

ASA GRAY.

THE following, as yet unpublished, words, almost the last spoken publicly by Asa Gray, have a pathetic interest for all those who knew and loved him. They were uttered in the Free Trade Hall, at Manchester, at the opening meeting of the British Association in August last, in seconding the vote of thanks to Sir Henry Roscoe for his address:—

“For the very great honour of being called upon to second the motion for a vote of thanks to your illustrious President, I am mainly indebted to that deference which is naturally accorded to advancing years, a deference which sometimes—as in the present case—takes one unawares.

“In looking back over the list of Corresponding Members of the British Association, I find myself, much to my surprise, nearly, if not quite, the oldest survivor.

“I recognize, therefore, a certain fitness, on this score, in the call upon me to be the spokesman of those, your brethren from other lands, who have been invited to this auspicious gathering, and to the privilege of listening to the very thoughtful, well-timed, and most instructive address of your President.

“As guests, we desire, Mr. Mayor, heartily to thank the city of Manchester and the officers of the Association for inviting us; we wish to thank you, Sir Henry, for the gratification your address has afforded us.

“Convened at Manchester, and coming myself by way of Liverpool, I would say personally that there are two names which memory calls up from the distant past with unusual distinctness; both names familiar to this audience and well known over the world, but which now rise to my mind in a very significant way. For I am old enough to have taken my earliest lessons in chemistry just at the time when the atomic theory of Dalton was propounded, and was taught in the text-books as the latest new thing in science.

“Some years earlier, Washington Irving in his “Sketch-book” had hallowed to our youthful minds the name of Roscoe, making it the type of all that was liberal, wise, and gracious. And when I came to know something of botany I found that this exemplar, as well as patron, of good learning had, by his illustrations of Monandrian plants, taken rank among the *Patres Conscripti* of the botany of that day.

“The name so highly honoured then we now honour in the grandson. And I am confident that I express the sentiments of your foreign guests, whom I represent, when I simply copy the words of your President in 1842, now reproduced in the opening paragraph of the address of the President of 1887, transferring, as we fitly may, the application from the earlier to the later Manchester chemist: ‘Manchester is still the residence of one whose name is uttered with respect wherever science is cultivated, who is here to-night to enjoy the honours due to a long career of persevering devotion to knowledge.’

“I cannot continue the quotation without material change. ‘That increase of years to him has been but increase of wisdom’ may indeed be said of Roscoe no less than of Dalton; but we are happy to know that we are now contemplating not the diminished strength of the close, but the manly vigour of the mid-course, of a distinguished career. Long and prosperously may it grow from strength to strength.

“In general, praise of the address which we have had the pleasure of hearing would not be particularly becoming from one whose chemistry nearly ended as well as began with the simple atomic theory of Dalton. But there is one topic which I may properly speak of, standing as I do as a representative of those favoured individuals whom your programme—for lack of a better distinguishing word—calls foreigners. I refer to the urgently expressed ‘hope that this meeting may be the commencement of an

international scientific organization.’ For this we thank you, Mr. President, most heartily. This is, indeed, a consummation devoutly to be wished, and confidently to be hoped for, by all of us, especially by those for whom I am speaking. Not only we Americans, who are of British descent, and who never forget that blood is thicker than water, but as well our Continental associates on this platform, of the various strains of blood which interfused have produced this English race and fitted it for its noble issues—we, each and all, I repeat, accept this name of foreigners only in the conventional sense which the imperfection of language imposes. In the forum of science we ignore it altogether. One purpose unifies and animates every scientific mind with ‘one divine intent,’ and that by no means the ‘far-off intent’ of which the poet sings, but one very near and pervading. So we took to heart the closing words of your President’s most pertinent and timely address. Indeed, we had taken them to heart in anticipation. And we have come to this meeting one hundred strong or more (in place of the ordinary score) fully bent upon making this Manchester meeting international.

“Far back in my youthful days there was a strong-willed President of the United States, of military antecedents, who once drew up and promulgated an official order which somewhat astounded his Cabinet officers. ‘Why, Mr. President!’ they said, ‘you can’t do that.’ ‘Can’t do it!’ replied General Jackson, ‘don’t you see that I have done it?’ And so we internationals have come and done it. I am the unworthy spokesman of such a numerous, and such a distinguished array of scientific foreigners as have never been assembled before.

“Next year, if you will, you shall have as many more. When you, too, are ready to cross the Channel or the North Sea, we shall compose only a larger scientific brotherhood. And when you cross again the Atlantic, the brotherhood of science will be the more increased, and its usefulness in proportion.

“In behalf of your foreign guests, I heartily second the motion.”

#### NOTES.

FIFTEEN years have passed since the Marshall Hall Fund was instituted with the twofold purpose of commemorating the late Dr. Marshall Hall, and for the encouragement of research in that branch of natural science which he did so much to develop. The Trust provides “that a prize shall be given every fifth year for the best original work done and recorded in the English language during the previous quinquennium, in physiological or pathological researches relating to the nervous system, and that the prize shall consist of the simple interest derived during the preceding five years from the amount of the capital fund.” The first award was made to Dr. Hughlings Jackson, the second to Dr. Ferrier, and this year the Council of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, in whose hands the Fund was placed, have awarded the prize to Dr. Walter Holbrook Gaskell, F.R.S., Lecturer in Advanced Physiology in the University of Cambridge. The Council have invited Dr. Gaskell to give some account of his work before the Society, and a special meeting will be convened for this purpose.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD, the tidings of whose death excited universal regret, did admirable service to the cause of education in England. No writer of his time pressed more earnestly on the attention of the public the need of thorough educational reform, and in his full and lucid Report on the Universities and secondary schools of the Continent he showed how far, in almost all matters relating to this essential element of the national life, we had allowed ourselves to be outstripped by some of our neighbours and rivals. Although, of course, convinced that