

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY.

Copyrighted, 1897, by Frank G. Carpenter. WASHINGTON, D. C. September 18, 1897.—I had an hour's chat today with Mr. John Russell Young as to his plans for the new National Library. He had just returned from his home in New Jersey over the various rooms with Mr. Spofford and the chiefs of the different divisions, and had before him a set of plans, showing the floor and just how each part of this great book palace is to be arranged. Mr. Young's home is now on New Jersey avenue, within a few blocks of the library. In going to him I walked by the front of the National Capitol, down the central stairs of which a wooden trough or chute has been built to carry the boxes of books from the top of the library down into the wagon in which they are to be carried to the new. I saw scores of workmen bringing these boxes on their shoulders out of the capitol and putting them into the chute. Men stood at the bottom to catch the boxes as they came flying down, and as soon as one wagon was loaded I noticed that there were others there to take its place. Already several hundred thousand books have been moved, and it is expected that long before Congress meets this vast collection of volumes and pamphlets will be stored away in its new home.

The New Librarian of Congress. Before I give my interview with Mr. Young, let me say something about the man. Some of the papers seem to look upon him as a politician rather than as a literary man. This is a mistake. Mr. Young is almost a born librarian. He began to work for the newspapers long before he was out of his teens. He has been a student all his life, and today he has one of the largest private libraries in the United States. His collection of Americana at Philadelphia numbers several thousand volumes, and he has rare editions of nearly all the greater authors. His literary work has been carried on all over the world. For years he was the head of the New York Herald bureau in London, and as such spent much time in the British Museum library. He has also worked for months in the National Library of France. He has had access to the collections of Spain at Madrid, and there is hardly a great library of the world which he does not know. As a writer he is noted for the purity of his English, and when he talks his language is the purest Anglo-Saxon so worded that it could be published without revision. He has always received high salaries. I am told he got \$10,000 a year from Mr. Bennett, and that he must have been well paid when he was vice president of the Reading railroad, and I imagine his work today is done more for the love of the best nature. His salary which he gets from the government.

How McKinley Appointed Young. It has been stated that Mr. Young's appointment was due to Albrecht Spofford. This is a mistake. Mr. Spofford himself wrote the president that he did not wish to be continued as chief and in his letter he himself suggested that Mr. Young be chosen as librarian. When President McKinley offered John Russell Young the position, Mr. Young said he could not accept it because of his friendship for Mr. Spofford. Said he: "Mr. President, Mr. Spofford and I have been friends for over thirty years. We like each other and I would not for the world do anything that would affect our relations."

Upon this President McKinley showed Mr. Young Mr. Spofford's letter, and some weeks after that Mr. Young accepted the appointment. The relations of the two men are of the best nature. They are working together. Spofford acting as literary assistant and Young as administration head, executive manager, and in short as librarian-in-chief.

Uncle Sam's Book Collection. I asked Mr. Young to tell me something of the size of Uncle Sam's book collection. He replied: "It is hard to say as yet just what it is. For years thousands of pamphlets and volumes have been stored away in boxes, packed up in bundles and piled up in all sorts of shapes in the basement of the capitol. We know that we have altogether about 750,000 books and 250,000 pamphlets, making a million in all. We have, I judge, something like 300,000 unbound periodicals, and at least 40,000 maps. In addition to these there are manuscripts, pictures and a vast amount of material, the value of

John Russell Young Talks of Our Big Book Collection, and Tells Where It Is Strong and Weak.

which can only be known when it is properly arranged and classified. "What these must be a great deal of trash in such stuff," Mr. Young said. "No, I think not," was the reply. "Almost every bit of it is valuable in one sense or another. You know the trash of the next. Old pamphlets which are thought worthless often become very valuable. The American ones are especially so. I know the classics of the great American brain is doing it. It is the great brain reservoir of the United States, and it should contain everything published."

Enough Room for the Next Century. "Will not the library soon become full at this rate of increase?" I asked. "No, I think not," replied the librarian. "We can put all the books in one wing or stack of the new building. We have shelves for years to come. The library covers about three acres. There are three acres of necessary rooms for books, machinery, offices and reading rooms. Nine acres is a great deal of space. There are already miles of shelves in the present building, and we could build for more than 4,000,000 books. I doubt whether we will fill the library building within the next 100 years. The greatest library of the world is the library of Paris. It has 2,000,000 volumes, but the books are badly housed. The British Museum library is next, with 2,000,000 volumes. I think that the library of St. Petersburg follows. As for us, we stand about eleventh in number; but if Congress is as liberal in providing books as it has been in putting up this book palace, we will become third in rank, and we may eventually be first."

