

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GIBBON
COMMEMORATION 1794-
1894**

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Proceedings of the Gibbon Commemoration 1794-1894 by Various

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VARIOUS

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GIBBON
COMMEMORATION
1794-1894**



EDWARD GIBBON

*From a photograph of the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds published in the
'Illustrated London News'*

Gr. Brit —

Royal Historical Society

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
GIBBON COMMEMORATION
1794—1894

*PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDWARD GIBSON (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PORTRAIT BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE EARL OF SHEFFIELD) <i>Frontispiece</i>	
REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY	5
BALANCE SHEET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS	9
LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMEMORATION	10
PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING ON NOV. 15, 1894:	
INTRODUCTORY SPEECH OF SIR MOUNTSTUART GRANT DUFF	13
ADDRESS BY MR. FREDERIC HARRISON	18
CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM	36

Gibbon Commemoration,

1794—1894

REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY

EARLY in the year 1894 a proposal to commemorate the centenary of the death of Edward Gibbon was suggested by Mr. Frederic Harrison in a letter addressed to the President of the Royal Historical Society. The matter was brought under the notice of the Council of the Society, and it was resolved to form a General Committee, of which the Council of the Royal Historical Society consented to act as members, the Director and the Secretary being appointed Honorary Secretaries.

Invitations were sent to European and American scholars who have made a special study of the history of the Roman Empire, and thus a large and influential Committee was appointed, including delegates from France, Germany, Italy, Holland, from the United States, and from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Dublin, and Durham. The Committee numbered about ninety members, amongst whom may be mentioned Geheimrath H. von Sybel, Professor Mommsen, Count Ugo Balzani, M. G. Hanotaux amongst foreign delegates, and the Bishops of Oxford and Peterborough, the Deans of Westminster, Salisbury, and

Durham, Lord Rosebery, and Mr. James Bryce amongst English members, with many others. The Earl of Sheffield, in whose family the remains, manuscripts, portrait, and relics of the historian are preserved, consented to become the President of the Commemoration. Meetings of the Committee were held at several dates between May and October and two sub-committees were appointed, one for literary affairs and the other for the purpose of organising the proposed Exhibition and Meeting.

This Exhibition of MSS., Books, Pictures, and Relics was held at the British Museum, by permission of the Trustees. It was opened on Monday, November 12, by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, President of the Royal Historical Society, and remained open for a fortnight. Every possible assistance was given to the Commemoration by Mr. Maunde Thompson, C.B., the Principal Librarian, whilst for the arrangement and classification of the MSS. the Committee had the advantage of the great experience of Mr. G. F. Warner, of the Manuscript Department.

The success of the Exhibition is largely due to the interest and courtesy displayed by the official staff of the British Museum throughout the whole proceedings, and it is very satisfactory to learn, on the authority of Mr. Maunde Thompson, that of the temporary exhibitions held at the Museum few have been so successful or so instructive as the Gibbon Exhibition, if the short time that the Exhibition was on view is taken into consideration.

The Committee must express their thanks for the kind and generous support given by the owners of manuscripts, portraits, and other relics of the historian. By far the most important of these collections was that of the Earl of Sheffield, at Sheffield Park, which included the autograph memoirs of the historian's life, the interesting series of original letters, most of which had not before been exhibited, together with the famous portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Another valuable collection was lent by M. W. de Charrière de Sévery, the descendant of Edward Gibbon's intimate friend at Lausanne,

which included many personal relics of great interest. Other Swiss relics were contributed by General Meredith Read, and Portraits, Miniatures, Books, and Engravings were lent by Mr. Alfred Morrison, Mr. Hallam Murray, Mr. Alfred Cock, Q.C., the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, Mr. J. Milman Brown, the Fine Arts Museum at Lausanne, and the Trustees of the British Museum.

The whole of these exhibits were safely received, and have been safely returned to their respective owners. In respect of the negotiations with exhibitors and delegates abroad, the Commemoration is under obligations to H.M. Foreign Office, H.B.M. Consul at Zürich, M. Henri Angst, to M. Chas. Bourcart, Chargé d'Affaires de Suisse, to General Meredith Read, and to several of the Society's Corresponding Members.

The meeting in the theatre of the Museum of Practical Geology at Jermyn Street took place on Thursday, November 15, at 4.30 P.M., when the Introductory Speech of the President of the Royal Historical Society and the Commemoration Address by Mr. Frederic Harrison were given, with a full audience.

In addition to the Addresses which are printed in the following pages, letters were read from many distinguished foreign scholars, and speeches were delivered by Mr. James Bryce, Professor Pelham, and Mr. Maunde Thompson. Special articles in reference to the Commemoration appeared in the 'Nineteenth Century' for July, 1894, and the 'English Illustrated Magazine' for January, 1895, the 'Times' of November 10, 12, and 16, the 'Athenæum' of November 10, and in other papers, while the 'Illustrated London News' of November 17 devoted a pictorial supplement to the Exhibition at the British Museum.

On Thursday, November 22, members of the Commemoration visited Westminster School by the kind invitation of the Head Master, and inspected several interesting mementoes of Edward Gibbon's school-days.

A large mass of correspondence remaining in the hands

of the Hon. Secretary will be preserved in a separate volume amongst the Royal Historical Society's archives.

In appending to his Report the Financial Statement of Receipts and Payments in connection with the Commemoration, the Hon. Secretary regrets to announce that a considerable sum received by his colleague, the late Mr. P. E. Dove, has not been recovered from the deceased gentleman's private estate, in spite of every effort that has been made for that purpose.

The cheques paid in respect of subscriptions were traced by means of information afforded by the subscribers themselves, or by other means, and it was ascertained beyond doubt that the same had been paid by Mr. Dove into his private account, and the embarrassed state of the private affairs of the deceased made it useless to take any further proceedings in the matter. It has been found necessary, therefore, to write off this sum as a bad debt, but it has been possible, by an economical administration of the fund, to show a balance of 20% after the payment of all expenses connected with the Commemoration. The Petty Cash expenditure incidental to the meeting of November 15, and the cost of printing this volume, have been defrayed by the Royal Historical Society.

HUBERT HALL.