

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

During the past six months two deaths have occurred among the active members, both very recently. William Roscoe Livermore of Boston, a member since October, 1897, died at New York, September 28, after a brief illness. On Saturday last, October 11, Henry Ernest Woods of Boston died very suddenly at Greenfield. He was elected to the Society in October, 1907.

Brief memoirs of these gentlemen will be prepared for publication in the Proceedings. So far as known to the Council there have been no deaths among the foreign members. It may be well to repeat the suggestion made two years ago, that members notify the secretary or librarian of the decease of any foreign member that may come to their knowledge.

The Society has recently received from the estate of the late Samuel Abbot Green a legacy of five thousand dollars with which the Samuel Abbot Green Fund has been established, the income of which, under the terms of Doctor Green's will, is to be expended for "the purchase of works relating to American history, including all publications in any way connected with the town of Groton," Massachusetts. Doctor Green at the time of his death was the senior member of the Society, having been elected in October, 1865, and for forty-four years was a member of the Council, the last fourteen as Vice-President. It is peculiarly gratifying therefore, to have his name associated with the large benefactors of the Society.

A petty source of annoyance, which has existed for many years, has been removed during the past

summer, by the action of the local society in changing its name from "The Worcester Society of Antiquity" to "The Worcester Historical Society." The similarity of the former name to that of this Society led to constant misunderstanding in the mind of the public as to which was which, and to frequent misdirection of letters. This Society has always wished to encourage and assist the local society and, in the past, has sent much material to it for its cabinet and library, but many individuals have refrained from joining it because of its unfortunate name. The Council now hopes that every member of this Society from Worcester County will join the Worcester Historical Society and give it every aid in his power.

It should be one of the most important objects of this Society to encourage local historical societies all over the United States. The more there are of them and the more active they are in collecting and preserving the records, maps, manuscripts, and newspapers of their respective localities the better. It is manifestly impossible for any national library to cover the whole country. The Library of Congress, which has the government itself behind it, is swamped with the vast mass of material which it attempts to preserve. There are seventeen thousand newspapers published in this country alone, and many hundreds, if not thousands, more in Canada and Spanish America. This library preserves about thirty of these thousands. If every local historical society would make a point of preserving and binding a file of the newspapers published in its neighborhood, it would advance the cause of local history very much, and bring great relief to the national libraries. But it is not necessary to have a local society to accomplish this, since the local library can do this work as well, and many in Massachusetts, where every town has a library, are already doing it. Let it be the business of every member of this Society to see that his own local society or library adopts this plan, if it has not already done so.

By the sale of the larger part of the duplicate newspapers, as was mentioned in the last annual report, the Purchasing Fund has been restored to its original sum and considerably increased. This has made possible the purchase of several important collections which otherwise could not have been secured. The most notable of these is the Marshall collection of book-plates, the acquisition of which has placed the Society's collection well at the front of all others. The financing of this purchase has been done partly with the Purchasing Fund and partly with the aid of our ever generous recording secretary. It will probably be a year before the sale of duplicates from this collection will enable the Society to repay the secretary and return something to the fund. Through the good will of Mrs. E. D. French, the Society's collection of the book-plates designed by her husband has been made practically perfect, and an exhibition of his work has been arranged in the upper hall, which will undoubtedly interest the members and will be continued for some weeks for the benefit of the public. It should attract the attention of all who are interested in this branch of art.

Partly owing to the war, partly to the death of the most active member of the committee of publication, and partly to a depleted staff and consequent increase of work for those remaining, the published Proceedings are six months in arrears, and the printed records of the last annual meeting have but just now reached the members. One result of such delay is that any appeal of the Council is received, by those members who are not present at the meeting when it is made, so late as to lose much of its force. An effort will be made during the coming year to return to the former custom of having the printed Proceedings of each meeting distributed before the holding of the next meeting. Even this delays too long the presentation of recommendations of the Council. It is, therefore, proposed to print and distribute the report of the Council, as a

separate publication, as soon as possible after each meeting. Thus the members may be more promptly advised of the Society's doings. A year ago reference was made to an offer which would enable the Society to acquire a valuable collection of engraved portraits of distinguished Americans, and the hope was expressed that some member, not too far removed from Worcester, would volunteer to care for the arrangement and increase of such a collection, the staff being too small and too much occupied with other work to take over such a task. Owing to the delay in printing the Proceedings this suggestion has reached those members, not present when the report was read, within the last week, and naturally no response has been received. This is a concrete example of the advantage to be gained by a separate publication of the Council's report. Fortunately the offer of the portraits is still open and the suggestion is now renewed.

