

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

FOR

THE YEAR 1876.

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1877.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
Washington, January 1, 1877.

The undersigned submits herewith his annual report, embracing the statistics of the growth of the Library of Congress and the business of the copyright department during the year 1876. One year ago the Librarian was authorized to make these reports represent the calendar year thereafter, beginning and ending with the first of January, instead of the first of December, as formerly.

The increase of the Library during the year now closed has been highly gratifying. The counting of the books, just completed, shows an aggregate of 311,097 volumes of bound books, together with about 100,000 pamphlets. The last enumeration, January 1, 1876, showed a total of 293,507 volumes. The books added during the year thus amount to 17,590 volumes, besides 8,636 pamphlets. The additions to the law library, reckoned in the above aggregate, were 3,211 volumes, carrying the collection of works in jurisprudence up to an aggregate of 37,727 volumes.

The additions to the Library have been from the following specified sources, namely :

	Books.	Pam- phlets.
By purchase.....	5,495	745
By copyright.....	8,080	5,995
By deposit of the Smithsonian Institution.....	1,417	1,878
By donation, (including State documents).....	1,888	345
By exchanges.....	830	373
Total.....	17,590	8,636

To this are to be added maps and charts acquired during the year to the number of 2,445.

The acquisitions to the Library by purchase during the last year, though not so large numerically as in some previous ones, have been more than usually important. Extensive auction sales in American cities and on the Continent have been availed of to make selections of rare and expensive books seldom occurring for purchase; and in this way very handsome acquisitions of early American imprints, and of multitudes of books and pamphlets relating to America, not before in the collection, have been secured. Among the foreign purchases worthy of note were complete sets of the publications of the Maitland Club, in 110 volumes;

Nichols's *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*; the Chetham Society Publications; the Dresden Gallery, 3 volumes, in great folio; Ferrario's *Costumes*, 21 volumes, folio; the *Critical Review*, 144 volumes; the original manuscript Report of the Debates in the Irish Parliament, from 1775 to 1789, covering the very interesting period of the American war of the Revolution and the events preliminary to the consolidation of Ireland with Great Britain in 1800; and a collection of the privately printed pedigrees, visitations, parish registers, &c., left by the late Sir Thomas Phillipps; these last were printed in so small number as to be nearly as rare as manuscripts, and constitute a valuable accession to the rich collection of genealogical and historical works already in the Library. Many works of great value and interest, in architecture, sculpture, painting, and the mechanic arts, have also been purchased, greatly extending the value of the collection as a complete library of reference.

The business of the copyright department during the year shows a considerable increase of entries, notwithstanding the depressed condition of the book-publishing trade and connected interests. The whole number of entries of copyrights for the twelve months of 1876 was 14,882 against 14,197 for the preceding calendar year. The cash receipts paid into the Treasury amounted to \$12,500.50, while for the year preceding the aggregate was \$11,780.50, showing an increase in fees of \$720. It was anticipated, when the transfer of all prints and labels used in connection with manufactured articles was made from the copyright office to that of the Commissioner of Patents, that there would be a large and permanent decrease in the number of copyright entries. But the result during the past year as well as in that preceding indicates that the general increase in the entry of articles that are still legitimate subjects of copyright this such as, taken in connection with the growth of the country, will keep this department fully up to its present average of business.

Under the law which requires the deposit in the Library of two copies of each book or other publication protected by copyright, the following articles have been received in 1876, under each designation of copyright matter:

Books.....	8,020
Periodicals.....	7,027
Musical compositions.....	5,767
Dramatic compositions.....	262
Photographs.....	1,347
Engravings and chromos.....	1,483
Maps, charts, and drawings.....	2,070
Prints.....	224
Total.....	26,200

As two copies of each publication are deposited, it will be seen that the net additions to the collections have amounted to 13,100 articles, 4,010 of which are books.

The funds appropriated by Congress for the various objects placed by law under the charge of the Joint Committee on the Library exhibit the following balances on the 1st of January, 1877:

Fund for increase of Library	\$8,092 37
Fund for contingent expenses of Library	3,066 19
Fund for expense of exchanging public documents.....	315 49
Fund for purchase and printing of unpublished historical documents relating to the early French discoveries in the Northwest and on the Mississippi.....	8,541 01
Fund for ornamenting the Capitol with works of art.....	3,394 42
Fund for completion of three volumes of Wilkes's Exploring Expedition....	4,814 51
Fund for salaries in Botanic Garden and greenhouses.....	7,871 45
Fund for improving Botanic Garden.....	1,304 03
Fund for portraits of Presidents of the United States.....	850 00

