



VIEW FROM THE CAPITOL, SHOWING THE MAIN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY.

## THE NATION'S LIBRARY.

BY THE LIBRARIAN.

WITH PICTURES BY E. POTTHAST.

### I. THE NEW BUILDING.



A CONSOLE, MAIN VESTIBULE.  
HERBERT ADAMS, SCULPTOR.

THE monumental building provided for the extensive collections of the Library of Congress at Washington represents about nine years of construction, besides fourteen years of preliminary agitation and discussion. The act of April 15, 1886, authorizing the erection of a separate library building was the fruit of a public necessity growing out of the rapid increase, beyond all capacity within the Capitol to hold them, of the nation's books. Several proposed measures for this end had been postponed from year to year by interests deemed more important

or more pressing, or by differences concerning a proper site, plan, and cost, until the act referred to secured fully two thirds of the votes of both houses of Congress.

The site selected was an ideal one in respect to elevation, salubrity, and dry, solid foundations for a massive edifice of granite. It abuts upon the park of the Capitol, being about 1500 feet distant from that building on the east, and it is surrounded by four streets with ample approaches. The white

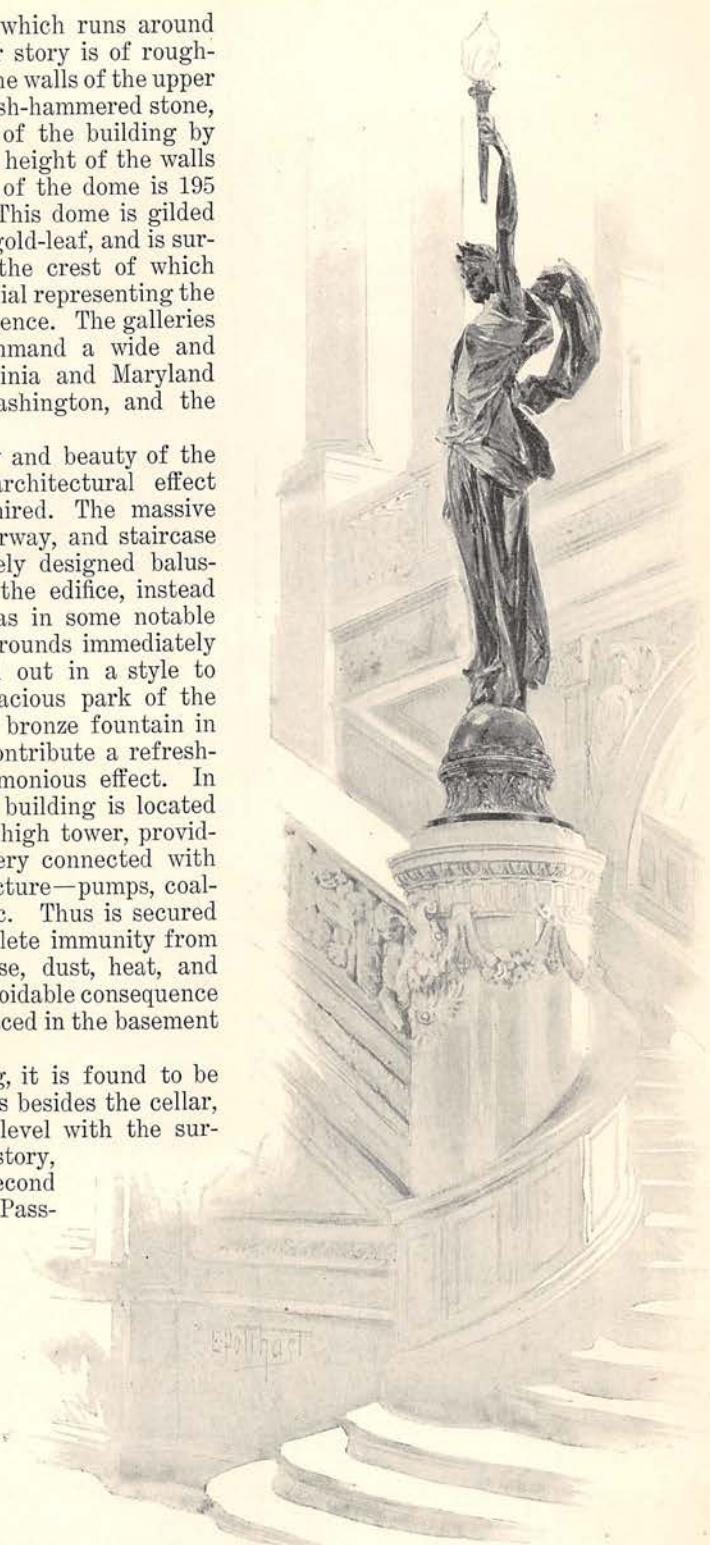
granite which forms the exterior walls of the building is from quarries in Concord, New Hampshire, and in color is nearly as light as the marble walls of the Capitol. The inner walls, facing the four spacious courts, are in part of a slightly darker granite from Maryland, and partly of white enameled brick resembling porcelain in color, and producing a light and cheerful effect. The dimensions of the library building are 470 by 340 feet, covering about three and a half acres of ground. In style the building belongs to the Italian Renaissance, and four corner pavilions, together with the central front, are moderately projected, completely relieving any monotony incident to so long a façade. The solid and massive granite walls are further relieved by many windows, the casings of which are treated in high relief, and by sixteen ornate pillars and capitals in the central front, with twelve columns in each of the corner pavilions. In the keystones of thirty-three window arches are carved in the granite thirty-three human heads, representing types of various races of men—a unique feature, furnishing an object-lesson in ethnology as well as in decoration. Four colossal figures, each representing Atlas, are carved below the roof on the central pavilion, surmounted by a pediment with sculptured American eagles, and an emblematic group in granite. Three spandrels, carved in granite above the arches of the three main entrance doors, represent Art, Science, and Literature. The whole edifice is surmounted



by a carved balustrade which runs around the building. The lower story is of rough-surfaced granite, while the walls of the upper stories are of smooth bush-hammered stone, relieved at the corners of the building by vermiculated work. The height of the walls is 69 feet, and the apex of the dome is 195 feet from the ground. This dome is gilded with a thick coating of gold-leaf, and is surmounted by a lantern the crest of which terminates in a gilded finial representing the ever-burning torch of Science. The galleries of the upper story command a wide and noble view of the Virginia and Maryland heights, the city of Washington, and the river Potomac.

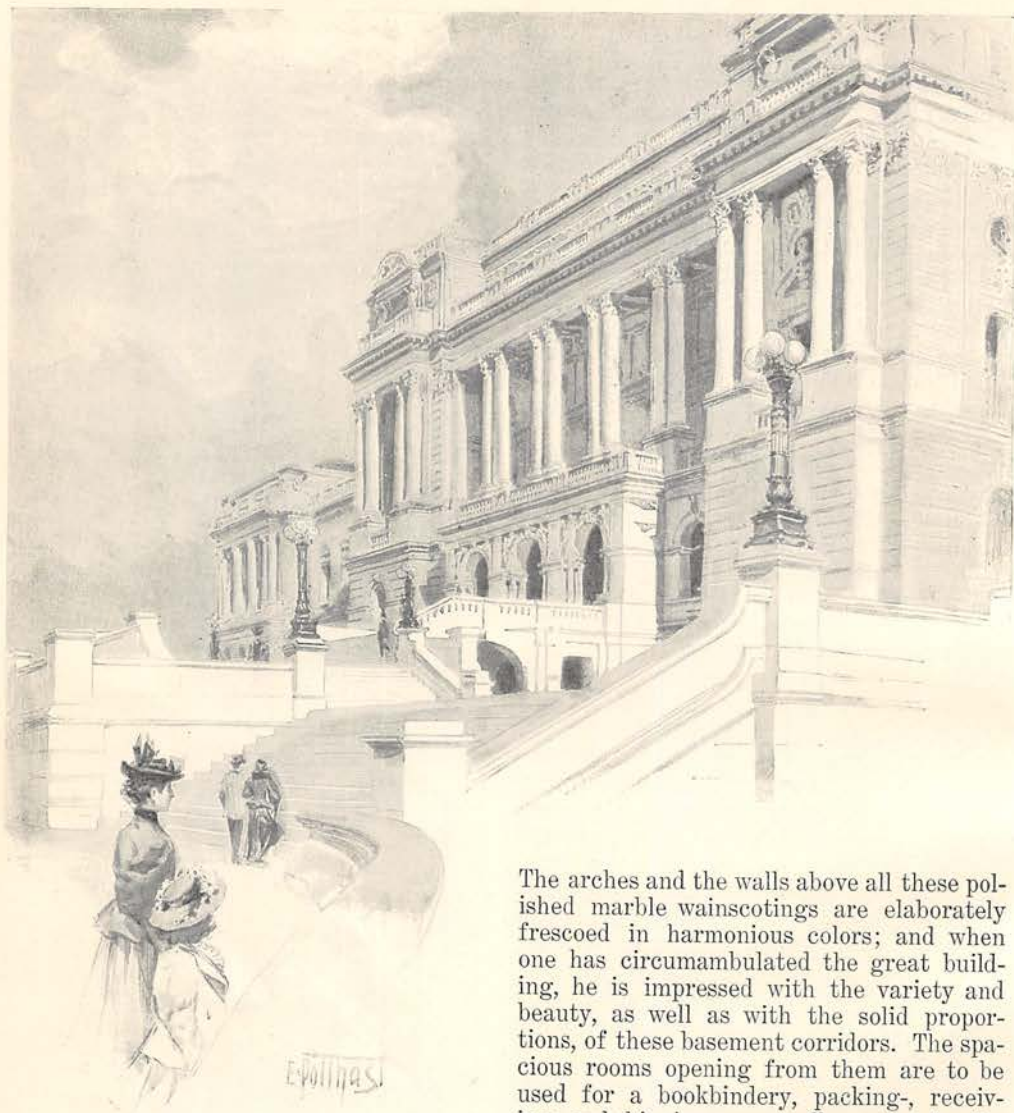
The combined solidity and beauty of the exterior produce an architectural effect which is generally admired. The massive granite approaches, doorway, and staircase with its heavy but finely designed balustrades, lend dignity to the edifice, instead of detracting from it, as in some notable public buildings. The grounds immediately surrounding it are laid out in a style to correspond with the spacious park of the Capitol, and a beautiful bronze fountain in the central front will contribute a refreshing adjunct to the harmonious effect. In the rear of the library building is located a granite annex with a high tower, providing for all the machinery connected with the heating of the structure—pumps, coal-vaults, steam-boilers, etc. This is secured within the library complete immunity from those nuisances of noise, dust, heat, and odors which are the unavoidable consequence when such plants are placed in the basement of any public building.

Entering the building, it is found to be divided into three stories besides the cellar, namely, a ground floor level with the surrounding streets, a first story, or library floor, and a second story, or gallery floor. Passing into the basement under heavy groined arches, the ceilings of which are frescoed in simple designs, we enter one of the four long, spacious corridors which extend all around the building. The feature of all these wide passageways is that they are wainscoted or are lined entirely



BRONZE LAMP-BEARER OF THE GRAND STAIRCASE. PHILIP MARTINY, SCULPTOR.





