

Poolle (Wm F.)

American Library Association.—Buffalo Meeting, August 14-17, 1883.

REMARKS

ON

LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION.

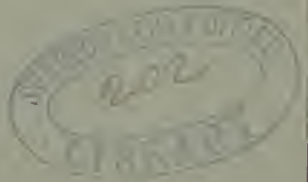
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BY WILLIAM F. POOLE,

Librarian of the Chicago Public Library.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

AN EXAMINATION OF MR. J. L. SMITHMEYER'S PAMPHLET
ENTITLED, "SUGGESTIONS ON LIBRARY ARCHI-
TECTURE, AMERICAN AND FOREIGN."



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REMARKS ON LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION,

AT BUFFALO, AUGUST 15, 1883.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Edmands for the very able and interesting report to which we have just listened. Its views on the subject of library architecture are in harmony with opinions and resolutions which, without a dissenting voice, have been expressed at the last three meetings of this Association, where it has been freely discussed. In the wide range of topics relating to our profession which have been considered at our meetings, perhaps there is no one on which there is such a unanimous concurrence of opinion as on this,—that the typical style of constructing library buildings in this country and abroad is very faulty, and needs to be reformed. The discussions we have held have directed public attention to the subject, and the reform has already commenced. No committee or board of trustees, who now have the charge of erecting a library building, would take their architect to Boston, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington or Cincinnati, and reproduce what they there found. Those buildings are all in the old conventional style,—a mediæval Gothic structure, with empty nave and galleries from four to six stories high filled with books. At Boston, Judge Chamberlain would say to the committee: “Do not copy our plans; they will vex you as they have us. We have abandoned them ourselves in the new building we are about to erect.” At Cincinnati, my friend, Mr. Merrill, would say, as he has often said: “Make your building as unlike ours as you can, and you will not make a mistake.”

The problem of library architecture is not a difficult one to solve if we will abandon conventional and mediæval ideas,

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and apply the same common-sense, practical judgment and good taste which are used in the construction of houses to live in, stores to do business in, and hotels to accommodate transient visitors in. We want buildings for doing the work of a library in; for giving readers the best facilities for study; for storing books in the most convenient and accessible manner, where they will be secure from fire and heat, and for doing in the best manner whatever pertains to the administration of a library. The architect is not qualified to decide what the requirements of a library are, for he knows nothing about the details of its administration. The librarian should study out the design of the original plan, and the architect should take his practical suggestions, harmonize them, and give to the structure an artistic effect. It would be well if librarians gave more attention to library construction. If left to architects alone, the business will run in the old ruts.

The conventional style of library architecture has come down, through the centuries, to our day under the supposition that it was beautiful. Committees start out with the single idea, and seldom get beyond it, that a library building must be, in any event, picturesque. It may be objected that a building constructed on the practical and utilitarian ideas which have been promulgated of late through this Association will not be æsthetic. Beauty is that which is pleasing to the sight or gratifying to the other senses. That only is really beautiful which answers the purpose for which it was designed. Different persons have different æsthetic ideas as to the same object. A stranger entering the Cincinnati Public Library, and gazing aloft at the ornamental skylight and at the upper galleries filled with books, regards the design as beautiful; but the assistant, who is obliged to climb four flights of stairs to get a volume, sees no element of beauty in the arrangement; and when Mr. Merrill, on a summer day, finds that the sun streaming through that ornamental skylight has raised the temperature in the upper galleries to 140° , and that the bindings of his books are crumbling because they have been

burned up by this excessive heat, the sight does not appeal to his æsthetic faculty. No person who has had experience with buildings of this class will say they are beautiful, and for the reason that they do not meet the legitimate wants and conditions of a library.

We have naturally an interest in the plans which will be adopted in the construction of the two great library buildings soon to be erected in Boston and Washington, and chiefly because they will indicate the progress, if any, in library architecture. Mr. Edmands has given us such information concerning them as he could obtain, which is not very definite. With the plans for the Washington library we have an especial interest, because it is the National Library. If this American Association of practical librarians is good for anything, it would seem that it ought to have some influence, by the way of advice, in determining what those plans shall be. Hitherto its advice has been wholly ignored by the Congressional committee on that subject. The committee's plans were exhibited and explained by its architect, at our meeting in Washington, in February, 1881, and by resolution they met the disapproval of every member. They were in the old conventional style, with open nave, alcoves five stories high, and skylights. They were condemned again the next year, at our Cincinnati meeting. No notice was taken of our action; and the question of adopting those plans coming before Congress, the bill was defeated, on a motion of Mr. Holman, of Indiana, that the expense of the building (estimated by some architects at about ten million dollars) should not exceed two millions. The question will doubtless come up again in the next session of Congress. Mr. Spofford, in his letter to the Association, which Mr. Edmands has just read, says it appears to him "that the Association should take measures to make its views on the matter of library construction more widely known, and its influence felt in a more definite and emphatic manner." This is the very thing we have been trying to do, and with very little success. "And it is quite cer-

tain," he adds, "that with the prestige we [the Association] have, it is possible for us largely to give direction to public thought on the subject, and through the public to the action of Congress." I think we ought to heed this good counsel and to suggest that we be heard by the committee when the subject next comes up for consideration in Congress.

