

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

DURING the past year an extraordinary amount of time has been devoted by the Society to making its collections more accessible. The additions to the Library, although nearly as numerous as in the immediate past, were not so frequently of the rare and unusual type demanding extra care in cataloguing and filing. For this reason, and especially because of the considerable amount of help furnished by WPA assistants, much headway has been made in arranging, indexing and cataloguing collections which were hitherto consultable only by visits to the shelves. In this way the vast collection of newspapers dating from 1820 to date have been completely catalogued on cards and also copied for entry in the recently published "Union List of Newspapers," one of the most valuable reference works ever produced under Government supervision; the map and print room has been cleared of recent accumulations and put in order; the manuscript room has been rearranged and reshelfed in alphabetical order; and several important indexes of historical and biographical value have been compiled. The details of this work will appear in the Librarian's Report.

There have been two changes in the library staff. In January last, Mr. Theron J. Damon, a capable and accomplished scholar ideally suited to our needs, was engaged to take charge of the manuscripts and also of the prints and broadsides. Mr. Frank Dana, who since 1920 has served in the Library in charge of periodicals, institutional reports, directories, schoolbooks and documents, died on September 23 last. His conscientious regard for his duties and his faithfulness have made his position not easy to fill. Miss Dorothy M. Collins has been engaged in his place.

Although not a direct part of the Library's activities, the members of the staff have aided whenever possible in the valuable project of the Cotton Mather Bibliography, being compiled so ably by Mr. Thomas J. Holmes. It is due to the continued generosity of Mr. William G. Mather of Cleveland that this important undertaking is being financed to completion.

There have been but two deaths in the Society's membership in the past six months. Leonard L. Mackall, elected in 1918 and one of the most learned of this country's bibliographers, died May 19, 1937. His various scholarly works and his able column, "Notes for Bibliophiles" in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, have endeared him to the entire fraternity of book-collectors. John Franklin Jameson, elected to this Society in 1890, died September 28, 1937. As professor of history at Brown University and the University of Chicago, as director of the department of historical research in the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and as chief of the division of manuscripts in the Library of Congress, Dr. Jameson was undoubtedly the most widely known historian in the United States. His long career in teaching and his editorship of the *American Historical Review* for nearly thirty years brought him into association with thousands of students and teachers of history. His memory was prodigious. His knowledge of the entire field of American history, from the Icelandic sagas to the recent times, was unequalled. It was he who conceived and launched the *Dictionary of American Biography* and it is fitting that now, through death, he is admitted to the pages of that great national work which he himself sponsored.

The Proceedings of the Society are somewhat in arrears. The issue containing the papers read at the meeting a year ago is about ready to come from the press and should be mailed to members within a fortnight. The difficulties which authors have in finishing material for final printing, added to our own troubles

with technical typographical difficulties, have delayed us slightly, but the coming year should witness a prompter date of publication. One of our greatest needs is an Index to the entire body of Proceedings from 1850 to date, but the expense of such an undertaking prevents it from taking precedence over matters which are more pressing.

The "Guide to the Resources of the American Antiquarian Society," which was described in the report of the Council in April, has been mailed to the members, to libraries on our exchange list and to several hundred individuals and institutions throughout the country. Judging from the many letters which we have received, it has elicited general commendation. The attractive style of Mr. Vail's narrative, the information contained in the statistical description of the Library's collections, the interesting illustrations, and the typographical excellence of the volume combine to make it the best handbook of the Society which has been published. Our indebtedness to Mrs. Homer Gage for the gift of the considerable funds necessary for its publication and distribution is hereby acknowledged. This gift is only another evidence of her life-long interest in Worcester and its institutions.

One of the chief reasons for publishing the Guide is to attract financial support to this Society. If a person of cultural tastes had funds at his disposal, it would seem as if the serious needs of an organization which so freely aids scholarship throughout the country would appeal to him. Our building at the present time is so overfilled that the necessity of a new stack is imperative. Every department and activity of the Society, in the effort to serve students more generally, has outstripped the endowment. This Library prides itself, not as a mere storehouse of rare books, but as the custodian of a great national collection of history and literature which must be made of use to every serious researcher. The action of the Carnegie Corporation of New York during the past year in making a grant of

\$5000 to the Society for its service to scholars has not only been appreciated, but has allowed us to maintain the standard of recent years. Without it we should have had to relinquish much of the aid which we desire to furnish to those who seek to use our collections. But not until a real endowment is provided shall we be in a position to enlarge our book space, catalogue our possessions, fill in our collections, and in general make the Library adequately effective. The endowment of a great and generous institution of learning would make the name of such a benefactor live forever, not only in our annals, but also in the realm of American scholarship.

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