



Henry C. Lee.



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PRESENTATION OF PORTRAIT OF THE LATE  
HENRY CHARLES LEA,  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

THE Stated Meeting of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania of March 13th, 1911, was largely attended and the transactions were of more than usual interest. A life-size portrait of the late Henry Charles Lea, Vice-President of the Society, painted by Hugh H. Breckenridge, from the original by Robert Vonnoh, was placed at the right of the President's chair. After an address by Edward Raymond Turner, Ph.D., Associate in History at Bryn Mawr College, on "Slavery in Colonial Pennsylvania," the President of the Society, Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D., read the following letter :

2004 Walnut St., PHILADELPHIA,  
March 3d, 1911.

HON. SAMUEL W. PENNYPACKER,  
PRESIDENT OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENN-  
SYLVANIA.

MY DEAR SIR :

On behalf of the family of the late Henry Charles Lea,  
Vice-President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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from 1890 till 1909, I have the honor to present a copy by Hugh H. Breckenridge of the portrait of Mr. Lea painted by Robert Vonnoh in 1896. It gives us great pleasure thus to comply with the suggestion of Colonel William Brooke Rawle, a Vice-President of your Society.

Sincerely yours,

ARTHUR H. LEA.

REMARKS OF WILLIAM BROOKE RAWLE, ESQUIRE.

*Mr. President:* I rise to offer a Resolution of Thanks.

During the eighty-six years and more of our existence as a Society we have had many distinguished men to fill its offices of President and Vice-President. Some of them have occupied the most exalted executive, judicial and legal positions in this Commonwealth; some have been leaders of our Bar; some have held the highest diplomatic positions in foreign countries; some were physicians of great repute; some among them have been men of affairs, men of letters, men of great influence and standing in the community. Among them have been historians and biographers of great and world-wide reputation. The work of these last mentioned writers, however, for the most part has, naturally, been restricted to the confines of the endeavors of our Society. Their fields of investigation have been chiefly comprised within those geographical limits for work in which our Society was specially formed, that is to say, Pennsylvania, the Middle Colonies and the War of the American Revolution. Though splendid work was done by them in their respective fields, none achieved higher honor or distinction than our late lamented Vice-President, whose likeness is portrayed upon the canvas before you.

Mr. Henry Charles Lea was a many-sided man, and he was eminently successful in everything which he undertook. We, within these walls, however, know him best as the ardent student and delver in the philosophy of history, a worker in the broad fields and deep mines of antiquarian material of an older civilization.

Mr. Lea's chief field of work, that for which he is known and will be known for all time in Christian lands, was in the history of the religious affairs of the Middle Ages. The crowning literary work of his life was his "History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages," in three volumes, which was translated into German, French and Italian, and later his "History of the Inquisition of Spain" and "The History of the Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies," making five volumes. These, also, are being translated into foreign languages. Others of his works have gone into second and third editions. The fairness of his opinions and conclusions, the total absence of one-sidedness or of personal and sectarian feeling, and the thoroughness of his work are characteristics which have drawn forth the encomiums of the free minded of different religious convictions almost without exception.

Mr. Lea became a member of this Society on February 22, 1869. He was elected a Vice-President on May 5, 1890. Upon reaching the age of eighty years, when he was endeavoring to rid himself of many of his responsibilities, he requested to be relieved of the office, whereupon he was elected on November 12, 1906, to the position of Honorary Vice-President, and continued to be annually re-elected as such during the remainder of his life.

A few weeks ago, on January 20, 1911, a remarkable meeting was held in the Hall of the College of Physicians in this City, to do honor to the memory of Mr. Lea. It took place under the auspices of five of our greatest learned institutions—The American Philosophical Society, The Library Company of Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania, The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and this, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It was a notable gathering of men and women of high social, professional and scientific standing; of prominence and distinguished rank in learning and literary endeavor. Such men as the President of The American Philosophical Society, Dr. William W. Keen, the Right Honorable James

Bryce, British Ambassador, Dr. Horace Howard Furness, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Dr. Joseph G. Rosengarten and Professor Edward P. Cheyney, joined in appreciations of Mr. Lea's character and his great work in its various lines. As has been said of the meeting: "The keynote in all the addresses was one of profound admiration for the unusual combination of intellectual and ethical traits which stamped Mr. Lea as one of the truly great men of his generation."

It is not my intention to give an extended account of Mr. Lea's historical work. This has been done by far abler speakers at the Memorial Meeting which I have mentioned, and will be also by the eloquent gentleman who will follow me.

