 4to.—*From the Author.*

The Florist and Horticultural Journal. Vol. III. No. 12. Philadelphia, 1854. Svo.—*From H. C. Hanson, Editor.*

A Geological Reconnaissance of the Arkansas River: by Prof. J. A. Warder, of Cincinnati, O. Cleveland, 1854. 4to.—*From the Author.*

Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll, pursuant to appointment, read an obituary notice of the late Joseph Bonaparte, a member of the Society.

I was not aware, till lately apprised of it, that the American Philosophical Society appointed me, ten years ago, on the death, in July, 1844, of our late fellow member, Joseph Bonaparte, to deliver the obituary notice of him. No neglect on my part is the cause of the omission since. And, as often providentially results from inaction, and even ignorance, in this short-sighted world, where the wisest cannot see far before them, gratuitous favourable influences now enshrine the deceased which did not exist when he departed this life.

In 1844, when Joseph Bonaparte died, obituary truth regarding him would have been coldly received by probably many of this Society, and by an incredulous number of our countrymen throughout the United States. His immense brother, as another of our fellow members, La Fayette, designated the Emperor, whom, though his debtor for liberty and life, he felt it his duty to dethrone, was then still deemed by nearly all Englishmen, many Americans, and some Frenchmen, a monster, and Joseph one of his worst instruments.

But the late popular elevation of their nephew to be emperor of the French, the close international union since accomplished between France and England, the enlightenment of their pacific intimacy, the emulation of their warlike alliance, the literature and science of both war and peace, in short, the providential progress of events and rectification of public sentiment, have advanced, by half a century or more, the clear historical light breaking on the acts and characters of the Bonapartes. The great mother country, from which ours takes

most of its impressions, once unanimously abominating and reviling, has turned to admiring and applauding the hero and his family, long blasted by almost universal European dread of a conqueror, of whom abhorrence only changed to unmerciful contumely, when Europe's master, reduced to be their captive, was chained to an African rock and tortured to death. In our imitative country, counteraction of his hatred has become so strong, that the American press now flashes with even extravagant vindication of the not long since monster in Anglo-American apprehension.

Though time, the greatest of innovators, was gradually rectifying these prejudices; still, but for the revolutions, wars, alliances, and revulsions which have nearly clarified public sentiment, no one now would be patiently suffered to assert that all the much abused and adulated eight Bonapartes, five men and three women, extraordinary offspring of an excellent mother and respectable father, were every one of them endowed with uncommon talents, and no one of them degraded by a depraved or malignant nature. Lucien, a fine scholar, poet, and ardent republican, pertinaciously rejected, and at last actually fled beyond the sea from a throne, rather than surrender the humble wife of his affection. Louis, with fine literary acquirements and performances, religious, strictly conscientious, and nobly independent, after reluctantly submitting to the crown imposed on him, indignantly cast it away, rather than subject his adopted country to the sway of his imperious brother. Joseph and Jerome, the only two who submitted to be kings, invariably administered justice with mercy, and promoted liberal principles with beneficial reforms. Eliza and Caroline displayed on thrones masculine abilities for government. Pauline, declining principalities, proved herself a most affectionate wife and sister. Napoleon's step-children, brought up in his family, Eugene Beauharnais, as Viceroy of Italy, was a prudent and acceptable ruler; as commander of armies, a brave, faithful, and incorruptible lieutenant of his imperial constituent. His brilliant sister, historically known as Queen Hortensia, shone among the brightest female ornaments of her time, whose lyrical poetry is now chanted with enthusiasm in the capitals of France, England, Italy, Greece, and Turkey. Few born royal have done more honour to diadems than these extraordinary upstarts.

Far, however, from designing to present the family of Bonapartes in one mere strain of eulogy, to hide or gloss their faults, I own their infirmities—though much exaggerated by malevolent dread and eloquent vituperation. Of their amiable and affectionate dispositions,

Joseph was an attractive type. Few families so numerous, even in private life, none so prodigiously elevated and then terribly reversed, can be mentioned truer to patriotism, to probity and humanity, throughout trying vicissitudes, much fonder of each other in adversity than prosperity, always free from shocking offences or paltry vices. Judging by the unerring developments of posthumous truth, none are more certain of the applause of impartial history and the approval of posterity.

