

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

THE Council announces that since the April meeting there have been six deaths to record; three from the list of resident and three from the foreign membership.

William Bradford Homer Dowse, a patent lawyer of distinction and a man of large vision in business affairs, has been a member since 1921 and died on April 19.

Charles Grenfill Washburn died on May 25. He was elected to the Society in 1908 and has been a member of the Council since 1911. He delivered the historical address in 1912 at the dedication of this building.

William Milligan Sloane, Professor of History at Princeton and Columbia Universities, was elected to resident membership in 1910 and died on September 11.

Memoirs of these resident members will be prepared and published in our Proceedings.

Notices of the three foreign members here follow:

Manuel de Oliveira Lima, was born in Pernambuco, Brazil, on December 25, 1867 and entered early into the diplomatic service of his country. From 1890 to 1896 he served in this department in Japan and several countries in Europe. From 1896 to 1900 he was first Secretary in the Embassy of Brazil to the United States, and since that time he resided in Washington, D. C., where he died on March 24. In 1915-1916 he was visiting Professor at Harvard University and until his death he was Professor of International Law at the Catholic University of Washington. To this University he presented his valuable Ibero-American Library of 40,000 volumes containing

many of the rare Americana recorded by HARRISSE. He was elected to foreign membership in this Society in April, 1919.

Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian explorer, was born July 16, 1872 and, at the age of 15, started out before the mast on his cruise of great adventure. Since that time the navigation of the Northwestern passage, the attainment of both Poles and the first crossing of the Polar Sea are the high spots of success in his strenuous life. But as the highest of all will be reckoned his last trip, in the month of June the present year, to rescue from the Polar wastes the ill-fated voyagers of the airship *Italia*. He and his five companions have never been heard from but the discovery, at last, of the wreckage of a portion of his air-plane shows that they have all gone further into the unknown. In his memoirs he wrote that the air-plane has replaced the dog in Arctic exploration, but he stated that he was too old to learn this new method of transportation. With this feeling it was the more heroic for him to be the first to volunteer to search for the lost fliers. He was elected to foreign membership in this Society in October, 1906.

The Right Honorable Sir George Otto Trevelyan, reached his ninetieth birthday on July 20th, of this year and died on August 16. Educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, he entered early into the political life of England and this career was stormy and interrupted because of his pronounced views and independent spirit. In spite of this he lost few personal friendships even among his political enemies. His literary life also began early, but his reputation was established in 1876 by the publication of the "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," his devoted uncle, a work cordially criticized in his country as a new departure, but standing today as one of the best biographies in the English language. In 1899 he began and in 1905 finished his "History of the American Revolution," a work of great importance to

this country, but which caused renewed disputes, both in Great Britain and America, concerning that struggle. It showed him, however, as a firm friend of our country which he continued to be the rest of his life. His letter of acceptance of foreign membership in this Society, to which he was elected in October 1915, shows markedly this loyalty to the country whose history, writings and people he had studied so well.

Regarding the physical plant of our Society I can report that its grounds and buildings are in excellent condition. The walls and floor of the basement have been recently repaired and repainted, thus removing the evidences of the hard usage to which this part of the building is necessarily subjected in handling the hundreds of boxes and packages which arrive at and depart from our doors each year. This part of our plant is, however, the index of our growth and the results of that growth are reported to you from year to year by the Librarian.

In order to care for that growth, in the various departments of the Library, the rearrangement of the books, pamphlets and newspapers instituted by our Librarian three years ago has gone on until the entire collection has been put into a modern and comprehensive system which will render the labors of our attendants more easy and effective in their task of securing the material required by our visitors. We can congratulate our Librarian whose plan this is, and which has so nearly reached completion, as well as ourselves on having a plant which is growing more and more efficient each year. One of the difficulties which Mr. Brigham has before him is the unequal and unexpected growth of the different departments of the Library but he would be the last to wish it otherwise. It is, however, a real difficulty which requires provision as well as prevision.

The first editions of American authors, for example, established by the gift, in 1923, of the Rev. Herbert

E. Lombard of his Whittier collection and further developed by Mr. Brigham, has become one of importance through his continued labors and the activities of Mr. Lombard, not only by personal contributions but by letters to prospective donors which have proved successful and added materially to this department during the present year.

The American collection of printing and journalism established about ten years ago by Mr. Charles H. Taylor has been receiving large contributions from him each year until it is today one of the most valuable in the country. This also in consequence is extending its borders in healthy growth. These will be spoken of more at length in the Librarian's report.

