

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

In the annual report of the Council for 1913 mention was made of leaks in the marble dome of Antiquarian Hall which necessitated extensive repairs with a preparation known as "minwax." During last winter the dome again developed serious leaks and investigation showed that the repairs had been imperfectly made and the "minwax" applied in a very superficial manner. Unfortunately, it was learned, at the same time, that the firm which had done the work and had furnished a guarantee that the dome would remain tight for five years, had become bankrupt and the guarantee was worthless. Advice was sought from several builders and it was ascertained that to cover the dome with copper would cost over two thousand dollars and that the result, besides depriving the building of the architectural effect of the marble, for which the Society had originally paid a large sum, might not prove entirely satisfactory. Recourse was had to a New York firm of satisfactory financial strength, and on its representation that "minwax" properly applied would prove effective and with the advice and approval of the architects, the dome was again treated with this preparation under a guarantee for five years; and in the hope and expectation that it has been made permanently water-tight, the interior has been repainted. The cost of these repairs was over five hundred dollars, and since the income of the Society was not available for such expense without materially affecting the care and maintenance of the library, it

has been necessary to take this sum temporarily from the invested funds.

As intimated in the last annual report the dwarf box bordering the front walk has proved too tender for so severe a climate, and so much of it was destroyed during the past winter that there seemed no alternative to replacing it with hardier plants, except a complete reconstruction of the whole front walk, which, as it had been designed with reference to architectural effect, it seemed advisable to preserve. The smaller box has therefore been replaced in the lower beds with dwarf barberry, as an experiment, and the upper beds have been planted with *pachysandra terminalis*, retaining the larger box plants for further trial. It is hoped that the effect sought by the architects in the original planting with box may thus be retained. The southern boundary of the lot has been planted with evergreen trees, all of which have made a good growth during the past summer, and will eventually make an effective and attractive screen. All winter-killed shrubs have been replaced and the grounds are in a flourishing condition. If funds permit, a power lawn-mower will be purchased next spring, which will reduce the time required to keep the lawn in order and enable the janitor to devote more time to the work in the hall.

A special meeting of the Worcester members of the Council was held on March 22 to take notice of the death of Charles Francis Adams, Secretary of Domestic Correspondence. The President in announcing the death made a few remarks respecting Mr. Adams's work in connection with the Society, and Samuel Swett Green read an appreciation which had been prepared by request. A short biographical sketch of Mr. Adams prepared by Charles Grenfill Washburn was printed in the last number of the Proceedings.

Since the April meeting three active members have died. Albert Harrison Hoyt of Boston, who had been a member for forty years, having been elected in

April, 1875, died at Boston, June 10, aged eighty-nine years, six months and four days. He was the fifth in seniority of membership and the oldest member in age. Frederic Ward Putnam of Cambridge, the distinguished archaeologist who had been a member since April, 1882, died at Cambridge, August 14 after a long illness. George Emery Littlefield of Boston, who was elected in April, 1912, died very suddenly at Hamilton, September 4. His book shop in Cornhill had long been a resort for many of the members when visiting Boston.

Brief notices of these members have been prepared by the Biographer and will appear in the printed Proceedings of this meeting.

Through the enterprise and generosity of Dr. Charles L. Nichols, whose advancement of the work of the Society has often been noted, the Society will have the credit, without financial risk, of doing a work of great interest and value to all libraries and bibliographers. The almanacs published in Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, the existence of which are known, have been reproduced by the photostat process and ten sets are now offered to libraries and collectors. This work has been made possible through the generous co-operation of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Watkinson Library and of Henry E. Huntington, Alfred D. Foster, and Valentine Hollingsworth, all of whom possess copies not in the Library of this Society, and the first three libraries named have done the photostat work at but little over cost.

As a matter worthy of record and preservation the circular prepared by Dr. Nichols offering this work to other libraries is here presented:—

“The American Antiquarian Society has reproduced by the photostat process the almanacs printed in Massachusetts before the year seventeen hundred. As its Library contains forty-two of the sixty-five

almanacs known in this period, it was suggested by Mr. Wilberforce Eames to be appropriate for the Society to undertake this work. With the exception of the Massachusetts Historical Society few libraries in this country possess more than a dozen of these interesting books. They contain so much of value and importance, from the point of view of history, science, literature and local tradition, that it appears desirable for a few of the great libraries, in various parts of the country to possess complete sets of the fac-similes in order that reference to them may be facilitated.

“Sixty-four of these almanacs have been reproduced, including the four belonging to Mr. Henry E. Huntington, and, as the originals are so frail that even careful handling is a menace, the use of the reproductions by the student will save the originals, which are in many cases represented by a single specimen. The copies have been folded, trimmed and pressed, ready for binding singly or in volumes, and are each placed in an envelope with label, stating the year, the compiler and the imprint. They will be sold only in sets, ten of which have been printed, the price being fixed at ninety-six dollars (\$96) for each set.”

The Council is pleased to report that the income for the past year was not reduced as was anticipated, and therefore it has not been necessary to put into effect certain contemplated economies. On the other hand it has been found necessary to increase the expenses in nearly every department, and notably in the cost of publishing the Proceedings, the only form of publication in which the Society by reason of its limited income can indulge itself at present. This increased expense of publication is due not only to the higher cost of paper and printing, in which latter item the advance in the last seven or eight years is thought to be at least forty per cent, but also to the larger size of the volumes,

which have increased nearly thirty per cent in the same time. This larger size is due, at present, to the publication of the bibliography of American newspapers, which occupies more than half of the number just issued, and which it is desired to push to a conclusion as rapidly as possible.