I regard the adoption of Mr. Holman's resolution as a fortunate circumstance, for it makes the construction of a building on the plans adopted by the committee, an impossibility, and indicates that the members of Congress propose to give to the matter some consideration. It affords the librarians of the country, also, an opportunity to express their views. As to what shall be the architecture of the exterior, this Association has no interest, and hence has expressed no opinion; but with the construction and arrangements of the interior it has, by unanimous votes, expressed and reiterated decided opinions, first at Washington, in 1881, just after the committee's plans had been exhibited and explained to the Association, and in these words:—

"*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Association, the time has come for a radical modification of the prevailing typical style of library building, and the adoption of a style of construction better suited to economy and practical utility."

This resolution was repeated at Cincinnati, with some additional resolutions, among which were the following:—

"*Resolved*, That the plans submitted to this Association at the Washington meeting, by Mr. J. L. Smithmeyer, and adopted by the Joint Committee of Congress, embody principles of construction which are now regarded as faulty by the whole library profession; and therefore, as members of the American Library Association, we protest against the erection of the building for the Library of Congress upon those principles.

"*Resolved*, . . . That it is of great importance to the library interests of the country that the old and conventional errors

of construction be avoided in the interior plans of this building."

As these are the views on library construction which this Association has uniformly expressed, they must be the views which Mr. Spofford wishes "the Association to make more widely known, and its influence felt in a more definite and emphatic manner." I certainly am not inclined to shirk my share of this duty.

The only information we have as to the plans which are now in contemplation for the Congress library building is contained in Mr. Spofford's letter which has just been read. In it he "regrets the vote of the Association condemning an interior plan, assumed by those who passed it to have been fixed upon definitely, when it was merely provisional and designed to get some kind of a building from Congress." We were not told that the plans submitted to us for our information were provisional, and did not mean anything; and we never suspected that the committee had adopted plans simply "designed to get *some kind* of a building from Congress." Asking Congress for an appropriation, which involved an expense of some ten million dollars in carrying them out, had the appearance of business and serious intentions. We are now told that the interior arrangements, as well as the materials, were to be ultimately agreed upon by the commission, "with the understanding that the librarian's judgment would be carried out as to details." It was not to the details, but to the general plan, that we objected. Hon. C. B. Farwell, of Chicago, who was a member of the committee, said to me that he was as much responsible for the adoption of the plans as any member. I asked him whether, in case Congress had enacted the committee's bill and made the appropriation, the commission could have essentially changed Mr. Smithmeyer's plans. "Not at all," he replied; "the bill carried the plans with it, and was drawn so intentionally."

So much for the past; now what of the future? A building contrived for show, such as the late committee proposed,

can not be built for \$2,000,000; but one sufficiently commodious, adapted to the practical wants of the National Library, and architecturally an ornament to the city of Washington, can be built for about that sum. No committee will be likely again to go before Congress with plans which have not been duly considered. If they consult the librarians of the country and give any weight to the advice they receive, their plans will in some measure represent the views which this Association entertains and has expressed. The Librarian of Congress, who is one of our members, ought to have, and will have, much influence in determining what those plans will be. He was, when we met at Washington, cordially with us in condemning the conventional style of library buildings, and we have had no intimation, until we listened to his letter which has just been read, that there had been a change in his opinions. Recalling, Mr. President, the views he expressed to us when, with Mr. Cutter, we partook of his generous hospitality after the Washington meeting, I am surprised at the statement of his present views of what the interior of a National Library should be. It seems like falling back on Mr. Smithmeyer's plans. He says:—

“1. A grand central hall, sufficiently impressive in height and proportions to show at once, by its well-lined walls, the wealth of its literary stores, and to appeal to public taste as something worthy of the country.”

