

The central pavilion itself is subdivided with its own powerful flanking pavilions, each of a single bay, the massiveness of which heightens by contrast the comparative openness and lightness of the centre.

Every critical spectator must be struck by the resemblance of this central feature in the façade to the façade of the New Opera-house in Paris. The main motive is the same, and is quite recognizable through the modifications that have been made in the detail. But it is noteworthy that the resemblance is much stronger in the completed work than in the original design. In the design adopted in 1886 it is hardly traceable, and certainly is not obvious, the massive and separate treatment of the flanking pavilions, and the crowning of them with their own cupolas, quite changing the impression. The arrangement of the actual building appears for the first time, I think, in the restudy of the design made under General Casey's administration, and seems to have had for its object to ally the treatment of the centre more closely with that of the wings, rather than to bring it nearer to the Parisian façade. In this it is distinctly successful. Though no doubt the remodelling was done with reference to the Opera, it is by no means an unreflecting imitation. The flanking pavilions are much more strongly distinguished from the centre. The entrances, which in an opera-house very properly include the whole seven openings of the basement, are confined in the library to the central three, and signalized by a projecting porch above the carriage-entrance. The range of openings, with the busts in the bull's-eyes, which in Paris is a mere screen in the intercolumniations, is more decidedly withdrawn and the order more effectively detailed; the round pediments, instead of resting directly upon the order, are raised to the top of the attic, and relieve the sky-line, taking the place of the bristling groups of statuary which are the crowning features of the opera-house. The attic, the disproportionate height of which M. Garnier, in his critical review of his own work, found the chief fault of his façade, is duly subdued. If the motive of this central feature has been borrowed, it has been subjected to intelligent analysis and modification for the purposes of its new employment. The fortifying effect of the

flanking pavilions is very satisfying, and it has been attained by careful study. In restudying the design the importance and detachment of the central feature were enhanced by a considerably increased projection, and this increase presented a new problem, in the treatment of the returns, which has been very well handled. The design of these pavilions, both in the face and on the returns, is one of the most decided successes of the building. It is the more telling by the "imitation," which is as effective in frozen as in mobile music. This is here shown by the recalling in the enclosure of the central portico of the flanking bastions of the whole front, inasmuch that the relation between the central and the terminal features, displayed by the long intervals of curtain-wall, may be said architecturally to constitute the principal front. This front is homogeneous without being monotonous; it has variety in unity; it is uniform and effective in scale, a scale maintained also in the sculpture; if nowhere exquisite it is everywhere scholarly and respectable in detail, a harmonious and impressive work.

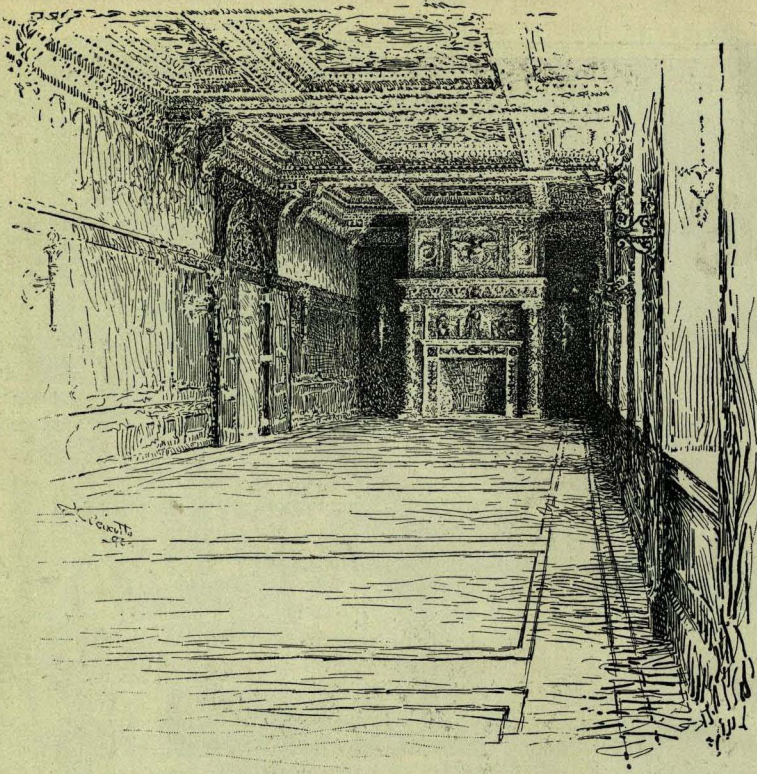
Scarcely less impressive in their simpler way are the sides. The fivefold division has here been judiciously abandoned. There was no justification such as the main entrance furnishes for a central feature, which would have seemed arbitrary and capricious, and the long stretch of curtain between the bastions is left to make its impression by mere extent, relieved only by the emergence of the central cupola. The impression is very marked, marred though it be by shortcomings of detail of which one is more than a detail. This is the alternation of triangular and curved pediments over the openings of the principal story. The effect of this flank is the familiar but never-failing effect of the repetition of similar objects, not numerable at a glance, the effect of a classic colonnade or a Gothic arcade interminably receding. The æstheticians tell us that "succession and uniformity of parts are what constitute the artificial infinite." Manifestly the effect of succession is lost when uniformity is discarded, and an alternation of different forms of opening works an interruption as injurious to the effect of repetition as would be the alternation of two orders in a colonnade. In the curtain-walls of the front, which are mere intervals in the





The Rotunda or Public Reading-room, from the Gallery.





