

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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IN SPITE of financial depression and reduced income, the Society has functioned during the year even more widely than usual. Not within the period of my official connection with the Society, which extends back for twenty-seven years, nor within my knowledge of the history of previous years, has the Library acquired so great an abundance of rare and valuable historical material. The writings of European voyagers and historians, such as the late Henry Harrisse sought to include in his "*Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima*"; productions of the seventeenth century New England press, the incunabula of American printing; material concerning the English colonies in the New World, especially an outstanding collection relating to Bermuda; hundreds of examples of American pre-Revolutionary printing; long files of Southern and far-Western newspapers—all have combined to make this the most notable year in the history of the Society for the last century. Details of such accessions will be found in the Report of the Librarian. Although many of these acquisitions have come through purchase and exchange, the largest and most important have come through gift by members of the Society, who are evidently convinced that such a long established and comprehensive library of Americana should be increased and supported.

There are few concerns of general interest in the conduct of the Society to report. The library building has undergone a few slight repairs and alterations. The brick area-ways on the west side of the building, which had been undermined through the influence of frost, have been reconstructed or strengthened. Addi-

tional book-cases have been erected in the over-flow newspaper room in the basement. In the manuscript room, which had become crowded to capacity, metal cases have been added to the height of the ceiling, thus increasing the shelf space by nearly one-third. The collection of about half a million manuscripts is one of the important features of the Library, and for the first time all of the papers, whether documents or bound volumes, are in one alphabetical order.

There have been four deaths in the Society's membership during the last six months. Marshall H. Saville, elected in 1908, noted American archæologist died May 7, 1935. Edward Herbert Thompson, elected in 1887, explorer in the ruins of Mayan civilization in Yucatan, died May 11, 1935. Frederick H. Gillett, elected in 1931, member of Congress for thirty-nine years and author of the recent life of Senator Hoar, died July 31, 1935. Dr. Leonard Wheeler, elected in 1915, venerable physician and public citizen of Worcester, died October 2, 1935. Also there should be noted the death of Lyon G. Tyler, Virginia historian and genealogist, on February 12, 1935, which should have been recorded at the April meeting.

The Proceedings of the Society are somewhat in arrears, due to the difficulty in obtaining some of the papers read at the meetings. The Proceedings for the meeting of October 1934 is nearly through the press and should be issued shortly. The delay is somewhat compensated for by the issue of the full proceedings of the annual meeting in the form of a preprint immediately after the meeting.

The project of raising funds for the Society to make up for the loss in income due to the diminished earning power of invested capital, has resulted favorably and has made it possible for the Library to maintain its customary activities. About \$9500 was raised as a consequence of this special appeal, enabling us to retain the Library staff and to acquire needed books. The list of donors to this emergency fund is to be

found in the Treasurer's Report. In the list are one gift of \$1,000, nine gifts of \$500, one of \$350, one of \$300, five of \$250, one of \$200, six of \$100, and fifty-two of amounts under \$100. In all, seventy-six members showed their vital interest in the Society's work and many others who could not afford to give, wrote letters of good-will and encouragement.

The situation during the coming year is equally embarrassing, and probably will remain so until the long-promised return of prosperity will restore our lessened earnings. Until then, we shall either have to attempt to raise emergency funds, or abridge the activities of the Society. Considering the prestige of this ancient organization and the service which it is constantly rendering to American scholarship, the latter course seems unthinkable.

Respectfully submitted,

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*For the Council*

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