Not a word or intimation is given as to the use to be made of this grand central hall, except that it impress the public as a show-room. Are there not show-buildings enough in Washington? A library is for the use of students and scholars, and not for sight-seers. It is the last institution which should to be housed in a show-building. This central hall is to be of great height, and its walls lined with books, in galleries, of course, of which there are five tiers in Mr. Smithmeyer's plans. Possibly this number may be increased in a room of the height proposed. What is the purpose of all this? It is not a convenient mode of shelving books and

making them accessible ; and it is well known that the bindings of books stored in galleries are destroyed by heat. Mr. Spofford here proposes to repeat and perpetuate the injury to books from heat which he experiences in his present library rooms, and which he so vigorously condemned at the Washington meeting. He said : “ If you go into the upper galleries of the Library of Congress on any day of the winter, and take a book from the shelves, the chances are that it will almost burn your hand. It has often occurred to me that, if these warped and shriveled and overheated volumes were not inanimate beings,—if they could only speak,—they would cry out with one voice to their custodians, ‘ Our sufferings are intolerable.’ ” Mr. Spofford now thinks that this arrangement “ will appeal to public taste as something worthy of the country.” To ignorant people who come to gape and stare, it will be impressive ; but to well-informed and educated persons it will be anything but an appeal to public taste. It will be pitiable, and positively discreditable to the Nation. If these be really Mr. Spofford’s present views of what the National Library ought to be, I regard his comments on some plans of library construction which I proposed at Washington as positively complimentary to them. “ In any case,” he says, “ the scheme proposed by Mr. Poole would be wholly unsuitable to a National Library building.” My scheme has certainly a very different purpose in view from his ; and that I regard as its chief merit. The delectation of strangers and casual visitors is not the primary purpose of a library building. The Washington Monument, five hundred and twenty-five feet high, will soon be completed, and visitors from the rural districts can do their gazing and wondering there. They can now roam through the Capitol (which is a show-building), and with delight look aloft in the rotunda. They can visit the Smithsonian Institution, the Patent-Office, the President’s House, and admire the marble columns around the Treasury Building. With these opportunities at sight-seeing, the National Library ought not to be constructed for their special

accommodation, in preference to convenience, common-sense, the quietude of readers, and safety of the books.

If I had not taken so much of your time, I should like to comment on some other features in the scheme of a National Library building which Mr. Spofford has laid before us. It seems hardly necessary, as my criticisms would be in the same line as those I have already made. I leave the subject here, hoping that the views of this Association will be represented in the plans which Congress in its wisdom shall adopt; and that the new National Library building will mark an era in the healthful progress of American library architecture.

Extracts from the letter of Mr. A. R. SPOFFORD, which were read by Mr. EDMANDS, as an addendum to his report:

“As matters now stand, and in special reference to the proposed new building for the Library of Congress, it appears to me this Association should take measures to make its views on the matter of library construction more widely known, and its influence felt in a more definite and emphatic manner. And it is quite certain that, with the prestige we have,* it is

* The organization of the Association for the current year is as follows:

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 1883-84.

PRESIDENT—Justin Winsor, Librarian Harvard University.

VICE PRESIDENTS—Ainsworth R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress.

William F. Poole, Librarian Chicago Public Library.

Henry A. Himes, Librarian New York State Library.

Lloyd P. Smith, Librarian Philadelphia Library Company.

SECRETARY—Melvil Dewey, Librarian Columbia College, New York.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY—C. Alex. Nelson, Astor Library, New York.

TREASURER—James L. Whitney, Ass't Librarian Boston Public Library.

possible for us largely to give direction to public thought on the subject, and, through the public, to the action of Congress.

“Both plans embodied the exterior plan of the building adopted by the committee, drawn by Mr. J. L. Smithmeyer, which is in the Italian renaissance style of architecture, with central rotunda and skylight, corner pavilions, very slightly projected, to break the monotony of a long facade in one style, and a generally modest and plain treatment throughout. The interior was to be of iron and stone; the arrangements of reading-rooms, copyright department, shelf system, and alcoves, as well as the selection of the materials, whether granite or marble, to be ultimately agreed upon by the Commission, with the understanding that the Librarian’s judgment would be carried out as to details.

FINANCE COMMITTEE—Samuel S. Green, Librarian Worcester Public Library.
 J. N. Larned, Librarian Young Men’s Library, Buffalo, N. Y.
 Daniel Beckwith, Librarian Providence Athenæum.

CO-OPERATIVE COMMITTEE—Charles A. Cutter, Librarian Boston Athenæum.
 Wm. C. Lane, Harvard University Library.
 C. B. Tillinghast, Massachusetts State Library.