The Congressional Reading-room.

design, the alternation does no harm ; but on the side, where the expanse is itself the motive, the alternation confuses it by reducing the expanse to its actual dimensions in place of the indefinite prolongation that it would gain from mere repetition. An ill-advised attempt has been made to convert the dividing mullions of the openings of the subordinate stories into decorative objects by modelling them, in one case into the similitude of a column, and in the other into that of a corbel. The things have been so attenuated by practical considerations that there is no mass left which can be made effective. A plain bar of stone would at least be inoffensive, whereas the unkind emphasis put upon it gives it a look of puerility. Nor can the spectator reconcile himself to the incongruity of the very smart and modish cartouche at every angle of the attic, a detail obviously fresh from Paris, with the soberer and older-fashioned Italian detail elsewhere employed.

The cupola, the one exterior indication

of the essential scheme of the work, might properly, and but for economical considerations, would probably have been made still more predominant. Like the dome of the capitol, it crowns the edifice only from selected points of view, apprehensible though it be from all. But if it was practically necessary to limit its height below what its best effect required, it was æsthetically as necessary to avoid the appearance of a competition with the loftier dome of the capitol. Nothing could be more satisfactory or more impressive in their way than the powerful and orderly masses of the masonry substructure, wherever they can be seen. An increase in the height of this substructure, with perhaps a greater richness in the upper stage, and a broad and low crowning feature, would probably have best reconciled the artistic requirements. But in restudying the design, the natural desire to gain more height has resulted in sharpening the pitch of the roof and in elongating the terminal lantern till it is pretty evidently



either too important, or not important enough. It is only when the masses of supporting masonry can be seen, with their massiveness enforced by simple but effective modelling, that the central feature assumes the power and value that belong to it.

But in spite of these things the exterior architecture makes its effect, the effect of a Roman largeness, power, and durability, and of an orderly and coherent design which is also Roman, of a national building. In the interior, in spite of a lavishness of decoration, sculptural and pictorial without any precedent in our national architecture, the source of the impressiveness is equally architectural. It proceeds primarily from the studied and successful articulation of the plan, the organization of the parts with reference to the whole, and the skilful convergence of the architectural interest upon the rotunda. On paper, the great entrance-hall may seem extravagant as a mere vestibule to the reading-room, just as the foyer of the Paris



The Dome Seen through One of the Entrance Arches.



Opera-house seems excessive in comparison with the auditorium. In fact, however, its dimensions, subdivided as they are by the structural enclosure of the staircase, and reduced at the centre to those of the staircase-well, suffice merely for a liberal and hospitable fore-court. This entrance-hall has been made the field of the most lavish and sumptuous decoration; but the effect of it is still predominantly architectural, and the decoration takes its place. The arrangement of the coupled columns in the crowning arcades of the enclosure, corresponding to the great order of the exterior; the doubling of the columns on the two larger sides in the line of the wall and on the two shorter in its depth, with a corresponding difference in the thickness of the wall above, all four walls performing apparently the same function, by no means justifies itself as rational nor explains itself to the eye. But, upon the whole, even here, with all the importunity of the color still more chilling the cold blue-white of the marble, the architectural scheme remains the chief source of effectiveness, and by no means disappears under its adornment.

As much may be said of the system of corridors and dependencies, which are nowhere a "maze," but in which everywhere the "plan" is manifest, and of which even those most successfully adorned, as by Mr. Simmons's series of the Muses, are primarily attractive by the successful study that has gone to their proportioning, to their lighting, and to the modelling of their parts. To prove this, it is necessary only to leave one of these corridors and

cross over to a like passage in the capitol, where, with equal or greater dimensions, the vista is so comparatively ineffectual.

But it is in the great rotunda that the interest of the interior culminates. The nucleus of the plan becomes the focus of the architecture. It is here, too, that the interest is most unmistakably architectural. Of color-decoration, apart from the emphasis by pigment of the detail of the dome,

there is none excepting Mr. Blashfield's beautiful ring of nations encircling the base of the lantern, and his group in the crown. The allegorical statues crown the great piers and fill the pendentives; the portrait statues are the needful finials of the intermediate piers. The magnificence of this interior impresses every spectator. It is monumental in scale, in material, and, most of all, monumental in design. The organization and the modelling of the great clustered piers of marble, with their attached columns, are thoroughly admirable, and so is the relation to them of the intervening screens of marble, and the design of these in themselves, with the arcade surmounting each of the three single arches of the lower stage.