As I have remarked, Mr. Lea was a many-sided man. In his early youth he was interested in scientific investigations, and worked and wrote in that line. Later he became the head of a large publishing business, which had been handed down for several generations, from the earliest days of our national existence. In the prime of his middle life the Northern side in our War of the Rebellion engaged his supreme interest and exertions. He was among the foremost of the patriotic citizens of Philadelphia in the work which resulted in the formation of The Union League, and he wrote many of the publications issued by it to encourage the patriotic spirit in this City and State which then was the chief object of its existence. He labored earnestly and successfully in the raising and equipment of regiments of troops to be sent to the Front; in keeping the ranks full by means of recruiting; in seeing that justice was done in regard to the filling of the quotas of men called for service, and in the payment of the heavy bounties which became necessary therefor. He organized and managed this work so successfully that when, at one time, conscription had to be resorted to, and Philadelphia was called upon to furnish her quota, a surprisingly small number of men—only forty-six it has been stated—had to be secured by such an unpopular method.

During the anxieties of that terrible War the concentration of patriotic minds on its problems allowed abuses to grow in municipalities, and Philadelphia was no exception. After the restoration of peace Mr. Lea threw himself vigorously into the work of reform and contributed of his intellectual powers, his purse and his time, with zeal and energy—indeed he was the chief of the leaders in that crusade against corruption, extravagance and political criminality. I saw him frequently in those days, for I was in the law offices of the late William Henry Rawle, who was the counsel for the Municipal Reform Association, which led and fought the fight with considerable, though not very lasting, success. Mr. Lea was a frequent, and at times a daily visitor to our offices for consultation, advice and assistance, and I can testify to the good and hard work he then did himself and in making others do likewise.

Philadelphia has had for many years the reputation outside of being among men the most hospitable place in this country. This came about from the fact that ever since the Winter of 1799–1800 there has been among us a social coterie of a high intellectual stamp, beginning with the informal weekly gatherings of congenial members of The American Philosophical Society at the residence of Doctor Caspar Wistar, the President of that time-honored institution. After Doctor Wistar's death these gatherings, under the name of The Wistar Party, continued until the early days of the War of the Rebellion, when partisan feeling became so strong, and opinions on the great issues at stake so diverse, as to cause the breaking of friendships and social and often home ties, the consequence being that the gatherings fell off and then ceased for awhile, their place being taken by other social coteries, none of them of long duration. When the time was opportune a resuscitation of the Wistar Party took place and Mr. Lea's father, Doctor Isaac Lea, resigned his office of Dean, or President, and Mr. Lea himself was elected to succeed him. For sixty-seven years father and son held the position of Dean, the chiefs around whom and their

associates gathered, on Saturday evenings at stated periods during the Winter season, much of the intellectual, professional, scientific and cultured society in our community, as well as the distinguished travellers, men of letters and learning, and other worthy celebrities who visited our City. Mr. Lea's interest and zeal in the Association were great and constant, as in all his pursuits in life.

There were many other fields of Mr. Lea's work, and it is a pleasure to know that a full and adequate Memoir of him is likely to be given to the world in the not distant future.

Mr. Lea was a man of profound learning; a master of several modern languages and a fine classical scholar; a careful and thorough student; an ardent lover of accuracy, truth and justice; a man possessing enormous capacity for work, and systematic in doing it most thoroughly; an exhaustive investigator of original sources of knowledge from their very foundations; a man of infinite pains in all he undertook, whose style of writing was most concise and apposite, with no unnecessary circumlocution or departure from the point. He was just and fair in weighing his evidence, and in arriving at conclusions and deductions, in which he was always without bias of any sort, religious or otherwise.

A marked characteristic of Mr. Lea's thoroughness of character and in his work is shown in the fact that, believing that a book without an index lost full half its value, and with a bad one almost as much, he indexed his own volumes in the most complete and concise manner, not counting the laboriousness, the tediousness and the drudgery of the undertaking. He held that the author alone could properly index a book.

He was exceedingly liberal in contributing from his extensive means to worthy objects, and his pecuniary assistance in the erection of this building in which we are gathered was a great help to us in our hard struggle for the accomplishment of that object.



We are fortunate in having upon our walls in this building many valuable portraits of distinguished men. We have a complete collection of the portraits of our Presidents and of some of our Vice-Presidents, and it is a great pleasure that this excellent one of Mr. Lea is added to our collection.