CENTRAL PAVILION, SHOWING MAIN ENTRANCE.

with American marbles coming from three different States, and embracing the handsomest colored marbles which this country produces. The western corridor (nearest to the Capitol) is of two shades of mottled blue Vermont marble from quarries at Brandon. The south wing is lined with what we may call Champlain marble, from the Swanton quarries near that lake, a very rich red-and-white stone, most effective to the eye. In the eastern corridor (360 feet in length), a Georgia marble from Pickens County, in black and white veins, has been used with beautiful effect. Finally, the north wing is lined with Tennessee marble of a light chocolate color.

The arches and the walls above all these polished marble wainscotings are elaborately frescoed in harmonious colors; and when one has circumambulated the great building, he is impressed with the variety and beauty, as well as with the solid proportions, of these basement corridors. The spacious rooms opening from them are to be used for a bookbindery, packing-, receiving-, and shipping-rooms, office-rooms for the heads of the watch and superintendence of the building, and for storage purposes.

Ascending to the first or library floor, which is also entered from the outside by the granite staircase and bronze doors, the vestibule is reached, through which, decorated elaborately with white marble and gilded ceiling, one enters the foyer, or grand staircase hall. This superb apartment is constructed throughout of the finest Italian marble, highly polished. From its four sides rise lofty rounded columns with Corinthian capitals richly carved, and its heavy but very graceful arches are adorned with marble rosettes, palm-leaves, and foliated designs of exquisite finish and delicacy. The lofty height of this fine entrance-hall, rising 72



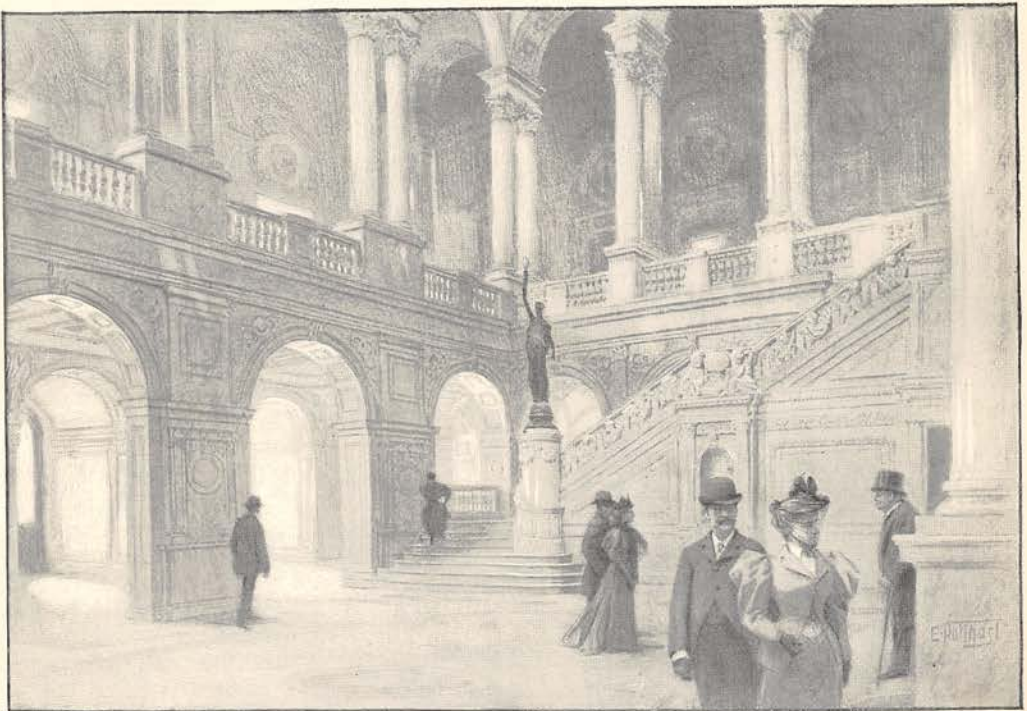
feet to the skylight of stained glass, with its ornate vaulted ceiling and grand double-staircase, and its white marble balustrades leading up on each side to the galleries above, produces an architectural effect both harmonious and imposing. It has been styled «a vision in polished stone» and «a dream of beauty»; but only readers who have seen it can be expected to appreciate such terms of praise.

Entering through this spacious hall, we pass into the reading-room, or central rotunda, by wide corridors adorned with rich mosaic ceilings. This public reading-room is octagonal in shape, with a diameter of 100 feet, and is lighted from above by eight large semicircular windows 32 feet wide, bearing the arms of all the States and Territories in color. At intervals eight massive pillars rise to the height of 40 feet, their bases being of dark Tennessee marble surmounted by heavy columns of lighter red Numidian marble, and crowned by emblematic statues of heroic size. The wall-space of the reading-room is of yellow Siena marble, with numerous arches and balustrades rising to the height of the upper gallery in a double tier, and having an extremely rich and beautiful effect. There are in all seventy-seven arches, the lower tier being intercalated with pilas-

ters and architraves carved in classic sculpture. All these beautiful architectural effects are embodied in that richest of all known colored marbles which comes from the quarries of the Siena monastery, and their soft, warm, and mellow lights and shades are a pleasure to the eye.

The reading-room is fitted with mahogany desks for about two hundred and fifty readers, allowing each four feet of working-space. In the center, slightly raised above the surrounding floor, are the desks of the superintendent and his assistants, with the card-catalogue of the library in a long series of drawers grouped about the inner circle, while the circular shelves outside the railing provide readers with an assortment of catalogues, bibliographies, and other works of reference to be used freely without the formality of tickets. Within this central desk-space, which commands every part of the reading-room, is an extensive series of pneumatic tubes communicating with the several stack-rooms in which books are stored, and there is to be introduced a system of book-carriers for the speedy service of books to readers from any part of the outlying book repositories.

Opening out from the central reading-room on each side are two extensive iron book-stacks, each of the capacity of about



THE GRAND STAIRCASE HALL, OF CARRARA MARBLE.



800,000 volumes. These stacks are nine stories in height, each tier of shelves being just seven feet high, and each stack rising 65 feet, tier over tier, to the roof. All the floors are of white marble, and every book can be reached by the hand at once. The shelves are made of rolled steel, not solid, but in open bars, very light and firm, and so coated with magnetic oxid as to render them as smooth as glass. The space between the bars secures ventilation for the books, as well as immunity in a good degree from accumulations of dust. They are adjustable by an easy movement to any height for books of various sizes. This shelf system and stacks were designed by Bernard R. Green, engineer in charge during the construction of the building. The book-stacks are lighted by windows of plate-glass without sash, each window being a single plate, and dust-proof, the ventilation of the stack-rooms being from the upper tier of

windows, on the down-draft system. Three elevators are provided for the three stack-rooms, and three for public use in other parts of the library building.

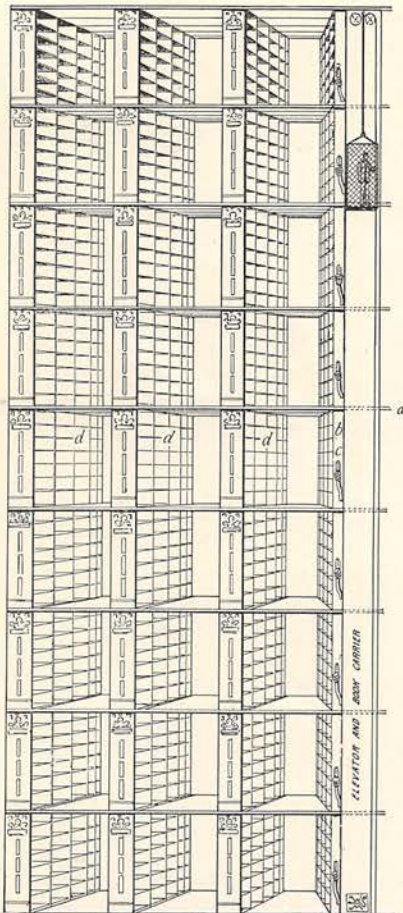
The spacious rooms on the first floor, outside the central reading-room, are designed for the copyright office, or public records, a catalogue-room, a special reading-room for the Senate, and another for the House of Representatives, an apartment for the Toner Library (presented to the Government), committee-rooms, librarian's office, etc. The Smithsonian Scientific Library, long deposited with the Library of Congress, will be placed in the smaller stack-room on the eastern side of the building, which will hold about 100,000 volumes.

The second floor of the building has four spacious open corridors surrounding it, decorated as to walls and ceilings with frescos and mural paintings, and with numerous tablet inscriptions from the great writers of the world. It contains an extensive hall designed for an art gallery, a hall for maps and charts, and three or four spacious exhibition-halls in which choice specimens of early typography, engraving, and Americana will be exhibited in glass cases.

The capacity of those portions of the library building already shelved is ample for about 1,900,000 volumes, there being about forty-four miles of shelves in position. Besides this, there is space which may ultimately be finished with book-stacks to accommodate about 2,500,000 additional volumes; and the extensive inner courts may still further serve posterity for book storage to the extent of 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 volumes more. When it is considered that the largest existing library numbers less than 2,500,000 volumes, it will be seen how extensive is the provision for future growth for at least a century or two to come.

An underground tunnel between the Capitol and the library building will transmit rapidly any books wanted for congressional use and not found in the reference library at the Capitol.

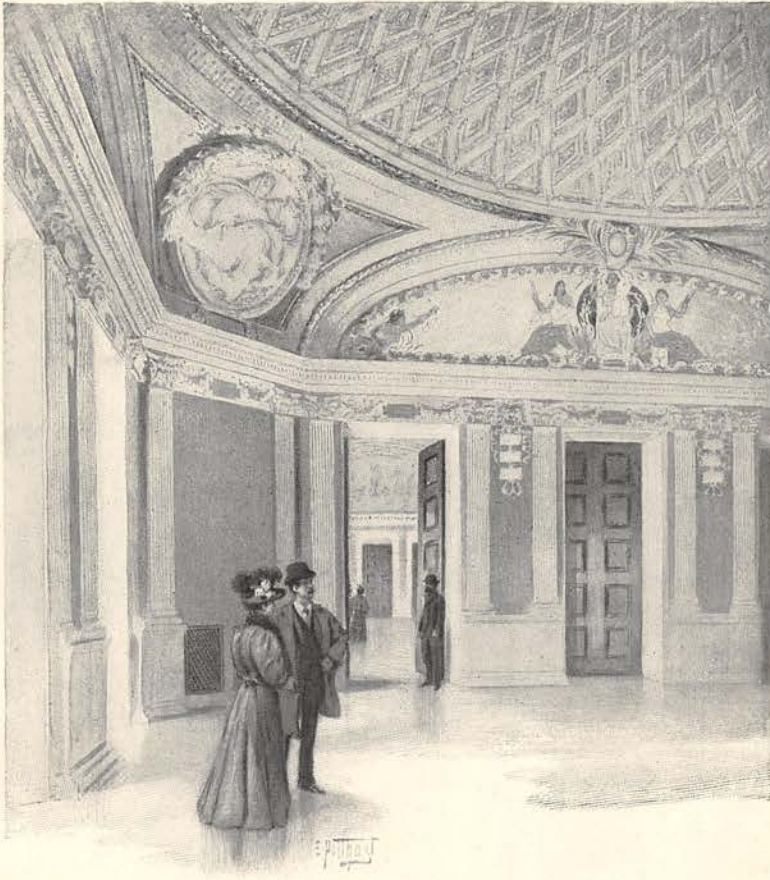
The floor-area of the library in its first story is about 111,000 square feet, that of the British Museum being a little more than 90,000 square feet, and that of the building for the State, War, and Navy departments 92,000 square feet. The ultimate cost of the entire edifice, including decorations and furnishings, will be about \$6,300,000, or a little more than half the cost of the government building last named, and it will be completed within the limit of cost fixed by Congress.