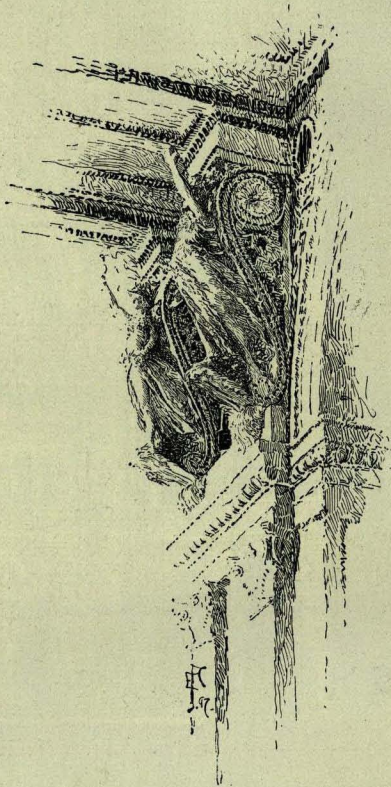
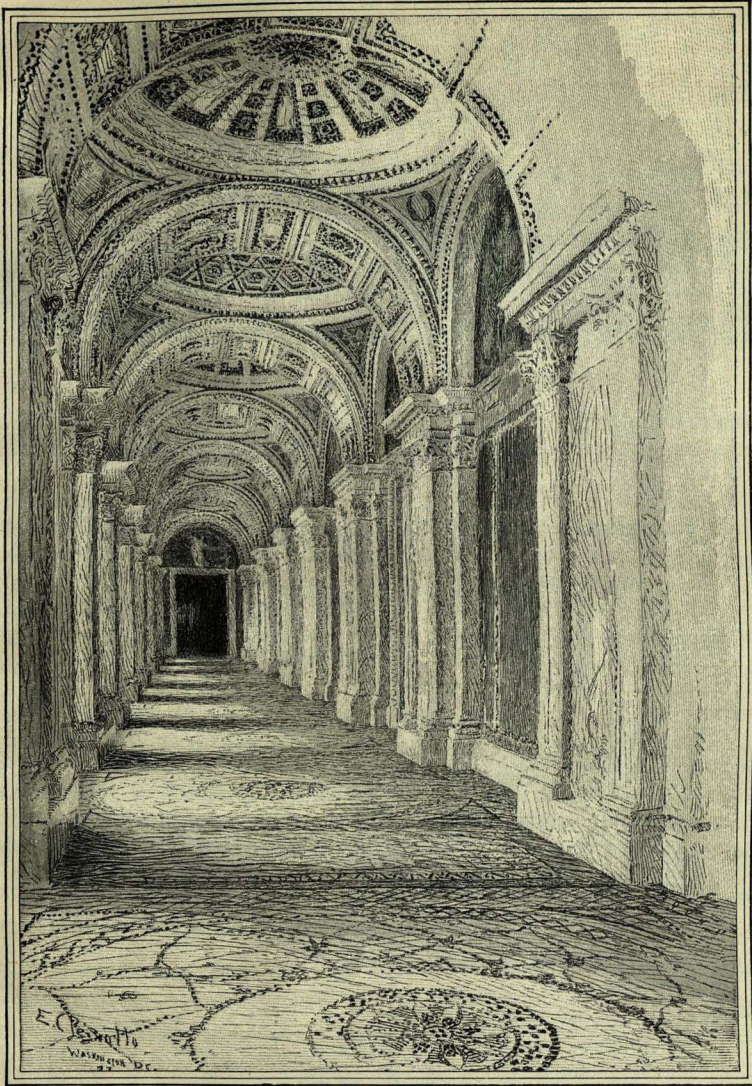


Figure of Minerva—One of the Decorations in the Vestibule.

There is a noble largeness in all this, a largeness and an organization really Roman, the solid and durable fact of which the architecture of the Chicago fair was the scenic representation. We have in Washington, as we had in Chicago, to waive some serious questions in order to enjoy the spectacle without reserve. We have to judge the architect by what he has attempted, and to forbear inquiring whether he might not better have done



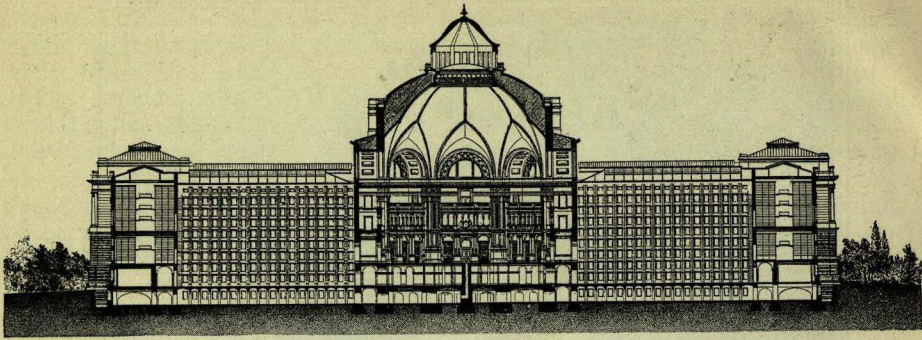


The Simmons Corridor.