That their mighty earthly creator was worse for prosperity, and impatient of adversity, may be part of his history. But that, take him for all in all, his memory is dear to the unsophisticated peasantry, the simple hearted millions of France, has been lately attested by the votes of eight millions of those made democratic landlords by the revolution of which Napoleon was truly the child and the champion. Poor and uneducated owners of small estates, of which they are as tenacious as opulent nobles of their great domains, like our American farmers and planters, conservative upholders of law, and order, and property, controlling suburban mobs, metropolitan clubs, and a centralized executive, they saved not only France but nearly all Europe from the anarchy with which it was threatened by those mis-called republicans, who, mocking but perverting liberty, revived and aggravated despotism. The wisest statesmen now acknowledge that the god of these peasants' idolatry was a man of superhuman wisdom, whose politics are become proverbial, like those of Aristotle and Cicero. The tremendous struggle he anticipated is raging between Western and Eastern Europe, proving his vast providence by his own weather-beaten overthrow in a Titan effort, which Great Britain is now straining every nerve to atone for by renewing it, for the subjugation of the same overreaching Asiatic empire.

Napoleon, though not our topic, was so constantly and closely united with Joseph, throughout their combined career, from school-boys till they parted dethroned Emperor and King, one for England, the other for America, that their rise, culmination, decline, and fall were always together. To appreciate Joseph justly, we must, therefore, understand his intimate connection with a younger brother, whose prodigious conquests gilded the iron ascendancy, of which, while always submissive, the elder constantly strove to check its excesses and temper its violence. The eldest was the mildest of the Bonapartes; just and tenacious, but considerate and forbearing; living ever affectionately with a large, multiplied, and mixed family of Bonapartes and Beauharnais, Corsicans, French, Americans, and

Austrians, Republicans and Royalists. When domestic were distorted to national difficulties, Joseph was the invariable mediator of conciliation with democratic Lucien, intractable Louis, hostile Prince Bernadotte, disloyal King Murat. If France, invaded by all Europe in arms, needed the Emperor abroad to fight, Joseph was the infallible regent at home, proof against all assaults, temptations, and seductions. Before the Empire, the great works of amity were his, the treaties with Austria, with the Pope, the United States, and England. On all occasions, during both the republic and empire, whether ambassador, king, or regent, his predilections for peace were manifested, while in many great battles he displayed the intrepid composure of a valiant general. During the four years of his reign on a bed of roses in Naples, and the five under a crown of thorns in Spain, he was, as Lamarque, an eye witness most competent to judge, testified, a philosopher on a throne.

Many biographical and historical works describe him, from which it would be easy to cull and arrange his full length portrait. But within the last twelve months ten volumes of unexampled testimony, published as the political and military Memoirs of King Joseph, so much facilitate the task to which this Society has appointed me, concerning our late fellow member, that little more is necessary than voucher of that singular and unquestionable demonstration that, whether in private or public life, military commissary, member of provincial or national assemblies, ambassador, colonel, general, king on more than one throne, or fugitive from sanguinary proscription, for more than a quarter of a century, serenely and wisely philosophizing on the banks of the Delaware in this neighbourhood, in the cabinet, the field, the drawing-room, or family circle, Joseph Bonaparte was continually and invariably an honest, humane, brave, wise, virtuous, and thorough gentleman, incapable of meanness or wickedness.

Concealed in various hiding-places till, at length, clandestinely transported from Leghorn to Philadelphia, seven trunks of these precious documents were here deposited in a place of safety till the appointed time for their posthumous publication in Europe. Hundreds of letters written by Napoleon and Joseph to each other, and between them and many others, brothers, sisters, lovers, husbands, ministers, generals, monarchs, poets, and philosophers, are thrown before this malignant, invidious, and censorious world, without the suppression or alteration of one single word, no matter whom they expose, from the Emperor to the lowest person. From the days when Napoleon and Joseph were struggling with poverty to when they were over-

loaded with regal treasures, without ever a cent misappropriated or coveted, perfectly confidential, unreservedly free, exhibiting the writers naked and bare to mankind, whatever they thought, hoped, designed, did, how they loved, hated, rose, reigned, fell, fled, and were to the last devoted to each other—the realities of their very beings are monumentally laid bare in print, more durable than brass or marble.

