

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

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During the last six months the present building has continued to prove its fitness for the Society's work. The skill of the architects and the foresight of the librarian and the building committee are shown in the fact that few changes in the plans, and those of minor importance, would be recommended were it possible to rebuild. There is some reason to fear that, if the newspaper collection continues its rapid growth of the past two years, a shortage of shelving may develop in that department sooner than was estimated, but, as it has yet been impossible to arrange properly the present shelving for lack of time and assistants, the actual capacity of the newspaper stack is still undetermined.

The method adopted a year ago for maintaining, during the summer, a moderate temperature in the upper story of the stack which, as was explained at the last annual meeting, consists merely in painting the roof with a cheap white paint, was repeated this year with a still more satisfactory result. It is found that the paint is completely washed off during the fall and winter rains, allowing the sun to assist in heating the building during the cold months, and four dollars worth of asbestine paint applied at the beginning of the hot weather, at the cost of a few hours labor of the janitor, lasts until colder weather renders it unnecessary. It has been interesting to note that this principle has been applied to a large ice-house in Worcester, though with what result and whether the application was due to this experiment the writer has not learned. Leaks which appeared in the marble dome soon after the building was completed, in spite of careful planning by the architects and conscien-

tious construction by the builders under watchful supervision by the clerk of the works, have been apparently stopped by treating the dome with a preparation known as "minwax." The expense of this treatment, which could not fairly be placed upon the contractors for the building, was unpleasantly large, but has been paid out of the past year's income. The additional land acquired last year has not yet been improved for lack of means. It has been suggested that it be planted with shrubbery and trees, which would be less expensive to maintain than a lawn and more attractive.

At a meeting of the Council in April, 1912, the President was instructed to appoint a committee of three members, to report to the Council on the future welfare of the Society, for its guidance in future conduct of the Society's affairs. In accordance with these instructions the President appointed Messrs. William MacDonald, Justin H. Smith and George F. Dow and that committee presented the result of their deliberations last spring. The Council and the Society are much indebted to these gentlemen for the very careful study they made of the situation. The Council does not deem it necessary to report the findings of the committee to the Society, but wishes it understood that no radical changes were recommended and that, on the whole, the report was commendatory of the present system. Many of the recommendations suggested must await an increase of the Society's endowment and income, but the Council, at a special meeting held in May to consider the report, voted in accordance with its suggestion to authorize the issue, as often as material offered, of a bulletin or leaflet by which the members can be kept more in touch with the work of the Society, its acquisitions and its needs. As a result of this vote the first number of the "Bulletin of the American Antiquarian Society" was issued July 19, 1913, and was sent to all the members of the Society. It contained an introductory note; an account, at some length, of recent acquisitions of southern newspapers; an announcement of the valuable gift by Mrs. Emma

DeF. Morse of her remarkable collection of American historical pottery; an appeal for financial assistance; a brief notice of the government document collection; and a death notice. It was the intention of the librarian to issue a second number about September 1st, but an unfortunate accident which kept him confined to the house for about a month prevented; and it is now proposed to issue the second number about November 15th. It was probably due to the fact that this first number was mailed when most of the members were away on their vacations, thereby delaying their receipt of the Bulletin, that so little notice was taken of this new departure.

About a hundred years ago it was the custom of the Staffordshire potters to decorate sets of china for the American market with American scenery and views of American buildings. This pottery, now become very scarce, has long been an object for collectors of Americana and possesses considerable historic value, as many of the views have been preserved only in this form. The most successful collector of this pottery is Mrs. Emma DeF. Morse of Worcester, whose almost perfect collection lacks but a few pieces to make it complete and of which Alexander M. Hudnut in "American Homes and Gardens" says: "I do not hesitate to say that, within my knowledge, this is the finest collection of dark blue Staffordshire in America." Finding its preservation in her own home too much of a burden, Mrs. Morse, in spite of tempting offers of eager purchasers and with rare public spirit, decided to keep the collection intact if a suitable place could be found for its public display, and a society willing to assume its care. She selected this Society for this favor and the gift was gratefully accepted. Mrs. Morse has thus made herself the most generous benefactor, outside of its members, the Society has ever had; for while it would be invidious, and perhaps impossible, to place a money value upon this gift, it is quite safe to say that no collection has ever been presented to the Society of greater value at