COUNCILLORS—John S. Billings, Librarian National Medical Library.
 Mellen Chamberlain, Librarian Boston Public Library.
 John N. Dyer, Librarian St. Louis Mercantile Library.
 John Eaton, United States Commissioner of Education.
 John Edmands, Librarian Philadelphia Mercantile Library.
 Weston Flint, Librarian United States Patent Office.
 Daniel C. Gilman, President Johns Hopkins University.
 Reuben A. Guild, Librarian Brown University.
 Caroline M. Hewins, Librarian Hartford Library.
 Frederick Jackson, St. Paul, Minn.
 John W. M. Lee, Librarian Baltimore Mercantile Library.
 Fred. Leyoldt, Publisher of the Library Journal.
 Karl A. Linderfelt, Librarian Milwaukee Public Library.
 Chester W. Merrill, Librarian Cincinnati Public Library.
 Stephen B. Noyes, Librarian Brooklyn Library.
 Lucy Stevens, Librarian Toledo Public Library.
 Addison Van Name, Librarian Yale College.
 James W. Ward, Librarian Grosvenor Library, Buffalo, N. Y.

“ This brings me to say how greatly I regret the vote of the Association condemning an interior plan, assumed by those who passed it to have been fixed upon definitely, when it was merely provisional, and designed to get some kind of a building from Congress. Of course you could never get architects to agree upon what would be the proper interior ; and, unless I greatly mistake, an agreement of librarians would be almost equally difficult to reach. In any case, the scheme proposed by Mr. Poole would be wholly unsuited to a National Library building in many particulars. Unlike the wants of a mere collection of books open to students, a National Library must embrace,—

“ 1. A grand central hall, sufficiently impressive in height and proportions to show at once, by its well-lined walls, the wealth of its literary stores, and to appeal to public taste as something worthy of the country.

“ 2. An Art Gallery, at least 300 feet in length, for the proper arrangement of the 30,000 specimens of the arts of design already received under the copyright law, and those which are to follow.

“ 3. A Map room of large dimensions, in which many thousand maps can be systematically arranged on spiral-spring rollers, to illustrate, by a complete and magnificent series, the entire cartography of America.

“ 4. Copyright record rooms, ample for the large clerical business and accumulated folios of a national office of public records.

“ 5. A spacious hall for bound newspapers, of which more than 12,000 volumes are already accumulated.

“ 6. Committee rooms and offices in adequate number and dimensions.

“ 7. Students' rooms for special investigations.

“ 8. All needful appliances of packing, binding, heating, and quick communication throughout the entire building.

“ These being provided for and assured, and every reader furnished with a desk protected from his neighbor, and quiet

in the main library hall secured by diverting the great sight-seeing public to the art-gallery floor, where they can look down upon the reading-room, and aloft to the graceful dome, I am ready to introduce all the economics of storage which the stack system or the most utilitarian scheme proposed by any of my very respected colleagues may involve. Until these objects are secured, I am not willing to have the interior plans of a library building of national importance dwarfed to the dimensions of a prolonged series of packing-boxes."

AN EXAMINATION OF MR. J. L. SMITHMEYER'S PAMPHLET ENTITLED "SUGGESTIONS ON LIBRARY ARCHITECTURE."

Since the meeting of the American Library Association, at Buffalo, Mr. J. L. Smithmeyer, "Architect," who has made plans for the new Congressional Library building, and is soliciting Congress to adopt them, has issued a pamphlet entitled "*Suggestions on Library Architecture, American and Foreign, with an examination of Mr. Wm. F. Poole's Scheme for Library Buildings.*" Washington, 1883, 31 pp., 8vo. It seems proper that I should append to the preceding remarks a response of this "Examination." The "scheme" which he examines was set forth in a paper on "Library Construction," which I read at the meeting of the American Library Association, held at Washington, in February, 1881, and was printed by the United States Bureau of Education (Circulars of Information, No. 1, 1881); in the *Library Journal* (vol. 6, p. 69); and *American Architect* (vol. 10, p. 131).

Mr. Smithmeyer seems to regard my views on library construction as an obstacle to the adoption of his plans by Congress; and hence his pamphlet. The attitude of the examiner,

therefore, is not that of a disinterested critic; and in treating the subject he has found it convenient to make statements, and give impressions which are widely erroneous. One of these is that my paper was intended as a criticism of his plans; whereas it was read at Washington before he made his plans public, and when I was wholly without information concerning them, or, indeed, of the fact that he had any plans. When later he put forth his plans to the public, it is not strange—inasmuch as he had adopted every vicious and antiquated principle of library construction, which I, in common with the American Library Association, had specifically condemned—that he should regard my paper as a criticism on him and them.

Secondly. He would have his readers understand that the scheme of library construction which I submitted to my associates in the Library Association was intended as plans for the Library of Congress; and he takes frequent occasion to mention something peculiar to the needs of that building which I had omitted. There was no such intention, and no intimation was expressed in the paper that I was planning for any specific library. They were professedly general plans, intended simply to outline and illustrate principles, and especially “in the construction of larger buildings than we have had experience with.” He says I “forgot to provide separate rooms for Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.” He might have added that I forgot to locate a hat-rack and door-mat.

