

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

One year ago the Society met for the last time within the walls of the old building on Court Hill. Our present domicile was at that time practically completed and a portion of our possessions had already been transferred thereto. Inadequate and unlovely as the old building was, those members of the Society who habitually attended the Worcester meetings will always retain pleasant memories of the cheerful room occupied by the librarian in which they were accustomed to exchange friendly greetings before and after the exercises of the day, and will not easily forget the homelike and distinctly antiquarian aspect of the hall within which those exercises were held, furnished as it was with our old provincial or colonial chairs, the gifts of friends of the Society. The utter unfitness of the Court Hill building for our purposes, and the responsibility which we incurred through the continuous exposure of our collections while therein to irreparable loss by conflagration would be reasons enough for congratulating the Society upon the occasion of holding its first regular meeting in the commodious, fire-proof structure in which we are now assembled. There may be some, however, who still feel sentimental regrets that the treasured associations with our old home could not have been preserved through improvements and alterations of the building of such a nature as to permit the continued occupation of a site so admirable for our purposes. If by chance there are any such, a mere glance at our environment to-day will convince them that the members of the Society must in time become attached to this beautiful hall, with its charming surroundings, and will wonder that there could

have been any regrets to alloy the pleasure of our occupation of the new building.

The test of a year of actual use has demonstrated the wisdom of the move, and has confirmed our confidence that the forethought of the various experts who had under consideration the plans of the building had made ample provision for the disposition of our books, papers and documents, and had successfully grappled the problem of placing them under easy control, ready for submission to students who should desire to consult them. We have but to look about us to see under what favorable circumstances investigators may carry on their researches here, comfortably provided with adequate facilities for work in a room, the beauty of which both in proportion and in contrasts of color becomes more and more impressive the longer it is inspected.

Externally, it is thought by some, that the striking differences between the white marble of the dome, the white columns, the white trimmings, and the red bricks of the wall, leaves much to be desired, but it is to be assumed that the dust and smoke of the nearby city will ameliorate these defects and that the modifying of the tints of the external colors will ultimately permit the looker-on to realize the excellent proportions of the building without his attention being distracted by this temporary assault upon his love of harmony.

The transfer to the shelves of the stack and the arrangement thereon of our books and papers, and the deposit in suitable receptacles of our manuscript collections has brought the whole of these accumulations of years for the first time within easy reach of workers, and has revealed in many instances unexpected wealth. Our librarian reports, for instance, that the large collection of maps which was deposited in the library of this Society by the New England Historic-Genealogical Society has proved to be of much value, supplementing the maps already belonging to the Society in many interesting directions. For the first time for many years we know with approximate accuracy what we have and

what are the lacunæ which ought to be filled. The services of Mr. Brigham in bringing about this condition of affairs in a quiet, unobtrusive, and economical manner are entitled to recognition.

The Council has met with a loss during the year which, even though mitigated by the fact that it was not unexpected, was nevertheless deeply felt by all of us since it involved the rupture of strong, personal friendships based upon profound respect, and ripened by long association. The person of Charles Augustus Chase was familiar to most of our members through his service as recording secretary of the Society, but only those who were brought in contact with him under circumstances where they could profit by his counsel, could realize the value to an administrative body, of his prudent, cautious temperament, and the careful, deliberate movements of his mind. Never carried away by passion, always faithful to his ideals; the servant of truth and the champion of honor; loyal to the Society and always to be relied upon to look out for its interests, we shall miss his presence and we shall feel the want of his advice. Hereafter we can only enjoy in memory the dry humor with which he occasionally characterized a situation or emphasized a point. A conservative rather than a progressive, strong in defence rather than conspicuous as a leader in assault, the Council could always rest assured that they could not commit serious error if they listened to him. Mr. Samuel S. Green has undertaken to contribute to our necrology a sketch of his life and career.

At the October meeting of the Society in 1908, Mr. Henry H. Edes offered the following vote which was duly carried:

Voted: That the Council of this Society be requested to confer with the Council of the Massachusetts Historical Society with a view of securing the proper editing and publication of all the manuscript diaries of Increase Mather and Cotton Mather, the greater part of which, if not all, are owned by the two Societies.

The matter was duly taken up and at the April meeting of this Society next ensuing, the Council reported as follows: As a result of the correspondence with the Massachusetts Historical Society, a committee from this Society consisting of Messrs. Andrew McF. Davis, George P. Winship and Clarence S. Brigham has been appointed to confer with a committee from the Historical Society consisting of Messrs. Charles Francis Adams, Nathaniel Paine and Barrett Wendell with reference to the publication of the Mather Diaries.

The questions of how a joint publication by the two Societies should be carried on, how the expense should be divided and how credit should be given to each Society for its share in the work were not easy to answer. The nature of the material demanded chronological arrangement and this involved a mixing up of the diaries in possession of the two Societies, so that if they were put forth in the collections of the one Society and the Transactions of the other there would be a duplication of published matter, the necessity of which is absolutely uncalled for and the value of which as historical material would not furnish justification.

Fortunately for the success of the proposed scheme the committees appointed by the Councils of the two Societies were in entire accord in their desire to secure the carrying out of the project and were respectively willing to concede minor points where concession was essential. The harmonious co-operation of Mr. Brigham, upon whom devolved much of the preliminary work in this affair on the part of our Society, and of Mr. Worthington C. Ford, the appointed representative of the Committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society, was also absolutely essential, and credit should be given to them for making possible a solution of some of the troublesome questions which arose during the progress of the discussion.

