

## *Report of the Council*

**D**URING the past winter, or rather the last six months, work in the Library has been largely devoted to bibliographical research. The most valuable of the ensuing publications was the long contemplated volume thirteen of Charles Evans's *American Bibliography*. Mr. Evans had carried volume twelve through the letter M in the year 1799, when death interrupted his labors in 1935. Since that time many scholars and bibliographers have thought of completing the Bibliography through the year 1800. About five years ago the Society began to give the undertaking serious consideration, realizing that nowhere could the project be carried through so effectively as here, because of our outstanding collection of early imprints. Mr. Shipton has given much of his time for five years to the compilation of the volume and it is now in the bindery, almost ready for distribution.

The edition of volume thirteen was five-hundred copies. The advance subscriptions have very nearly met the cost of manufacture. The book will be bound like Evans's previous volumes. Several of the leading libraries have checked completely or partially the galley proofs for their respective holdings. Therefore the location of copies is more extensive than in previous volumes. There are 3308 entries, covering the last half of 1799 and all of 1800. Of this number the American Antiquarian Society, because of specializing in the field of early printing, contains 1520 titles, the Library of Congress has 1254, the New York Public Library 1034, the John Carter Brown Library 646, Harvard College Library 563, the Boston Athenæum 556, the New York State Library 530, the New York Historical Society 460,

and the Huntington Library 457. A total of 144 libraries are recorded for locations.

Mr. Shipton's Preface describes in detail the plan of the volume, the history of the project, the need for abbreviation of titles, and the indebtedness of American scholars to Charles Evans, who almost single-handed carried out one of the greatest bibliographical compilations of all time. Had Mr. Evans lived, he would have published further volumes of additions and corrections, revising his work to make it more useful. One of the greatest satisfactions which this Society has in completing the Evans series through 1800 is the knowledge that we are carrying out the desires of a great American scholar whose career is one of the most outstanding of modern times.

Another publication upon which the Director of the Society has been working for over thirty years is *Paul Revere's Engravings*, which was finally printed and distributed the last week in December. The edition was 1500, and the advance price of \$15.00 resulted in the sale of 983 copies. Since publication 94 copies have been sold at \$25.00. Excluding complimentary and review copies, there remain 392 copies which are to be sold at the latter price. If all of these are sold there will be a substantial profit over the charge for printing and reproductions. The book was very expensive to produce, chiefly due to the cost of the exceptional quality of the reproductions, several of them in color. The volume contained 142 different cuts, illustrated on 77 plates. Revere himself engraved 93 plates on copper or other metal. The remainder of the plates consisted of the engravings which he copied, and which were identified mostly for the first time, or of facsimiles and later impressions.

At the time of publication the Society owned all of the engraved plates except three—the portrait of Jonathan Mayhew, the John Gardiner bookplate, and Josiah Flagg's

*Psalm Tunes* published in 1764. Three weeks after the volume was printed, we acquired the Gardiner bookplate, and we hope that sometime this spring the *Psalm Tunes* will come our way. Reviews of the book have been favorable, especially that written by Mr. R. W. G. Vail, former Librarian of the Society, in the *New York Sunday Times* of March 20, 1955. Mr. Vail's review resulted in the immediate sale of two dozen copies.

Another bibliographical project, which is the most extensive and useful of any which the Society has ever attempted, is already well under way. This is a reprint on microprint cards of the full text of every imprint included in Evans's *American Bibliography* from 1639 through the year 1800. It will exclude newspapers and serial publications, which have been elsewhere covered. In addition to the printing of each text, there will be a complete revision of every title, indicating the ghosts as such and incorporating all the corrections and new discoveries of the past fifty years. The project was described in detail in the Librarian's Report for October, 1954. It is expected that the project will take ten years to accomplish. Already a sufficient number of subscriptions to the entire series have been received, more than enough to guarantee the successful completion of the work. Mr. Shipton has begun the compilation of this great undertaking, and will give much of his time to it for the years to come. The incidental re-examination of our own collection is proving well worthwhile. The Committee on Documentary Reproduction of the American Historical Association has announced its sponsorship of the project. The constant aid of the Readex Microprint Corporation, through its President, Mr. Albert Boni, is making possible the success of the project. Also we are much indebted to the heirs of Charles Evans for the loan of the large amount of material which Mr. Evans had gathered, consisting of corrections and additions

to his published work. For years he had looked forward to the revision and completing of his vast undertaking.

The Society has helped much in recent weeks to aid two bibliographical projects. Lyle Wright spent a month here in the early winter listing titles for his forthcoming *American Fiction, 1851-1875*. Our collection in this field, nearly all acquired in the last two years, provided him with over two thousand titles. He proved to be a friendly and able scholar, and we much enjoyed his visit. Also we have constantly aided the valuable *Bibliography of American Literature*, and its editors, Jacob Blanck and Earle Coleman, have spent many days in the Library, examining the collections. From them we obtained much help for our own cataloguing, as much, we hope, as we gave.

An article, by Howell Walker, in the *National Geographic Magazine*, for February, 1955, entitled "Cities Like Worcester Make America," devoted several paragraphs and pictures to the American Antiquarian Society, which brought to us many queries and comments from all over the country.

Only one death of a member has been noted in the past six months—that of William Robertson Coe, of New York, who died March 14, 1955. Mr. Coe during his latter years had manifested a great interest in the development of the early West, and built up the greatest of all collections of Western narratives, which collection he gave to the Yale Library. He was elected in 1948 and was a generous friend to the Society.

The financial situation of the Society, largely due to the increased income from the Henry F. DePuy bequest, has been satisfactory. In spite of increased expenses, we seem to be able to make both ends meet, and to avoid a deficit.

Respectfully submitted,

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