Thirdly. While claiming that he is wrestling with a great problem, he says: “Mr. Poole has doubtless in view the “smaller libraries of the country, and libraries built for specific purposes, such as law, medical and circulating libraries.” In my criticism on the “conventional American library building” I specified by name the buildings of the Boston Public Library, Boston Athenæum, Astor Library, Cincinnati Public Library, Baltimore Peabody Institute, and Library of Congress. Can he mention larger American libraries than these?

Concerning my scheme of construction, I said: "In the plans "I now lay before you, I propose, on a lot of ground 200 feet "square, the construction of a building for a reference library "of one million volumes; and in order that the library may "grow, I expect, upon the same lot, without cramping the space "for storage, or changing anything which has been construct- "ed, to provide for two million, and later for three million vol- "umes. By doubling the size of the lot (200x400 feet) six "million volumes can be provided for." (Bureau of Educa- tion Circular, p. 16.) I later showed how the plan could be extended to provide for twelve million volumes on a lot 400x450 feet. Was this treating "the smaller libraries—law, medical and circulating libraries?" If I had been discussing trivial matters, why did he think my views came in conflict with his? Time and patience will not suffice for me to reply in detail to the scores of misstatements with which his rambling and slipshod pamphlet abounds. I need discuss only a few of the main topics.

To find some method to remove the destructive effects of heat upon the bindings of books stored in the galleries of our conventional library buildings was one of the motives which led me to study the subject of library construction, and to prepare the paper read at Washington. If it had any merits, one of them was in setting forth a sure and effective remedy for this deplorable injury to books. The remedy was in abolishing galleries altogether. Mr. Smithmeyer, however, writing three years later, and professedly examining my paper, has never heard of any remedy. He says: "The real "cause of alarm among students of library architecture and "custodians of large and valuable collections is caused by the "fact that an extensive destruction of books in the large "libraries is constantly going on in the upper stories and "galleries. While it is now ascertained that the accumula- "tion of heat and its intensity is [are] the cause of it, *no reli- "able remedy seems to be known.*" Mr. A. R. Spofford, the librarian of the Congressional Library, knows of such a rem-

edy, though Mr. Smithmeyer, the architect, whose plans have been accepted by the Joint Committee of Congress on the new library building, says he does not. In the discussion which followed the reading of my paper, Mr. Spofford said :

“ If there were no other cause, Mr. President, why we should all be grateful to our veteran colleague from Chicago, whose lucid and interesting paper has been read, than its suggestions for preventing the overheating of books and libraries, that alone would entitle him to a high meed of praise.” He then vividly described the deplorable effects of heat upon books and bindings in his library, and continued his remarks as follows : “ Now by the simple and ingenious expedient, graphically represented before you by our Chicago colleague, all the deleterious effects of overheating are got rid of. By the mere method of construction the lofty upper stories are abolished ; each floor for the storage and arrangement of books being only sixteen feet high, all the books are within easy reach from the floor, and the upper half of every library room is devoted, not to the concentration of heat, but to its dispersion or ejection, which is effected by windows that supply at once a maximum of light and of ventilation. * * * I look upon this information and discussion as of the first importance among our labors in this convention, and, whatever might be our conclusion as to the details of the scheme, I hail the special improvement of which I have spoken as one of great practical value.” (Bureau of Education Circular, pp. 22, 23.)

It is a public misfortune that the Architect of the Congressional Committee could not have conferred with the Congressional Librarian, and got from him some information and some ideas on library construction. Mr. Smithmeyer's plans embody the same old faults of construction which are sure to entail the evils complained of by Mr. Spofford in his present building, and they ignore the remedy so highly commended by him. Mr. Smithmeyer in claiming for himself the sole credit for his library plans, deems it necessary to explain why he has not conferred with Mr. Spofford. He says : “ The time of the Congressional Librarian is always fully occupied. Information on this matter was very scarce, and I had to rely principally upon my own observation and such interviews with individual librarians as I was able to obtain ; but such information I found I could make little use of in designing a work of the size, character and requirements called for in a Congressional library.” We are therefore to understand

that his scheme, when not copied from old conventional forms, was evolved from the inner consciousness of a person of very ordinary capacity, who never had any library experience, and takes pride in the assertion that he has had no help from the professional librarians of the country. Of the men who constitute the membership of the American Library Association he has a very low estimate. He says of them: "They can not be expected to be, and certainly do not appear to be, competent to judge either upon questions of architectural science, or upon the needs of a great national library." The Librarian of Congress is a prominent member, and first Vice-President, of the American Library Association. It may gratify Mr. Smithmeyer to be assured that the leading librarians of the country have as poor an opinion of his library plans as he has of their knowledge of architecture and their competency to judge of the needs of a great national library. This opinion they have publicly and unanimously expressed on two occasions; and would doubtless, if he requested it, furnish him their votes engrossed on parchment.