A BOOK-STACK.

*a*, flooring; *b*, pneumatic tube; *c*, carrier; *d*, shelves.





SOUTHWEST PAVILION—THE EXHIBITION-ROOM.

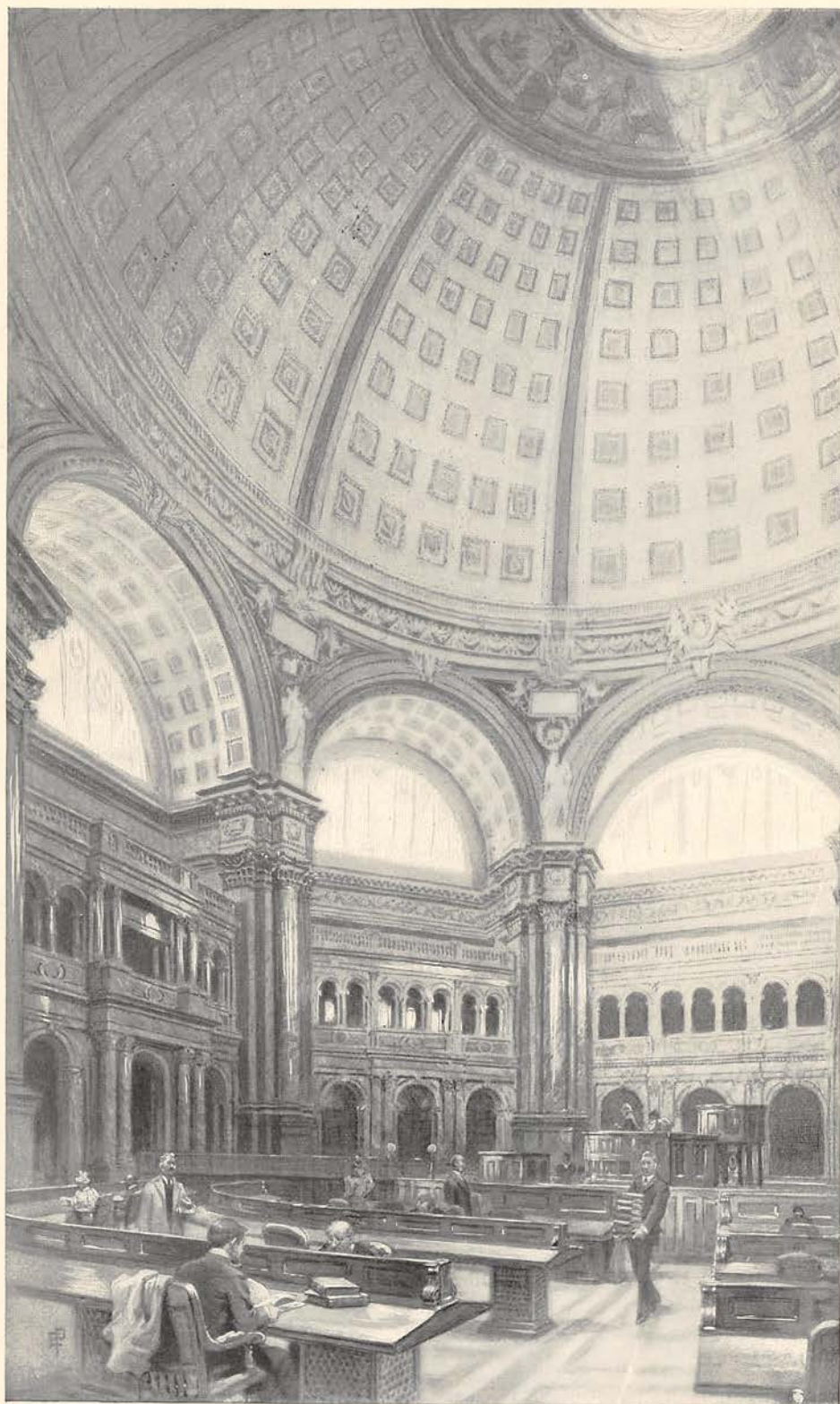
In design and in construction the two great ends of architecture, use and beauty, appear to have been well attained in this government building, a structure erected not for the present generation alone, but for many yet to come.

## II. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.

WHAT is the function of a government library? is a question which becomes more than ever pertinent in view of the impending opening at Washington of the noble building to which this article is devoted. That this edifice is a permanent, fire-proof, and fitting home for the nation's books, representing the assiduous gatherings of nearly a hundred years, is already recognized by all. That the mission of the great library which it is to contain is a manifold one, reaching far beyond the limits of its locality and the present age, is perhaps less widely appreciated.

Founded in the year 1800 by the modest

appropriation of five thousand dollars «for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress at the said city of Washington,» this collection has grown, notwithstanding the ravages of two fires, to the present aggregate of 740,000 volumes. The acquisition of the Jefferson Library in 1815, the Force Historical Library in 1865, the Smithsonian Library in 1867, and the Toner collection in 1882, all constituted specially important and valuable accessions to its stores. And by the enactment of the copyright law of 1870, followed by the international copyright act of 1891, this library



THE PUBLIC READING-ROOM.



became entitled to receive two copies of all books, periodicals, and other publications claiming the protection of copyright in the United States.

While its primary function has been and still is to furnish the national legislature with all the aids in their far-reaching and responsible duties which a comprehensive library can supply, its more extensive province has made it the conservator of the nation's literature. By the wise legislation of Congress it has been made the one designated legal repository of the entire product of the American press, so far as issued under the government guaranty of copyright. If this salutary and conservative measure had been in force from the beginning of copyright in 1790, instead of being confined to the last twenty-five years, we should now be in possession of an unapproached and unattainable completeness in every department of American books. In the absence of any central place of deposit, the copyright requirements of earlier years were most negligently and imperfectly complied with, and multitudes of books have wholly disappeared, or are found only in second-hand book-shops or in the cabinets of curious collectors. Considered in a scientific view or as absolute knowledge, the loss may not be greatly to be deplored; but, taking a single example, let the reader consider how substantial a benefit it would be to those interested in the profession of education to be assured of finding in a national collection every school- or text-book produced in the United States during the period of a century. Writers for the press may learn as much from the failures of their predecessors as from their successes. And the historian of American literature who would be thoroughly comprehensive cannot overlook the forgotten books read, and perhaps admired, by former generations. Nor can any nation claiming to hold a front rank in civilization shirk the obligation of preserving, in one inclusive and not exclusive collection open to the whole people, all the books which the country produces. From the lack of care in the past to enforce this judicious policy, the National Library of Great Britain has been for years buying up at great cost the dramas, pamphlets, chap-books, and other productions of English literature in past ages, to fill innumerable gaps in its great collection.

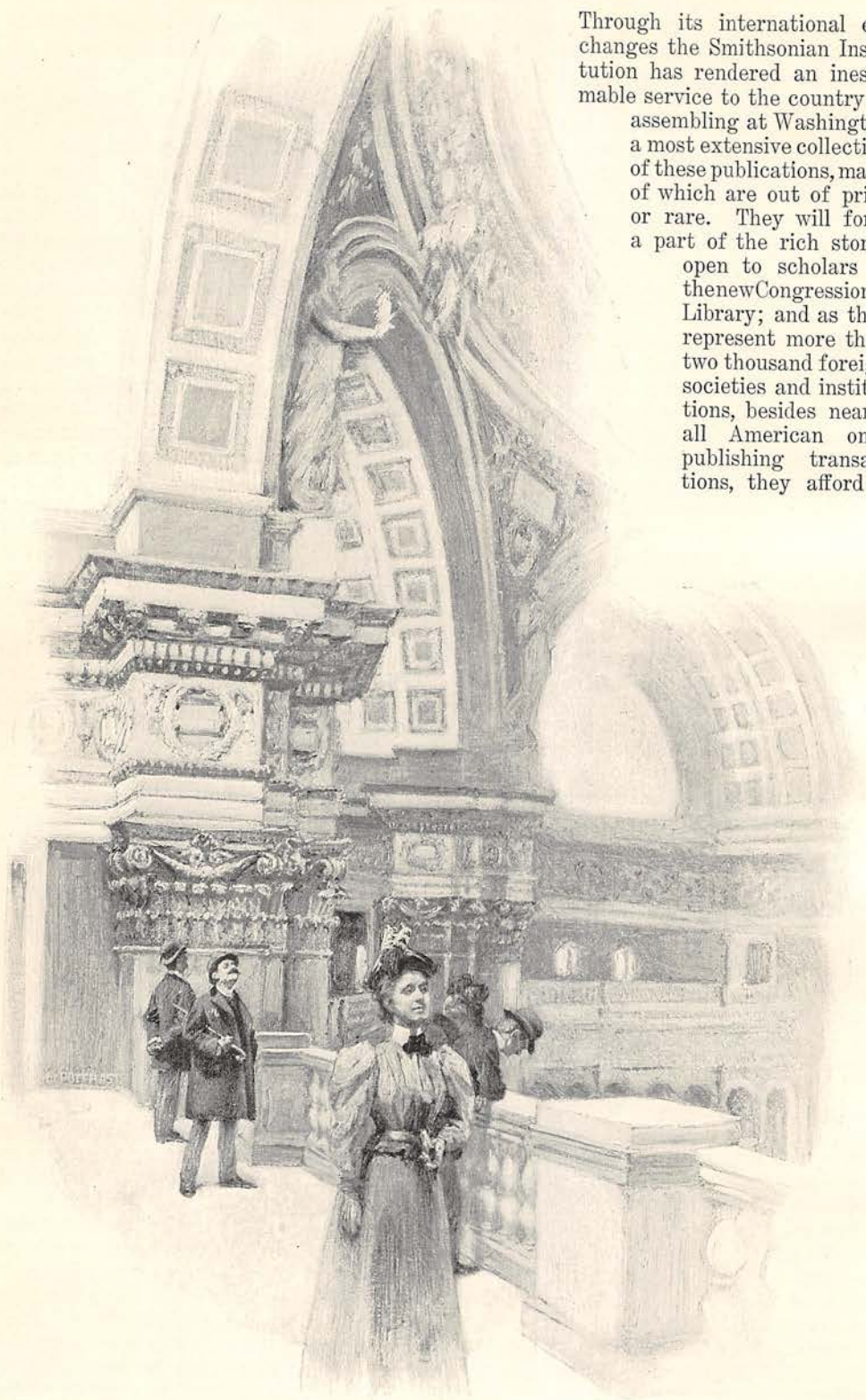
Where in America can one find even a respectably full collection of the pamphlet literature of which the country has been so prolific? This class of writings appears fore-

doomed in each generation to swift and irremediable destruction, unless preserved in public libraries. Yet its great value, as reflecting in condensed and often masterly style the real spirit of the age which produced it, with its controversies, political, religious, and social, and the ideas which moved the public mind, has been recognized by all philosophic historians as incalculable. If all authors of pamphlets would send their productions to the library of the Government, they would not only secure the preservation of their own thought, but would be found to have performed a useful public service. As an instance of the historical value of pamphlet literature, take the Thomason collection of twenty thousand pieces, covering the Cromwellian period in England. Its owner sedulously collected and laid aside every issue of the press from 1649 to 1660; and the collection, after escaping the ravages of fire and of two hostile armies, was finally bought by the king, and afterward presented to the British Museum Library. Carlyle made extensive use of this inestimable collection. In like manner, the great La Bédoyère collection of printed matter relating to the French Revolution, purchased for the National Library of France in 1863, covered exhaustively the issues of the press, including periodicals, for twenty-five years, and its 15,500 volumes were the fruit of fifty years' assiduous research by an enthusiastic and untiring collector. Another devotee to the collection and preservation of historical material, the late Peter Force of Washington, was for forty years engaged in amassing a rich library of manuscripts, newspapers, books, pamphlets, and maps illustrative of American history. He ransacked the book-shops of the cities, imported from abroad, and was a frequent bidder at auctions, where he secured the Duane and the Wolcott collections of pamphlets, representing the carefully preserved and bound gatherings of a Republican and a Federalist during many years of public and political life. The Force collection was fortunately saved from dispersion, and now forms an invaluable part of the Congressional Library.

