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ARLO BATES (1850-1918).

Fellow in Class III, Section 4, 1900.

Arlo Bates was born in East Machias, Maine, December 16, 1850, the son of Dr. Niran, and Susan (Thaxter) Bates. The strange name that was given to him was due to a family idiosyncrasy which originated with his grandfather, who had a theory that every man should have "a name that is all his own and nobody else's." So he called his son Niran; Niran upon the same principle begat Arlo, and Arlo in his turn begat Oric. You will search the dictionaries of biography and mythology in vain for any of these names, they are merely combinations of letters with no significance, but unique and calculated to impress the bearer from birth with the sense of individuality which was a family characteristic, not least strongly marked in the subject of this memoir.

He was educated at Bowdoin College, where he received the degree of S.B. in 1876, A.M. in 1879, and Litt.D. in 1894. Already while an undergraduate his strong instinct for literature as a profession began to manifest itself, he became the editor-in-chief of the college paper called *The Bowdoin Orient*, and thus started on his chosen career. Shortly after his graduation he resolved to try his fortune in Boston, and moved to the city in the same year, to remain a resident of it until his death on August 26, 1918.

His first venture in Boston was a paper which he named *The Broadside*. This led an unprosperous existence during the years 1878-79 and was then abandoned. In the following year he was made editor of the *Sunday Courier*, a journal which had once been highly esteemed, when it numbered among its contributors many of those whose names were associated with the *North American Review*, but had sadly degenerated when he took hold of it, and was living then chiefly on its name and advertisements. Its proprietor gave him a free hand in the conduct of his own columns, with the result that during the thirteen years that he remained its editor he was able to restore it to something of its old prestige. It became again one of the accepted Sunday papers, and was extensively read for its editorials, literary reviews and notes on current topics, for all of which he was responsible and most of which he wrote himself.

The period of his connection with the *Courier* was, in one respect at least, the happiest and also the most unhappy in his career, both the result of his marriage. In 1882 he was married to Miss Harriet L. Vose, of Brunswick, Maine, who under the name of Eleanor Putnam was a well-known magazine writer, and the author of a book on Old Salem. Their union was a singularly ideal and sympathetic one, sharing as they did to the full their intellectual tastes as well as their devotion to each other, but after only four years of this companionship she died, and to the end of his life he never ceased to mourn her. She left him one child, Oric, to whom his affection was transferred and centered more and more as the boy grew up.

His literary career began soon after his arrival in Boston. His first attempts were not successful in finding a publisher, but not discouraged by this experience he persevered, and in 1881 published his first novel, "Patty's Perversities." For the next twenty-seven years he continued a fairly regular output of novels, poems and essays, in spite of his arduous professional labors. "Who's Who in America" for 1916-17, the last volume issued before his death, gives a list of twenty-three titles with their dates, ending with "The Intoxicated Ghost" in 1908. While these books won and held for him the respect of his literary associates they did not achieve the wide popularity for which he had hoped, and it was doubtless the disappointment at this result which led him to abandon writing during the last ten years of his life. He was slow to recognize that his real strength lay not in fiction or poetry but in essays. Of these he published only three volumes, the two series of "Talks on Writing English" and the "Talks on the Study of Literature," all of which are of permanent value, and delightful reading because of his critical ability, his high standard of purity in the use of our language, and his exhilarating freedom of thought and expression.

In 1893 he resigned his position on the *Sunday Courier* to accept the professorship of English literature in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There he entered enthusiastically upon the most difficult task of his life and the one in which he achieved his greatest success. To imbue a lot of young students who went to the Tech to fit themselves for the most practical professions, with little or no time, as they thought, for "ornamental" studies, to imbue them with the sense that ability to express themselves in clear sound English should be an

essential element of their training, and that the basis of this should be a knowledge and appreciation of the masters of their language, was no easy matter in that atmosphere of practical work, but he did it. The testimony of many students who sat under him, as well as the commendation of his associates on the faculty, leave no doubt of that, and it is still further shown by the fact that many who were not regularly connected with the Institute enrolled themselves as special students in order to have the advantage of his teaching. During the twenty-three years that he occupied his position he maintained it on a level with the best teaching in any of our universities, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that the seed he had planted was bearing good fruit. But there was another and a darker side to the picture. The period of his service in the Tech was the most turbulent in its history. Controversies arose, spread and would not down. Questions of policy, administration, the possible union with Harvard, every kind of problem that can disrupt a governing board, were discussed, not always with academic calm. Divisions of opinion were sharp and sometimes bitter. Into these he threw himself whole-heartedly, strong as always in his convictions, and vehement in his expression of them. Even before the clouds rolled away he found himself in a minority, out of sympathy with the new spirit that was growing in the institution in spite of his efforts, distrustful of its changes, and unwilling as always to compromise. Disheartened at the outcome as well as by the slight prospect of continued usefulness under the conditions that had thus been brought about, he retired in 1915, shortly before the Tech moved from Boston to Cambridge, and three years before his death.

Thus another disappointment was added to his life, and if I seem to dwell unduly upon these it is because they are essential to a knowledge of his character and its development. Highly sensitive as he was, and of a temperament that was naturally prone to melancholy, he was less fitted than a more robust personality would have been to withstand these slings and arrows, for as such he regarded them.

No account of Arlo Bates would be complete without at least a reference to his association with the Tavern Club, where for twenty years it is hardly too much to say that he was the life and soul of the club, contributing to an extent equalled by few others towards the distinctive character which gave it its reputation. Always ready to prepare a skit, a burlesque, a miracle play, or any kind of original

entertainment, and equally ready to take part in any or all of them, the "moroseness" which many who did not know him well regarded as characteristic was there shown to be merely skin deep and easily punctured. Some of his wittiest and most brilliant work was done in the plays which he wrote for the club, and it is a pity that there was so small a public to enjoy them. But those who had the privilege will never forget it nor the affection in which they held him.

He was elected a Fellow of this Academy March 14, 1900, and a Member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1904. An account of his life and work, with tributes from various sources, was published in the *Technology Review* for November, 1918, Vol. XX, pp. 615 ff.

EDWARD ROBINSON.

CHARLES PICKERING BOWDITCH (1842-1921).

Fellow in Class III, Section 2, 1892.

Charles Pickering Bowditch was born in Boston on September 30, 1842, and died in Jamaica Plain on June 1, 1921. He was the son of Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch and Lucy O. (Nichols) Bowditch. He entered Harvard College in 1859 and was graduated in the Class of 1863 after having been suspended for his participation in some college pranks. He received the Master's Degree in 1866.

As a member of the Presidential party he witnessed Lincoln's First Inauguration on March 4, 1861. He served in the Civil War as 2d Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, and Captain in the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and later he was Captain in the 5th Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry of which his brother, Henry, was a Major.

He spent the year 1865 in the oil regions of Pennsylvania and from 1865 to 1872 he was in charge of the Estate of William W. Wadsworth at Geneseo, New York, and from 1866 to 1872 he was Trustee of the Estate of Allen Ayrault at the same place. He returned to Boston in 1872 and, except for periods of travel in Europe, the Orient, Mexico, Central America, and California, he resided in Boston until his death.

Mr. Bowditch's grandfather, Nathaniel Bowditch, was the Fifth President of the American Academy, serving from 1829 to 1838 and succeeding John Quincy Adams as President. His father, J. Inger-