

THE TRUSTEES of the New York Society Library present to the shareholders this their report for the year ending March 3, 1942.

It is my sad duty to report the death of two members of the Board of Trustees, Philip J. Roosevelt, who died on November 8, 1941, and Samuel V. Hoffman, who died February 23, 1942.

The Library continues to serve as a cultural unit in this city's busy life. The Reading Room is a quiet haven for the leisurely perusal of the recent magazines as well as for the intensive research of the student. Scholars from as far away as California have made special trips to consult our treasures. During the past year over forty-eight thousand books were borrowed for home reading. The decrease (1313) in the number of books borrowed is a national condition reported from most libraries. It is probably due to the fact that time formerly given to reading is now being devoted to listening to radio commentators, also the exodus of members into war service or other defense activities has doubtless affected reading habits.

The open book shelves were checked and a few more books were transferred to the Rare Book Section; among them some splendid examples of 16th century European printing from early presses in Antwerp, Bologna, Cologne and other cities, also a copy of John Rotheram's "Essay on Faith," New York 1767 (a rare James Parker imprint, no copy of which is located in Evan's bibliography of Americana). In the Theology section, two books were found bearing John Sharpe's characteristic autograph and motto "*Ad quid venisti?*". These were placed with the Sharpe Collection, from which they had been separated for many years, for we do not find them in any extant inventory of the collection. Another "find" was Edward Stillingfleet's "A Letter to a Deist," London 1677, which bears the library's first bookplate. We know of no other book in the library with this bookplate, which was the issue used prior to the Revolution, thus indicating that it was one of the few books to withstand the pillaging of the British troops during the year 1776-1777, when they occupied New York.

Two Revolutionary broadsides and the first issue of the New York Evening Post were loaned to the Museum of the City of New York for their "Extra! Extra!" exhibit, which depicted the development of journalism in New York. In order to check on certain facts in a forthcoming picture, one of the motion picture concerns in Hollywood requested us to rush to them by air mail, the book which gave that information. An exhibit of the best sellers of a half century ago were sent to the Port Washington Public Library to help celebrate their 50th anniversary.

Among our gifts during the past year were the 1640 edition of Ben Jonson's "Workes" from Mrs. Henry A. Henriques, and more family manuscripts from Mrs. Walter Bowne. The two volume edition of the "Diary of Gino Speranza" was presented by Mrs. Speranza.

We are collecting a file of autographs of our author members, which we hope will become as interesting as are those of authors who used the library in the past. These signatures have been largely found on letters requesting or acknowledging the library's help, from writers such as Martha Lamb, Benson J. Lossing, Lydia Maria Child, John Bigelow, Hamilton Fish, James Kent, John L. Cadwalader, Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, William Cullen Bryant and many others. The list of our present author members has grown to proportions impressive enough to record (~~see attached list~~). One of our living authors paid a handsome tribute to the Library in a recent issue of the NEW YORKER when he hailed the fact that the water taps in the washrooms of this library "stay on without being held."

Approximately 2500 of our most valuable books, documents and manuscripts have been sent out of the city for safekeeping "for the duration." They have been wrapped individually, packed in cartons, and these clearly marked for later identification. This storage arrangement was made possible through the cooperation of the New York Public Library and the State of New York. Other valuable records have been placed in protected bank vaults.