In another field of library collection, which the Smithsonian Institution may be said to have made its own, consider the value of a complete series of the reports, transactions, and other publications of scientific bodies. Embracing as these do the results of the labors of men of science in every field of thought or investigation, they furnish material of the first importance to the student.



Through its international exchanges the Smithsonian Institution has rendered an inestimable service to the country in assembling at Washington a most extensive collection of these publications, many of which are out of print or rare. They will form a part of the rich stores open to scholars in the new Congressional Library; and as they represent more than two thousand foreign societies and institutions, besides nearly all American ones publishing transactions, they afford a

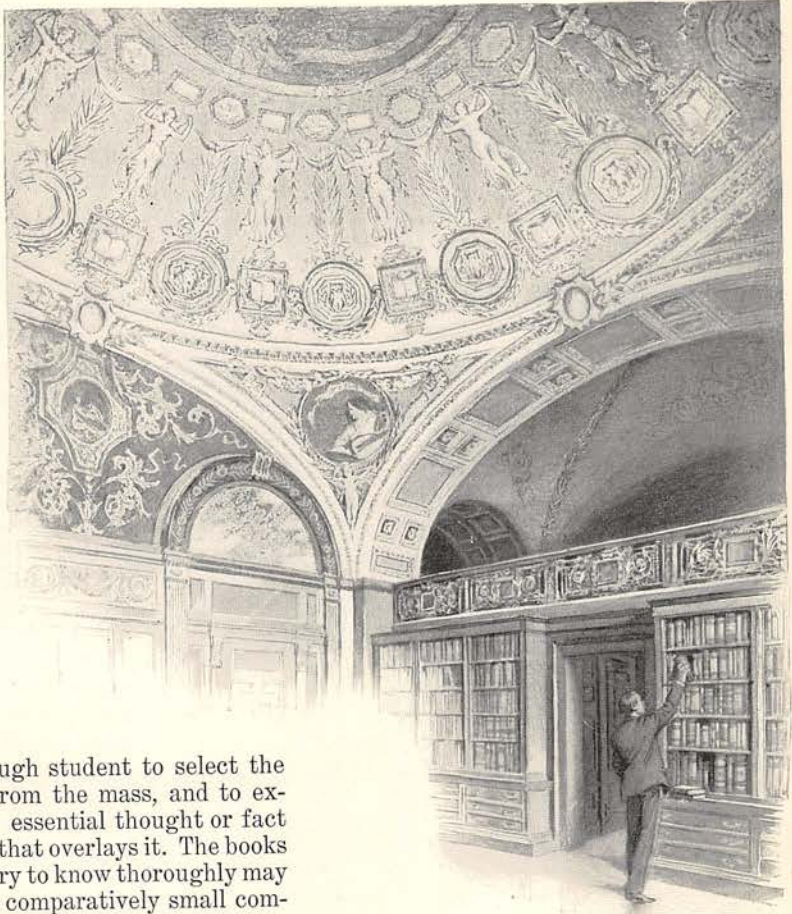


THE MAIN READING-ROOM GALLERY.



copious repository of scientific information for public use and reference.

That a library is useful and valuable in the direct ratio of its completeness is a postulate that may be termed self-evident, and fairly so. «The true university of these days,» says Thomas Carlyle, «is a collection of books.» While the vast extent of the world's literature may fill the ordinary reader with dismay, it needs only the practised eye and quick discernment of the thorough student to select the more important from the mass, and to extract in each the essential thought or fact from the verbiage that overlays it. The books which it is necessary to know thoroughly may be comprised in a comparatively small compass. The rest are to be preserved in the great literary conservatories—some as memorials of the past, some as chronicles of the times, and not a few as models to be avoided. It is easy to pronounce the great majority of the books in our larger libraries «rubbish,» and to propose, as has frequently been done, to make a bonfire of the trash which the copyright law brings into the government library at Washington. But the grave question confronts us, Where are we to begin? Are there any judgments likely to concur as to what is to be preserved? It is a common experience that the book which was nothing to us at one time came to have a most unexpected value at another. When the priest and the barber, in the immortal romance of Cervantes, sought to purge the library of Don Quixote of the perilous stuff which had bewildered his artless brain, the self-consti-



THE LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE.

tuted censors were not agreed as to what should be condemned to the flames. Do the learned editors who would like to have the great library «weeded» ever reflect that their own works in great folio might be the first to go out, to make room for smaller books, if not better ones?

The ever-widening sphere and influence of the periodical press—one of the great phenomena of modern times—suggest the importance of preserving in our most representative libraries a copious selection from the daily newspapers, and a full collection of the literature of magazines and reviews. While no library, however comprehensive, could possibly store all the periodical publications (now amounting in the United States alone to more than twenty thousand, as against only eight thousand in 1875), it is none the less its proper function to provide full sets of the more important ones. They



A. R. SPOFFORD.





THE NORTH CORRIDOR OF THE GRAND STAIRCASE HALL.

afford the completest mirror of the times to be derived from any single source. Taken together, they supply the richest material for the historian and the student of comparative civilization in all its aspects—literary, political, moral, social, religious, and economic. More and more the best thought and the inventive genius of the age become reflected in their pages. No investigator in any department whose aim is full information can afford to neglect this fruitful mine, where his most valuable material will frequently be found; and it is to be considered that unless the representative library preserves them, a very large portion of them will not be preserved in accessible form at all. The destiny of most periodicals is swift destruction. The obvious causes of their rapid disappearance are their great volume, inevitably growing with each year, the difficulty of finding room to store them in our small dwellings, the ravages of fire, and the continual demand of paper for the uses of trade. Add to these the

technical, philosophical, social, fashionable, medical, legal, educational, agricultural, bibliographical, commercial, financial, historical, mechanical, nautical, military, artistic, musical, dramatic, typographical, sanitary, sporting, economic, and miscellaneous, is it any wonder that specialists and writers for the press seek and find ready aid therein for their many-sided labors?

To the skeptical mind, accustomed to undervalue what does not happen to come within the range of its pet idols or pursuits, the observation of a single day's multifold research in the great library might be in the nature of a revelation. Here one finds an industrious compiler intent upon the history of American duels, for which the many files of Northern and Southern newspapers, reaching back to the beginning of the century, afford copious material. At another table sits a deputation from a department, commissioned to make a record of all notable strikes and labor troubles for a series of

large cost of binding sets of periodicals, and the preference of the majority of families for books, and the reasons why very few private subscribers to periodicals can afford to bind and preserve them are apparent. So much the more important is it that public libraries should not neglect a duty which is due both to their own age and to posterity. These unconsidered trifles of to-day, which are looked upon as not worth space to store or money to bind, are the very things which the man of the future, intent upon the reconstruction of the past, will search for with eagerness. Accordingly, it has been the policy of the library of the United States for nearly thirty years past to preserve and bind up at least two of the daily journals of each State and Territory, and all the magazines and reviews obtainable, with a selection of the weekly press. No department of the library is so widely used, not only for purposes of reference, but of study. When it is considered how far-reaching are the fields embraced in the wide range of these periodicals, literary, religious, scientific, political,



years, to be gleaned from the columns of the journals of leading cities. Hither flock the ever-present searchers into family history, laying under contribution all the genealogies and town and county histories which the country has produced. An absorbed reader of French romances sits side by side with a clergyman perusing homilies or endeavoring to elucidate, through a mass of commentators, a special text. Here are to be found ladies in pursuit of costumes of every age; artists turning over the great folio galleries of Europe for models or suggestions; lawyers seeking precedents or leading cases; journalists verifying dates, speeches, conventions, or other forgotten facts; engineers studying the literature of railways or machinery; actors or amateurs in search of plays or works on the dramatic art; physicians looking up biographies of their profession or the history of epidemics; students of heraldry after coats of arms; inventors searching the specifications and drawings of patents; historical students pursuing some special field in American or foreign annals; scientists verifying facts or citations by original authorities; searchers tracing personal residences or deaths in old directories or newspapers; querists seeking for the words of some half-remembered passage in poetry or prose, or the original author of one of the myriad proverbs which float about the world without a father; architects or builders of houses comparing hundreds of designs and models; teachers perusing works on education or comparing text-books new or old; readers absorbing the great poems of the world; writers in pursuit of new or curious themes among books of antiquities or folk-lore; students of all the questions of finance and economic science; naturalists seeking to trace through many volumes descriptions of species; pursuers of military or naval history or science; enthusiasts venturing into the occult domains of spiritualism or thaumaturgy; explorers of voyages and travels in every region of the globe; fair readers, with dreamy eyes, devouring the last psychological novel; devotees of musical art perusing the lives or the scores of great composers; college and high-school students intent upon «booking up» on themes of study or composition or debate; and a host of other seekers after suggestion or information in a library of encyclopedic range.

This collection, extensive as it is, still falls far short of completeness in many important directions. While its quality is by no means commensurate with its quantity, it yet pos-

sesses a large share of the standard works in all departments of science and literature. Its greatest strength lies in the fields of jurisprudence, political science, American and British history, and what are known as Americana. Its deficiencies are most marked in books in foreign languages, and they are notably great in editions of the classics, in philology, in Oriental literature, and in many of the sciences. With all its manifold defects, it may be said that the library, so far as it is the fruit of selection, has been formed with a view to the highest utility, and with some general unity of plan. Congress may be expected, now that the expenditure upon the building has ceased, to take a more liberal view of its wants, and to make wise provision for such an increase of its intellectual stores as shall be worthy of the nation and the age. Its new and magnificent building, through the far-sighted liberality of the people's representatives, has



A GLIMPSE OF THE GRAND STAIRCASE HALL.





AN EXHIBITION-HALL, SHOWING A PORTION OF THE FRESCOS BY GARI MELCHERS.

been planned and organized to accommodate ultimately, with every convenience of administration. In the judgment of all who have seen it, its architectural and artistic beauty has been pronounced fully equal to its utility. Its gallery of art will soon be filled with an instructive exhibit of the progress

of the arts of design in every form; and it may be hoped that the large-minded policy which has created this noble temple of science, literature, and art will endow it with adequate means of growth, so that its ample shelves may before long be filled with the learning of all lands.