Our Specialties. "In what features is the library especially strong, Mr. Young?" I asked. "It has a fine collection of American pamphlets and books published in America. It is very strong in law, political economy and history. There are, however, many gaps in our collection of French, German and Spanish literature, and also in other things. I want to see the gaps filled up. I hope that Congress will give us a big enough appropriation to buy the things which we have not. Mr. Spofford and myself are now working the catalogues of sales all over the world. In order to supply our deficiencies, Congress ought to give a good appropriation to the library, and I think the building will cause it to do better as to the book fund than it has in the past. The book fund the library has had about \$1,100,000 a year, and one-third of this has gone to the supreme court. The new library building cost \$4,000,000. The interest on the investment at 6 per cent is \$240,000 a year. As long as the United States is paying \$300,000 a year for its library, it ought to add the small sum of \$20,000 or \$30,000 more for the purchase of books, which would keep it abreast of the great libraries of the world. As it is, we have a great many good nuggets in the library. We have, for instance, the great folio edition of Shakespeare, a volume which is worth from \$1,000 to \$5,000. I think we should have not only every edition of the works that can be found."

A Chance for Rich Men. "There is one idea that I would like to see grow in the minds of the rich men of the United States," continued Mr. Young, "and that is, that one of the best places to leave the money to is the library. The British Museum Library was founded by the gift of a man named Hans Sloan, 150 years ago. It was first kept in one of the dual palaces and for time part of the king's library. George IV. desired to sell it at one time, when he was hard up, but when he found that he could not do so he gave it to the nation. It has since been largely increased by gifts. Just now I understand that there is a fine collection of Burns' works in this city. It is owned by William R. Smith, the superintendent of the Botanical Gardens, and is said to be one of the finest Burns collections in the world. I have understood that he expects to give it to the Masonic Library of Washington, but I have written him that he should give it to the National Library. Why should not some rich man buy a collection of this kind and give it to the library? Take some of our millionaires, such as John Mackay, Rockefeller and others. What better monument could they leave for themselves than to give to the library? It would be known in the library as their collection, and to be always called by their name? I would like to see national pride aroused by the library. It is a library for the people, and we hope to make it so accessible that it will be at the command of everyone who comes to Washington."

Washington as a Literary Center. "Is not Washington already one of the literary centers of the nation?" "Yes, it is," was the reply. "It is fast becoming the seat of great collections. The National Library is only one of a number. There should be a general catalog published of all the books in Washington, stating where they may be found. We have here what is said to be the best medical library of the world. The Bureau of Geographical Names, the Army and Medical Museum. It has more than 100,000 volumes and about 150,000 pamphlets, comprising, it is said, copies of the works of all the great authors of literature published, and copies of nine-tenths of all the medical books published within the last 10 years. Doctors now come from all parts of the world to consult this library. Along some lines it surpasses the library of the British Museum, and that of France. The Smithsonian library is very rich in scientific matter. It contains something like 300,000 volumes and pamphlets. There will be about 100,000 of these books stored in the National Library and accessible to the public. We shall have the Patent Office library is one of the finest of its kind. It contains about 60,000 volumes, and is the largest collection of scientific books in the world. The department has many valuable books and manuscripts and the War department and Navy department are also rich in scientific and technical literature. The geological survey has a fine library of travel and science, and there are other collections of value, all of which are open to the public. A great deal of scientific work is steadily going on in Washington, and there is no reason why it should not be the chief literary center of the continent."

In the New Library. At this point Mr. Young spread out the plans of the floors of the library and showed me how he expected to arrange the different departments. We first took "Here," said he, "we will have a lecture room, which will seat 500 people, and which may be used for scientific and literary conventions. We shall have the rooms for the Smithsonian Institution collection, so that it may be right near the lecture room. In the south gallery we will have a collection of the great artists of the United States, making here an art gallery in which people can see what our people have done along these lines since the government has been founded. This collection of the growth of the copyright law, but hitherto,

all work in such shop or factory without the sanction of the board of the central union, and no strike shall be declared without an attempt at arbitration. The workers further agree to abolish the shop clubs. In every shop and factory the workers have organized clubs. The main object of these clubs is to work against workers who have not joined the trades unions. When the unions have adopted these arguments the lock-out will be declared off, and every machine in the iron factories and shops in Denmark will at once be put in motion.

owing to the lack of room, it has not been shown. Walking around the third floor, you next come to the side of the building facing the capitol. Here will be a department devoted to early Americana and early printed works of Americans. On the north side of the building I have decided to put the maps and charts. This will be a very interesting collection. There are many maps which were made by our officers during the revolutionary war. Some were drawn on the battlefields and not a few were made by British, French and American engineers. "In the attic there will be a restaurant, and the building will be so arranged that scholars who wish to work here will have all conveniences."

