

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

FOR

THE YEAR 1877.



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REPORT.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
Washington, January 2, 1878.

The undersigned has the honor to submit herewith his annual report, covering the statistics of the Library of Congress and the copyright business of the United States for the year closing December 31, 1877. Rapid progress in the growth of the Library and all its interests, except the provision of adequate space for its fast accumulating treasures, has characterized the year just closed. The number of readers has been far greater than ever before, the majority of whom are serious students in quest of authorities and information, and it is at times impossible to furnish adequate accommodations, within the narrow space at command, both for the readers and for the members of Congress themselves.

The enumeration of books January 1, 1878, exhibits an aggregate of 331,118 volumes, and about 110,000 pamphlets. Of the books, no less than 39,796 belong to the law department of the Library. At the date of my last annual report the Library contained 311,097 volumes. The increase during the last year was thus 20,021 volumes, derived from the following specific sources, namely:

	Books.	Pamph- lets.
By purchase.....	7,882	849
By copyright.....	8,952	5,340
By deposit of the Smithsonian Institution.....	2,231	2,184
By donation (including State documents).....	1,030	320
By exchange.....	126	655
Total.....	20,021	9,348

To this should be added maps and charts, to the number of 2,622, acquired during the year 1877.

The Librarian has been this year confronted with a new embarrassment. The annual enumeration of the Library yielded a result so surprisingly large when first taken that the undersigned had the count of the whole retaken, each department by different assistants as enumerators. The result above given can be regarded as approximately correct, but only approximately, since it has been impossible with the help at the Librarian's disposal to remove the piles of books that have accumulated, so as to insure accurate counting. Any library upon shelves, however vast in extent, can be accurately enumerated, even to a single volume, but in a library like that of Congress, which has shelves but for 260,000

volumes, while about 70,000 volumes are heaped in places so narrow that they cannot be moved for counting, the contents must in great part be estimated—not enumerated.

The business of the copyright department continues to increase, both in the number of entries and in the number of publications received at the Library. There were entered during the calendar year 1877, 15,758 publications, as against 14,882 for the year preceding, 1876. This is an increase over the preceding year of 876 publications. The aggregate of copyright-fees paid into the Treasury by the undersigned amounted to \$13,076, while for the year preceding the aggregate was \$12,550.50; showing an increase in fees of \$575.50. The deposits of publications protected by copyright, under the law requiring that two copies of each book or other publication entered be transmitted to the Librarian of Congress, show the following result for the year under the various designations of articles which are lawful subjects of copyright:

Books	8,952
Periodicals.....	7,036
Musical compositions	5,710
Dramatic compositions	153
Photographs	1,688
Engravings and chromos.....	1,888
Maps, charts, and drawings.....	2,296
Prints	154
Designs.....	81
Total.....	27,958

As two copies of each publication are deposited, the net additions to the collections of copyright material in the Library foot up 13,979 articles, of which 4,476 are separate books, besides a still greater number of periodicals.

The funds placed by law under charge of the Joint Committee on the Library show the following balances on the 1st of January, 1878 :

Fund for increase of Library.....	\$10,228 54
Fund for purchase and printing of unpublished historical documents relating to the early French discoveries in the Northwest and on the Mississippi	7,304 76
Fund for ornamenting the Capitol with works of art.....	3,144 47
Fund for salaries in Botanic Garden and greenhouses.....	4,512 17
Fund for improving Botanic Garden.....	1,792 73
Fund for portraits of Presidents of the United States.....	850 00
Fund for reprint of acts of the Continental Congress and the Congress of the Confederation	800 00

The printing of the new general catalogue of the Library, so long ready for the press, though delayed a year by the failure of appropriations for printing and binding for the Library of Congress at the last regular session, was provided for at the extra session recently adjourned, and is now proceeding. This catalogue will embrace the titles of all the works in the Library up to 1877, including both books and pamphlets.

The arrangement will be that most generally approved, by authors' names in a single alphabet. Embodying, as it will, the titles of a larger collection of English and American literature, to say nothing of other languages, than has ever been embraced in the printed catalogue of any existing library in a single alphabet, it is hoped that it may be found a work of reference of the highest utility to all. It will be produced in the same clear and satisfactory style of printing which has characterized the catalogues of the Library heretofore executed at the Government Printing Office.

The labor of preparing a complete index to the documents, debates, and laws of Congress, which was suspended last spring through the want of appropriations, will now be resumed and pushed forward to completion. The undersigned has in previous reports recommended, with a view both to the highest utility and to public economy, that no fragmentary work be attempted, and that no part of this index be published until the whole of this vast material shall have been properly prepared, revised, and co-ordinated into a single alphabet. This work, embracing as it does the contents of over 1,500 volumes, is one of such magnitude as to require the most careful application both of industry and of time to the work involved. There have already been indexed for this proposed publication, the Annals of Congress, 42 volumes; the Register of Debates, 29 volumes; nearly the whole of the Congressional Globe and the Congressional Record, 135 volumes; with 18 volumes of the Statutes at Large, up to the last Congress. There still remain to be indexed a great proportion of the Executive and other documents of Congress. Meanwhile there has been offered to the Committee on the Library, on certain conditions as to printing, the index of documents alone, prepared in manuscript by the officers of the Boston Public Library, and assumed to be approximately complete. With a view to avoid delay, it is recommended that the Library Committee consider the expediency of accepting these already prepared materials for an index, with such revision and additions as may be found important, the whole to be printed in one alphabet, with the index to the debates of Congress and the laws. Under each topic of legislation there can then be traced its history, with complete references to its discussion in both houses of Congress, to all reports or documents bearing thereon, and to the laws affecting the subject, in chronological order.