*A. R. Spofford.*

## THE DECORATIONS IN THE NEW CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.

THE scene in the new Congressional Library at Washington, when I visited it in the summer of 1896, was interesting and impressive. A guard admitted me at a small door under the imposing terraces and flights of steps which form the approach to the main entrance of the building. I walked through corridor after corridor, ascended broad stairways, and found my way through spacious galleries and vestibules to the great rotunda in the middle of the vast construction. Here was an immense scaffolding rising a hundred

feet or more to the base of the dome, and high above that, as I looked up, I saw the iron elliptical truss-work that swung from the platform of the scaffolding to the top of the dome, carrying ladders and landing-places to the crown of the lantern, 160 feet from the floor. Scores of skilled workmen were carving, fitting, and polishing. Some were perched high in the drum of the dome; others were setting mosaics and laying marble floors. In corridors and halls were rolling platforms and bridges full of busy





PAINTED BY KENYON COX.

«SCIENCE» (LUNETTE).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.

craftsmen painting in fresco on the vaulted ceilings. Four or five artists were at work on their decorative compositions in different parts of the building, and one I found, with his assistant, in the crown of the lantern of the dome. The artists, like the workmen, were in overalls, and the atmosphere of the place seemed impregnated with the spirit of art and labor. It was something as it must have been in Florence or Venice in the Renaissance.

On every side there was evidence that the decorative work had been artistically planned, and that it was being intelligently and durably executed. The interior of the new Congressional Library will be a veritable revelation when the public takes possession of it. It might have been very different if it had not fortunately happened that good brains and good culture were called upon to embellish it. Indeed, they were summoned to set right what had been but badly begun; and we may congratulate ourselves and our legislators that by timely action the country has been spared a gift that might have been an architectural failure, and obtains a great building which, whatever may be its faults of detail, is, taken as a whole, imposing and picturesque. The story of the building of the library is given in a statement prepared by

the officials who have been charged by the Government with the duty of bringing the work to completion. By an act of Congress of April 15, 1886, a commission was directed to build a library building after the plans submitted by Messrs. Smithmeyer and Pelz. This commission employed Mr. Smithmeyer, with the title of architect, to supervise and manage, under its direction, the construction of the building. By an act of Congress of October 2, 1888, the act of the 15th of April was repealed, and the chief of engineers of the army, the late General Thomas Lincoln Casey, was placed in charge and directed to prepare plans for a building which should not cost more than \$4,000,000. Such plans were accordingly prepared, with estimates, and submitted to Congress at the opening of the session in December, 1888. In the preparation of these plans Mr. Pelz was employed to make the drawings under the direction of General Casey and Mr. Bernard R. Green, who was appointed to the local charge of the work as superintendent and engineer. For the foundation or main lines of the design the building begun under the act of the 15th of April was used. At the same time that General Casey had the plans prepared for the building limited in cost to \$4,000,000, he also had prepared a set of plans for a building



PAINTED BY GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

«DISCOVERY» (LUNETTE).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.





PAINTED BY KENYON COX.

«MATHEMATICS» AND «PHYSICS» (DETAIL).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.

which would cost about \$6,000,000. These plans were evolved from the original general designs by Smithmeyer and Pelz formerly adopted by Congress, but differed from them in numerous important particulars. By an act of March 2, 1889, the design for the \$6,000,000 building was adopted by Congress. Mr. Pelz was continued as architect under the direction of the chief of engineers, and construction and detail drawings were prepared. In April, 1892, Mr. Pelz's connection with the work came to an end. Upon the death of General Casey in March, 1896, Mr. Green succeeded to his duties and powers in full. In

December, 1892, Edward Pearce Casey, an architect of New York, who had completed his studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was employed to prepare the drawings for the interior architecture and scheme of decoration of the building. It is at this point that the interest of American artists was enlisted; and later on commissions were given out, under Mr. Casey's general direction, for mural and sculptural decoration. The amount of work done by Mr. Casey in designing the principal interiors of the library building is enormous. With the exception of the main portions of the mar-





CEILING. PAINTED BY GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.

ble work in the great staircase hall and the rotunda, designs have been made by him for the decoration of the entire interior. He was occupied more than three years with the work, giving all his time to it, and employing, of course, a number of draftsmen to assist him. His decorative schemes show variety of design, fertility of invention, and an excellent sense of the importance of unity in the ensemble. Under his direction all the work not given out to the artists has been intelligently and skilfully carried out by a corps of decorators, headed by Elmer E. Garnsey for the painters, by Albert Weinert for the sculptors and modelers of ornament, and by H. T. Schladermundt for mosaics and for colored glass. Praise for the excellence of the general decorative work in

the building is due to the young architect who planned it and presented it in its broad aspect and in its detail forms, so that nothing might be misunderstood, and so that the execution by the hands of the craftsmen should realize his conceptions. The color-schemes chosen by the artists for their compositions will be found to harmonize with this general decoration, each of them, before making his sketches, having taken account of the prevailing general tints, and considered their color-effect as the setting for his work. The greater part of the mural pictures have been executed on canvas in artists' studios in New York, Paris, and other places. These large canvases when completed are removed from their stretchers and sent to Washington. The artist follows, and the



pictures are put up under his supervision. The process employed consists in applying a thin bed of composition, of which white lead is the principal ingredient, to the wall or ceiling, and «rolling on» the canvas. In this manner it is fastened smoothly and securely. This process may naturally be most successfully employed where the surface is flat. In France, we are told, painted decoration on canvas has been rolled on concave surfaces by a clever system of goring the canvas, and in one case this was done at Washington. In almost every instance, however, where the surface is concave the painting is done directly on the material of the wall or ceiling itself. Mr. Maynard's ceiling in the southwest pavilion, where the surface is a section of a sphere, and Mr. Blashfield's work in the great rotunda, are cases in point. Both artists executed their designs in place, and spent months, with their assistants, working in the building. So, too, did Mr. Shirlaw, Mr. Barse, and others.

«The Evolution of Civilization» is the subject of the decoration by Edwin Howland Blashfield. It is composed of the collar of the dome in the great central rotunda, and the crown of the lantern. The collar is about 140 feet in circumference, surrounds the eye of the lantern, and is at the height of 125 feet from the pavement of the rotunda. It contains twelve seated colossal figures, each ten feet high. There are twelve cartouches, or tablets, inscribed with the names of the epochs or of the countries which have contributed to the evolution of civilization. These twelve tablets form rhythmical points established between the figures, and under each figure runs a banderole, or streamer, with an inscription referring to the special contribution to civilization of the country or epoch which is represented by the figure above. The wings of all the figures overlap each other and form a dominant factor in the composition, binding together the component parts of the decoration. The figures are divided into four triads. The central figure of each triad is relatively rigid, and the drapery is principally white. The side figures lean toward the central ones, and the drapery is of darker tints. Egypt, with «Written Records» on the tablet, comes first in chronological order. The figure bears the sign of immortality and a tablet inscribed with hieroglyphics. On the throne is shown the cartouche of Mena, the first Egyptian king. Judea (religion) holds stone tablets bearing Hebrew inscriptions. Greece (philosophy) bears a lamp and a scroll. Rome

(administration) has a baton of command and a bundle of fasces. Islam (physics) holds a book and a glass retort. The Middle Ages (languages) bears a sword denoting chivalry, a model of a church typifying architecture, and a tiara and keys, symbols of the church. This figure has the features of Miss Mary Anderson. Italy (the fine arts) holds a palette and a statuette of Michelangelo's «David,» and rests her foot on a capital. The features are those of a young lady of New York, a sculptor. Germany (the art of printing) holds a proof-sheet, and beside her figure is a sixteenth-century printing-press. The features are those of General Thomas Lincoln Casey. Spain (discovery) has as accessories the rudder of a ship and a model of a caravel, and the head shows the features of Mr. William Bailey Faxon the painter. England (literature) bears a volume of Shakspeare, the page being a transcript of the title-page of the first edition of «A Midsummer Night's Dream.» The head is a portrait of Miss Ellen Terry. France (emancipation) sits upon a cannon and holds out the «Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme.» The features of the figure suggest those of the artist's wife. America (science) is depicted with a dynamo and a book as accessories. The head is that of Abraham Lincoln. The heads of the figures are not intended to be absolute portraiture, but characterizations, the features being used because the artist thought them especially suited to the nation or contribution typified. The dominant colors in Mr. Blashfield's decoration are white (the girdle of wings), bluish green (the background of mosaic patterning), and violet (the banderoles). The drapery of the figures harmonizes with these colors, being gradated from white to violet tints, and the violet hues are shaded into yellow and orange. The composition is light in general tone, and carries with great effectiveness at the distances from which it may be seen either from the floor or from the galleries encircling the rotunda. The collar decoration is inclosed around the eye of the lantern and at the outer edge by heavy gilded moldings in the form of garlands of leaves.

The crown of the lantern, consisting of a circular ceiling, contains three figures. A female figure floating among clouds of white and gray, and lifting up a veil which almost envelops her, is depicted looking upward, and represents Human Understanding looking up from finite achievement, as presented in the decoration of the collar, to what is beyond. Two nude figures of boys float at her sides,





PAINTED BY E. H. BLASHFIELD.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.

«ITALY» (DETAIL).



one holding a closed book typifying the end of all things, and the other beckoning to the figures below. The drapery of the central figure is blue, darker than the portions of the sky which appear between the clouds, and the color of the veil is orange. The figure is shown as soaring upward and disappearing in the clouds. It is easy to see that Mr. Blashfield's task was a difficult one, considering the places allotted to him for decoration, the necessity of painting for effect at a great distance, and the importance of his color-scheme as the culminating point in the ensemble of the rotunda. At the ground floor the walls and bases of the piers are constructed of brownish-gray Tennessee marble. At the successive stages of the floors rising to the base of the dome the piers and

pilasters are of yellow Siena and red and yellow Numidian marble. At the base of the dome, running around the drum, is a sculptured frieze composed of bay-leaf garlands and eagles, with two female figures in the round over each of the eight arches, holding up the garland and supporting escutcheons. These figures are the work of Philip Martiny, while the rest of the sculptured stucco ornament in the rotunda is by Albert Weinert. The vault is paneled in sculptured ornament and rosettes. The latter are gilded, and are relieved against a ground of greenish blue. With all these various elements of material and color Mr. Blashfield's decoration is in harmony, and possesses such individuality of itself that it counts as a dominant note in the whole. His great figures, too, are well



PAINTED BY W. L. DODGE.

"AMBITION" (CEILING).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS &amp; CAMERON.



drawn, and his composition is constructed with a firmness that gives it power while it in no way detracts from its effect, which is intended by its position to be without any heaviness of character.