something else; whether this reproduction of Roman forms, even though here they subserve structural purposes, is the true treatment of a modern and American public building. It remains true that the work is Roman, Roman even to the *columnas ultima recisas Africa*, for in fact the piers, with their attached shafts of yellow Siena, and their continuous base of chocolate American marble are themselves of red Numidian. They support not Horace's "Hymettian" beams nor the ceiling, as monumental in material as them-

selves, which one would like to see above them, but apparently an entablature and a dome of plaster, in reality a light construction of steel and terra-cotta. It is indeed a pity that this noble room should not have been ceiled with masonry, for which it is evident, on the exterior of its massive substructure, that preparation was made. It seems also that the scheme of an alternation of lunettes and huge pendentives, shown in the section of the design, carrying up toward the eye of the dome the division into bays, and carrying up also the



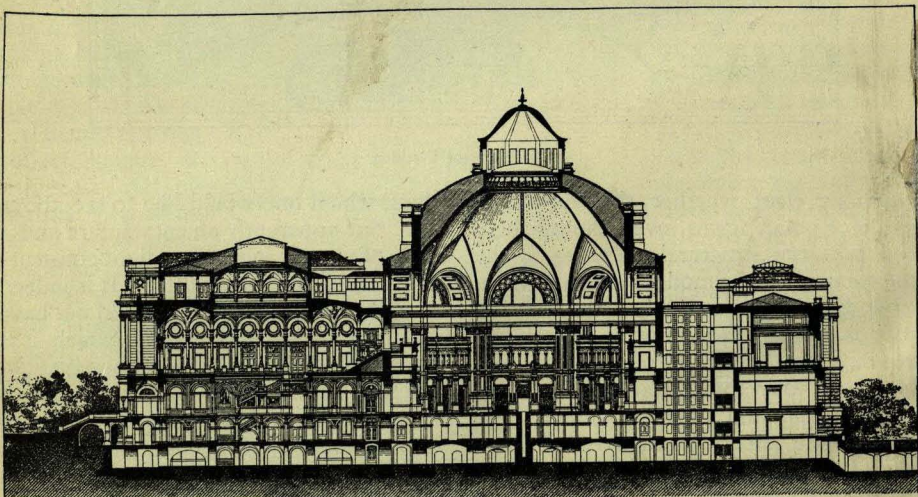


Section of the Building on North and South Centre Axis.

colossal scale, was a more eligible mode of treatment than that actually adopted of an inverted bowl resting on a continuous entablature, and rather belittled by the equable and "all-overish" character of the decoration, both structural in the cassettes and applied as in the incrustation of the surface. Even the ribs of the cupola, so strongly emphasized on the outside, are in the interior indicated only by stripes of decoration which form the only relief to the succession, vertically and laterally, of equal or equally diminishing squares. Excepting the continuous entablature of the great order, of which the Roman frieze, albeit in plaster, is in scale and keeping with the masonry, it is undeniable that above the masonry the design becomes weaker, the architectural effect less monumental and imposing. For all that it is a noble ro-

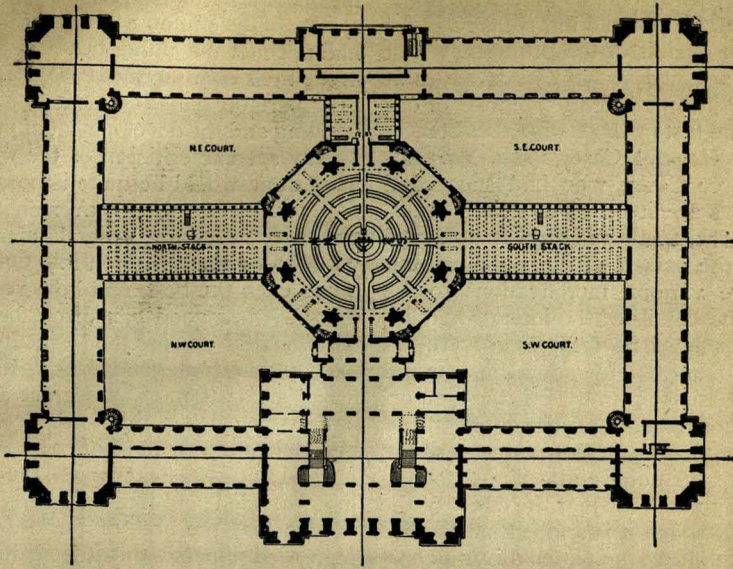
tunda, the most adequate public apartment that the United States have thus far built themselves.

But it is not alone as a national monument that the national library does us credit. It is also as a great public work, energetically and intelligently carried to completion, and not only honestly and thoroughly built, but also lavishly decorated, "within the appropriation." General Casey, and Mr. Green, during General Casey's lifetime, his subordinate, and since his death last year his successor, have performed this unprecedented feat. The Chief of Engineers of the United States Army is by no means apt to be an expert in matters of art. The Pension Building in Washington is an architectural Helot so unspeakably unexemplary that it is almost worth while to have it constantly on



Section on West and East Centre Axis.