It is natural, at this point to turn to the staff of assistants which is the right arm of a Librarian in the execution of his plans for the usefulness of the library to the public. Our staff has been increasing, year by year, in response to our needs, but is still inadequate in numbers to attend to the queries and letters which overwhelm us and to furnish the material requested by the many visiting students who spend hours and often days in their researches at our tables. After almost daily observation, during the past year of my service as your President, I desire to record my unhesitating conviction that in no other society or similar institution is there a more expert, self-sacrificing and contented group than we have in our Library. A visitor, whose problem was unusual, told me that the attendant selected to help him gave him not merely perfunctory service but was eager to make his problem her own until it was happily solved.

It is particularly gratifying to me to announce that the collection of 4,000 Almanacs given by Mr. Samuel Lyman Munson in 1923 has been consolidated with our previous collection into a well arranged unit of nearly 20,000 and a full index of the whole has been completed. This work has been done, in the intervals of her regular duties, by Miss Avis Clarke who came to

us two years ago from the Brown University Library and whose accuracy and careful labor on whatever work she has had in hand is sufficient guarantee of the satisfactory conclusion of her labors in this field. This collection, with its scheme of arrangement by states with the authors in alphabetical lists and their issues chronologically placed, is housed in uniform boxes carefully labelled and our Almanac room is equalled by no other in the country.

Two years ago President Lincoln, in his Council report, called attention to our good fortune in securing the services of Mr. Charles S. Hale to continue the indexing and arranging of our 200,000 manuscripts, a task begun before the war by Mr. Charles H. Lincoln. I can report that, already, Mr. Hale has arranged in uniform boxes, 265 in number, a portion of this collection, among which manuscripts are:

Larned papers relating to South American affairs.

Jennison biographical papers.

William Lincoln papers relating to our early history.

Lea & Shepard publishing correspondence.

Salisbury family and business papers.

American Antiquarian Society correspondence, 1812-1920.

Miscellaneous papers and correspondence.

The critical examination of each of these papers and letters, the arrangement of them in their proper relation and the careful filing of them with the artistic labelling of the boxes show already an earnest of the hopes expressed by Mr. Lincoln in the report just mentioned.

A copy of the Proceedings of the last Annual Meeting has been mailed to the members, leaving us still in arrears for the April meeting.

While the Committee on Publications deplors any delay, it will be found that securing the revision of the text of the important papers presented at our meetings and the inevitable troubles in the printing

room are responsible for much of our difficulties. It is but justice to state that the index of this volume, as well as a long list of those which have preceded it, has been prepared by our Assistant Librarian, Mrs. Mary Robinson Reynolds, one of whose many tasks this is. No one can fully appreciate the result unless he has made a study of this subject or has observed the inadequacy of the average index. Mrs. Reynolds' knowledge of our collections, her intimate acquaintance with our membership and her intense interest in the problems which come before us render her singularly equipped for this part of her duties.

The Endowment Committee has been far from idle, but has at present no definite report. At the last annual meeting the committee announced that the sum of \$100,000 had been given by the Worcester members toward this fund. It is fair to say that this result was attained largely through the undismayed perseverance of Waldo Lincoln, then President. This fund has been paid, in full, into the treasury and will add the full \$5,000 to our income this year. In consequence of this accomplishment the promise made by our associate, Mr. James B. Wilbur, was fulfilled and on January 11, his gift of \$100,000 was placed in the hands of our Treasurer; the largest life time donation ever made to this Society. Munificent as is this gift, it is but one of many important evidences of Mr. Wilbur's personal interest in and efforts for the welfare, growth and usefulness of our Society. These two gifts, with that of our associate, Mr. Henry R. Wagner of California, of \$30,000 also paid into the hands of the Treasurer, although its income is not immediately available, make nearly one-half the sum we are seeking to add to the endowment, a sum which the generosity of our members and other friends is sure to complete. It should be said here that if any member prefers to give for some definite purpose, rather than for endowment in general, there are several departments which need special funds, the income

from which will enable the Librarian to add very largely to their usefulness. The Librarian is ready to confer with such members as soon as he is notified and will show them the resulting benefits to these departments by their special donations.

Isaiah Thomas, in his will, wrote of the responsibility of membership in such organizations as ours both as to contributions to its meetings, in the form of papers or of books, and material of value to its objects, and as to gifts of money for temporary needs, or for endowment, and he then proved that he was thoughtful of this, the child of his brain, as well as of other similar societies.

