

Report of the Council

THE library building has functioned well during the year. It seems remarkable that a building which was constructed nearly fifty years ago has required practically no alterations to have it conform to modern library usefulness. The work of the architects was well grounded. The only exception was the installation of a marble dome which in two years leaked and had to be replaced by a copper dome. Our chief solicitude is to keep the building in repair by repainting when necessary. During the past summer every window was painted and reputtied. This was an expensive undertaking, as the putty in the sashes, especially in the old bookstack, had fallen out and needed replacing. Since there are nearly 3300 panes of glass in the entire structure, this was a laborious task and required about three hundred pounds of putty. But buildings that are not frequently repainted rapidly deteriorate.

Another important matter was the installation of a new catalogue case. The original main catalogue contained 340 trays, and during recent years several small wooden cases have been added to furnish necessary room for cards. A new case has now been constructed by Remington-Rand with an addition of 288 trays, at a cost of about \$4000. It should take care of our problem for several years.

During the past six months there have been three deaths in the membership. Lee M. Friedman of Boston, leading Jewish historian, elected in 1932, died on August 7. J. Hall Pleasants, of Baltimore, writer on early Maryland artists, elected in 1937, died on August 25. Morgan B. Brainard of Hartford, Connecticut collector and insurance executive, elected in 1942, died on August 27. Obituary sketches of

these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings*. All three were especially interested in the affairs of this Society.

The project of issuing microcard reproductions of the books, pamphlets, and broadsides recorded in Evans's *American Bibliography* has progressed rapidly during the year. This vast undertaking conducted by Mr. Shipton with the aid of the staff, and financed by the Readex Microprint Corporation, has already proceeded through the year 1780 on the way to 1800. It has been described in the reports of the Librarian during the past three years. Although it becomes increasingly formidable as the years progress toward the end of the century, when the United States came into being and printing expanded, the project is assured a sense of completion. The microcards have been gradually distributed to subscribers and the financial success of the plan is decisive. One of the most satisfactory results is the reappraisal of our own outstanding collection of early American printing.

The Society has continued during the year to aid two important bibliographical undertakings, Lyle Wright's check list of American fiction from 1851 to 1875, and Jacob Blanck's *Bibliography of American Literature*. The former is about ready to be published and the second volume of the latter should soon be issued.

Two volumes recently published by the Society have met with general commendation and excellent reviews. The thirteenth volume of Evans's *American Bibliography*, listing over 3300 titles in the years 1799 and 1800, has already gone out of print. *Paul Revere's Engravings* still has 150 copies remaining to be sold, but such a useful and well documented reference book should soon be unavailable for purchase.

Three hitherto unlocated Revere engravings have recently come to light. The variant of Revere's print of the Boston Massacre, with the hands of the clock pointed to

8 o'clock instead of 10:20 o'clock, has at last been found. Only one copy was known and when the Revere book was published in 1954, it could not be located. It seems that it was bought from Dr. Rosenbach in 1915 by Dr. Alexander Hamilton Rice of Newport. After Dr. Rice's death in 1956, it was sold by Mrs. Rice to a private collector of early American prints. A hitherto unknown engraved print, signed by Revere, has been discovered and acquired for the Society. It is one of the most interesting of Revere's Masonic engravings, and is the summons for the meetings of Lodge No. 169 Antient York Masons of Boston. This was the Lodge chartered prior to 1772 by the Atholl Grand Lodge of England. It had but a brief existence. The print was engraved by Revere probably in the late 1760's, but no charge for it appears in Revere's Day Books. The third hitherto unlocated Revere print is the notification for meetings of the Relief Society of Boston, dated in manuscript March 4, 1782, and signed "P. Revere sculp." It is owned by a private collector in Boston, and the Antiquarian Society has a photostat. The Relief Fire Society was instituted in 1773, and issued a seven-page pamphlet of *Laws* (copy in Massachusetts Historical Society) in 1785. The Boston Public Library has the manuscript minutes of the Relief Society from 1773 to 1807. From these records it appears that Revere cut a plate for membership tickets, also a plate to appear at the head of the printed articles of the Society, also a plate for notifications—all done after June 2, 1773. The Boston Public Library has a copy of the *Rules and Orders for the Relief Society*, with a list of members in manuscript, and a cut, presumably by Revere, in type metal, of an ornamental design at the head of the broadside (photostat in AAS).

A new bibliography has recently been prepared for publication by the Director of the Society, a bibliography of the

American editions of *Robinson Crusoe*. This English classic, written by Daniel Defoe in 1719, became the most widely read, reprinted, translated, adapted, and imitated of any piece of fiction ever written in the English language. Although studied and learnedly discussed by scholars in every European language, with over two thousand editions, variations, and imitations listed, the popularity of the book in America has been overlooked. The attempt has now been made to list every American edition from the earliest printing through the year 1830. One hundred and twenty-five editions have been located, of which this Society has ninety-one.

The financial condition of the Society is highly satisfactory. We have been successful in keeping within our budget. The purchase of books necessary to fill in our collections and the need of making increases in salaries, have been made possible by generous contributions to our income from members and friends.

Not for over thirty years has the Society held a meeting in a building other than the usual meeting-places in Boston and Worcester. In 1924 the Boston meeting was adjourned to the Widener Library in Cambridge, where a meeting was held to signalize the presentation by the Antiquarian Society to the Harvard College Library of thirteen volumes of seventeenth-century books which had once been owned by the College but which had been sold as duplicates. Now again a Worcester meeting adjourns to another location, this time to the Worcester Art Museum, where we will hear a talk by Gilbert Chinard of Princeton on Charles Alexandre Lesueur. Lesueur was the French naturalist-painter who came to this country in 1816 and remained until 1837. After he returned to France he deposited his drawings in the Museum of Natural History at Havre. His American views and drawings number about 1200 items of the 1600 there

preserved. Dr. Homer Gage of Worcester, when on a visit to France, became interested in the collection and had 803 views photographed, presenting the prints to the American Antiquarian Society. This collection we still own and it has been extensively used for reproductions of many views. A selection of the prints is on view in the exhibition cases in the upper gallery. The Antiquarian Society in 1938 published a monograph of 109 pages, compiled by R. W. G. Vail, listing all of the 803 views in our possession.

The Gage photographs reproduced only about half of the collection, although the attempt was made to photograph the more important views. The adjourned meeting this afternoon will be held at the Worcester Art Museum, where Gilbert Chinard, professor emeritus of French at Princeton University, will deliver a paper on Lesueur, and an exhibit of original Lesueur drawings will be shown.

Respectfully submitted,

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For the Council

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