I move you, Mr. President:

That the thanks of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania be most cordially extended to the members of the family of Mr. Henry Charles Lea, our late Vice-President, for their kindness and generosity in presenting to the Society this beautiful and life-like portrait of him, copied by Hugh H. Breckenridge, after Vonnoh's painting, which will recall to our minds, and hand down to those who come after us, the features and resemblance of our distinguished associate and liberal benefactor, who has added so much to the honor and high standing of our Society.

REMARKS OF HON. HAMPTON L. CARSON.

*Mr. President:* I rise to second the resolutions offered by Mr. Brooke Rawle. My recollections of Mr. Lea make it an agreeable duty; my relations to him and to his family make it a personal pleasure. I often observed him in conference or discussion with men of affairs about matters of moment. I often met him on the street and had familiar chats about men and current events. I listened, alas too rarely, to his conversation about books, pictures and other things which interested him as a scholar and as a collector. He had a penetrating mental eye which saw far into the heart of things, while at the same time he had a breadth of vision which saved him from narrowness or near sightedness. He was never dogmatic, although he was always persistent in the maintenance of his opinions, and if challenged or annoyed by opposition which seemed unreasonable, he could cite facts which became overwhelming, not simply in numbers, but because of the manner in which they were marshalled by a master commander of what the world had

learned by experience. His mind was a microscope and a telescope combined, if the law of optics will permit of such an illustration. He knew and saw the smallest details, and he could draw their most distant relationships into combinations so as to present a result which was impressive because of the light it shed on the meaning of customs, formularies and conventions which formed the organic structure of society in past ages.

It is easy enough to say that Mr. Lea was a very learned man, and to point to the titles of his books and to the character of the authorities cited in the foot-notes, to prove that his researches were recondite, but after all that is very general, very vague, and quite unsatisfactory, because it conveys no definite idea of the quality or the value of his learning. We must go far deeper than that. We must examine his text, and then examine his authorities, and then go back to the text to ascertain what use he made of his raw material, how he assimilated and arranged it, and how he evolved a statement of the principle underlying his deductions. In that way we can secure an appreciative estimate of the illuminating character of his scholarship. An analysis of his mental processes will, I think, give these results. First, he collected his facts, his phenomena, his symptoms, and in doing that he discarded all theories and rejected all secondary sources of information. He was unwilling to trust to translations, but studied documents in their native tongues, whether Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, Ancient Irish, or Icelandic, whether Frankish, Gothic, Spanish or Italian. Next, he made exact and careful notes of his observations, and in these there was not the slightest trace of a dogma or a theory. Then, having exhausted the entire field of original research, and searched every crack and cranny and crevice of hidden or forgotten lore, no matter what their latitude or longitude in history, he brought his notes together. Having prepared himself by laborious analysis for the far greater work of synthesis, in mechanical phrase, he assembled his parts and fitted them into each

other, marking their similarities and observing their differences. Thus he prepared his mind for the consideration of their general significance, their striking adaptability. Then, with a divination peculiarly his own, which gave him the clue to the arrangement of multiform and widely scattered parts, he pieced out the puzzle in a compact and shapely structure, which as it grew under his hands gave out flashes of meaning to his cool and cautious brain until, finally, the arrangement being complete, he was ready to expound the meaning of his work in a striking, neat and precise statement of a philosophic principle, so simple and yet at the same time so convincing, as to carry to the mind of the reader of his books the assurance that the author had found the key that unlocked the mystery and threw open to public entrance all the chambers of the Enchanted Castle of Knowledge.

To change the simile, it occurs to me that Dr. Lea did in the field of history, both legal and sacerdotal, what the bacteriologist does at the present time in the science of biology or of medicine. He studied germs, isolated them, ascertained their exact character, observed their effect upon the body politic, and then announced the law of their operation. He used the microscope when his mind was engaged in analysis. He made blood tests when he generalized, and he operated on the lower animals in experimentation, if I may so describe previous conditions of our ancestors without causing commotion, and then announced the law of social life or the cause of a particular political disease.

We can test his mental process very readily. Take, for instance, the first book that he wrote, "Superstition and Force." It is that part of his labors which appeals most strongly to me, because it is an attempt, and a most successful one, to explain the origin of certain mysterious passages in the law of procedure and proof, which up to the time that he wrote had been a sealed book even to philosophic jurists. It consists of four essays, "The Wager of Law," "The Wager of Battle," "The Ordeal," and "Torture." If

we examine his foot-notes we find that he has not confined himself, as many men would have done, to an Anglo-Saxon examination to explain the law of England, but he has gone to the Sagas of Iceland, to Scandinavia, to Gothic and Early Frankish establishments. He is as familiar with the decrees of Clovis and the capitularies of Childebert and Charlemagne, as he is with the later statutes of Henry II and III. Although not a lawyer he has an accurate understanding of Glanville, Bracton and Fleta, three authors whose names are frequently on the lips of lawyers who have never opened the lids of the volumes. With an intuitive sense which can be described as a flashlight of the mind, he reveals the contents of the darkest recesses of history, and causes ordinary objects to stand out in such clear and scientific relation to each other that we find the evolution of the system delineated as happily and as easily to be comprehended as the chapter of Blackstone on the Action of Debt.