As a result of this introductory work, the Historical Society generously undertook to print all the Cotton Mather diaries and to furnish enough copies to the Anti-

quarian Society to make sure that one should reach each member of this Society. On the other hand, the Antiquarian Society resigned its claim that the joint publication should appear in its series of published collections.

The diaries of Cotton Mather of which we have knowledge cover dates extending from 1681 to 1724 inclusive, a period of forty-three years. The diaries which have been preserved contain the record of events, or emotions, which occurred during twenty-six of these forty-three years. The manuscript of each year is separately stitched and constitutes a volume by itself. Sixteen of them are to be found in the Massachusetts Historical Society, nine in the Antiquarian Society and one in the Congregational Library. The whole, when published, will fill two volumes, the first of which, a book of 604 pages, is already out. The second volume will have about 800 pages. The diaries contain psychological rather than historical matter and would have but little value were it not for the prominence of the man, the activity of his career, and the influence that he exerted during life.

The Cotton Mather diaries being thus disposed of there remains to be discussed what shall be done with those of Increase Mather. The twenty-six volumes of the Cotton Mather diaries were legibly written upon small-sized sermon paper. Increase made use of almanacs, many of which were interleaved but all of which were small in size. The entries in the several books are not necessarily confined to the year of the particular almanac in which they are made, one or two of them having extra leaves bound in both at the beginning and end of the volume. The seventeen almanacs containing these entries furnish a partial record covering at least twenty-three or twenty-four years of Mather's life. The extreme limits of the dates of the various entries extend from 1665 to 1721 inclusive. Sixteen of these almanacs belong to this Society. The Massachusetts Historical Society owns one and has already printed the contents of that volume. The entries throughout the set of diaries are necessarily compressed, abbreviations and

abridgments being made use of, the whole resulting in a skeleton record of the daily avocation and of the reading or study of the man, without much regard to outside matters. Take a single page of the published diary. It presents the record of nineteen days. This record contains twelve entries which read "studyed sermⁿ," two "prpd for lect," three "prpd for sabbath" and gives the titles of eight books which Mather was reading on certain days. There are one or two brief references on this page to current events which might prove interesting if they were more than mere references.

At the present time the Massachusetts Historical Society is overloaded with publication work and the Antiquarian Society has as much on hand as it can attend to. The committees having the publication in charge will undoubtedly be met in their claim for immediate attention with the answer on the part of both Societies that the matter cannot be taken up at present and it is quite possible that we shall ultimately be obliged to content ourselves with a descriptive paper prepared by some person appointed for the purpose, which will embody all extracts from the Increase Mather diaries of such matter as is of general interest.

When the requisite number of the first volume of the published diaries of Cotton Mather was furnished us by the Historical Society as a part of the transaction above described we were confronted with the question: What shall be done with these volumes? This Society has never furnished its published collections free of charge to its members. If we should receive these books and then sell them the net result would be that whatever sum we should receive for them would be practically a payment by the Historical Society for the privilege of publishing some of our manuscripts. The impropriety of this led at once to the conclusion that the volumes received from the Historical Society should be distributed among those members of this Society who were not, through their membership in the Historical Society, already in possession of a copy.

The discussion caused by this proceeding raised doubts in the minds of the Council whether it would not actually be for the pecuniary benefit of the Society as well as for its general reputation to pursue the policy of many other societies engaged in kindred work and distribute among our members, publications of our collections as they come out. The result was that at a meeting of the Council held September 14, it was voted that volumes 11 and 12 of the Transactions, and all future volumes, be distributed without cost to members who are not in arrears to the Treasury. In connection with this movement to secure a wider distribution of our publications those having in charge the sale of the earlier volumes of the so-called Transactions have issued a circular announcing that these volumes can now be secured at reduced prices. The title, "Transactions," given to them is an inheritance and is misleading. They belong more properly to the class of publications usually denominated "Collections." We have already abandoned the title, "Archæologia Americana," a relic of the early part of last century, and it may be that some way may be found to furnish a more suitable binder's title than "Transactions." Perhaps the word, "Publications" itself is comprehensive enough to include past and future. On this point the Council would be glad to hear at some future time expressions of opinion from members of the Society.

Volumes 11 and 12 of the Transactions have already passed into the hands of the members of the Society. The first of these volumes was referred to and described in the report of the publication committee included in the Council report last April. The contents of the volume, though miscellaneous in character, are nevertheless of great value as sources of information and must be regarded as a distinct contribution toward the history of a comparatively unknown subject. As for the Royal Proclamations in volume 12 of the Transactions, it will be admitted by all historical students that this volume contains information much of which is available in no other form than by personally consulting the archives

at the Record Office in London, information furthermore of such a character that it cannot be neglected by any student of American History of that period. Ultimately the volume must find its way upon the shelves of every library in America that pretends to maintain an equipment adequate for research in American history.

We have to congratulate ourselves that affairs have moved so smoothly in our new building and that we have adapted ourselves thoroughly in our every-day life to our new situation. The greater the facilities provided for the use of our material, the greater will be the advantage taken of these provisions, and it will undoubtedly be found that our expenses will increase. The wise forethought that sought to provide a fund for this has not as yet realized a success of which we ought to boast. Our membership is not composed of Carnegies and Rockefellers. We must, therefore, base our hopes upon outside support. While we gratefully acknowledge the generous gifts already received, we must rest our hopes largely on aid to be derived from others through members and we would especially appeal to citizens of Worcester who ought to take pride in the fact that the *American Antiquarian Society* is located here, that it has contributed to the attractions of the place a beautiful hall, and that it maintains a library which is open to the world for consultation.

ANDREW McFARLAND DAVIS,

For the Council.

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