Had it not been for the extraordinary expenses on the dome and for the purchase of a three years' supply of paper for the Proceedings, the Society would have easily met all expenses from its income. These two items, amounting to nearly thirteen hundred dollars, it has been necessary to pay from principal, with the expectation that this loss can be made good from income in three or four years. Other imperative calls upon the Society's means may, however, prevent this and members must not get the idea that, because the Society manages to live on its present income, it does not need assistance in order to do its work more efficiently. A visit to the work rooms in the basement will impress the most sceptical with the vast amount of labor required in caring for the constant stream of material passing through those rooms. To-day the contents of nearly one hundred mail bags of government publications are being sorted and made ready for the shelves, in which process every item must be examined, collated, marked with its proper check-list number and all duplicates laid aside. During the year, more than 200,000 numbers of newspapers bound and unbound have received the same thorough treatment and there are now 58 cases containing books and pamphlets awaiting opportunity to be opened and examined. Only one who makes frequent visits to the Library can appreciate the labor and time required for this work, and meanwhile the other work of the Society, quite as important if not more so, must not be interrupted. Certainly two more assistants could find constant work did means permit their employment.

There are sometimes disadvantages in having efficient officers. Owing to the sagacity and alertness of the Librarian in securing new material, the Society threatens to accomplish in five years what it was estimated would take at least four times as long. The newspaper collection has been increased so marvellously that there is every reason to believe that in two years it will be necessary to enlarge the newspaper stack. As this will certainly require an expenditure of forty to fifty thousand dollars, it will be necessary to take early steps to raise this sum, and at the same time it may be well to attempt to raise a fund for the maintenance of the newspaper collection. An appeal for these two sums may, perhaps, be effectively made outside of the Society, since the objects to be accomplished may well interest not only the general public, but particularly those concerned in newspaper publication, among whom are many wealthy individuals of generous impulses. The members of the Society must, however, be asked to contribute liberally to a further endowment for general purposes, the need for which has so often been recited, and the appeal for which in the opinion of the Council should be postponed no longer, even if this does not seem to be the most propitious time to present the claims of the Society to the consideration of the benevolent. For the first time in several years no increase of endowment is to be reported and it would seem as though recent appeals for help have fallen upon deaf ears, or have not been sufficiently emphatic, since many members die and neglect to provide in their wills for the Society's benefit.

Few, if any, libraries in the world are attempting to do so great a work as that attempted here without some form of government aid, and the wonder is that, with so small a membership, it has succeeded so well. The Society, unlike a college or university, has no great and growing body of alumni to whom to appeal, and it is difficult to inform the general public of its

needs and the importance of its work; nor is the generosity of the Society in throwing its library freely open to the public as widely known as might be expected. Ever since the Society has had a house of its own and a librarian, or for more than seventy-five years, it has welcomed the public and it rightly claims to have established one of the earliest free reference libraries in this country, yet only a few days ago inquiry was made of the writer in Boston if one, not a member, might consult the newspaper files. No record has been kept of the number of daily visitors, nor would their number be impressive compared with those who visit libraries of general literature, but during the past summer an average of twenty-five volumes of newspapers has been daily furnished to students, who are learning that for such historical material no library north of Washington can compare with this. It is evident that, as the newspaper bibliography now being published spreads the knowledge of this collection abroad, the use of the library will increase, requiring more and more time from a staff now too small, to the detriment of other interests. Another erroneous impression seems to prevail, not only with the public but also with the members outside of Worcester, that this city is the principal beneficiary of the Library. As a matter of fact most of the users of the Library come from a distance and Worcester furnishes a small percentage of them. That this city benefits indirectly is, of course, true, but a surprisingly small number of citizens take advantage of the opportunity to consult the collections.

As the Council is now taking thought how best to reach the members and others with an appeal for funds, and how to secure the publicity which is the first step, consideration of what has been accomplished in the past is not out of place and with this in mind a list has been prepared of all contributions of one hundred dollars and more to the endowment of the Society since its foundation. For the encouragement

of future generosity it is proposed to publish this list of benefactors every year, as a part of the Treasurer's report and as a permanent roll of honor, on which it is hoped that all members of the Society and many friends of education who are not members will be desirous to have their names appear. It is printed this year for the first time and makes, on the whole, a remarkable as well as interesting exhibit. Many of the larger gifts have been established as separate funds under the names of the donors, but others and especially the smaller sums have not. A study of the list discloses that the total amount received from sixty-nine gifts and twenty-five legacies is \$403,696. Of this sum over \$360,000 has come from thirty-four members and friends in Worcester, and \$42,859 has come from thirty-nine members and friends outside of Worcester. The whole ninety-four gifts and legacies came from seventy-three individuals, of whom all but eleven were members of the Society, and from these eleven the Society received \$20,100. The largest benefactors are Isaiah Thomas, who gave the original building with the land on Summer Street on which it stood and left the Society by his will \$23,152; Stephen Salisbury, senior, who gave the land on Lincoln Square on which the second building was erected and which was finally sold for \$40,000, gifts at various times amounting to \$20,545, and left by will \$20,000; and Stephen Salisbury, junior, who gave during his life \$10,000, and left by will a legacy of \$200,000, besides the old mansion house which was sold for \$35,000 when the present building was erected.

It is considered impractical to include in this list the names of the many givers of sums under one hundred dollars and it must be remembered also that only the contributors to the invested funds of the Society are named. Gifts of money for the designated purpose of purchasing specific additions to the collections are not included, for the same reason that

direct gifts of books, manuscripts, newspapers, furniture, paintings and historical relics are omitted. Such contributors are named annually in the Librarian's Report and the record of their gifts already fills four large manuscript volumes, which are preserved in the archives and called "donation books."

WALDO LINCOLN,

For the Council.

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