

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

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The Council has learned with great regret that Mr. A. George Bullock, who has served the Society as Treasurer since October, 1907, wishes to retire from that office. Mr. Bullock's thorough knowledge of financial affairs has been of great benefit to the Society, especially during those years when the increase in the endowment necessitated frequent investment of the Society's funds, which, through Mr. Bullock's management, has been done to the Society's advantage. The Council wishes also to acknowledge its obligations to Mr. Bullock's very efficient assistant, Mr. D. W. Carter, for the clear and concise system of bookkeeping which he established for the Society's accounts:

Since the April meeting three active members have been taken by death. Horace Davis, of San Francisco, California, but a native of Worcester, who has been a member since April, 1862, and was second on the list in seniority of membership, died at San Francisco, July 12. Rev. Joseph Anderson, of Woodmont, Connecticut, a student of the languages and antiquities of American Indians as well as of local history, who was elected to this Society in April, 1885, died at his home in Woodmont, August 18. Hon. Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker, of Pennypacker's Mills, Pennsylvania, active in the public service of his State, of which he was at one time Governor, a notable collector of Americana and author of many works relating to Pennsylvania history, president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and a member of this Society since October, 1912, died September 2, at his home. Notices of these members will be prepared for publication in the Proceedings.

Information has recently been received of the death, about two years ago, of Dr. Antonio Peñafiel, of Mexico City, who was elected a foreign member of the Society in April, 1910. Dr. Peñafiel was charged with the general direction of statistics of the Mexican Republic, from the establishment of that office, in 1882, until his death. He was a student of Mexican languages and hieroglyphics and the author of several works on those subjects and was a member of many national and foreign scientific societies. No other deaths among the foreign members have been reported, but the present European war and Mexican situation have caused so much disturbance in foreign correspondence that other deaths may have occurred without their coming to the knowledge of the Council. Members aware of such deaths will confer a favor by reporting them to the Librarian before the publication of the next number of the Proceedings.

Members who attended the last annual meeting may recall the tapestries which were hung, temporarily, in the large panels in the Reading Room. The decorative effect of the hangings was so pleasing, and the improvement in the acoustic properties of the room so marked, that it seems advisable to cover the panels permanently. Search has been made for tapestries large enough for the purpose, those used temporarily being rather too small, but nothing has been found except at such prices as to be prohibitive. Meanwhile those used last year have been sold and, being of Belgian manufacture, no more like them can be obtained, probably, until after the close of the present European war. Learning of the good effect obtained by the sound absorbent pads used in the Harvard Club, of Boston, the committee on the hall has inquired as to their merits and cost, but, while favorably impressed, considers it inadvisable to recommend their use at present. As a temporary expedient, to make the use of the room possible for this day's meeting, wooden frames covered with burlap have

been hung in the panels, the burlap being lined and pleated so as to be as absorbent of sound as possible. The cost of this arrangement is slight, as the burlap belonged to the Society and the color, a dull green, makes the effect not unpleasing.

In the manuscript department an important and long-delayed task has been performed, in arranging, mounting and binding the papers of Isaiah Thomas. This work has been wholly done in the Library by the staff, in odd moments. The papers were arranged chronologically, mounted with hinges on a strong paper, and substantially bound in the Society's bindery, in six large volumes. It is a good example of what should be done with many other manuscripts, notably the Salisbury collection. The work of calendaring and indexing the manuscripts, so well begun several years ago, still remains unfinished, in the condition where it was left on the removal to the new building. Its completion will have to await other, more pressing requirements, unless provision is made for it from some source outside of the Society's present income.

The advantage of having a purchasing fund through which large collections, unexpectedly thrown upon the market, may be acquired, has again been demonstrated during the past summer. Through the watchfulness of Mr. Albert C. Bates, of Hartford, whose interest in the library has been shown repeatedly, the Librarian learned of the opportunity to secure the valuable collection of bookplates belonging to the late James Terry, of Hartford. In view of the large number of duplicates, both of imprints and bookplates, which the collection will furnish, the sale of which it is reasonable to expect will largely defray its cost, it was felt that the Purchasing Fund might properly be used for this purchase and the collection was secured and is now being arranged. Mr. Terry, born at Terryville, Connecticut, August 5, 1844, died at Hartford, October 17, 1912. He had been inter-

ested in scientific and historical subjects since 1873 and had made this collection of about ten thousand bookplates, mostly dating before the Civil War, with the idea of writing a history of early American libraries. With this in view he took the unusual course of preserving several hundred early volumes of Americana with the original bookplates in them, made copious notes concerning the several libraries, and paid much attention to book labels made from printer's types, so that the collection is, perhaps, not so valuable for the study of engraving, as for the names of libraries and book collectors, which it has preserved. As these books and notes are included in the purchase, the Society has acquired not only a valuable addition to its bookplates, but also the materials for an exhaustive history of American libraries, both institutional and individual.