First Story Plan of the Building.

view to admonish the Spartan boys of Congress against a reversion to military methods in the design of public buildings. But military methods in the superintendence are quite a different affair, and they have been conspicuously vindicated in the construction of the library. General Casey showed a just sense of the distinction, when he was put in charge of the work in 1888, by disclaiming all responsibility for the architectural success, either in beauty or in fitness, of the structure which Congress had ordered to be erected and appointed him to erect. He left all that to the authors of the design, retaining one of them to carry it into detail and dispensing with his services after four years, for the reason that the architectural work had been completed. It was with the thorough, rapid, and economical execution of the work that General Casey charged himself. In October, 1888, when he took charge, although the excavations were completed, and the foundations had been put in, there was scarcely anything to be seen above the surface of the ground. In that month General Casey submitted detailed estimates of the cost of the work upon the plan finally chosen, as well as upon the mutilated plan ordered by Congress. He estimated that, if the work were not interrupted, and money were provided as it was wanted, the

building "would be completed in about eight years," and for \$6,003,140. In December, 1896, his successor, Mr. Green, was able to report "that the building is now very nearly completed in all particulars," and that not only was there no additional appropriation required to complete the building, but that there was on hand an unexpended balance of \$314,452.02.

Such a result is very rare, if not absolutely unique in the history of our national architecture and, indeed, of our public works. That it has been attained in the Library of Congress, would alone suffice to mark the work of General Casey and Mr. Green as a masterpiece of administration. But this is by no means a complete showing. The ten per cent. reserved for contingencies in the estimates of 1888 had been, by the energy and faithfulness of the superintendence, and also, doubtless, by the favorable course of the markets, kept so nearly intact that it was evident, several years before the completion of the building, that a great part of it would be available for other uses, and General Casey most fortunately decided to employ this balance in the sculptural and pictorial embellishment of the building. For decoration, other than the strictly architectural "finish," and \$15,000 for "ornamental painting," the original estimates had made no



provision. The scheme of a systematic decoration of the building, so as to make it really an exhibit of the proficiency that had been attained in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century of our era, and the first of our national existence, is due to General Casey's son, Mr. Edward Pearce Casey, who had succeeded Mr. Pelz, as architect. For strictly architectural work, there was little or no scope left upon the outside of the building, but there were various modifications to be made in the details of the interior and, indeed, in such of its features as were not already committed by actual execution. None of these is in itself of the first importance as concerns the general effect, but the sum of them is. Such a detail as the covering of the floors and ceilings, for example, may make or mar the effect of the interiors to which it is applied, and it has here been done so monumentally, much of it in solid mosaic, as perfectly to carry out the indications and enhance the effect of the architecture. Indeed, in these things it is not easy to draw the line between architecture and decoration. It is, however, as the author of the general scheme of decoration and the superintendent of its execution, including the design of the architectural part of it, that Mr. Casey has been enabled to render his chief service to the Library; and a very signal service it is. The notion of enlisting in the decoration of a national building the best sculptors and painters of the nation, and of securing in it their best work, was really novel on this side of the Atlantic, in spite of the experiment that was made at Chicago with so encouraging a measure of success. But the decorators at Chicago, employed to model in plaster or to paint upon it decorations for palaces that were to stand six months, were in the position of Michelangelo when Pietro di Medici commissioned from him a statue in snow. It was impossible for them to take their ephemeral employments very seriously. But the order for paintings of which the life was to be limited only by the durability of pigments, and for busts in granite, and statues and reliefs in perennial bronze made a very different appeal, an appeal which met for the most part a hearty and earnest response. Though the balance available for the work was unexpectedly and gratifyingly large, it would, by no

means, have sufficed for so complete a system of decoration as we see if the artists had not met the authorities half-way, and made their own sacrifices in order to bear their parts in the adornment of a national building and the development of public art.

Any specific criticism of the work they have done would be quite impossible in a paper which has already overrun its limits; but there are some general remarks that "fall to be made" upon it. One is how much even the best, and how very much more the less good gains from being part of a general scheme, and executed under fixed and uniform conditions. In the pictorial decoration of the great entrance-hall, it seems that the color scheme has been laid out with an insufficient allowance for the flood of light which the architect had provided, and that it is in consequence of this that the note of the decoration is high to shrillness. But it is also to be observed that the note is forced equally throughout, and that to tone the color down, so that the effect may be merely festal and not garish, besides the mellowing of time, which may have been allowed for, it needs only that the crude daylight shall be "handsomely tempered" with stained glass, the one American achievement in fine art that is not adequately illustrated here. In the sculpture the benefit of an architectural disposition and a common scale is very striking, especially striking in contrast with the national chamber of horrors in the rotunda of the capitol, much of the horrific effect of which comes from the fact that every sculptor chose his own scale, and that, quite naturally, the worst statues are also the biggest.

