

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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IN accordance with the by-laws the Council makes its Report to the members on the progress of the Society for the past six months. Nothing of especial importance has happened that would call for extensive comment, and this report will be confined to a simple message to the members, to keep them informed on the work and aspirations of the Society. These reports in the past have often been used by their writers as a means of communicating a paper on some historical subject, which, though interesting and valuable, was not germane to the object of the report, and several members have expressed the wish that these reports might be more brief and confined to their business aspects, and that the essays on special topics might appear elsewhere at the meeting as separate communications. But when we are fortunate enough to have the report written by one of the older members it is of great value to have him include his reminiscences of early meetings and former members, for this infuses a real antiquarian breath, and puts the younger men *en rapport* with the atmosphere and traditions of the Society. A good example of this was in October, 1918, when the late Andrew McFarland Davis drew such a vivid picture of the old-time meetings with their devoted attendants sitting on the antique sofas and chairs around the Secretary's desk.

During the past winter the weather has been so severe and the means of travel so antiquated and uncertain that fewer people than usual have been able to go to Worcester and use the treasures in our building.

Sickness has for a portion of the time deprived the Society of the constant and devoted attention of two of our leading officials. Our President, started in the autumn for a long trip to the Pacific, which was cut short by a serious illness in southern California, from which he has but recently recovered, and we welcome him back to his accustomed chair, where we hope to see him for many a year, with renewed health and strength. And our beloved Recording Secretary after many weeks in a Boston hospital has but just returned to his home in Worcester, where he is daily improving, and it is a matter of deep regret to us, as I know it is to him, that he is not here present with us today.

The serious financial problems that harass all the world have not passed us by, and the heavy increase in the cost of all we need affects every department in the library. Our coal and all kinds of supplies have increased in cost, while our income coming from invested funds and the generosity of our friends has not kept pace with the increase. But even so, we have not been without donations and have received additions to our funds to an amount larger than in any year since the Centennial Fund of 1912. Following Dr. Samuel A. Green's bequest of \$5,000, which came to hand just at the time of the meeting last October, there was a gift of \$6,000 from Andrew McFarland Davis accompanied by the following letter:

CAMBRIDGE, DEC. 13, 1919.

DEAR SIRs:

When the portrait of Stephen Salisbury was painted I contributed to the Society two thousand dollars. When the John and Eliza Davis Fund was established I contributed one thousand and at a later date another thousand to that fund. It is my desire to have a fund established in the Society bearing my name, which shall ultimately be carried on the Treasurer's books at a capital sum of not less than ten thousand dollars, and in order that this desire may take effect I enclose a check for \$6,000 (say six thousand dollars), the annual interest upon which I desire to have added to the capital of the fund until the

same shall reach ten thousand dollars. After that date the annual income of the fund to be at the disposal of the Council for any current expenses. The allusion to previous contributions to the Society has no other bearing on the questions involved in the establishment of this fund than their influence upon myself. In each instance they represented a desire to aid the Society and a belief that it was the last contribution that I should feel myself able to make.

The benefactions of the Davis family are larger than those of any except those of the Salisburys and Isaiah Thomas.

In January last our associate William K. Bixby of St. Louis wrote that he had deposited to our credit in the St. Louis Union Trust Co. the sum of \$2,000 the interest of which trust would come to the Society each year. This gift adds to our already large indebtedness to Mr. Bixby for his gifts of valuable historical publications.

From Samuel L. Munson, of Albany, the Society has received a donation of \$1,000, to be added to the invested funds. This gift, all the more welcome because it was unsolicited, shows that our efforts to preserve Americana for the use of students are appreciated.

From our associate on the Council, Clarence W. Bowen, we have received the portraits of Theophilus Chandler and his wife, painted by Winthrop Chandler about 1770. Winthrop Chandler was an early New England artist of considerable merit and was the brother of Theophilus and the Reverend Thomas Bradbury Chandler. He was born in Woodstock, Conn., in 1747, and died in Thompson, Conn., in 1790. Some of his portraits in oils are preserved in each of these towns and in Worcester and Petersham, Mass.

This gift from Mr. Bowen is especially appreciated, as the Society at the present time is anxious to acquire early American portraits. In the old building on Lincoln Square there was little room for pictures, and those which we had seemed a large collection. But in

the new building, with its abundant wall space, excellent lighting and fine setting for portraits, we could hang to advantage many paintings. It seems quite strange that this Society, which for one hundred and eight years has been the object of many valuable gifts, has not received more colonial portraits by the better-known artists. Today we do not possess a single example by Stuart, Copley, Peale, Savage, Trumbull or a dozen other well-known painters who flourished previous to 1820. Therefore the Society stands ready to receive gifts of this character. It is an excellent opportunity for members and friends to place their old American portraits where they will be preserved and valued and where they can be seen by students. Often owners of such paintings have no direct heirs, or even if they have, they cannot see into the future and know whether the portraits may not in another generation or two fall into the hands of someone who will care little for them. And in this connection it seems eminently proper that this Society should make a collection of reproductions of all early American portraits, perhaps even coming down to the time of the Civil War which marked a period of great change in the character of this country. Almost all the early portraits have been photographed and most of them can be obtained of a uniform size (8 x 10), and these could be mounted on cards and placed alphabetically in a cabinet. Were it generally known that we were making such a collection, gifts would come to us. The writer knows of one gentleman in Boston who now stands ready to donate a large number of these pictures. And if it were known that we had them, students and investigators would come to us to see them.

If we confined ourselves to portraits of Americans, we should be in a better position to preserve them, than are the great art museums that must collect pictures on all subjects and must lay stress on the artistic character of the picture more than on the

subject, and must also consider the question of re-arranging their collections from time to time, and possibly relegating to the storeroom or the cellar, such pictures as do not meet the ideas of the trustees or the public of the moment.