the time of its presentation. A vote appreciative of Mrs. Morse's generosity has been prepared for adoption by the Society at the proper time. To carry out Mrs. Morse's wishes and properly and safely display this gift it has been necessary to incur considerable expense, which it is quite impossible to meet from the income of the Society's funds. To conform to the absolutely fireproof character of the building, steel and glass seemed to be the only acceptable materials of which to make the cases to hold this collection. The Council, however, has no authority to employ the principal of the Society's funds for such a purpose; but, desiring to have the collection ready for exhibition at this annual meeting and confiding in the Society's liberality, it has, at its own risk, authorized the President to contract for suitable cases and to ask authority of the Society to add the cost to the expense of the building and to charge the amount to such principal fund as may seem best to the finance committee. A vote for this authority has therefore been prepared and will be presented today for action. After a careful study, the southwest room on the second floor was selected as the most available place for the preservation of the collection; the walls have been lined with suitable cases of steel and glass, built by Krasser & Company of Boston at a cost of about \$1,200; and the pottery, somewhat hastily arranged therein, is now on exhibition.

Since the last meeting three Resident Members have died. William Addison Smith of Worcester, oldest in years and fourth in membership, died at Worcester, September 25, 1913. He was elected in October, 1867, and served as auditor from 1884 to 1901, but held no other office. Frederick Albion Ober of Hackensack, N. J., died June 1, 1913. He was best known as a student of ornithology, especially that of South America and the West Indies. Francis Henry Lee of Salem died there October 7, 1913. He was elected a member of this Society October 21, 1904, but, although intensely interested in antiquarian and genealogical studies, failing health prevented any active participation in the work

of the Society. In accordance with custom, obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed Proceedings of this meeting. As notice of the death of Foreign Members has sometimes not been received until long after the event, it has not been usual to print obituary notices of them. The Council should, however, notify the Society of such deaths as soon as learned, and in the case of the more distinguished members may properly record more than the mere dates. The Right Honorable Sir John Lubbock, Baron Avebury, D. C. L., of London, England, and a Foreign Member of this Society since October 12, 1893, died May 28, 1913. He was born April 30, 1834, was educated at Eton and succeeded to the Baronetcy of Avebury in 1865. He was a member of Parliament from 1870 to 1900 in which year he was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Avebury. He was head of the banking house of Robarts, Lubbock & Company; but devoted most of his time to authorship and the study of natural history and published many books which reached a prodigious circulation. He is perhaps best known in this country as author of "The Pleasures of Life," which has already attained 259 editions, and for his investigations of insect life. He was president of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of many allied societies too numerous to mention here.

The Council has learned with regret that Mr. Winship, who is now travelling in Europe, declines re-election as Recording Secretary. Mr. Winship's interest in the objects of the Society is so great, his advice is so valuable and his presence so agreeable that the Council has only pleasure in advising the Society, while releasing him from the duties of Secretary, to retain his services as a member of the Council.

The Library has grown healthily during the past year, but the increase in early newspaper files is worthy of especial notice. The remarkable file of the *Alexandria Gazette*, covering over one hundred years of consecutive publication and practically perfect, was described

in the "Bulletin." During a visit last winter to the British West Indies, the President was so fortunate as to secure for the Society nearly one hundred volumes of newspapers, published in Trinidad, Grenada, St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua and St. Christopher between 1790 and 1880, which it would be very difficult if not impossible to duplicate, and which have placed this Library far ahead of any other, in this country at least, in early West Indian newspapers. There is reason to hope that files of Jamaican, Porto Rican, Cuban, and other island newspapers may yet be found to enrich the collection still further.

Little interest seems to be taken in most of the islands in their bibliography, and while there is a public library in each of the British Islands no attention has been paid to the collection of West Indian imprints, save the very creditable work which has been done by Mr. Frank Cundall in the Institute of Jamaica at Kingston. This lack of interest, which makes the search for early imprints difficult and often discouraging, is probably due to several causes but is well nigh universal; and though it is certain that printing presses were established in many of the islands before the middle of the eighteenth century, the writer was unable to find, except in the Institute of Jamaica, a single book, pamphlet or broadside printed in the islands previous to 1850, save two almanacs and a book of the Laws, all printed in the island of St. Christopher, and of these the two almanacs could not be located. The small percentage of white population, which in the British Islands is only about two per cent., and the temporary residence of the white officials, who are frequently moved from colony to colony, are contributing causes; but perhaps the chief reason for this scarcity of early imprints is the difficulty, one might almost say impossibility, of preserving them in a climate where literally moth and rust do corrupt. Moreover, nearly every town has been the victim of earthquakes or of one or more disastrous conflagrations when, in the absence of adequate protective equipment, everything within

