

a distinguished and unique place in the history of American literature, and is accorded on all hands the highest rank among the early American autograph collectors.

Robert Gilmor, of Baltimore, was also an early and successful collector of autographs. He was a man of liberal means; and one year, while in Europe, he expended thirty thousand dollars for paintings, autographs, and other objects of virtu. Dr. Jared Sparks, who resided awhile in Baltimore, aided Mr. Gilmor very materially. Mr. Thatcher's description of his collection, as it existed early in 1835, represents it as less voluminous, but more general and valuable, autographically considered, than Dr. Sprague's. It was very rich in specimens of noted English and French characters—Mr. Thatcher enumerating many of them. Mr. Gilmor lived to supply his wanting Lynch autograph; and dying, at the age of seventy-four, Nov. 30, 1848, his collection mainly passed into the hands of Mr. Ferd. J. Dreer, of Philadelphia, including his set of the signers, while another portion was scattered, and aided materially in making up and improving other collections. In his lifetime, Mr. Gilmor had bestowed upon the Maryland Historical Society a rich array of manuscripts, illustrating the period of the French and Revolutionary wars; and these *Gilmor Papers* will long serve to perpetuate his memory.

The deaths of several of the signers during the Revolutionary contest—Morton and Gwinnett, in 1777; Livingston, in 1778; Hewes and Lynch, in 1779; Hart, in 1780; Taylor and Stockton, in 1781—so soon after appending their names to the immortal declaration, have contributed to render their autographs exceedingly rare in any form. Those of the other North and South Carolina signers, together with those of Thornton, Samuel Adams, Ellery, Lewis Morris, Stone, Wythe, Braxton, Heyward, Middleton, and Hall are also among those most difficult to obtain.

Sometime prior to 1834, Dr. Sprague was so fortunate as to obtain a Lynch signature from Gen. James Hamilton of South Carolina, a nephew of that signer, which he generously sent to Dr. Raffles; and Mr. Tefft supplied his English friend