In a hall about 150 feet long, to be used as a museum, Mr. Kenyon Cox has painted two lunettes of semi-elliptical form. They are at the two ends of the long room, and measure 34 feet 7 inches at the base by 9 feet 7 inches in height at the center. The prevailing color-note in the general decoration of this hall is blue. Mr. Cox's subjects are «Art» and «Science.» Each of his decorative panels is divided into three parts by two pedestals bearing flaming tripods, these pedestals coming directly over the pilasters, which are part of the architectural lines of the room. In the middle part of each lunette is a throne raised on steps; at the sides are balustrades. The panel representing «Art» contains five principal figures typifying the five great arts—poetry, sculpture, painting, architecture, and music. «Poetry» occupies of right the central throne. She is draped in white and pale rose-color, bears the lyre, and looks upward with an expression of inspiration. She is crowned with ivy, and points upward with her right hand. On the steps of her throne are two genii, one with a tablet, suggesting study, the other snapping his fingers and dancing, suggesting the gaiety of poetry. The division to the right of the spectator contains the figures of «Sculpture» and «Painting.» «Sculpture» in pale yellow, carries a statuette in her hand, which, while an original figure, recalls the style of Michelangelo. «Painting» leans upon the shoulder of «Sculpture» in an affectionate attitude. Her type is that of the Venetian school of the Renaissance, and she is draped, below the waist only, in dusky yellow. In her hand is a palette set with white, red, yellow, and blue. On the left side of the panel are figures of «Architecture» and «Music.» «Architecture» is leaning on a Gothic column, and is simply draped in a robe of the color of terra-cotta, the long lines of which are meant to signify architectural dignity. Beside her is «Music» in rose-color and violet, with fluttering scarf, playing on the violin, while a winged genius holds before her an open music-book. The scheme of color in this composition, based on rose and yellow, is pale and tawny. The color-scheme of the other lunette, devoted to «Science,» is based on green and blue, but with the use of some warm tints for contrast. In the middle is the figure of «Astronomy,» the



PAINTED BY WALTER SHIRLAW.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY G. C. COX.

«GEOLOGY.»

greatest of the sciences, leaning over a celestial globe held up by one of her attendant genii, and measuring it with a pair of compasses. She is draped in white and blue, and has a crown of stars on her head. A scarf of pale blue is disposed above her in an arch-like curve. As it was impossible to represent all the sciences in his composition, the



artist has selected typical ones. To the right are «Botany» and «Zoölogy,» the sciences dealing with the vegetable and animal kingdoms. «Botany» is clad in a brocaded gown of green and gold, the forms of the pattern recalling vegetable shapes. In her hand is a small oak-tree. «Zoölogy,» a nude seated figure, points with her right hand to a peacock—introduced because of its decorative

markedly full. The artist's resources as a draftsman are especially well shown in the admirable figure of the boy holding the globe, but the drawing of the figures is erudite throughout the work. The room in which the compositions by Mr. Cox are placed has its counterpart on the other side of the building. This room contains decorations by Gari Melchers. The prevailing color in the general



PAINTED BY ROBERT REID.

«HEARING.»

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS &amp; CAMERON.

beauty, but the eyes in its tail may be thought to symbolize the curiosity of science. To the left of «Astronomy» are «Physics,» in brown and yellow, investigating the laws of weight, and «Mathematics,» type of abstract science. The latter figure is clad in salmon-pink and rich blue, and holds an abacus, while a genius at her knee reckons on his fingers the sum set by the beads. They are arranged to count 1896. While both of Mr. Cox's compositions are painted in an extremely high key, the color is suave. The necessity of raising the tints to a very light value by the use of white has not caused them to become harsh, as sometimes happens with less skilful painters. The quality of the color in this work is notable, and, as in the green robe of «Botany,» re-

scheme of decoration is red. Mr. Melchers's subjects are «Peace» and «War.» The two lunettes are painted in the sound and competent manner which characterizes the work of this well-known painter, and were executed in Paris.

Two pavilions, octagonal rooms at the corners of the library building, are decorated by George W. Maynard and William L. Dodge. Two others contain ceilings and panels by Robert Dodge and William B. Van Ingen, the decorative schemes for these having been supplied by Mr. Casey and Mr. Garnsey. Mr. Van Ingen's work in the pavilion and elsewhere is notable for striking color quality, possessing some of the characteristics of the La Farge school. Mr. W. L. Dodge's



composition has «Ambition» for its subject, and four panels on the walls represent «Science,» «Art,» «Music,» and «Poetry.» They were painted in Paris, and the ceiling was exhibited at the Salon of 1896 before being brought to Washington. There are two groups in the composition of the ceiling, one consisting of a figure typifying «Glory,» holding aloft a crown, and majestically pre-

when the entire decoration, if practicable, is executed with the coöperation of the artist who paints the decorative pictures. In this case a most harmonious ensemble has been achieved, and the room has an air of perfect completeness. The panels, semi-elliptical in shape, occupying the upper part of the four longer walls of the room, have as their subjects four epochs of America—«Adventure,»



PAINTED BY ROBERT REID.

«TOUCH.»

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS &amp; CAMERON.

ceding a winged horse, while another figure, symbolizing «Fame,» flies before, holding the bridle of the horse in one hand and a trumpet in the other. The other group, united with the first by a large piece of drapery, consists of a number of figures on a terrace, including one who upsets a flaming brazier at the end of the balustrade, another stretched out dead, others struggling, and a fool with cap and bells. The general aspect of the ceiling is extremely decorative. The decoration of the pavilion containing Mr. Maynard's five works, confided to Mr. Maynard, consists of a general scheme of white and gold, which has been most successfully carried out, and the room shows how satisfactory the result is likely to be

«Discovery,» «Conquest,» and «Civilization.» The ceiling depicts the four elements necessary for development—«Fortitude,» «Valor,» «Courage,» and «Achievement.» The figures and accessories in each of the four panels follow a general arrangement common to all, and the color-schemes, while varied, are designed to balance one another. The panel «Adventure» shows a seated female figure with a drawn sword in one hand and a caduceus in the other, symbolizing courage and daring. To her left is a female figure typifying Spanish adventure, with a hatchet and a Peruvian golden image in her hands. The image signifies booty, which was the object of the quests of the first adventurers. On the right of the central figure is a young woman of



blonde English type, a sword in one hand, and grasping with the other silver pieces of money which fall from a bag. In either corner are the arms of England and Spain. Shields on each side of the principal figure bear the images of Norse ships, and on the background, or field, appear the names of famous adventurers such as Raleigh and Hawkins. The prevailing color is yellow, and the armor of the figures is gold and steel.

In the second panel, «Discovery,» crowned with a laurel wreath of gold, grasps a tiller with her left hand and supports a globe on her knee. On the globe are the outlines of Leonardo da Vinci's map, the first one that is known to have had the name America upon it. On each side of «Discovery» are female figures, one holding a sword, but not in an aggressive position, and a Jacob's-staff, the other a paddle and a chart. In the corners are ornamental figures of mermaids growing out of the border, who hold up corals and pearls. The two shields bear an astrolabe, the primitive quadrant. On the field are the names of great Spanish, French, and English discoverers, but no Portuguese, because their exploits relate to the East Indies, and not to America. The principal colors in this decoration are yellow and blue.

«Conquest» rests her hand on the hilt of a sword, suggesting that her work is done, and her right arm, extended with clenched fist, characterizes her attitude as one of possession and defense. The side figures are in reposeful positions, and bear swords, one entwined with oak, symbolical of the North, the other with palm, symbolical of the South. The arms of Spain and England reappear in the corners, and on the shields are the Pillars of Hercules with the setting sun and the motto «*Ne plus ultra.*» The field shows the names of conquerors such as Pizarro and Standish. The prevailing colors are red and orange. «Civilization» holds an open book on her knees, and bears a torch. One of the two side figures typifying «Manufactures» and «Agriculture» holds a distaff, the other a scythe and a sheaf of wheat. In the corners are mermaids with cotton and Indian corn in their hands, and the device on the shields is a lamp. The field is inscribed with the names of humanitarians and pioneers in civilization, such as Las Casas, Hennepin, Marquette, Penn, and Eliot. The predominant tints in the color-scheme are blue and white. In the circular panel of the ceiling the field is blue, the ornament yellowish white, and the draperies of the figures yellow. «Fortitude,» with flowing robes, supports a column. «Valor» rests

her hand on a sword. «Courage,» a strong Amazonian figure, is clad in a lion's skin and carries a shield and a club. «Achievement» points to the symbol of empire, a Roman standard surmounted by an eagle. The four figures, placed at points equidistant on the rim of the circle, are balanced in a symmetrical composition by ornamental designs which fill the intervening spaces and the center.

Besides the work done in this room, Mr. Maynard has painted eight upright panels around the staircase well in the second story of the staircase hall. The panels are three feet by twelve, and the subjects are the virtues — «Justice,» «Fortitude,» «Prudence,» «Temperance,» «Concordia,» «Industry,» «Courage,» and «Patriotism.» The figures are Pompeian in style, floating, and clad in drapery of whitish gray with backgrounds of vermilion. Each panel contains a single figure symbolical of one of the virtues. «Patriotism,» for example, is represented with an eagle on her arm, with wings extended as if having just alighted, and holding a bowl, from which the eagle eats. «Concordia,» the virtue of peace, carries an olive-branch and a cornucopia with wheat falling from its mouth.

Two curtain corridors are decorated by Edward Simmons and Walter McEwen. Nine heroes of ancient history form the subject chosen by Mr. McEwen, who painted his compositions in Paris. Mr. Simmons was given control of the entire decorative scheme in the corridor assigned to him, and has depicted the nine Muses. There is a tympanum at each end of the corridor, and seven others on one side, three over false doors and four over real doors. On the opposite side are windows. Besides the tympana, Mr. Simmons painted figure and ornamental subjects in the panels of the seven small domes of the corridor and in the twenty-eight pendentives. The motives are the attributes of the Muses. The tympana are nine feet long, the upper side consisting of a semicircle described by a radius of four and a half feet. «Calliope,» chief of the Muses, occupies the panel at one end of the corridor, and «Clio» the other. The color-scheme comprehends an arrangement passing from blue in the figure of «Calliope» to orange in that of «Clio.» In the row of seven tympana along the side of the corridor, three of the Muses have their arms extended, and, four between having them disposed otherwise, form a chain of arms uniting the series. The borders of the panels are formed by wreath-like designs in which roses, lilies,





PAINTED BY EDWARD SIMMONS.

MELPOMENE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAMERON.



poppies, and green foliage are introduced. Grace and dignity are happily combined in these compositions, and Mr. Simmons's authoritative draftsmanship, so well shown in his decorations in the new criminal courts in New York, is here applied with force and distinction. The color-scheme is sufficiently restrained to comport well with the style of his design, while it is not lacking in such animated notes as befit the treatment of some of the details of his theme.