Upon the whole it may almost be said that the sculptors appear in the Library to greater advantage than the painters. Not, of course, that the art of sculpture is so successfully cultivated in America as the art of painting, but that the Library presents a more adequate exposition of what we can do in sculpture than in painting. It is, indeed, the first collective exhibit, in durable form, of the work of American sculptors that has ever been made. There is no American sculptor who is conspicuous by his absence, whereas there are American painters whom the observer will miss, and others whom he will encounter with more or less regret. The bronze doors of

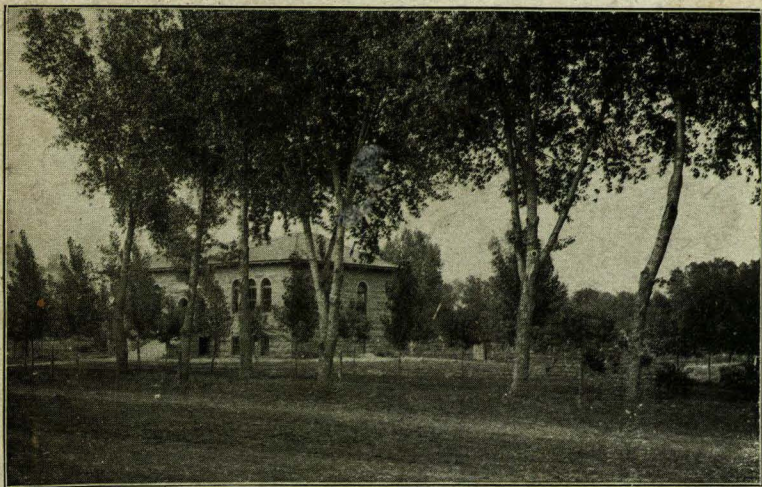


Warner set a standard at the threshold to which it would be too much to hope that all the interior sculpture should conform. And yet those who know American sculpture best will probably be most surprised at the success with which the sculptural adornment of the great rotunda has been managed, at the appropriateness, alike architectural and symbolical, of the eight austere figures of the pendentives, at the dignity and the force of the portrait statues. Not that even here there are not some works which appeal for attention by a provincial eccentricity.

The more strictly decorative modelling, which still has sculptural pretensions, one cannot praise so highly. The facility of the modeller of it is so astonishing that it would be contrary to nature if it were not largely reminiscent. Reminiscent or not, the aspiring bronze figures that form the finials of the newel-posts in the vestibule are extremely effective. But the flying figures which hold the tablets over the allegorical statues, and which fill the spandrils by the simple expedient of kicking backward into them, are pretty plainly incongruous with the sober and monumental richness which is the character of the great rotunda, and which is very powerfully enhanced by the allegorical statues of the pendentives, and the portrait statues of the marble screens.

All this, in addition to whatever sculpt-

ural merits it may disclose to a detailed inspection, is primarily architectural decoration. Perhaps, if we limit our painting to decorative painting, it cannot be said to be at all in advance of our sculpture. Unfortunately, it is not so limited in the Library. The works of the illustrator and the anecdotal painter are in evidence, and constitute decoration which does not decorate. The display of the painters is therefore not so homogeneous as that of the sculptors—does not show so uniform an understanding of the special conditions of the work. Moreover, it has been a common comment that, although all the artists who have contributed to the work are Americans, those of them who have worked abroad, with such shining exceptions as Mr. Vedder, have neither taken their work so seriously nor comprehended its conditions so well as those who have worked at home. But upon the whole, and in spite of many shortcomings, and more than one complete collapse, the decoration of the Library is more than a promise and an encouragement. It is a positive achievement and a positive success. The Library of Congress is a national possession, an example of a great public building monumentally conceived, faithfully built and worthily adorned, a national possession which will inculcate its lesson where that lesson is most of all needful and most of all likely to be fruitful.



PUBLIC LIBRARY, FORT COLLINS, COLO.



## A SPECIALIST IN LITERARY TREASURE

The stories of Mr. Morgan and the art world are many and interesting. Some of them are true. A good many of them are not. But the fact remains that he was a great figure not only in the world of business, but in the world of art and letters. Incidentally he was a rich man. Yet there are many rich men who are by no manner of means great men. Strip some men of their millions and the residue is not worth consideration. You could have taken J. Pierpont Morgan's last dollar from him and found him still a dominating personality.

This is not the time to recount Morgan's place in the great world of art and letters. Two things that he did for that world will redound to his credit for long years to come. One is the incomparable collection of rare treasures that he gave to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the other the unusual library that he built in the garden of his fine old house on Murray Hill.

The library is a gem of faultless architecture. It is more important to note, however, that it is a real library. There is not another such collection of missals and original manuscripts on this continent; in the whole world few, if any, that are to be ranked with it.

To this quiet workshop in the realm of thought come students slipping back four, five, six, ten centuries, men who have exhausted the resources of the best of our modern libraries and needs must turn to the original sources of information—the writings of the masters of thought of long ago. American students have found it of great value, and an astonishing number of foreign savants make the trip oversea so that they may browse in its records.

The librarians of those two great treasure-houses of thought—the British Museum, in London, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris—do not hesitate to draw upon it for aid. And they find in the Morgan book collection a librarian who is worthy of the institution—another of the captains of the real feminist army.