One of the specialities in which this library holds first rank is that of American school books, or educational textbooks as they are frequently designated. This collection has recently been completely rearranged and classified, and by a careful estimate contains ten thousand eight hundred and seventy volumes, probably nine-tenths of them being published before the Civil War. No other collection of which any record has been found approaches this in point of numbers and importance. A Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Education on "Special Collections in Libraries in the United States," issued in 1912, claims for that Bureau ten thousand textbooks, but a large proportion of these are foreign, while the collection in the Library of Congress consists mainly of textbooks published since 1870 and acquired through the operation of the copyright law. The next largest collection noted in the Bulletin is that in the Wadsworth Athenæum, Hartford, Conn., which numbered forty-five hundred volumes, and many of these are foreign. A better idea, perhaps, can be

gained of the importance of this accumulation of early school books, for a study of the history of education of the United States, by stating that, by actual count, there are on the shelves eight hundred and twenty arithmetics, six hundred and ten geographies and atlases, six hundred and thirty English grammars, nine hundred and forty readers, and three hundred and ninety spellers,* yet these subjects, which include the classic "three R's," make up only about a third of the whole number.

On August 22, 1919, the presidents and secretaries of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Historical Association invited this Society, with twelve other representative American learned societies devoted to humanistic studies, to send delegates to a conference to be held in Boston on September 19. The purpose of the conference was to consider what action should be taken by American societies to enable them to take part effectively in the new international Union Académique, which was organized in Paris in May, to further international undertakings in bibliography, archæology and history. The suggestion was made in the invitation that each society be represented by its president, its secretary and one other member, and accordingly the Council appointed the president, the recording secretary and the librarian to attend the conference. Doctor Nichols was unable to accept, but President Lincoln and Librarian Brigham were present at the conference, which was held in the building of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and was attended by twenty delegates representing the following ten societies:—The American Philosophical Society, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The American Antiquarian Society, The American Oriental Society, The American Philological Association, The Archæological Institute of America, The Modern Language

*This includes school atlases only and not the larger and more important atlases in the map room. Neither are the New England Primers, of which the society owns ninety-two editions, counted among the nine hundred and forty readers.

Association of America, The American Historical Association, The American Economic Association, and The American Philosophical Association. Three other societies had been invited but were not represented, viz.:—The American Political Science Association, The American Sociological Society, and The American Society of International Law. Mr. William Roscoe Thayer was chosen permanent chairman and Mr. Waldo G. Leland permanent secretary, and the origin and purposes of the Union Académique were explained to the conference by Professor Charles H. Haskins of Harvard University. After discussion the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this conference that American learned societies devoted to humanistic studies should participate as a group in the Union Académique.

The conference then appointed Professor James T. Shotwell of Columbia University and Mr. William M. Buckler of Baltimore, as American delegates to the October session of the Union Académique, with power to fill vacancies, and adopted the following votes of instruction:—

VOTED, That all projects of research or publication which societies desire to have presented to the Union Académique at its October session in Paris shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Conference not later than September 28 for forwarding to the American delegates.

VOTED, That until the action of this conference shall have been ratified by the bodies represented and an organization of the societies for national representation in the Union Académique shall have been perfected, the delegates are instructed that they have no authority to commit the American societies to any particular project but should confine themselves to a cordial endorsement of the general plan by those present at this Conference, and that any projects submitted to the delegates should be regarded as the suggestions of individual scholars.

VOTED, That it is the sense of those present at this Conference that some form of bibliography of humanistic studies should be approved as an international undertaking.