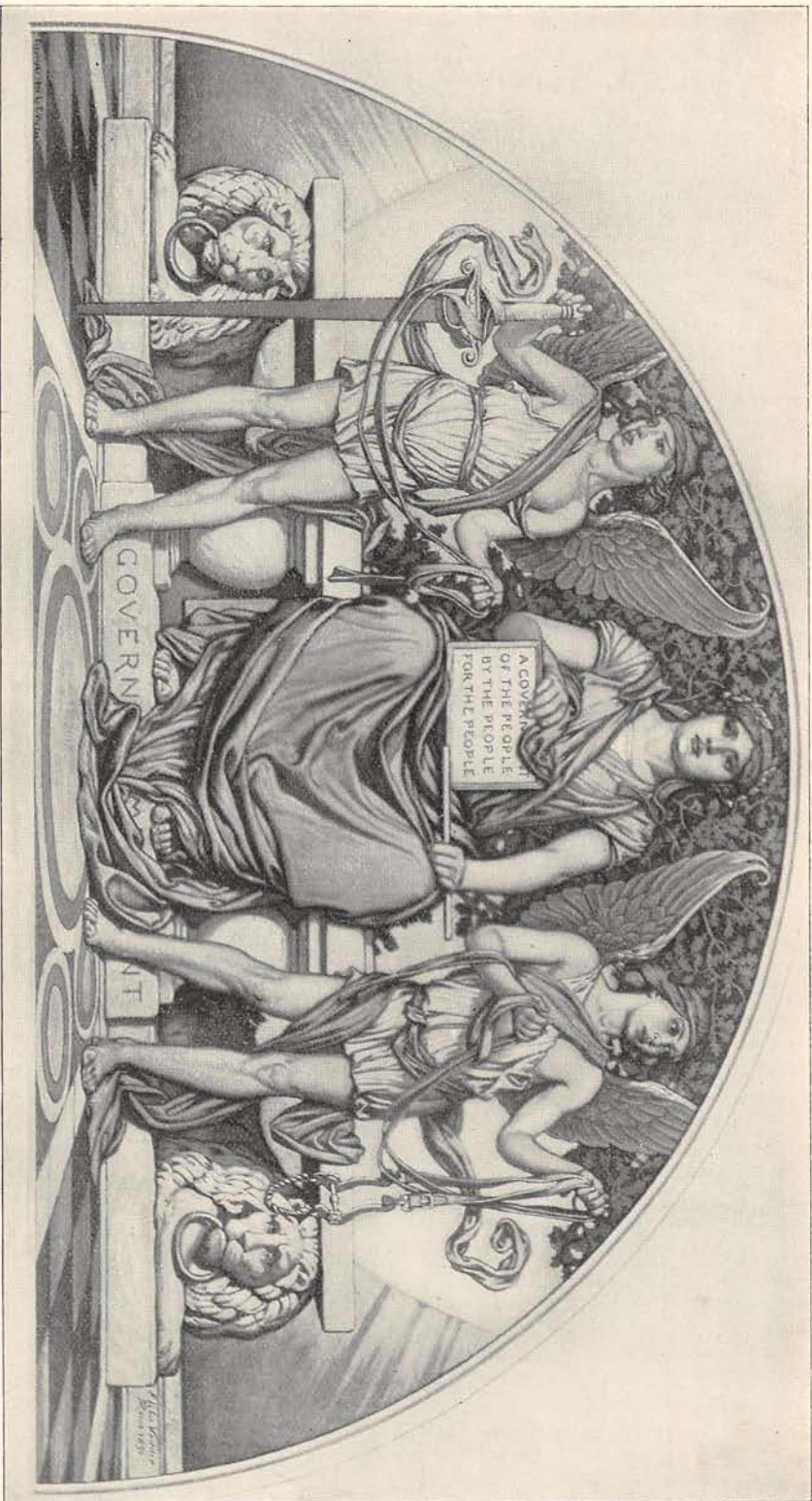
In the vestibule just before entering the great rotunda are five tympana painted by Elihu Vedder. The composition over the door in the middle represents «Government»; those to the right, «Good Administration» and «Peace and Prosperity»; the two on the left, «Corrupt Legislation» and «Anarchy.» Mr. Vedder's capability and good judgment are well shown in these works; for, unlike some of the other rooms given to the artists to decorate, which are fully lighted, this vestibule is somewhat tenebrous. Instead of forcing the color-scheme to a high key, an expedient which might have been adopted by a less experienced painter, Mr. Vedder has treated his compositions in sober, modified tones of an even gamut. They are in absolute harmony with their surroundings, and the restraint in color gives them depth and strength. These finely conceived designs are executed in such a manner that they do not appear as additions to the embellishment of their site, but as a part of the place itself, and nothing better in the way of fitness of placing will be found in the library. For the somewhat larger vestibule immediately preceding the one which contains Mr. Vedder's fine works, John W. Alexander has painted in Paris six tympana depicting «The Evolution of the Book.» His general color-scheme is made up of neutral tints, and the treatment, as may be seen in the illustration «The Story-teller of the Far East,» is extremely simple.

The central pavilion of the building, or the «west main,» as it is called in architectural parlance, contains the grand staircase; and on the second floor of this hall, directly in front of the visitor who mounts the steps to the mezzanine, there is to be a central panel in mosaic representing «Minerva.» The commission to make the design and color cartoon for this was given to Mr. Vedder, and it will be set in place after it has been laid in from the artist's designs. This will be done in Venice. On each side of the grand staircase is a lateral gallery, one of which is decorated by Henry Oliver Walker, and the

other by Charles Sprague Pearce. The spaces in each gallery consist of two large tympana and five or six small ones. The ceilings are decorated with conventional designs provided by the artists. Mr. Pearce, whose subjects include «The Family,» «Labor,» and «Recreation,» and who has placed his figures in landscape settings, executed his work at Auvers-sur-Oise, near Paris. Mr. Walker's general theme is «Lyric Poetry.» In one of the large tympana, which is cut out in the middle by the arched top of a blind window or niche, are two female figures symbolizing «Memory» and «Joy.» An ornamental design, with an inscription over the arched space in the center, unites them. In the six small tympana are youthful figures representing concrete personages, such as Endymion, who appears as a nude stripling reclining in a contemplative attitude on a grassy bank, with the crescent moon in the twilight sky. The second large tympanum, which is free in its entire space for decoration, contains Mr. Walker's principal composition. «Lyric Poetry,» draped in rose-color and holding a lyre, occupies the center, with female figures symbolizing «Passion» and «Beauty» on her right hand. On her left are «Pathos,» in blue drapery; «Truth,» a nude figure; and «Devotion,» with robe of dull terra-cotta hue. The figures are placed in a landscape showing the bed of a brook in the middle, with trees and herbage at each side. The general tone of the picture is light, and inclines to gray in the landscape part, with great refinement of treatment in the more positive tints of the draperies. The *mise en scène* is poetic, and the great lines of the composition are graceful and effective. One of the chief qualities in the easel-pictures of the artist is facial expression, and in this composition he has striven to ally this quality with the breadth necessarily requisite in painting so large a canvas. The result is a work of genuine charm.

In the Representatives' Reading-room are two sculptured chimneypieces of Siena marble, in each of which is a mosaic by Frederick Dielman. Like Mr. Vedder's «Minerva,» they were laid in Italy, and are of rectangular shape, three feet six inches in height and seven feet six inches wide. The subject of one of the designs is «History.» A female figure in red and brown occupies the middle of the composition, with «Mythology» on her right and «Tradition» on her left. «Mythology,» in green, yellow, and purple, holds a sphere in her hand, and is intended to symbolize the phenomena of the universe. «Myths are the



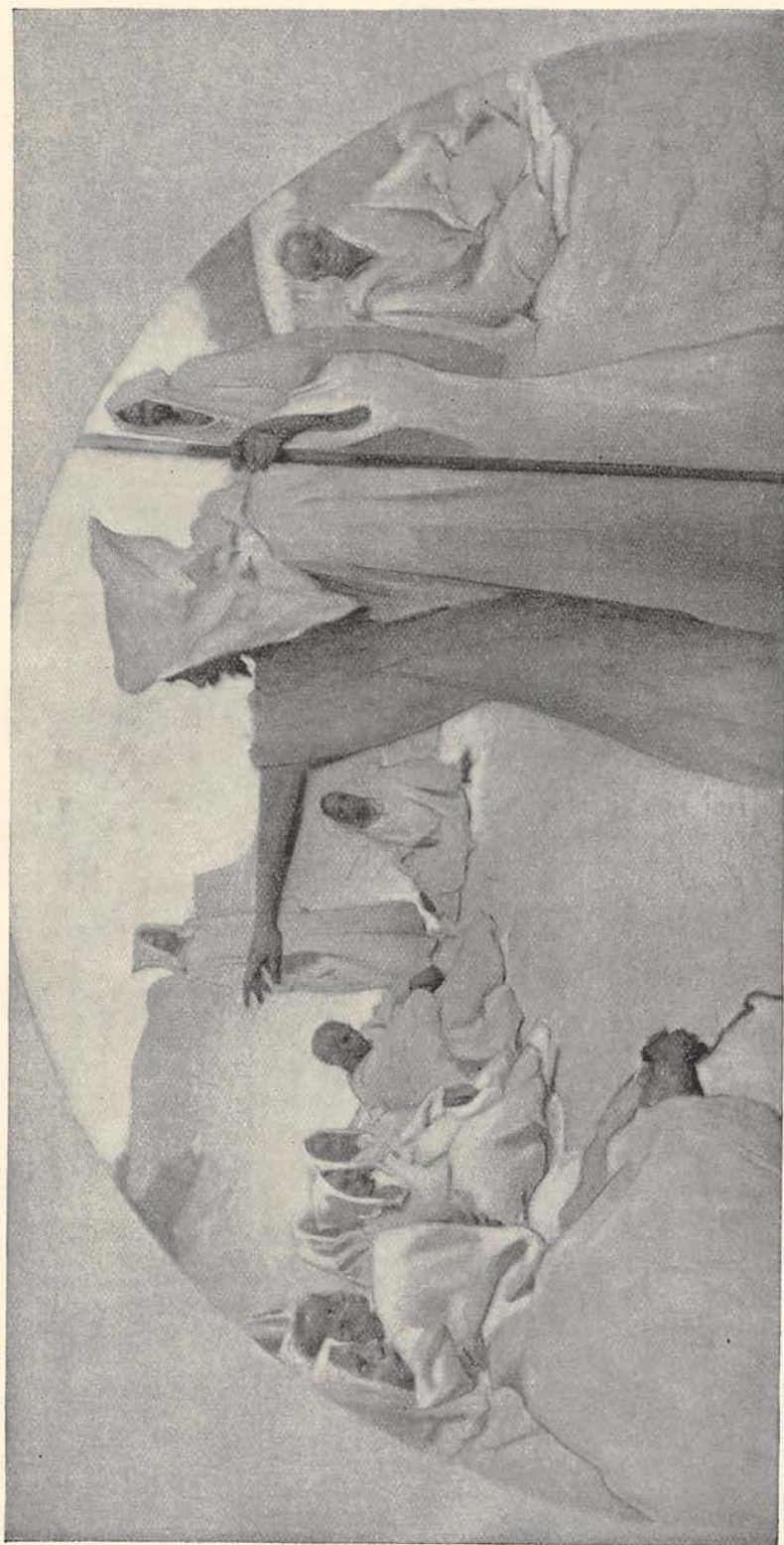


PAINTED BY ELMU VEDGER.

« GOVERNMENT. »

PHOTOGRAPH BY CURTIS & CAVENON.





PAINTED BY J. W. ALEXANDER.

PHOTOGRAPH BY FERDINAND ROUX, PARIS.

«THE EVOLUTION OF THE BOOK: THE STORY-TELLER OF THE FAR EAST.»



earliest recorded utterances of men concerning the visible phenomena of the world into which they were born» is the text illustrated by this figure. «Tradition,» in robes of blue and brown, listens to a nude boy who plays on a lyre and sings the deeds of ancient heroes. In the background behind «History,» a dignified figure with a book in her left hand, is a Greek temple; behind «Mythology» appears one of the Egyptian pyramids; and behind «Tradition» is the Roman Colosseum. The field is a sky of misty blue, and on columns at each side of the throne upon which «History» is seated are inscribed the names of great historians ancient and modern. The subject of the other design is «Law,» represented by a female figure enthroned, with «Peace,» «Truth,» and «Industry» on her right hand, and «Fraud,» «Discord,» and «Violence» on her left. The designs are sufficiently pictorial in character to be effective in that sense, but are composed with a certain formality that lends itself to mosaic treatment. The color-schemes are well balanced, and harmonize with the rich interior in which they are placed, the room being paneled in oak, elaborately carved, and dark in color. The seven main panels in the ceiling of the Representatives' Reading-room were decorated by Carl Gutherz, who took as his subject «The Light of Civilization.»

