

BOOKS AT BROWN

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JOHN HAY

On the 8th day of October in the year 1838, John Hay was born in the pioneer town of Salem, Indiana. His mother, born in Assonet, Massachusetts, in 1803, was a Leonard and his maternal grandfather, David Augustus Leonard, had attended Brown University (then Rhode Island College) in the Class of 1792. This New England connection drew the youth, John Milton Hay, when of college age, to Brown. His subsequent career has placed him in the very highest esteem among the University's alumni.

During October, from the 24th through the 30th, there will be an exhibition of John Hay memorabilia in the Harris Room of the Library. On the evening of October 26th the Friends of the Library will hold their October meeting in the Harris Room at eight o'clock and members will have an opportunity to view the exhibit.

The exhibition will include examples of Hay's published and private works, autograph letters, pictures, and his college records. Early letters of Hay are extremely rare as most of them were addressed to his family and were subsequently destroyed.

During the brief interval between his graduation from Brown and his departure for Washington to become Lincoln's private secretary, he suffered from, or perhaps we should say, indulged in, "Leonard Melancholy." This period it is hoped will be represented by copy No. 1 of Caroline Tichnor's book, *A Poet in Exile*, which has the original letters bound in. Also there will be a long letter written May 20th, 1859 from Warsaw, Illinois, to Hay's room-mate, William L. Stone, which likewise reflects his view of life at this period. This melancholia apparently developed before

he left Providence. He wrote in an autograph album, prior to graduation, the following:

Blindly to the grave we go,
Life today is death tomorrow—
God hath kindly willed it so—
Shorter life is shorter sorrow.

1858

JOHN HAY

Hay while in college was a member of the Zeta Charge of the Theta Delta Chi Fraternity. An example of the fraternity pin of that day will be shown. It was the pin of his class-mate, Leander Cornelius Manchester, a life-long friend and admirer of Hay. Hay was also a member of the Philermenian Society. Both of these societies, the one secret and the other not, had a decided literary flavor and papers were read and debates held on literary topics and current events. Some of the subjects assigned to Hay are interesting in the light of his subsequent career, touching on slavery, Mormonism and other things that later interested him.

In the active life of the White House the mists of melancholy were promptly dissipated. Numerous examples of the young secretary's letters written in Hay's hand and signed by Lincoln will be included.

During the period of Hay's connection with the Diplomatic Service at Paris, Vienna and Madrid, he had the use of the Legation's letter-press and the family have some of the books kept while he was under General Sickles at Madrid. The copies of many personal letters have been carefully deleted.

The copies of the original draft of the essay on Spain, which later appeared as *Castilian Days*, are in one of the Madrid letter-press books. References in his correspondence indicate that he also kept letter-press books in Vienna, forgot them when he departed, and was unable to recover them later.

There is very little record of Hay's stay in Paris under John Bigelow. In Bigelow's book, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, there is a reference to a speech of Hay's at a Legation dinner. It is the

earliest reference to a speech by Hay and very likely it represents the first of a series of addresses. Many of these have been separately printed and a book of his collected addresses appeared shortly after his death.

Lovers of the Persian poet will be familiar with *In Praise of Omar*.

A collection of pictures of Hay will show his development from the youthful class picture of 1858 to the mature frock-coated dignity of the bearded Secretary of State of 1905. One of the finest likenesses is the etching of Anders Zorn. The painting by John Nelson Arnold hangs permanently over the Harris Room mantle. Visitors will pass the St. Gaudens bust on the left just before mounting the stairs to the exhibition in the Harris Room.

The magnificent extra-illustrated set of the Nicolay and Hay *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, which Henry Adams describes in a letter to President Eliot of Harvard as ". . . the first work on American history in popular and political importance that has appeared in my time," will be loaned from the McLellan collection and will be accompanied by correspondence and proof sheets representing the long period during its writing.

Perhaps the rarest of Hay's printed works is a little pamphlet containing a poem entitled *The Enchanted Shirt*. The Library does not own a copy (prospective donors please note) and the only copy we know of is in the Library of Congress Rare Book Room from which it may not be loaned. However, the Librarian of Congress has very kindly furnished us with a photographic copy of the item which will be included.

The manuscript of Hay's anonymous novel, *The Bread-winners*, is in a private collection and cannot be procured—that is, the first seventeen chapters are. The last three are missing. Various editions, translations and sequels to this work will be on view.

The latter part of Hay's life is largely political. He said, "If you knew what an instrument of torture the pen is to me, you would not ask me to take it in hand again," in a letter to Richard Watson Gilder, March 1st, 1902. This period will be illustrated by numerous letters, documents and books bearing on the important work he accomplished in his diplomatic career and finally by a

black-bordered proclamation of Theodore Roosevelt on July 3rd, 1905:

“John Hay, Secretary of State of the United States, died on July 1st. His death, a crushing sorrow to his friends, is to the people of this country a national bereavement, and it is in addition a serious loss to all mankind, for to him it was given to stand as a leader in the effort to better world conditions by striving to advance the cause of international peace and justice.”

W. Easton Louttit, Jr.