VOTED, That this Conference desires to express its deep interest in the subject of explorations and researches in western Asia and hopes that a scheme of co-operation may be considered by the Union Académique.

The secretary of the conference presented a draft of a convention for establishing an American Council of Learned Societies accompanied by a form of constitution for such a council, which after some amendment was adopted. This convention and constitution will be presented to the Society by the recording secretary later in the meeting, with the recommendation of the Council that it be accepted and ratified.

By the liberality of four of our members a scholarship bearing the name of this Society has been established for two years at Clark University, for the encouragement of the study of American history.* A closer connection is thus formed between the Society and the University which should redound to the benefit of both, but the benefit accruing to the Society will come indirectly from the advertising by the University of the educational advantages possessed by it through the use of this library. It is true that the University has always had the free use of the library, but it is now not only at liberty to advertise that fact, but it has become its duty to extol the facilities which the library offers to students and writers of American history. The more generally this becomes known among the friends of education, the greater the chance that a "good angel" will appear who will relieve the Society of its financial distress. Should that "good angel" prove to be one of the Society's own members the greater the credit to the Society, but should it be a non-member the greater the credit to the "angel." Though attention has frequently been called to it in these reports, many members may not yet appreciate the extent to which the Society's collections are used by advanced students, in their preparation of theses for higher degrees. This alone justifies the work of the Society

*The scholarship has been awarded to Mr. F. Lee Bennis, a graduate of Syracuse University in 1914 and, from that time until February, 1918, an instructor in history and a graduate student in history and economics at Syracuse. For the next six months he was a teacher in the Bloomfield, N. J., High School and for the past year head of the historical department in the Danbury, Conn., High School. He is thirty years old.

in continuing to collect American historical material, but it is sometimes questionable if the library is not better known to students not connected with the Society than to the members themselves. One object sought by this report is to excite such an interest among the members, that everyone will feel it his duty not only to contribute what he can to the Society's funds, but to represent the merits and needs of the library to all liberal minded friends of education whom he may know, so that not one but many "angels" may spread their beneficent wings over this institution.

