

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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SINCE its last meeting in April 1931, the Society has lost two members through death.

Rev. George Foot Moore, of Cambridge, Massachusetts died on May 16, 1931. One of a gifted family of clergymen, he had been professor of the history of religion at Harvard since 1904 and president of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1925. He was elected to this Society in 1921 and attended many of its meetings.

Frederick W. Lehmann, of St. Louis, Missouri, died on September 12, 1931. A prominent lawyer in St. Louis, he served as solicitor general of the United States, 1910-1912. He was elected to this Society in 1919, and although distance from New England prevented his attendance at the meetings, he manifested an interest in the Library of the Society, especially in its collections of American literature.

The two most important gifts to the treasury of the Society during the year have been the bequest of \$10,000 from the late Samuel L. Munson, and the gift of \$5,000 from William E. Benjamin, a member of the Council, donated to aid the Library in carrying on its work. Other gifts, all of much aid to the Society in purchasing needed books, will be noted in the Treasurer's Report.

The large bequest from Henry W. Cunningham, described at length in the April report of the Council, has not yet accrued to the benefit of the Society, but will be paid over in part during the coming winter. Eventually the Society will receive about \$200,000 from this notable gift. Mr. Cunningham, throughout the twenty years of his connection with the Society,

was always its liberal supporter and constant friend. He frequently told the officers of the Society that the unfailing service which the Library rendered to all historical writers would eventually result in the building up of its endowment and that he believed that financial aid to this particular institution partook of a satisfying and unusual permanency.

The Society has done much during the year to aid two notable undertakings. As the result of our appeal to the American Council of Learned Societies, that body made a grant of \$1,000 to Mr. Charles Evans to assist him in finishing his comprehensive "American Bibliography" to the year 1800. The grant was made through the agency and endorsement of this Society and was paid over to Mr. Evans on his completion of the eleventh volume, which covered the years 1796-1797. He is now engaged in preparing the volume for 1798-1799, and it is hoped that a similar grant will be made for the further continuance of this work. Sabin's Dictionary of Books Relating to America, which is arranged alphabetically and needs only the letters of the alphabet from S to Z to ensure completion, and which is also being supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, is being produced largely in this Library, as Mr. Vail, the Librarian, is editor of the work, and a special working force is using the resources of the Library to aid in finishing this undertaking.

The choice of the Council a year ago in appointing Mr. R. W. G. Vail Librarian of the Society has been well vindicated. As the Librarian's Report will show, never before in the history of the Society have the volume of accessions to the Library been so large and valuable. Our resources have been used more than ever, both by correspondence and by general consultation. Already the need of more room for the working force, not to mention the need of more shelving, has made itself felt. The present library was occupied in 1910 and the stack addition completed in 1924. The

total capacity was planned at somewhat over half a million books and pamphlets, but at the present rate of increase, it will be only a few years before we shall have to provide further shelf room. The size of the library has nearly doubled in the last twenty years, so that today we have about 507,000 titles, which is nearly the limit of our capacity.

Nevertheless we shall go on increasing our collections as fast as is practicable. We desire especially to make our library of the utmost value to all students of American history and literature. There are constantly coming to light books and manuscripts relating to the past which are of great historical value. We appeal especially to those having such possessions to turn them over to our library in order that they may be available for scholars. One of the chief values of such an institution as this lies in its completeness. If the original sources and records relating to certain events of the past are all collected in one place they are not only much easier of access but much more liable to be thoroughly examined by those who are making investigations. Such an opportunity makes their work very much more liable to be complete and accurate.

Nearly every household and owner of a library has material which could be made of wide use if preserved in such a library as this. In many families there are old diaries and papers which are constantly subject to loss or destruction which could be preserved here with great benefit. Many persons have collections of books of no particular value to them which this library would prize highly. It would be a real contribution to the scholars of this country if such books and papers were turned over to this Society.

The main object of the American Antiquarian Society has always been to contribute something of practical value. It is not primarily interested in what is merely curious or merely old but considers those subjects important which serve to contribute most to our knowledge of whatever relates to the events of

American history. Realizing that all present problems have their source usually far back in the experience of the people, and believing that any proper understanding and adequate comprehension of current questions can only be had through an accurate knowledge of past human action we have undertaken to furnish the broadest foundation of original sources for the investigations of scholars and the enlightenment of the public. We consider that this service is one of the utmost importance and feel certain that the good which so manifestly results will continue to bring it adequate support.

CALVIN COOLIDGE,  
*For the Council*

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