Mr. Smithmeyer further assures us that "the entire American Library Association has been able to discover no effectual remedy" for the deterioration and destruction of books by heat; and yet he would not leave us in despair. He is simply, by this painful recital, preparing our minds for a cheerful surprise in the announcement that he has discovered the remedy himself! His remedy is the "vacuum or down-draft system." Now this system, with a new name, is a very old device, and is described in every standard treatise on ventilation. It is nothing more than ventilating a room through an opening near the floor, and increasing the normal draft by means of an exhaust fan, or fire in the stack. His knowledge of the history and principles of pneumatics is on a par with his knowledge of library construction. "Vitiating air," he says, "has a greater gravity than pure air of the same temperature." That depends on what the vitiating sub-

stance in the air is. If it be carbonic-acid gas, produced by respiration or combustion, such air is heavier; but if it be sulphurated hydrogen, the exhalation from human bodies, the fumes of stale tobacco, bad breath and other noxious odors freely given off in a mixed assembly, the air is lighter. Rooms are therefore properly ventilated where the air is exhausted both at the floor and at the ceiling. The foulest air will escape at the ceiling.

One statement of Mr. Smithmeyer is fortunately correct: "The coldest air in a room is always found at the floor." The converse of this proposition he omitted to state for our edification, namely: that "the hottest air in a room is always found at the ceiling." It is too much to expect that he would know the rate at which temperature in a room increases from the floor to the ceiling. If he had been possessed of this elementary information he would have withheld it, inasmuch as it would alarm his readers. In a room where the air is not disturbed by cold currents from without, or agitated by mechanical means, the rate of increase is one degree for every foot; so that in a room sixty feet high, as his plans indicate, a temperature of 70° at the floor means 130° at the ceiling, or 120° in the upper gallery, where he proposes to shelve the books of the Congress Library. In about a year their bindings would be ashes and powder. Perhaps he does not know that "books can not live where men can not live." Why should he know? He has never had any library experience, and disdains to take information from practical librarians.

The proposition for *cooling* the air in the upper galleries which is to surprise us by its originality and effectiveness, and perpetuate the name of Smithmeyer as a discoverer, is this: By exhausting the coldest air in the room through an opening near the floor, and supplying its place by hot air from the heating apparatus in the sub-basement, admitted at "the desired height" (he omits to state where the desired height is), the upper strata of air, some sixty feet above the opening, will be *cooled*. Any person who has the slightest knowledge

of the natural laws of heat will see the absurdity of this proposition. The hot air from the furnaces, wherever admitted, entering at a temperature considerably above that of the room, rises in a mass, like a balloon, to the ceiling, and maintains in the upper strata of air a high temperature, which diminishes in the lower strata at the rate of one degree for every foot. Exhausting air from the lower parts of the room brings down the column of air to supply its place; but the column maintains the relative proportions of heat in its different strata. Such exhaust does not cool the air in the upper parts of the room, because the cold air exhausted at the floor is replaced by hot air which makes its way to the ceiling. Increasing the exhaust by means of a fan, or fire in the ventilating stack, does not change these conditions, as it increases in the same ratio the amount of hot air brought into the room from the furnaces.

Unfortunately, the natural laws of air and heat have not been adjusted to meet Mr. Smithmeyer's ideas of library construction. Hot air is lighter than cold air, and will rise. The higher the column of air, the greater will be the difference of temperature between the top and bottom of the column. My plan of obviating the overheating of books is in not having high rooms, and not shelving books in galleries. Mr. Smithmeyer, on the other hand, proposes no other remedy than the one he has discovered, which has been considered and found to be a failure.

He might dispose of his hot air by several methods which he has not even hinted at. He might take off the roof, or leave the upper windows open. The hot air would then escape in a hurry. The trouble then would be that the temperature of the lower parts of the room would be reduced in the same proportion, and there would be no possibility of heating the room at all. If not inclined to adopt heroic remedies like these, he might abate the destructive effects of heat upon books by having his windows badly fitted in their frames, so that hot air could escape from some, and cold air be admitted

at others. Cold drafts descending from the upper windows would partially equalize the different strata of air in the room. These conditions may be found in several library buildings of the old conventional style, of which reports have been given of the temperature in different galleries which do not agree with tests made in rooms which are tight. The principle of abating heat in the upper galleries by this crude arrangement is the same as taking off the roof, or opening the upper windows, although the process of cooling the air is more gradual. The same remark applies to them all: Heating air merely to let it escape, or to cool it, is *waste* in its simplest form. Ventilating a room in winter more than is necessary to maintain the purity of the air, is another form of waste. The fuel which is thus squandered in the furnaces had better be left on the wharf, and distributed to the poor.

