

22 Apr 1906. cont'd

confined to Virginia and to Richmond. It is the occasion of surprised comment from strangers visiting the library, and it causes a revulsion of feelings on the part of those who are not accustomed to the sight. How one can grow accustomed to it is a wonder.)

The United States Bureau of Education Report for 1905 gives the number of books in this library as 50,000, making it the second largest in the State. The University library leads with 60,000. This estimate does not take into account the large and valuable manuscript collections of these two libraries.

In the manuscript department Mr. Kennedy found many distressing gaps. To discover and recover the many missing links in the chain of Virginia's history he has worked untiringly, but the gravity of the situation is such that he has secured the appointment and services of an expert to conduct the department of archives and history. Mr. H. J. Eckensrod, a Ph. D., of Johns Hopkins, has charge of this work, and he will endeavor to secure the valuable documentary literature whose dispersal into distant States, by private collectors, is so much to be regretted. It is difficult to understand the pride which moves the impecunious descendants of distinguished Virginians to sell their precious papers to distant collectors, when the State would buy them and cherish them.

At least 6,000 Virginians have contributed in various ways to literature. In order to make a complete list of all works by Virginians, all works on Virginia or on Virginians, as well as those written on Virginia soil, the department of State Bibliography has been established this year.

Mr. Clayton Torrence is in charge of this work and he will, as the first step, begin with cataloguing all the historic and biographical material to be found in the files of Virginia's early newspapers, 1736-1850. He will then visit all the leading libraries in this country and abroad, in his search after titles of all such works. The vast resources of the finely catalogued libraries of today make this task possible. It will take ten years, at least, but until this is accomplished, the great demand for a narrative and critical history of Virginia will remain unsatisfied.

Another of Mr. Kennedy's enterprises of great pith and moment has been the establishing of the Bureau

of Comparative Legislation, during the recent session, for the benefit of the legislators. New York and Wisconsin are the only States which have established this special service. By this systematic service, the legislators are enabled to familiarize themselves, on short notice, with all the laws of other States, on given subjects. The excellence of this service rendered during the Assembly of 1905-1906 no doubt greatly influenced the legislators to vote for the liberal library appropriation asked for by the Library Board. In its history of seventy-eight years, this was the first money that had been given to the State library by the State—its only source of revenue for all purposes of maintenance had been the selling of State documents.

No State has or ever had a finer library board than the gentlemen who direct the affairs of the Virginia State Library—Hon. A. C. Gordon of Staunton, chairman; C. V. Meredith and S. S. P. Patten of Richmond, John W. Fishburne of Roanoke, and Judge Theodore S. Garnett of Norfolk.

The next article will be upon two features of Mr. Kennedy's administration, which may be said to be even more important than any already mentioned—the Traveling Library System, and the editing of the Proceedings of the House of Burgesses of Virginia.