The censorious may condemn Joseph's evacuation as King of Madrid, and as Lieutenant-general of Paris, his almost inexplicable submission to his brother, and perhaps detect other defects in his character. But that no one ever lived so long through such incredible changes without fault or mistake, we may cite the last of the French legitimate kings for a remarkable averment. After his banishment, on his way abroad, admiring the fine appearance of the ship Charles Carrol, freighted to take him and his family from France to England, King Charles the Tenth, smiling, said, "This is a fine vessel, is it not, captain? Are we not doing as well in our marine?" "I do not think," M. d'Urville made answer, "that we have, sire, in our merchant marine, a vessel so well rigged, so well found, and so thoroughly equipped." "The Americans are doing well," the king added. "Yes, sire, in sixty or eighty years more they will be able to dispute with the English the sceptre of the seas." "It is to us, though," said the king, "they owe all that." "Yes, sire, to your majesty's brother, to King Louis the Sixteenth. They have not forgotten it." The king remained pensive, and then resumed: "*It was a fault, a very great fault* on the part of Louis the Sixteenth. *But who has not committed some in his life?*"

In that royal moral reflection Joseph Bonaparte coincided that to be faultless is not human; but, even as King Joseph, he uniformly and cordially recognised, as great blessings for mankind, those principles of freedom and reform from inveterate abuses which King Charles the Tenth deplored as fruits of the American revolution, unfortunately encouraged by France. This country, in its original and genuine free developments, had no more earnest, judicious, or confirmed advocate. Far from deeming Louis the Sixteenth's espousal of the American revolution a great fault, or its offshoot, the French revolution, a great misfortune, the Bonapartes, deploring Louis Sixteenth's fate, and abhorring bloodthirsty Jacobinism, were necessarily Americanized by their French position, strengthened in Joseph, especially, by long residence here, profoundly and dispassionately mastering our institutions and policy. Liberal but conservative, cherishing freedom,

deprecating licentiousness, such patriarchs of the American Philosophical Society as Franklin and Jefferson were not more sincerely attached to liberty, equality, rational progress, and predominant peace. Of this, the first and last volumes of King Joseph's Memoirs, in particular, are delightful and indubitable testimonials, as might be shown by large extracts, if the President of this Society had not admonished me that brevity is indispensable to its obituaries.

Stated Meeting, January 19.

Present, fourteen members.

Dr. DUNGLISON, Vice-President, in the Chair.

A letter was read from the Royal Saxon Society of Sciences, dated Leipsic, Oct. 30, 1854, returning thanks for Vol. X. of the Transactions of this Society.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

- Flora Batava, of Afbeelding en Beschrijving van Nederlandsche Gewassen: Aflevering 176. Amsterdam. 4to.—*From the Government of Holland.*
- Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. Vol. XV. No. 1. London. 8vo.—*From the Society.*
- Reports and Charts of the Cruise of the U. S. Brig Dolphin, made under the direction of the Navy Department, by Lieut. S. P. Lee, U. S. N. 2 Vols. Washington. 8vo.—*From the National Observatory, Washington.*
- Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, in Worcester, Oct. 23, 1854. Boston. 8vo.—*From the Society.*
- Journal of the Franklin Institute. 3d Series. Vol. XXIX. No. 1. Jan. 1855. Philadelphia. 8vo.—*From the Institute.*
- African Repository. Vol. XXXI. No. 1. Jan. 1855. Washington. 8vo.—*From the Am. Colonization Society.*
- American Journal of the Medical Sciences. New Series. No. LVII. Jan. 1855. Philadelphia. 8vo.—*From Dr. Isaac Hays, Editor.*
- The Medical News and Library. Vol. XIII. No. 145. Jan. 1855. Philadelphia. 8vo.—*From Blanchard & Lea.*