reach of the flames has been entirely consumed. Wars, too, which one hundred years and more ago were constant between England, France and Spain, have devastated many of the islands more than once, and change of masters was not conducive to the preservation of property so easily destroyed as books and papers. At one time or another nearly every newspaper office has been burned and with it the office file, and only such newspapers escaped as through change of ownership were removed by the retiring editors and were thereafter preserved in their own houses. Such are the volumes fortunately discovered during the past winter and now in the Society's library. It is probable that England, or even the older coast towns of the United States, many of which had an active trade with the West Indies one hundred years ago, will offer a better hunting ground for Caribbeana than the islands themselves.

A brief description of the conditions found in the several islands visited may be of interest; and since, with the opening of the Panama Canal, the Greater and the Lesser Antilles will probably become easier of access and more frequently visited, perhaps other members will soon be able to supplement this account with a description of the conditions in the other islands. Jamaica, third in size of all the Antilles, possesses in Mr. Frank Cundall, now a member of this Society, the one man in the British West Indies who is interested in their bibliography. He is manager and librarian of the Institute of Jamaica whose building was destroyed by the earthquake of 1907, but whose library was saved from the destruction caused by the ensuing conflagration. The Institute has recently built a new building of brick and concrete, unfortunately not so fireproof as its valuable contents deserve. The library contains excellent files of nineteenth century Jamaican newspapers, mostly well bound and in good preservation; a very good collection of books relating to the West Indies including many West Indian imprints; and a remarkable collection of portraits of colonial officials. All these are due to the

activity and exertion of Mr. Cundall and it is feared are hardly appreciated by the members and supporters of the Institute who are mostly interested in the circulating department of the library which is devoted to the ephemeral literature of the day. The writer did not visit the record office and cannot report on the condition of the records therein. He was informed, however, that they are well cared for.

Trinidad has, at Port of Spain, a well-selected circulating library, adequately housed in a new building, brick, but not fireproof. No attention has been paid to collecting West Indian imprints, although through the exertions of Miss Hart, the capable librarian, the library has a good file of nineteenth century Trinidad newspapers, the earliest number dated Jan. 18, 1817, most of which are in good order. The public offices were burned in the riots of 1903, but have been replaced with substantial stone buildings and the records are said to be in good order. The writer was informed that no one in the island was particularly interested in its history and bibliography, and though it is evident that a printing press was set up as early as 1804 no example of its work was found earlier than the newspaper of 1817.

Grenada possesses at St. George a small public library of modern literature. It is installed in one room of the public buildings and no attention is paid to collecting Grenada imprints of which no examples exist in the library save a partial file of a Grenada newspaper, the earliest number of which is considerably later than 1800, though the newspaper was first published in 1784 and the writer secured a partial file for the year 1790. The public record office was not visited. Though a file of St. Lucia newspapers was secured, it was obtained in Grenada of a descendant of the editor; and the island was unvisited save for a brief stop at midnight on a voyage to the northern islands.

The library at Bridgetown, Barbados, is installed in a handsome limestone building, the gift of Andrew Carnegie, but it has no historical collection and but an



imperfect file of rather late nineteenth century newspapers. In the public offices are some early Barbados maps in fine condition and the public records are said to be well cared for. The writer learned that there was a complete file of the *Agricultural Reporter*, which was established between 1830 and 1840 and is still being published, in the possession of the present editor. He was also told that there was a good private collection of Barbadian imprints in the island, to which visitors were not welcome and which he was therefore unable to see and cannot report upon. The native white Barbadians are a patriotic people and take great pride in their island and in its history, but up to the present time have not been generally interested in the productions of its press, though Thomas claims that one was established as early as 1730.