In this connection the Council takes occasion to express its appreciation of the benefit the Society is deriving from the activities of some of its members. The work of Dr. Charles L. Nichols in arranging and strengthening the almanac collection, and in enabling the Society to secure, for the benefit of itself and twelve other leading libraries, photographic reproductions of all the known issues of seventeenth century Massachusetts almanacs, has been acknowledged in previous reports; and now it is a pleasure to commend the enthusiastic work of Rev. Herbert E. Lombard who, not satisfied with presenting the Society with his entire collection of bookplates, the fruit of previous labors, is now devoting himself to its increase, and so successfully, that he has acquired one of the leading collections of the best bookplate engraving of the last fifty years, and has a fair proportion of the plates of the earlier period.

In one of the cases in the upper hall may be found an exhibition of institutional bookplates engraved by Sidney L. Smith, to which the attention of the members is called for the reason that Mr. Smith excels in

plates for institutions, and the bookplates used by this Society are extraordinarily bad, some of them being so unworthy that the librarian places them in the books with great reluctance. Six of the seven plates owned by the Society should be replaced by better examples of the designer's and engraver's art. Of these the Society can, perhaps, afford to supply one. Are there any members sufficiently interested to furnish the remainder, five of which commemorate benefactors? Mr. Lombard has arranged an exhibition, which will open on Friday, October 20, in the upper hall, of a nearly complete collection of the bookplates engraved by Mr. Sidney L. Smith, with numerous varieties and proofs.

It has been the good fortune of the Society, ever since its foundation, in 1812, to have had a group of members, varying in number at different periods, whose concern in the Society's work has been so great that they have devoted, gratuitously, much of their time to its interests. For this reason the Society has, during its long life, made almost continuous progress in its career of usefulness. It may be said in general, that the success of every historical society in this country, has been coincident with the interest taken in its affairs by a small group of men, sometimes by one man only, and as these have died, unless their places have been promptly filled by others of like enthusiasm, the society has become decadent, sometimes has even gone out of existence, and experience shows that it is extremely difficult to restore a decadent society to a lasting, active life. It is not unnatural that Worcester, the home of this Society, should have contributed the greater number of the active, working members. The interest inspired by frequent visits to the Library, by watching the growth of those collections in which one is most concerned, and by assisting in that growth, is most easily acquired by the local members. Yet it would be invidious to claim for Worcester all the credit for these wonderfully rich

collections. The names of Alden, Atwater, Bentley, Brinley, Clinton, Ellis, Everett, Harris, Wallcut, Willard and Winthrop are recalled as among the early contributors to the library and cabinet, from other parts of the State and country, and names of more recent members will recur to many as worthy of honorable mention in this connection. The historical collections of this Society have now become so large and so important that should a period of decadence retard their further growth, they would continue to be one of the most important sources of American history on the Continent; but this growth should not stop nor be seriously retarded for many years and the members should consider it a privilege to see that it does not. Those whose residence or occupation prevent their taking part in the actual labors of the library staff are urged to contribute, according to their means, either towards the employment of additional workers or towards a fund for an extension of the present stack, so that the rapidly accumulating material may be speedily classified and arranged and made available to the student. The present writer has so often spoken and written of the financial needs of the Society, that he fears further mention of it by him will not only be unwelcome but be considered by some to be unwise. Yet, while the need remains, it seems to be the duty of the officers to speak.

A year ago attention was called to the rapid filling of the newspaper stack, and the prediction was made that its enlargement would be imperative within two years. To-day it seems inevitable that by another year the Society must cease to collect newspapers unless some provision is made for their storage. It has been estimated that a duplicate of the present stack and its containing walls can be built for fifty thousand dollars, and it was suggested last year that it might be possible to interest some of the wealthier newspaper publishers in this branch of the Society's work. Unfortunately it has since been learned that the

prosperity, now so widely enjoyed in this country, does not extend to the newspaper business, in which advances in the cost of publication have, quite generally, destroyed all profits, so that an appeal to the publishers is pronounced inadvisable at the present time and recourse must be had to the general public, whom it is difficult to reach, and to the members of the Society, whose numbers and means are both somewhat limited. In this emergency it has been suggested, and the Council promulgates the suggestion, that the containing building only be now erected, in which can be built, either a temporary wooden stack of one story, or, if means permit, a permanent one of steel. The cost of the building, it is thought, will not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars, of the wooden stack a few hundred, and of the steel stack four or five thousand dollars. Should such an expenditure be more than the funds offered would warrant, it may be possible to build the basement only of the proposed extension, which, with a one-story steel stack, can probably be done at a cost of from twelve to fifteen thousand dollars. Either plan would provide room for a few years' growth, by which time it is reasonable to hope that the Society may be supplied with funds to complete the structure. In any case it will be only the part of prudence to plan this first extension with reference to the building of a second, which another twenty-five years may render necessary. The sum required for the first of these suggestions is not so large but that it seems possible to raise it in the Society, and an immediate attempt will be made to do so. Meanwhile the want of additional income for general purposes remains as insistent as ever, and the Society must continue to be a beggar for more endowment until its needs are supplied. These are not excessive and, in these days of enormous fortunes seeking worthy objects of beneficence are, comparatively, so small that it seems as though the mere publication of them should bring their satisfac-

tion. With "Americanism" the universal and popular cry, how is it possible that the work of a society devoted to the preservation of the records of, and materials for, American history, should be allowed to languish for want of a little money?



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