It was said of Morgan that his mastery came in his unerring judgment in the selection of men. He knew how to surround himself with capability; he used the same real judgment when he came to select an adviser for the purchase and the care of his art treasures. That adviser is Belle da Costa Greene, and she has come, in the due evolution of things, to be the head of the Morgan Library.

Miss Greene's specialty is books. She knows books. All her life she has known books and loved them. When she was still a little girl she developed the dominating trait that was to be the shaping of her life—the bringing to her of a very definite form of success. She was wise enough to train herself for the work that suited her, and the result has been that her tremendously busy life has been a magnificent romp. She loves her work, and her work must love her, for it gives her a renewed and vibrant enthusiasm in it.

At Miss Greene's age the average New York girl would be having a splendid time—dinners, dances, bridge, the opera—all gloriously fascinating and gloriously inconsequential. Miss Greene prefers going back in the evening to the library to delve into its treasures. She perhaps may be doing some research work for one of the great libraries of Europe, for there is hardly a librarian in civilization that does not know her.

## BOOKS NO ONE HAS READ

THE librarian blessed with a sense of humor finds the day's routine enlivened through the mistakes of patrons. The Kansas City Star has recently recorded a few requests for books that fell within the experience of one library worker. These are samples:

"Her" by Rider Haggard.

"John Bunyan" by the pilgrim.

Some one also asked vaguely for a poem by

Longfellow "which means hay." That was a poser until the librarian finally decided that the inquirer wanted Excelsior.

A high-school student asked innocently for "Shakespeare's latest."

A request came for "Tales of Shakespeare's Lambs."

No less ludicrous was the request for a copy of Lew Wallace's "Her Ben."

Another inquiry was for Kipling's "Light That Went Out."

By almost too happy an accident The Raven by Poe was demanded under the title "The Ravings of Edgar Allan Poe."

Shakespeare was misrepresented as "King Liar" and "The Turning of the Screw" (Taming of the Shrew).

The Hoosier Schoolmaster became "Who's Your Schoolmaster?"

The influence of the movies often shows in the requests. It was in an ancient city of New England, broken to books for at least two centuries, that a youthful citizen of foreign extraction recently asked at the librarian's desk for "Charley Chaplin's Christmas Present." The librarian was bright and experienced. She scarcely hesitated before handing out Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol, and her guess was right. If Dickens had survived into the movie era, how amused and delighted he would have been! He would have been scarcely less amused probably with an incident of several years ago when a very little girl at a New York branch library eagerly inquired for "A Tale of Two Kitties." She had seen the title and had sounded the "C" hard; but the librarian easily turned her attention to a tale that really was of "kitties," and she deferred her acquaintance with Dickens to go and read of the pussycats suitable to her years.





BELLE DA COSTA GREENE, LIBRARIAN IN CHARGE  
OF THE PIERPONT MORGAN COLLECTION  
OF BOOKS, ONE OF THE MOST  
FAMOUS IN THE WORLD

*From a photograph by Clarence White, New York*





# THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

BY HERBERT PUTNAM

Librarian of Congress

**T**O the "average citizen" who has not visited Washington, the Library of Congress suggests only a great building, much exploited during the past eight years for the majesty of its size and the splendor of its decoration.



To the actual visitor, who is but the ordinary tourist, it remains chiefly this. He enters the main hallway of lofty and dazzling Carrara, ascends the broad, richly sculptured staircase, wanders through the long corridors and galleries sumptuous with mural decoration, looks down upon the great reading-room magnificent with golden Siena, yet broad, deep and tranquil as a reading-room should be, and glancing across the spacious courtyards, gets an impression of indefinite spaces beyond.

He reads in his guide book that the building covers three and a half acres of ground, includes eight acres of floor space, and cost six and a half million dollars, and is additionally impressed. He learns also that it has highly ingenious mechanism for the transmission of books to and from the stacks and to and from the Capitol—and his fancy is tickled, as is always the fancy of an American at perfection in mechanical contrivance.

But all this time he has gained no sense of its operation or significance as a *library*. In the exhibit halls, to be sure, he has seen case after case of rare and curious books and manuscripts, and of exquisite prints; across the courts he has had a glimpse of huge stacks, rising tier upon tier, which he supposes to contain the collections,—and which do contain a portion of them,—and in the main reading-room he sees some scores of persons busy with books, and attendants active in ministering to them,—and in the periodical reading-room many more, consulting the thousands of newspapers and periodicals displayed there for their use. But these views are both partial and superficial. He may inquire further as to the size and scope of the collections that inhabit this huge structure, the equipment provided for the appropriate accommodation of each, and the organization to conserve and to make them useful.

## What the Visitor Learns.

**H**E may learn that there are one million four hundred thousand books and pamphlets and seven hundred and fifty thousand other articles—manuscripts, maps, music and prints—in the library proper, irrespective of a million others in the files of the copyright office; that there are two hundred and forty persons engaged in the care of these and the service to the public, and that, adding to these the hundred and twenty persons occupied with the care of the building itself and the grounds, seventy engaged in the copyright office, and nearly ninety in the printing-office and bindery, the total number of employes in the organization exceeds five hundred; and that for the maintenance of this establishment and the increase of the collections the government is spending more than a half-million dollars a year, exclusive of the expenditure for the copyright office—whose fees render it self-sustaining—and for printing and binding, which are amply provided for by a separate allotment.