The results of what Mr. Smithmeyer claims to be twelve years of study on heat and ventilation are singularly lacking in freshness and originality. He might have proposed to abate the temperature of his upper galleries by mixing up the different strata of air in his rooms by mechanical means; and, at the same time, have contributed to the leading idea on which his plans are contrived, namely: that the building should be "a museum," "a show-place," something "made for the pleasure and curiosity of the mere spectator;" for "provisions," he says (p. 11), "will have to be made for the hosts of visitors and curiosity-seekers." What would more inspire the awe and admiration of the casual visitor, or more administer to "the pleasure of the mere spectator," than furnishing each of his rooms with a rotary fan, forty feet in diameter, ornamented with Japanese dragons, and impelled by steam power? It would, indeed, be "a curiosity," and attract visitors from far and near. Whether it would be agreeable for a student to pursue his studies amidst a crowd of admiring and loquacious spectators, and a whirl of air-drafts laden with dust, is a matter not worth considering, provided the building be a "museum" and "show-place."

If in winter the effects of heat upon books and bindings stored in galleries are, as Mr. Spofford expressed it, "simply deplorable," what shall be said of the effects of summer heat in the rooms where Mr. Smithmeyer proposes to place the books of the National Library? The direct rays of the sun are admitted to these rooms through skylights which form the roof. What the direct rays of the sun in midsummer are at Washington, residents and even persons who have spent a few days in that torrid region during the summer months, can best appreciate. When the thermometer in shaded localities registers among the nineties, the mercury stands in the sun from 140° to 160° .* Metals become so hot that they cannot be taken in the hand without pain. Washington and St. Louis are in about the same latitude. Mr. Dyer, Librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library, says that in his galleries during the summer months the mercury, two feet below the ceiling, frequently registers 140° , and he has no skylights. The temperature of Mr. Smithmeyer's rooms, with skylights, can readily be imagined as something fearfully destructive to books. If a breeze was stirring, and these rooms had contact with the natural air currents, this overpowering heat might be somewhat abated by opening the windows; but Mr. Smithmeyer has carefully provided against the contingency of ever getting air into these rooms. He has placed them inside a quadrangle surrounded by high buildings which cut them off from contact with the outward world and its natural currents of ventilation. In the center of this enclosed quadrangle he has placed also the main reading room, one hundred feet in diameter, wholly shut out from the outer air. In this pit students are expected to pursue their studies. If the architect had in mind to plan a Tophet for the purpose of burning up the books of the National Library and their readers, his designs would deserve credit for originality and effectiveness.

There are ample accommodations for books and readers in

*Report at the Naval Observatory, July 18, 1873, 162° ; on a few dates 165° .

the structures which form the four sides of the quadrangle. There they would have access to the outer currents, and readers could get a breath of air to cool their parched tongues. But no: those rooms have been assigned to the architect's special hobby, and to what he deems the higher functions of a library building, namely: to museum purposes and show places. The casual visitors and tramps, who are always first in Mr. Smithmeyer's mind, have been well provided for; but the books and their readers—for which and whom he seems to have the same regard which Mr. Vanderbilt has for the public—he shuts up, without a breath of air, in his Gehenna.

It is a singular fact that, neither in the pamphlet under consideration, nor in the paper he read before the American Library Association, is there an estimate of the cost of his building, or of its capacity for storing books; and yet Congress is asked to adopt his plans and to begin the erection of the building without any information on these most essential points. Would any individual or corporate institution do business in this way? The House of Representatives, at the last session of Congress, voted by a decisive majority that the cost of the building should not exceed two million dollars. Does Mr. Smithmeyer propose to erect a building on his plans for the sum named? He says nothing about the cost, and for the obvious reason that the sum, if named, would alarm Congress and the country, and defeat his scheme. Congress is to be led into a reckless and extravagant expenditure of money with its eyes shut. The estimates of architects who have examined the crude and ill-digested drawings which have been printed, vary from ten to twelve millions, and some place the cost as high as fifteen million dollars. The objections which the librarians of the country have to the plans are not based on the needless and reckless expense involved, for that is an extravagance which this great Nation can stand; but they are based on the fact that the building, when completed, will be wholly unadapted for the uses of a library, and hence will be a discredit to the Nation.

It will be a monstrosity which intelligent Americans will be ashamed of, and foreigners will sneer at.