It is, however, not by money alone that such organizations as ours can become or remain of the greatest value to ourselves and usefulness to the public. It is customary in business to use the expression—goodwill—and to give it under certain conditions a money value. That which this word stands for is of vital concern to us also; to our staff for their encouragement, to our Librarian because it strengthens his hands, and to the public because it shows them the vitality of the institution. In the early letters of acceptance of our members, indeed not the early only but up to the present day, and throughout their correspondence during the past hundred years we find constant evidence of this goodwill. It would well repay the members to read these and learn the feeling of helpfulness therein freely expressed, and the zeal manifested in the growth of this Society of ours.

As an earnest expression of this feeling I desire to read a few letters or extracts from them.

Thomas Jefferson, in response to a letter asking if he would consider an invitation to join this Society, sent the following reply, dated,

“Monticello Jan. 9, 1814

SIR:—

I have duly received your favor of the 13th, of Dec. informing me of the institution of the American Antiquarian Society

and expressing its disposition to honor me with an admission into it and the request of my co-operation in the advancement of its objects. No one can be more sensible of the honor and the favor of these dispositions, and I pray you to have the goodness to testify to them all the gratitude I feel on receiving assurances of them. There has been a time in my life when I should have entered into their views with zeal and with a hope of not being altogether unuseful but now, more than a septuagenary, retired from the active scenes and business of life, I am sensible how little I can contribute to the advancement of the objects of this establishment and that I should be but an unprofitable member, carrying into it indeed my best wishes for its success and a readiness to serve it on any occasion which should occur. With these acknowledgments be so good as to accept for the Society as well as yourself the assurance of my high respect and consideration.

TH. JEFFERSON

When elected a member and notified of the fact, his reply was equally responsive of his interest in the Society and he forwarded with it a manuscript relating to our early colonial history. Six years later, when the diploma of the Society was engraved and his copy had been received, Mr. Jefferson sent another cordial letter of acknowledgment and hope for the Society's welfare.

Thomas Lindall Winthrop, in his letter of acceptance dated July 19, 1813, wrote in part: "I feel sensible of the honor conferred upon me . . . it will be in the highest degree gratifying to me if I can in any manner promote its views." This wish was richly fulfilled for the Society when he took up the mantle laid aside by President Thomas in 1831 and continued in the office of President until his own death in 1841.

Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, wrote on Dec. 18th, 1813: "To be numbered with such a collection of gentlemen is flattering to the ambition of any man and certainly ought to gratify mine . . . it will be my wish to contribute whatever may be in my power to promote the designs of the American Antiquarian Society."

Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, the last of the signers of the Declaration of Independence after the death of John Adams and of Thomas Jefferson, both our members, wrote on Feb. 6, 1815: "I consider myself flattered by being chosen a member of the American Antiquarian Society, I accept the choice and request you, Sir, to present my acknowledgments to the Society for the honor conferred upon me."

Moses Brown, of Providence, whose brother Nicholas had accepted membership two years before, wrote: "17th, of 8th, month 1815. Thy notice of my having been elected duly received . . . If I could, in my advanced age, be of service in your respectable Society I should not hesitate to accept the appointment . . . If, therefore, you can propose any service for me in this neighborhood I shall endeavor to attend to it and so far act my part as a member." Within a few months he sent as evidence of his feeling, a number of manuscripts and pamphlets of value and importance to the Society.

Thus you could be carried on through several hundred of these letters from that early day to the present time, showing in every case sympathy with the objects of our Society and belief in its success, but I will close with an extract from the letter of acceptance by the Rt. Hon. Sir George Otto Trevelyan, referred to above and dated Nov. 6, 1915.

"Till I was 76 years old I was too busy to visit America. Since that time I have been too old, but if ever a man lived in imagination in another country than his own; and if any man ever knew the literature of another country with lifelong and familiar love that man am I with regard to America. And therefore a recognition from such a body as the American Antiquarian Society has for me a value of a rare character. I shall never see Worcester or enter the Library in which henceforth I should have the privilege of reading but I accept the position of membership with gratitude and pleasure.

TREVELYAN

In this my first report as President of the Society, I cannot close without referring to the co-operation shown by all the officers and to the support given by members, which has made the duties of the Presidency seem not a burden, but a privilege and a source of continual enjoyment.

CHARLES L. NICHOLS
For the Council

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