He discovers that there are more than ninety persons engaged in the classification and cataloguing alone. This is explained by the fact that besides the existing collection, the largest in the western hemisphere, the bulk of which,

accumulated during a half-century of inadequate organization, constitutes an arrears to be reduced to

order and equipped with bibliographic apparatus, there are current accessions amounting each year to more than seventy thousand volumes, and fifty thousand other items, in themselves a

library of no mean dimensions. These include



the most highly scholarly material, in a hundred different languages and dialects, as well as the popular light literature and "trash" yielded by copyright, in addition to the material of permanent worth which also it yields. The work of these classifiers and cataloguers, in the highest degree expert scientific work, is being made available on printed cards to more than seven hundred other libraries in the United States, and is likely to result in a centralization of such labor and expense and an avoidance of the wasteful duplication of it which has been the greatest burden that libraries have hitherto had to carry.

The organization is highly differentiated. Besides the departments dealing with the processes involved in the acquisition of the material, classification and cataloguing, and the service to readers, there are groups devoting themselves entirely to the care of material special in form or character: Documents, law, manuscripts, maps, music, periodicals, prints. Besides the usual library service to ordinary readers, there is a service more scientific, by specialists to specialists; and besides the direct service to visiting investigators, there are various forms of service which stretch far beyond the limits of the District of Columbia.

The library is an incessant publisher of bibliographic aids, which are sent out to libraries and individual inquirers all over the United States, and indeed the world. It is also a bureau of information, answering freely inquiries addressed to it, which may be answered out of books, or directing them elsewhere if beyond its own capacity.

All this, in addition to the service to Congress, for which primarily it was created a century ago, and to the Supreme Court, and to the Executive Departments and Scientific Bureaus at Washington. For, although retaining still the narrow title under which it was founded, the Library of Congress is now the National Library of the United States.

It is for reference use as free a library as exists. And, as the National Library, it feels justified in aiding research beyond its own walls, both directly and through other libraries, in a way not deemed appropriate or feasible by the national library of any other country.

The inquirer who had sufficient interest to secure all this information would, however, have advanced little beyond the threshold in a knowledge of what the library really is. In a library the books are the thing. Building, equipment, organization, a law and an intention of useful service—these may be preëminent, but they are merely means. It is the book which is the end—or rather the utilities which the book may contain applicable to a given need.

Only a precise and detailed examination of the entire collections would enable one to judge of the significance of the library as a library, and the strength that may distinguish it from the ordinary public library—even the larger ones. Such an examination no one inquirer is likely to make, for the National Library is a library for research; and its highest service in accumulation will consist in the accumulation

and preservation in as many directions as possible of specialized material for the specialist.

It has, indeed, a primary duty growing out of its privilege as depositary under the copyright law—to preserve as complete a record as possible of the issues of the American press. This is its duty as a library of record; but I refer now particularly to its duty and its opportunity as a library for research.

### *Where Its Strength Lies.*

**I**TS function is not primarily to entertain or even, by the literature of power, to influence—although, in fact, it affects a considerable local constituency in both ways. Its great and varied service will be to furnish the literature of knowledge to those engaged in serious investigation calculated to widen the boundaries of knowledge.

Now no investigator uses such a library as a whole. Each approaches and explores merely a particular section. The strength or weakness of the library will therefore be estimated by him only as he has had success or failure there. The collection is indeed fast coming to be a collection of general strength; its present funds for increase—one hundred thousand dollars a year—insure this. But in five directions it has already distinctive strength:

(1) It has already the largest single accumulation of Americana, including not merely books, but maps, music and prints; and through copyright it is certain to continue this preëminence.

(2) It has an extraordinary collection of files of newspapers,—more than forty thousand volumes,—with copious accessions from among the thousands that it currently receives.

(3) It has a collection of official documents of all countries not to be paralleled elsewhere, since it has the benefit of an exchange with foreign governments based on a hundred sets of United States documents assigned to it for the purpose.

(4) It is the custodian of the Smithsonian Library—a superb collection of publications of learned societies growing out of the exchanges of the Smithsonian Institution.

(5) It has been made the depositary of certain great collections of historical manuscripts bought by the government in years past—from Thomas Jefferson, from Peter Force, from the heirs of the Marquis de Rochambeau. It has recently become the depositary of the government for other historical manuscripts in its possession not required by the Executive Departments for administrative purposes; and it has by purchase and gift come into possession of other invaluable manuscript material lately in private hands.

All these manuscripts relate to American history. In the aggregate it constitutes the largest and most important collection of "sources" for American history now gathered in any one place.

To describe even these five groups in detail would be impossible within my space. I should have liked to indicate an item or two in each, with its possible significance to research. For instance, the map division, among its eighty thousand maps in sheet form,