During the year, the second volume of the publication of original historical documents exhibiting the French discoveries and explorations in the northwestern regions of the United States and on the Mississippi, has been received from Paris, and the third volume approaches completion. The recommendation is renewed that as the cost to the government of each set of this work in six volumes is about twenty dollars, and as the edition is small (being only 500 copies), the Librarian be authorized to exchange copies of the work with historical societies and other libraries for books, periodicals, and pamphlets, deemed of equal

value, to enrich the collections of Congress. The great interest and value of the letters and papers embodied in this collection, as throwing light upon the aboriginal tribes and pioneer settlements in what are now great and populous commonwealths, fully vindicate the wisdom of Congress in making the moderate appropriation necessary to their publication.

The Librarian was charged by act of March 3, 1877, with the editing and preparation for the press of the resolves, ordinances, and acts of the Continental Congress and the Congress of the Confederation, "to be taken from the journals." After a thorough examination of the printed journals, in thirteen volumes, and a careful comparison of them with the original manuscript journals of the Congress, preserved in thirty-nine volumes in the Department of State, the undersigned found that such large and important omissions had been made in printing these inestimable records of our early political history as to justify him in suspending any attempt at a selection or a fragmentary publication from the journals until Congress should be consulted as to the expediency of printing the originals in full. This important matter, as it involves detail, will be made the subject of a special report soon to be presented to the committee.

Under the joint resolution of March 13, 1876, and the proclamation of May 25, of the same year, recommending that the several counties and towns in the United States cause to be prepared a historical sketch of each county or town from its foundation to the year 1876, and that a copy in print or manuscript be filed in the Library of Congress, there have been received up to date two hundred and twenty-five historical memorials, which are carefully laid aside and catalogued for binding and preservation. While it may be regretted that the suggestion of Congress has not been to a larger extent complied with, no such contribution to our historical literature can be wholly without benefit.

The Librarian renews, for the sixth time, his earnest appeal through this committee to the judgment and patriotism of Congress, that this body will no longer permit the great collection of literature and art confided to its care to suffer injury and loss in its present narrow and inconvenient quarters. The space, which five years ago was too small for this Library, is now, through the accumulation of nearly one hundred thousand additional volumes, utterly inadequate, not only to store the books, pamphlets, maps, charts, engravings, and other works of art, but it is at times uncomfortably crowded by those persons laudably seeking to make the best use of its rich and overflowing stores. A new Library building has become a positive and immediate necessity to furnish room for the readers, to say nothing whatever of room for the books, nearly seventy thousand volumes of which are now piled upon the floors in all directions. It is within the knowledge of the Librarian, and has formed a frequent subject of painful regret, that students, and especially ladies, are deterred from frequenting the Library of Congress, because

of the difficulty of procuring seats therein, while some schools of the city, whose pupils once resorted to its halls to examine the sources of English literature in volumes not elsewhere to be found, can no longer enjoy the possibility of such improvement. It is moreover well known to all who come to the Library that its own rules, adopted by the committee for the protection of students, are subject to compulsory violation, and that the measure of silence which should be enforced for the protection of readers is rendered impossible for want of space in which members of Congress or other investigators can be isolated from the crowd of sight-seers which sometimes throng every public place within the Capitol. "The still air of quiet and delightful studies" which should mark the halls of every library becomes farther and farther removed from those of the Library of Congress with each advancing year. While it may be said in extenuation that it is no function of the Library of Congress to supply the public, whether residents of Washington or the scholars of the country, with facilities for information, it cannot be forgotten that Congress has itself invited such frequentation by the liberal policy of accumulating a great library at the seat of government, and throwing open its doors to all. It has also taken in charge the rich scientific library of the Smithsonian Institution as a probably permanent deposit, with the contingent responsibility of making its stores contribute to the diffusion of knowledge among men. And it would little comport with the theory or the practice of our popular institutions and form of government that any new bars should be placed in the path of the widest diffusion of intelligence. When it is considered that, from the nature of the case, the embarrassment of producing books and information from these accumulated heaps is constantly growing; that Congress, by the act of 1870 requiring two copies of every publication protected by copyright to be deposited in the Library of the government, settled the question of its possible permanent shelter in the Capitol in the negative; that this building, overcrowded in all its departments, so that several committees have to occupy the same room, is crowded worst of all in the library department, to which no possible outlet or addition of room can be procured; that the mere arithmetical computation of the growth of the country's literature proves that space must be provided for a building at least two-thirds the size of the Capitol, within the century; that there is no large capital in Europe in which the library of the government can be or is provided for under the same roof with its legislature; that in our case, and in ours alone, there is added to the great government library the extensive and growing bureau of copyrights and copyright business for the whole country; that the attempt to get along with this double difficulty has already produced great injury to the books, with partial exclusion from their benefits, and must ultimately curtail the usefulness of the Library to an incalculable degree; that even if the remedy authorizing new space to be provided were immediately applied, some years must elapse before

the requisite building accommodations could be completed ; the case becomes one of such pressing emergency, not to say distress, that argument upon it should be unnecessary. Suffice it to say that it scarcely becomes a government representing a nation of such wealth, intelligence, and power to treat the assembled stores of literature and art of the country, which its own laws have caused to be gathered at the capital and thrown open to the people, with such indignity as to subject them to injury and destruction, or to equally reprehensible exclusion from their benefits. Of the mode and manner of providing for the care and permanent preservation of this treasury of knowledge, Congress is properly the sole judge; but should another session of that body be suffered to pass without proper provision being in some way made for its protection, Congress will hardly be held to have discharged the trust reposed in it as the custodian of what President Jefferson called with prophetic wisdom the Library of the United States.

A. R. SPOFFORD,
Librarian of Congress.

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