The materials for the new general catalogue of the Library, referred to in my last report, have been completed during the year, and all the titles, exceeding 260,000 in number, are ready for the press. But no appropriation has been made for the expense of printing; the small sum devoted to the printing and binding of the Library at the last session of Congress being hardly adequate to the necessities for the binding of books and the necessary blanks and records for the copyright department. The importance of making early provision for publishing this new general catalogue, which will represent the entire contents of the Library up to date, is earnestly commended to the attention of the committee and of Congress. The numerous alphabets of the existing catalogue, with its annual supplements, render it embarrassing for those who use the Library to refer to them without much consumption of time, as no less than twelve volumes have to be consulted in order to determine conclusively whether the Library contains any book. Moreover, these catalogues have never embraced anything more than a partial selection of the titles of pamphlets, with which the Library is so richly stored, whereas the new general catalogue embraces both books and pamphlets, without omission. It is, of course, possible for the officers of the Library to determine at once what books or pamphlets of any author are contained in it by reference to the official catalogue; but it is to be observed that this catalogue is on cards, in large part in manuscript, and arranged in drawers, thus preventing that convenient and quick reference which is only attainable through a printed catalogue in book form. The material has been so prepared as to abbreviate most of the titles, retaining only the more significant or descriptive parts, together with the collation and date of each work. To print in full the title-pages of so large a collection as this Library has now grown to be would involve too heavy an expenditure of the public money, with too little return in utility to justify so extensive and voluminous a publication. It is estimated that the succinct titles of the 311,000 volumes which the Library now contains may be compressed into four moderate octavo volumes, in clear type; and provision should be made to proceed with the printing with the least possible delay.

The preparation of the complete index to the documents, debates, and laws of Congress has very considerably advanced during the past year. The whole number of reference-titles already written amounts to an aggregate of forty thousand. Referring to my previous reports as to the general plan of this index, it is recommended that the small appropriation yet needed to complete the work be provided during the present session of Congress.

Since my last report, the publication of the first volume of original historical documents relating to the French discoveries and explorations in the northwestern portion of the United States and on the Mississippi has taken place. The whole work will be embraced in six octavo volumes, with an atlas of maps in quarto, and will cover a vast collection of letters, official papers, and other documents, in the original French, relating to the discoveries and settlements under Cavalier de la Salle and other explorers in territory now belonging to the United States, from A. D. 1614 to 1752. The edition of these historical volumes being small, (only five hundred copies,) it is recommended that, instead of a gratuitous distribution, the Librarian be authorized to exchange copies of the work with historical societies and other libraries for any books deemed equivalent in value, to enrich the collection of Congress.

The question of most pressing importance connected with the interests of the Library of Congress, which has become, by liberal legislation and extensive growth, the library of the nation, is the provision of a suitable building to contain its rapidly accumulating stores. In four previous reports, the undersigned has pressed this subject upon the attention of the committee in all its phases, and no repetition is here necessary of the cogent reasons, becoming continually more pressing, for prompt action in supplying so manifest a public necessity. In a report made by the chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, June 8, 1876, (Senate Report No. 387, 1st session 44th Congress,) a succinct statement may be found of the reasons which impelled the committee to recommend a bill for the construction of a new fire-proof building for the Library. The bill accompanying that report (S. 910) proposed to appropriate the sum of \$150,000 "for preparing the ground, laying the foundation, and commencing the construction of a new fire-proof building for the use of the Library of the United States." The site proposed in the bill was the public reservation lying on the west side of the Capitol, now occupied by the Botanic Garden. A subsequent examination of the ground, however, developed weighty objections to the location proposed; and, in the curtailment of all appropriations which governed the action of Congress at the last session, no step was taken toward providing for the wants of its overcrowded Library.

The whole subject is again earnestly commended to the early attention of the committee, with the single remark that the injury to the books, bound newspapers, and objects of art which are piled up unprovided with shelves or room, is constantly increasing with every addition,

while the difficulties and embarrassments attending the administration of the Library and the large copyright business of the country within such narrow quarters are such as would not be tolerated for a single season in any first-class business house in any city of the country. The undersigned cannot doubt that the committee will agree with him in the belief that the people of the country stand ready to sanction any wise expenditure necessary to protect and preserve these great collections of a nation's literature and art, which are intrusted to the immediate care and responsibility of the representatives of the people.

A. R. SPOFFORD,
Librarian of Congress.

Hon. T. O. HOWE,
Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library.