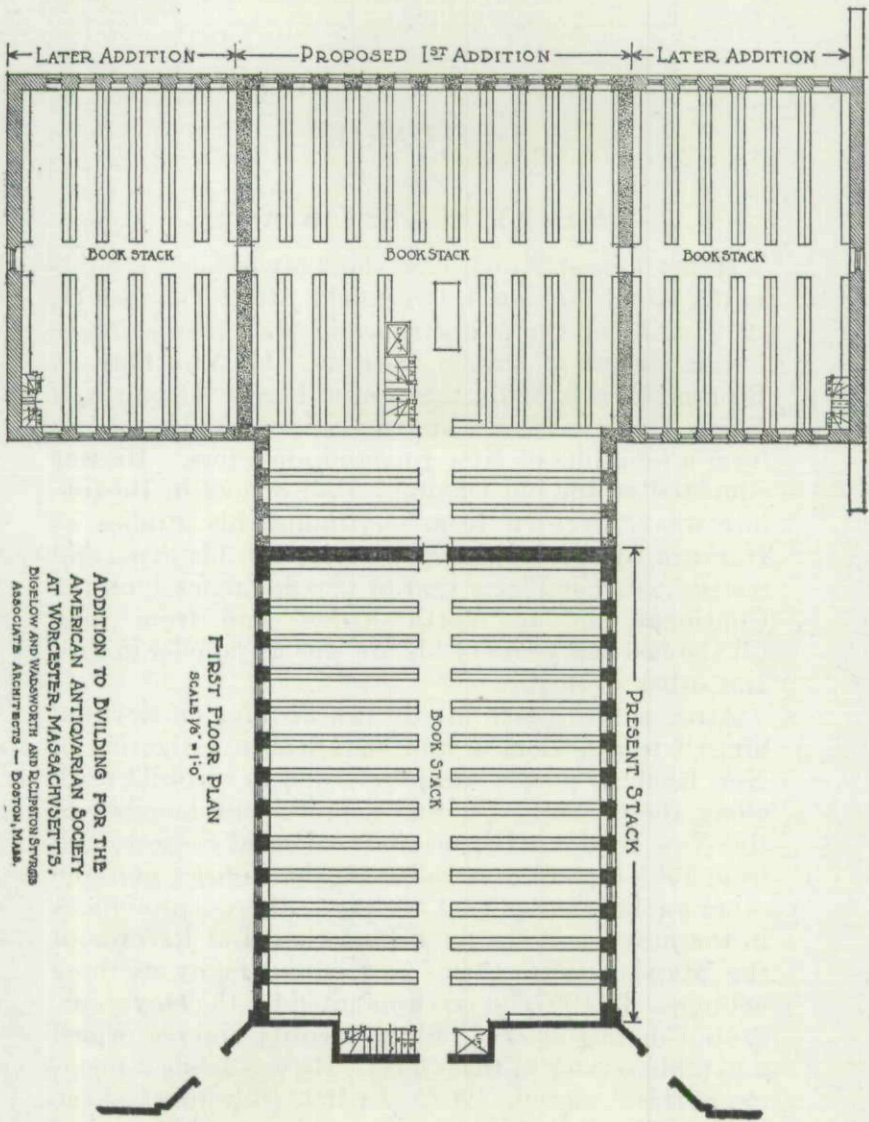
At the last annual meeting, held while the world war was at its height, some fear was expressed lest the scarcity of coal might seriously interfere with the usefulness of the library, and lest the Society might even be deprived of the services of its librarian. Fortunately in less than a month the armistice was signed and anxiety on those two points was allayed, but the high cost of living, which still continues, has been and is a serious handicap for which the only remedy seems to be an increase of endowment. The need for this has been mentioned so frequently that it may be superfluous to mention it now, but the members should bear it in mind when approached by solicitors for other educational institutions, whose appeals are receiving a wide, free advertising which a small institution like this cannot command. Compared with the vast sums demanded by others the wants of this Society can be met by a sum which is modesty itself, yet with the small constituency on which it can call, it looms so large as to seem almost unobtainable. One hundred thousand dollars added to the interest-bearing endowment would furnish the much needed addition to the staff, and provide an equally needed sum for binding and book purchases.

But the most imperative need is for a similar sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the enlargement of the stack to double its present size, for which plans were submitted by the architects nearly three years

ago. These plans are now before you and will be printed in reduced facsimile in the Proceedings for the information of those not present today. Estimates of the cost were made at the time and it was the intention of the Council to make an effort to raise a sufficient sum to build the extension, but the war interfered and the matter has rested until now. It can rest no longer for the time has come when the storage capacity of the building must be increased or a check must be put on collecting. Already several hundred volumes of newspapers are stored in the basement and are inaccessible for consultation, except with an expenditure of much time and labor which the present force is too small to supply, and even this method of storage must soon cease, as little room remains unoccupied and that is required for new acquisitions now awaiting classification and arrangement which cannot be hastened for lack of means. The fact is that the Society must have financial help or its usefulness will be seriously impaired, and the sooner the members realize that fact the better. They must themselves feel, and they must impress upon that portion of the general public on whose liberality all educational establishments must depend for support, that the great assistance given by this library to advanced students of American history, who come hither from graduate schools as far west as the Mississippi, and even from more remote universities, for research work which they cannot pursue as well elsewhere, must not be curtailed. They should realize that writers in almost every branch of this subject must prosecute their studies here, if they would exhaust the sources of information, for these walls contain larger and more complete collections of printed matter on many topics relating to American history, than any other library in the United States; and in certainly a dozen important lines more than any other library in New England. This is not said in any spirit of boastfulness but simply in an attempt

to impress on the minds of the members, that this is an educational institution which is entirely worthy of their financial assistance, and that its needs, though comparatively small, are quite as imperative as those of institutions whose appeals are now being so vigorously advertised.

WALDO LINCOLN,
For the Council.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
Scale $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'-0''$

ADDITION TO BUILDING FOR THE
AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
AT WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.
DIGELOW AND WADSWORTH AND CLIPSTON STRONG
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS — BOSTON, MASS.

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