The figure-pieces in the decoration of the vaults of the four corridors in the second story were painted by Walter Shirlaw, Robert Reid, George R. Barse, Jr., and Frank W. Benson. The corridors are alike in dimensions, but the spaces painted by the artists are different. Mr. Reid, with five octagonal panels in the vaulted ceiling, and four circles on the walls, known as blind bull's-eyes, has for his subjects «The Five Senses» and «Poetry,» «Prose,» «History,» and «Science.» The general decoration of the north corridor, which forms the setting for these works, is similar to the famous designs in the Siena Library, and hence, in its newly painted adaptation, is rather strong and vivid. Mr. Reid has consequently pitched his color-scheme in positive tints of blue, green, red, and yellow. Each of the nine spaces contains a single draped female figure, and the artistic problems, while thus made simple in intention, do not easily admit of satisfactory solution, presupposing, of course, that variety of pose be sought for, and recognizing the inherent difficulty of making a complete and well-balanced composition with one figure in a circular space. The designs show the spaces very well filled, however,

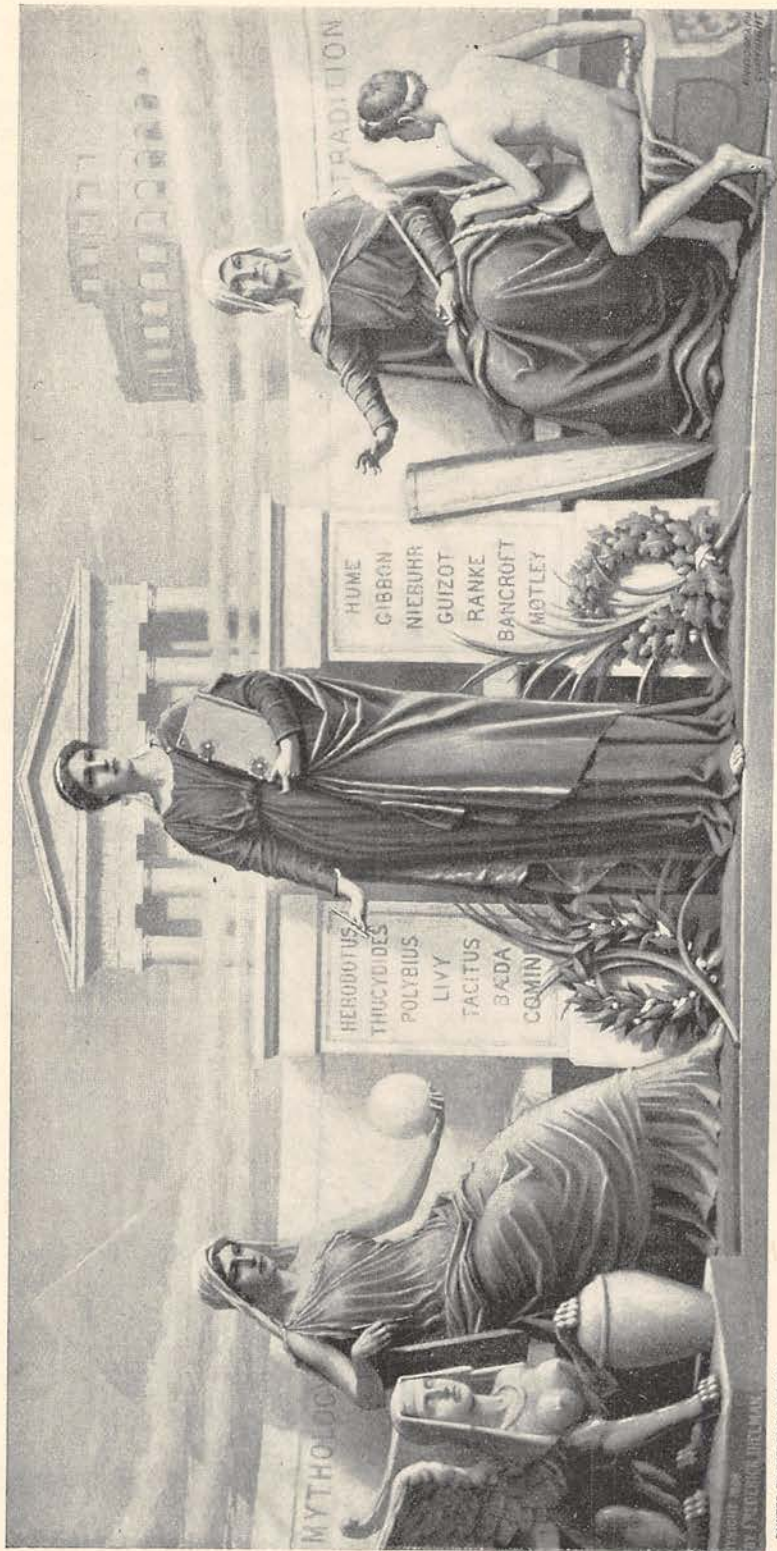
and such accessories as are introduced are of the simplest description. The lines of the figures are graceful, and the faces are good expressions of the decorative scheme—to represent each subject by a figure of a young and beautiful woman, to rely in the interpretations on natural beauty without classic convention, and to obtain grace of movement as the chief point in the different arrangements.

Mr. Shirlaw has painted designs in the spandrels between the arches of the west corridor. They consist of female figures, full length, and slightly above life-size. «Chemistry» holds a retort over the burning breath of a serpent coiled about a tripod with an hour-glass upon it. «Astronomy» bears in one hand the globe of Saturn with his rings, and in the other a lens. «Geology,» a strong figure of a type accustomed to labor, holds up a sphere and a piece of mineral, and at her feet are the earth and the moon. «Physics,» a lithe figure in flowing drapery, carries a torch, and symbolizes vital qualities. «Botany,» standing on a lily-pad, holds a water-lily in her hands, and the long stem is entwined about her body. «Zoölogy,» clad in the skin of a wild beast, and with a face expressive of animal quality, holds by his mane a lion at her side. «Mathematics,» a nearly nude figure, has a scroll in her hands on which a formula is written, and at her feet are geometrical solids. The figures are painted in a restrained color-scheme in which purple, blue, tawny-yellow, orange, and greenish hues predominate. They are drawn with special attention to the value of the great lines, and possess a fine statuesque quality.

In the south corridor three octagonal panels in the ceiling and four circular ones on the walls between the windows are painted by Mr. Benson. The subjects for the octagons are «The Three Graces,» and the color-scheme for the whole is a variation of white, blue, and green. Mr. Barse has painted eight upright panels in the spandrels of the east corridor, using as the motives «Epic Poetry,» «Lyric Poetry,» «Comedy,» «Tragedy,» «History,» «Romance,» «Tradition,» and «Fancy.» The decorations consist of a single draped female figure in each panel, painted in positive tints. The backgrounds are light, and the figures, appearing in silhouette, are strongly outlined. Simplicity of treatment, in contrast to the elaborate general decoration of the corridor, characterizes the work.

It is impossible in the space available here to give full descriptions of all the work, and only a small part of it can be reproduced in the illustrations.





«HISTORY.»



Commissions for mural and sculptural decoration in the new Congressional Library were given to some forty American artists. While it will be seen that the decoration undertaken is of considerable magnitude, and far more extensive than has ever before been projected in any public edifice in the United States, no adequate idea of its completeness may be obtained without mention of the large part played by the art of sculpture in the embellishment of the building. The bronze figures in the three niches of the fountain at the main approach to the library were modeled by E. Hinton Perry. In niches in the principal façade are busts of Demosthenes, Dante, and Walter Scott, by Herbert Adams; Emerson, Irving, and Hawthorne, by J. Scott Hartley; and Goethe, Macaulay, and Franklin, by F. Wellington Ruckstuhl. There are six figures in the spandrels over the main entrance by Bela L. Pratt; and there are two sets of bronze doors by the late Olin L. Warner, one of which has been completed since his death by Mr. Adams. The central doors were modeled by Frederick MacMonnies. In the main staircase are lamp-bearers, and sculptures representing America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, by Philip Martiny. In the first great vestibule are ornamental figures of Minerva by Mr. Adams. Spandrels over the door leading into the rotunda bear sculptured designs by Warner, representing students in youth and in old age. In the corner pavilions of the second story are reliefs of the «Four Seasons» by Mr. Pratt. The finely sculptured clock in the rotunda is by John Flanagan.

In the great rotunda, which will be known as the Central Reading-room when the library is occupied, there are eight colossal figures set on pedestals at the top of the piers between the arches. They are «History,» by Daniel C. French; «Art,» by Augustus St. Gaudens; «Poetry,» by J. Q. A. Ward; «Law,» by Paul W. Bartlett; «Philosophy,» by Bela L. Pratt; «Science,» by John Donoghue; «Commerce,» by John Flanagan; and «Religion,» by Theodore Baur. Sixteen bronze figures, slightly over life-size, each on a plinth in the balustrade about forty feet from the floor, and two in each arch, form another important feature of the decoration of the rotunda. Shakspeare is by Mr. MacMonnies; Herodotus, by Mr. French; Columbus and Michelangelo, by Mr. Bartlett; and St. Paul, by Mr. Donoghue. Gibbon and Moses are by Charles H. Niehaus; Plato and Bacon, by John J. Boyle. Fulton is by Edward C. Potter; Kent, by George Bissell; and Newton, by C. E. Dallin.

Beethoven is by Mr. Baur; Joseph Henry, by Mr. Adams; Solon, by Mr. Ruckstuhl; and Homer, by Louis St. Gaudens. The first thought that must suggest itself when we see this profuse sculptural decoration is surprise that we have so many good sculptors. Even those of us who are aware that great progress has been made by American sculptors in their art of late must be astonished at the resources shown in the work in the library. Taken together with the mural decoration, and seen in its completeness, it will surely produce a strong impression of excellence. A criticism may be recorded here that applies to the work in its ensemble, and not to any particular part. In the sculpture the subjects do not repeat one another, but in the mural decoration there are, if not too many abstract themes, at least too many similar ones. The arts and sciences, for example, have been used pretty frequently in the decoration. The point has no bearing whatever on the merit or effectiveness of the decorations in the artistic sense, but concerns only the whole of the work from the literary point of view. Historical subjects of a certain class would seem to be well fitted for use in the decoration of a library if the abstract themes do not suffice to give variety to an extensive scheme of decoration. The sculpture in the present instance, indeed, has been treated in this way, abstract subjects alternating with such historical ones as Columbus, Shakspeare, and Fulton. The importance of the whole work as a step in the onward march of art in the United States must be conceded without discussion. The responsibility of the artists in the matter is not a light one. If the educated public gives as its verdict that the work has been well done, it cannot but have the effect of giving a strong impetus to the rapidly growing conviction that both public and private edifices should be made beautiful as well as convenient. It would seem as if, in the future, the best achievements of American art might be found in the field of decoration. Breadth of scope in subject, and opportunity to work without too much hurrying, are all that are needed to bring out even better evidences than exist in the library at Washington that the American artists of to-day are abundantly equal to the task of decorating American buildings, no matter how great their architectural importance, or how manifold may be the difficulties of the project. The artistic ability has been shown beyond question, and appreciation is a public duty.

*William A. Coffin.*