The Librarian reports that work in the Library has progressed satisfactorily during the winter. He states that a large number of gaps in the genealogical collection have been filled and that several valuable newspaper files have been obtained as will be chronicled in his report at the annual meeting. Miss Louise Colegrove, who has been an assistant in the Library since 1908, has left to take a position with the Worcester Commercial High School, her place for the present being filled by Miss Emma F. Waite.

A large collection of books, including several rare early imprints, has been received from the bequest of the late Dr. Samuel A. Green. According to the seventh article of the codicil to his will it was stated: "I hereby give and bequeath to the Massachusetts Historical Society such of my books as it may select, to the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, such of my books as it may thereafter select; to the Newberry Library of Chicago, such of my books as it may thereafter select, and the remainder of my books to the Library of the Wisconsin Historical Society."

The material selected by us totaled 144 books and 219 pamphlets. Richard Ward Greene, just before leaving for Nassau where he died, gave to the Library, ninety volumes relating to South American history, and since his death there has been turned over by his estate, with the consent of Mrs. Greene, 110 volumes. This latter collection consisted chiefly of standard works on recent American history, and included a number of volumes from the library of our late associate, John Davis Washburn, the father of Mrs. Greene.

The Proceedings are somewhat in arrears and the Society is sorely in need of a member who will take the

place of the late Franklin P. Rice, whose knowledge of printing and whose interest in publication affairs made him of great benefit in the issuing of the Proceedings. The issue covering the meeting of April, 1919, is now in the bindery and will be sent to members very shortly. With a little effort and with an active chairman of the publication committee, it would not require much trouble to publish the October issue, and then the Proceedings of the semi-annual meetings could be brought out within two or three months after the meetings are held. The increased cost of printing, however, means that more money will have to be devoted to publication than in previous years if the same standard is adhered to.

Three members have died in the last half year: Rev. Henry Fitch Jenks, of Canton, Mass., on January 31; Richard Ward Greene of Worcester, on March 7; Andrew McFarland Davis, of Cambridge, on March 29.

Rev. Mr. Jenks a graduate of Harvard in the Class of 1863, was a Unitarian minister, and a member of several learned societies. He was elected to membership in April, 1901, was always interested in the Society, and a regular attendant at the meetings until ill health restricted his activities. The death of Mr. Greene is a great loss to the Society. Ever since his election to membership in October, 1916, and even before it, he was always ready to help the Library with work and with gifts. Because of his South American connections he was much interested in this field and presented many volumes of rarity and value relating to Chili, Bolivia, and Peru, his gift of the long file of the early Peruvian newspaper *El Mercurio Peruano* being of especial note. Having inherited a large collection of papers of the Greene family of Rhode Island, he had all of them sent to the Library some two years ago, and spent many hours of his time sorting and arranging them. The papers relating to Rhode Island were turned over to the R. I. Historical Society,

and the South American papers, chiefly the papers of Hon. Samuel Larned, chargé d'affaires at Peru and Bolivia from 1828 to 1837, were presented to this Society.

The death of Andrew McFarland Davis removes a most distinguished member and steadfast supporter and friend. At the time of his death he was the third in seniority on our membership list having been elected in April, 1882. His activity in historical research and his interest in Worcester made him a conspicuous candidate for administering the Society's affairs, and he was successively a councillor, since 1904, recording secretary from 1906 to 1909, and a vice-president since 1909. He was a constant contributor of historical literature to the Library, a frequent writer for the Proceedings and, as has been mentioned above in this Report, a generous donor to our funds.

At the meeting of the Council, held April 13, 1920, the following minute, prepared by Mr. Lincoln, was read and adopted:—

The death of Andrew McFarland Davis, senior Vice-President of the Society and a member of the Council since 1904, has deprived the Society and Council of one of its most liberal, enthusiastic and valuable members.

While health permitted he was a constant attendant at the Society's meetings, and never missed a meeting of the Council if possible to be present, even coming from a considerable distance while recording secretary, such was his conscientious regard for the obligations of that office.

Ever ready with advice as to the conduct of the affairs of the Society, and unsparing of criticism, when he disapproved of any proposed action, yet his advice and criticism were given in such a kindly spirit that he never gave offense, and rather increased the respect and affection with which he was regarded by the other members of the Council.

His satisfaction with the management of the Society's affairs was shown by his liberal gifts. With his brothers he established in 1900, the John and Eliza Davis Fund in memory of his parents. In 1906 he gave the library an oil portrait of Mr. Stephen Salisbury, Jr., by Vinton, but modestly declined to have his name mentioned as the donor, and, being recording secretary, was able to see that his wishes were respected. He

was again a liberal contributor to the John and Eliza Davis Fund in 1912, and his recent gift of six thousand dollars (\$6,000), but a few weeks before his death, bears renewed testimony to his interest in the Society and to his conviction that it was worthy of his support.

His death has left a vacancy in our hearts which cannot be filled, and, with gratitude that he was spared to us so long, we place on record this testimonial of our loving appreciation of the faithfulness with which he performed his duties as a member both of the Council and of the Society.

We have now upon our rolls fifteen who have been members for thirty years and six of these for thirty-five years. Of these last "venerable" gentlemen, one is the senior senator from Massachusetts; two of them (Messrs. Colton and Edes) are constant and devoted in their attendance at our meetings as they have been for many years, and, having become members in comparative youth, they may easily complete a half century upon our rolls.

HENRY WINCHESTER CUNNINGHAM,  
*For the Council.*



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