

THE TRUSTEES of the New York Society Library present to the shareholders this their report for the year ending March 31, 1940.

We wish to report that our property at 109 University Place was sold during the year for \$35,000, of which sum \$10,000 was received in cash, and we took back a mortgage for \$25,000 for one year with interest at 5%. It is a great relief to the Trustees that this property has been sold as we will save the payment of taxes and will be receiving interest on our money, and will also have an increased income of about \$4,500 by virtue of this sale. We have used the cash received from this sale toward the reduction of the mortgage on the Library which has now been reduced to \$70,000.

We take pleasure in announcing the election of Mr. Frederic Rhineland King as a member of the Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Frederic F. de Rham.

We wish to report the gift by Mr. Christian Zabriskie of Washington Irving's commission as Minister to Spain, dated February 10, 1842 and signed by President John Tyler.

In going over the old books about 400 volumes of the Old Harper Select Novel Series were newly cataloged. They are mainly obscure romances of the 1860's and 1870's, with such titles as "Her face was her fortune" and "Whom to marry and how to get married, or the adventures of a lady in search of a good husband by one who has refused twenty excellent offers."

The work of sorting old records and papers and arranging them has been completed. Surrendered certificates and transfers have brought to light many signatures, with names interesting in themselves, such as Eliza Jumel, James Kent and Clement C. Moore and also those representing families whose names have been given to many of our New York streets: Duane, Bleecker, Rivington, Barclay, Gracie, Pell and Desbrosses.

Of particular interest is a complete set of the Minutes of the Trustees from their first meeting at the City Arms on May 7, 1754, recording the original membership list and the newly made rules. Their intention, "That the rights and privileges in the said Library shall not be confined to this city but that every person residing in the province may become a subscriber" is now manifest in our mail service that reaches from Maine to California and Cuba to Canada.

Of unusual interest is a Visitors Book kept from 1836 to 1856, containing members' registration of their guests. Among the earliest, in April 1837, Prince Bonaparte, afterward Napoleon III, introduced by

Mr. Charles G. Ferris; in 1842, Mr. Charles Dickens, a guest of Mr. Charles A. Davis; and at later dates Mr. Thackeray, Mr. James Fenimore Cooper, and Mr. Francis Parkman, also statesmen and representatives of foreign countries and other notable visitors to the Library, which was an important point of interest in the smaller city of that day. A careful search, however, fails to reveal the names of any ladies! All these records combine to form a colorful picture of the Library's progress such as we believe few institutions possess.

In making an inventory of the Sharpe and Winthrop collections in the Member's Reading Room, we found that many of the volumes consisted of several publications bound together and these additional pamphlets had not been previously cataloged. The bindings on the books in these two unique collections need considerable attention, but we will have to defer that for the time being, because of the cost, meanwhile we shall treat them with periodic applications of leather oils.

We wish to report that during the past year progress has been made in cataloging the books and classifying them according to subject matter. During the year 52,500 volumes were loaned for home use, and more readers are visiting the Library in person, which is an encouraging fact and shows the Library is being used more now than when it was located on University Place.

The opening of the World's Fair was celebrated by an exhibit on George Washington, consisting of manuscript letters, newspaper and death notices, eulogies and early published biographies which attracted favorable notice from our visitors. Since February 1st, we have been celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Invention of Printing from Movable Type, by exhibiting our old New York City imprints. Examples have been shown from the presses of William Bradford, the city's first printer; Hugh Gaine, a Trustee of this Library from 1788 to 1807; James Parker, Childs and Swain, T. and J. Swords, and William Mercein.

We owe thanks to the members of the Board of Trustees who have attended meetings, often at great inconvenience, for their sense of responsibility and loyalty.

To the librarian and the staff and to all who by deed or by gift have further enriched the resources of the Library, we desire to record our appreciation.

Respectfully submitted,

LEWIS SPENCER MORRIS,

Chairman

April 30, 1940.