

1835; for B. B. Thatcher's letter in June, of that year, reproduced in Burns' *American Antiquarian* of September, 1871, states that Robert Gilmor, of Baltimore, had made his collection of the signers complete, with the single exception of Lynch; and adds: "Rev. Mr. Sprague has out-run him in this field, for he has the whole, and so has Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, and *these are the only two complete sets in the world.*" Dr. Raffles' collection was not yet complete; it still lacked, at least George Taylor's autograph. Hon. Mellen Chamberlain states, that when he visited Dr. Sprague at Albany, in 1848, he thinks he then had two complete sets—one designed for his son.

Dr. Sprague passed away May 7th, 1876, but not until he had gathered one of the largest and most valuable private collections of autographs in this country—numbering, it is said, forty thousand specimens. He completed three sets of the signers of the declaration of independence—two of which remain intact, and hereafter noticed; while the third set has been broken up, and gone to improve, or fill up deficiencies in other sets—some in completing that of our own Society.

Mr. Thatcher testified, in 1835, to Dr. Sprague's wonderful collection—as "at the head of the *list longo intervallo*, being composed of twenty thousand specimens at least—an enormous multitude, indicating most significantly, the vast pains which must have been taken by that intelligent, amiable, and indefatigable enthusiast to enhance the extent of his treasures."

Dr. Sprague was a man of remarkable industry. Beside his pulpit ministrations, he wrote no less than sixteen different works between 1821 and 1866—one *Annals of the American Pulpit*, is a production of great merit, in nine volumes. He also wrote numerous introductions to biographical and other works, was a contributor to Appleton's *New American Cyclopedia*, and was the author of more than one hundred pamphlets. The gathering of book materials, notably for his great work on the *American Pulpit*, largely contributed to the augmentation of his wonderful autograph collection. Take him all in all, Dr. Sprague fills