

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE CORNPLANTER MEDAL AND WILLIAM P. LETCHWORTH.

BY FREDERICK STARR.

The Cornplanter Medal for Iroquois Research is to be awarded to four classes of workers,—historians, ethnologists, artists, philanthropists. The first award was made to a critical student of history, the second and third to an ethnologist and an archeologist; the fourth strike of the medal has been given this year to a philanthropist of world fame, whose long life has been devoted to benevolent and charitable work, and whose interest and sympathy have gone beyond the limits of race and the narrower ties of blood.



WILLIAM PRYOR LETCHWORTH.

William Pryor Letchworth was born at Brownsville, Jefferson County, New York, on May 26, 1823. He came of a family of Friends, some members of which achieved notable positions as preachers and writers in their faith. In his boyhood his parents removed to Auburn, where seven years of his life were spent. At the age of about twenty-two years he went to New York City to engage in commercial pursuits, but in 1848 removed to Buffalo where he devoted himself to the manufacture of hardware, saddlery and malleable iron. While there in business his health became somewhat impaired, and in 1859 he

bought a property at Portage for a country seat. This property, since famous as "Glen Iris," was located at the upper falls of the Genesee, one of the most lovely spots for scenery in the state of New York. At first merely a summer home, "Glen Iris" became more and more occupied by its owner until finally it was his permanent residence, even though his business remained at Buffalo. Mr. Letchworth possessed excellent business ability, which is shown not only by his building up a considerable fortune in his manufacturing enterprises, but also by the wisdom and success with which he has handled various important concerns entrusted to him. Thus in 1871 he was elected President of the Buffalo Fine Arts Association, an institution of worthy aims, but at that time in desperate financial straits. Under his management it was put upon its feet and brought to the flourishing condition which has made it an important influence in its community. In 1873 Mr. Letchworth retired from active business with the intention to devote the remainder of his life to philanthropy.

In that year he was appointed a member of the New York State Board of Charities. It is not too much to say that it is chiefly due to his membership that that Board has an enviable and commanding position among such organizations in the United States. His arduous and unresting services were given without remuneration, and even in his official travel he was ever accustomed to pay his own expenses. In 1878 he was elected President of the Board, which office he held for ten years. After a continuous connection with the Board for a period of twenty-four years he finally insisted upon retirement on account of his increasing age. At the end of twenty years' service on the Board, the University of the State of New York bestowed the degree of LL. D. upon Mr. Letchworth "in recognition of his distinguished services to the State of New York as a member and President of the State Board of Charities, and as an author of most valuable contributions to the literature pertaining to the defective classes." Upon his resignation from the Board his fellow members passed extraordinary resolutions expressive of their appreciation of the man and his work. While Mr. Letchworth's work in philanthropy was general, his special interests were the problems of juvenile unfortunates and the insane. In his investigations of actual conditions he traveled throughout the state repeatedly, inspecting its charitable institutions. The condition of children in orphan asylums and reformatories was revolutionized by his efforts. In seeking the best methods of caring for and treating unfortunates he traveled widely through Europe, studying the systems of different countries with care. He was a member of many societies and organizations and was in constant personal contact and correspondence with other workers in the field. Three important works written by him are classic and standard in philanthropic literature. These are his great *State Report on Juvenile Reformation and Orphan Asylums* (1873), *The Insane in Foreign Countries* (1880), and *The Care and Treatment of Epileptics* (1898).

Mr. Letchworth's original purchase at Portage was comparatively small, but he subsequently added to it until "Glen Iris" included the land on both sides of the Genesee River for a distance of three miles, including the site of the upper, middle, and lower falls. His residence was within sight and hearing of the middle fall. At the upper fall the river is crossed by a lofty railroad bridge, and from the trains one catches glimpses of the beautiful scenery below. Between the middle and lower falls the river cuts a fine gorge with high banks on either side through solid rock. No scenery in the state except Niagara is better known; few places have been more visited; of none have the

beauties and attractions been more often sung. Nowhere in the state has there been a lovely country home more famous for its hospitality. Grounds and home alike have been thrown open to guests and public with a liberality and freedom rarely equalled. And now Mr. Letchworth has donated this fair domain, this valuable property, this wonderful scenic beauty to the state of New York as a playground and resort for all the people. The property, a thousand acres in extent and costing half a million dollars was transferred December 31, 1906, and was accepted by the state in trust forever. It has been fitly named "Letchworth Park," and will keep its donor's name fresh in public memory long after he is gone. Rarely has a man done so much for the people in any one direction as Mr. Letchworth has in two. Such men are not easily forgotten.

But why should Mr. Letchworth be the recipient of the Cornplanter Medal? For years he has been interested in the history and condition of the Iroquois,—especially the Senecas. When the old Council House of Canadea was in danger of destruction, he had the old timbers carefully removed and the edifice exactly reconstructed upon his property just back of the "Glen Iris" residence. The occasion was a notable one. The master of ceremonies was a Cornplanter, grandson of the Chief Cornplanter, whose profile appears on our medal. Mr. Letchworth's great uncle, Rev. John Letchworth, more than once came in contact with the famous chief during his missionary wanderings. The Council was interesting, not only as the last Indian Council in the Genesee Valley and in its being held in the historic building, but also as bringing about a renewal of relations between long estranged representatives of the Mohawk and Seneca tribes. When the gravestone of Mary Jemison, "the old white woman of the Genesee," was in danger of demolition, Mr. Letchworth had it removed to "Glen Iris" and reset,—a new monument with appropriate inscription being erected at the same time. It is needless here to recall the interesting and romantic story of Mary Jemison and her connection with the Iroquois. All that has passed into well-known history. Upon the grounds of "Glen Iris" and transferred with the rest of the property to the state is a small museum building for interesting objects connected with Indian and pioneer history. A descriptive pamphlet of this museum has been written by Mr. Henry R. Howland of Buffalo. It shows the care that Mr. Letchworth has taken to secure and preserve valuable materials that would otherwise be lost. For these three acts and for many lesser kindnesses Mr. Letchworth has deserved and gained the love and esteem of the Iroquois Indians and of their friends. Those have bestowed upon him the Indian name *Hai-wa-ye-is-tah*, "the man who always does the right thing"; these award the Cornplanter Medal in recognition of his interest in and service to the Iroquois.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

MEN VERSUS THE MAN. A Correspondence Between *Robert Rives La Monte* and *H. L. Mencken*. New York: Holt, 1910.

This book is a record of an actual correspondence which took place between two men, both of whom were interested in the general subject of the organization of society, but since they were separated by a space of 300 miles were unable to give the subject a more intimate discussion. As the title indicates, the controversy is the old quarrel between individualism and communism. Mr. La Monte is a socialist, a faithful disciple of Marx, though