A Look into the Reading Room. "Tell me something about the reading room, Mr. Young," said I. "Here it is on the library floor," replied John Russell Young, as he took another plan and spread it out before me. "It is about a hundred feet in diameter, and we have the desks already in, though not the chairs. I think we shall be able to seat 500 people and give them plenty of working space. The librarians will be in the center of the room, and they will be connected by telephone with every part of the building, and with both houses of Congress. They will have pneumatic tubes running from their desks to every story of the book stacks. There are carboys which run on endless chains from every part of the book stacks to the reading room, so that within five minutes a librarian can get a book from any part of the library. At the right of the reading room as you go out will be the office of the librarian, and near it will be the office of Mr. Spofford, Mr. Hutcheson and others of the assistants. In this building, however, I have decided to put a library for the blind. We have a large number of books with raised letters printed for the use of the blind. We could give these in the main reading room, but I fear that the people reading in this way would attract attention and sightseers might bother them, so I have decided to give them a room to themselves.

Cataloguing Department. "Here along the north side of the building on the library floor," Mr. Young went on, "will be the cataloguing department. This is a very important branch of the library. The cataloguing of a library is like the rudder of a ship—we should be at sea without one. We want to keep the book lists up to date. We publish, you know, a bureau of geographical names, and the books which have come in. We have already a good catalogue of the periodicals and of the volumes now in the library. "Further along the same floor, in the northeast corner, is a room which is to be devoted to the Toner collection. This collection consists of 30,000 volumes. It was made by Dr. Toner, of Washington. It is a very strong collection of manuscripts and books relating to George Washington, and I have placed it in charge of one of the last of the Washington family. Further around the building to the east there will be a department devoted to manuscripts. You remember that some manuscripts were stolen from the library not long ago. We shall have the room kept under special lock and key, and we hope to guard such treasures carefully. Then there will be a room devoted to research, and a room for the use of the scientific and literary workers who are known to be carrying on certain lines of study or research, can have books brought to them, and do their work apart from the regular reading room. Another important classification which will be in this part of the building is that of periodicals. We have one of the most valuable newspaper collections in the world. We have all the magazines that have ever been published in America, and many of those of foreign countries. These will be accessible, and by card catalogue one will be able to get almost anything.

Copyright Department. "At the south end of the library floor there will be the copyright department. This has been thoroughly systematized, and is now bringing in about \$1,000 a week. The mail is kept right up to date, and I make it a point to have every day's work done at the end of the day. If the clerks have to work late, I think that they will have to rest the next day, but that the business must be kept up. In addition to these departments, there will be a number of others. In the basement there is the mailing department. We expect to have a bindery there. We have a branch in which copyright books are kept, and, in short, we hope eventually to have one of the most complete libraries of the world." FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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SCANDINAVIAN NEWS. A young Japanese scientist, Abe, professor in geology and mineralogy at the University of Kioto, Japan, is in Norway to study the geological and mineral formations of Norway. The Japanese government defrays all the expenses. Henrik Cavling's book, "From America," which is being published in Copenhagen in serials, is attracting considerable attention in the Scandinavian countries. The latest serial treats of Norwegian plans in America, and is from the pen of Dr. Groth, of New York, who gives the following pen-picture of the characteristics of Norwegian immigrants: "For a while they remain Norwegians; the parents are pure Norwegians, speak Norwegian to one another, and also to the children, who at a rule speak a Norwegian dialect, in which they communicate with their parents, but they have resolved to be Americans. They speak English to one another, and in many instances the children Americanize the parents, compelling them to speak English in their homes, because it represents the strongest and most viable principle in society. Finally the Norwegian elements disappear as a drop in the bucket, but not until they have to some extent stamped a small percentage of their peculiarities on the national character. The immigrants of all nations will disappear, but their national traits will be inherited by future generations of Americans. This mixture of peoples and races, this people in embryo, is one of the most interesting manifestations of the present age, and while a few bigoted Americans look at it with diffidence and ill-will, there are others less prejudiced, who rejoice at the thought of the rich, many-sided national character which must arise out of this intermixture of fresh and foreign blood. A church for tourists has been built on historic Balestrand, in Norway, where the hero of Frodoth's Saga, immortalized by Eosias Tegner, would have taken refuge had he been snugly roval brother. The church stands on a small knoll near Balestrand. The ground was donated by an English society advanced a non-interest-bearing loan to defray the building expenses. The church is built in the old Norse stave church style, and is called St. Olaf's church. The tourists hold services here every Sunday during the tourist season in the summer months. English tourists dedicated the church on St. Olaf's day. The officiating clergyman in his dedication sermon mentioned the fact that St. Olaf was a member in England. Near the Thames river, in London, stood until recently a church which was nearly as old as the Thronheim cathedral. It had been erected and dedicated to the memory of St. Olaf, Norway's martyr king. The Norwegian sterling has appointed the following committee of five, to act as a prize committee in awarding the