He applied the same methods of workmanship to his other books. In the preface to his "History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages" he wrote that at the commencement of his historical studies, he speedily became convinced that the surest basis of investigation of a given period lay in an examination of its jurisprudence, which presents without disguise its aspirations and the means regarded as best adapted for their realization. Clearly he was right, for we may talk about kings and conquerors, and their names serve but as shibboleths, while much of what they did or said has vanished, but in a statute, a crystallization of custom, a statement of what the sovereign power had once willed to be law, there dwells a permanent preservation of a vanished state of society. Just as fossil bones found in the drifts of hills, will enable the geologists to set the date of an era, so will a law enable the historian to depict the character of those who peopled the world at that particular time. Mr. Lea wrote and toiled in the spirit of that noble sentence of Lord Bacon in his essay on The Advancement of Learning: "Antiquities or remnants of history, are '*tanquam tabula naufragu*' (like

the log of a shipwrecked vessel), when industrious persons"—mark these adjectives of Lord Bacon, and see how fitly they describe the methods of Mr. Lea's work—"when industrious persons, by an exact and scrupulous diligence and observation, out of monuments, names, words, proverbs, traditions, private records and evidences, passages of books that concern not story, and the like, do save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time." His work will always be regarded as original. I do not mean original in the sense that he created or invented, but original in the sense that hereafter there will be no necessity for any investigator, unless charged with some special inquiry, to find occasion to examine the actual manuscripts. He has done that work and done it for all time. We may talk of the monumental work of Gibbon, stretching over a thousand years, or of Robertson, the first of philosophic historians, or of the charms of Motley and of Prescott, but we find in Lea the midribs and the spine which constitute the framework upon which European institutions have developed and shaped themselves; we have them there defined in such a manner as to enable the thoughtful student to realize the force of the law of evolution, the development and the application of which Mr. Lea has made so clear.

I do not know how it is that we fail in our day and generation to see the greatness of men while they are still among us, perhaps it is because we are too close to them. We can place our eyes so close beneath the dome of the Capitol at Washington as to be unable to see anything except a mass of white marble. It is only when in perspective that it can be seen piercing the heavens and crowning the great structure which enshrines the institutions which shelter us and are to shelter our posterity. So it is that as the years recede Mr. Lea's monumental work will be appreciated, rising higher and higher and still higher above the labors of his contemporaries. Here in our midst was a Philadelphian, one of our own Vice-Presidents, who has rendered this Society a service and conferred upon this community an honor which no words of mine can fitly express.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE PORTRAIT BY THE PRESIDENT,  
HONORABLE SAMUEL W. PENNYPACKER.

Mr. Lea's fondness for literature and earnestness in investigation came to him with his pedigree. His father had studied and had published many scientific works. His grandfather, Mathew Carey, published "The Museum" in thirteen volumes, a collection of State papers and contemporary literature, and wrote many essays upon political and historical subjects. It is an interesting fact, worthy to have attention upon an occasion of this kind, that years before the organization of this Society, Mathew Carey urged the formation of a State historical association. Mr. Lea's intellectual activities were very varied, but he was essentially a historian. It cannot be said that his works were popular. It may be that even a large proportion of this select audience have never read them, but popularity and the appreciation or lack of appreciation of such as you and I, form a very inadequate test of merit. There are many popular writers who simply take the thoughts and the facts which have been presented time and again before them, and write them over, and their popularity only lasts until some one comes along to repeat the same process. Mr. Lea selected a subject about which before him men were not informed. He studied it with the utmost care, he presented it with all the charm of literary skill, and perhaps no other Philadelphian, perhaps no other American historian will be so long remembered among scholars and men of learning whose judgment is of value. He was for many years the senior Vice-President of this Society, and he made the most substantial individual contribution toward the erection of this hall. It is, therefore, eminently fitting that upon these walls should hang his portrait. I accept on behalf of this Society, the portrait so generously presented, and I assure the donors that it will be carefully preserved and tenderly cherished.

The Resolution offered by Mr. Brooke Rawle was unanimously adopted.