In Dominica there is a small library building, at Roseau, also the gift of Mr. Carnegie, containing an unimportant circulating library. There is no interest in local imprints and no attempt has been made to collect and preserve them. There was, however, a very good loan collection of Carib tools of stone and bone. Speaking generally, much more interest is taken in many of the islands in archaeological research than in bibliography and history, and there are several really good private collections. Owing to the absence of carriage roads in Dominica a search through that island would be conducted with much discomfort and probably with poor result.

St. John's, Antigua, possesses an unimportant library with nothing of historical note save an interesting autograph letter from Queen Anne relative to troubles which occurred in the island during her reign. Some newspapers of comparatively late date have been preserved, but they were unbound and in bad order and entirely useless for consultation. The papers in the public record office were in shocking condition; no attempt apparently having been made to preserve them from damage by insects and dampness. It was really painful

to consult them as it was impossible to handle some of the volumes without inflicting further injury. The Governor's attention was called to this sad condition of the record books; and he promised to take the matter in hand and to see that money was provided for their better care—a promise which he undoubtedly kept, since he took so much interest in the writer's quest for old newspapers that, learning of a collection for which the writer had made an offer, he promptly raised the bid and bought them for the island library, a course which this Society can only praise since it seeks to encourage local interest in historical and bibliographical matters.

Although St. Christopher, or St. Kitt's as it is commonly called, is said to have possessed the first printing press in the lesser Antilles, its library has been established but a few years and possesses nothing of historic interest. It is kept in an upper room of the Court House. The sister island, Nevis, which is separated by a narrow strait from St. Kitt's and which until fifty years ago was of considerable importance, has no library and a very trifling white population. The public records of these two islands are well kept. Considerable time was devoted to a search of the two islands for early imprints, which yielded several volumes of newspapers; the discovery of a volume of Laws printed at St. Kitt's in 1791, which the owner would not part with; and the report of the existence of two numbers of almanacs printed before 1810 which, after diligent search, could not be found.

The writer learned of the existence of early files of newspapers published in the island of St. Bartholomew and in the Danish island of St. Croix; but, as he visited neither of these islands he obtained only a single copy of an early St. Croix paper through the kindness of an English travelling salesman, who reported that the local government had been clearing out its offices of accumulated rubbish and that he had picked up this copy out of curiosity. This simply shows that early files are still in existence and that a systematic search through the islands might return a rich reward.

The Council wishes to impress on the members a fact which does not seem to be sufficiently appreciated, namely that the Society's first and greatest specialty is the collection of American newspapers and to urge the members to bear that fact in mind at all times and everywhere. That interesting and valuable files of newspapers still exist in attics and garrets all over the country is constantly made evident to the Librarian, yet it is very seldom that his attention is called to them by a member. These accumulations frequently can be obtained for little or no consideration; and members can render a great service to the Library, if they will be on the lookout for such material and, when found, either secure it themselves and forward it to the Library as a gift, or call the Librarian's attention to it.

Another of the Society's specialties, not so well known as the newspapers but which is equally deserving of assistance, is American school books, of which there is now in the upper hall a very interesting exhibition of about seventy specimens, most of which were published before 1800 and which will repay a careful examination. They have all been selected from the Society's collection, which, though numbering about 8,000 volumes, may not be the largest but is certainly one of the most important in the country and contains several exceedingly rare specimens.

Since the last report of the treasurer the Centennial Fund has received an addition of \$1,000 by the gift of Albert H. Whitin and \$500 by the gift of Mrs. Deloraine P. Corey in memory of her late husband and in addition to a previous gift of the same amount. Legacies have been paid to the total amount of \$5,000 by the estates of the late Edward L. Davis, Daniel Merri- man and Miss Jane A. Taft, as noted in the treasurer's report. The Council has been informed that a legacy of \$4,000 has been left to the Society by the late Miss Katharine Allen, daughter of the Hon. Charles Allen of Worcester, a member of the Society from 1827 to 1869. These gifts and legacies will yield a most welcome addi-

tion to the present income, though the Society will still remain so poor as to be unable to make the best use of its collections. Binding, repairing, publishing, collecting and all the necessities of a valuable consulting library are sadly curtailed. Safety has been secured and room for work and growth, but the Society cannot do the work of which it is capable, for want of sufficient means. This has been the President's cry so often that he fears by repetition it may lose force, yet while the need remains it seems to be his duty to call attention to it.

WALDO LINCOLN,  
*For the Council.*

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