Another very singular fact is, that, withholding his own estimates, Mr. Smithmeyer is very free to comment on the estimate of cost and storage capacity of the theoretical plan which I have proposed. I welcome criticism on these points from whatever source it may come. Under the head of "Economy," my critic becomes eloquent on "the excessive waste of space in Mr. Poole's plan," because I did not have galleries in rooms sixteen feet high, and carry the bookcases to the ceiling. This space was left empty for a specific purpose, and if a person be foolish enough to fill it with books, he can do so; but he will ruin the books shelved on the upper tier of cases by heat, and will cut off the light which, by this vacant space, is diffused through the room. He claims that my rooms will hold twice as many books as I have estimated. This hardly looks as if I had wasted the space, when a person of Mr. Smithmeyer's caliber can fill it so readily. The space is there, and only awaits a first-class ignoramus to use it for storing books. Again my critic says: "There can not be any other reason assigned for this *stupendous waste* of space than pure ignorance." Mr. Spofford, of the Congressional Library, is not an ignorant person, and he commends the arrangement. He knows why the space above one tier of cases was left empty, and could have told the writer of the above quotation, if the latter could have got at him. As I have, on p. 16, quoted the whole paragraph from Mr. Spofford's remarks on my plan, I will again quote only one sentence which covers this point: "All the books are within easy reach from the floor, and the upper half of every library room is devoted, not to the concentration of heat, but to its dispersion and ejection."

The constant assertion of ignorance on my part is one of the means by which Mr. Smithmeyer seeks to make his pamphlet lively and entertaining. The charge he varies, when it gets to be monotonous, by the use of such express-

ions as "shallowness," "random assertions," "pretentious claims," and "utter want of knowledge." It is very evident that the critic is greatly disturbed by my paper, now three years old, which made no reference to him, or to the future Congressional Library building, but simply discussed general principles of library construction. He was present when it was read at Washington, and might have replied to it then and there. He kept silent, and heard the Librarian of Congress and other eminent librarians commend its "shallowness" and "pretentious claims." He had also the satisfaction of reading his own paper on the same occasion, and displaying his own plans, which his auditors, the leading librarians of the country, promptly condemned by a unanimous vote. Not a voice except his own was heard in their defense. Why he should have thought it necessary and appropriate, so long after, to get excited, and to discuss my ignorance and that of my associates in the library profession, it is for him to explain. Ignorance is an infirmity which experience and protracted study often cure. There is always hope for an ignorant man, and hence I take courage. I regret to see no evidence in Mr. Smithmeyer's pamphlet that *he* has learned anything useful or practical in the principles of library architecture since I listened to the reading of his paper, and heard him explain his plans, in February, 1881. He inspires amazement when he tells us that he has made a special study of heat and ventilation, as well as of library architecture, for the past twelve years; has traveled in Europe for the purpose; that he has "omitted to acquire nothing (*sic*) which might enrich my [his] knowledge of library architecture" (p. 9); and that the plans he lays before us are the results! Was there ever such an instance of misdirected effort? He has, however, now exhibited qualities which three years ago I did not suspect. I then saw that he was a charlatan in the matter of library architecture, and surmised that he was tricky; but did not suspect that he was dishonest. In his pamphlet he does not scruple to change my

drawings, and then to use his own falsifications as evidence to prove that I did not understand what I was writing about ; that I could not even multiply figures. This point will be sufficiently illustrated by the following specimen of his method :

My paper was first printed in the *Library Journal*, and the ground plan of the proposed structure, set up roughly with printers' rules, gave the dimensions of each room, with its book-capacity. On the side opposite the main entrance, four rooms were indicated, and the dimensions of the two middle rooms were 45 x 50 feet, each with a book-capacity of 45,000 volumes, which was a correct estimate. When later the paper was printed by the Bureau of Education, an architectural drawing on wood was made of this ground plan, which showed the same number of rooms and the same general arrangement. The space, however, was differently subdivided, in order that some of the rooms might be larger and others smaller. The size of the two middle rooms opposite the main entrance was reduced from 45 x 50 feet to 28 x 53 feet, and the space taken from them thrown into the adjacent rooms. No estimate of book-capacity for the separate rooms was given ; but the total capacity for the whole story was correctly estimated as 505,000 volumes. Mr. Smithmeyer has been at the trouble and expense of copying this wood-cut into his pamphlet, and he has inserted in each of the small rooms mentioned (28 x 53 feet) "45,000 books," which was the capacity, on the other plan, of the larger rooms (45 x 50 feet). He has also inserted erroneous capacities in other rooms. His purpose in committing this fraud was that he might make the following note, which he prints below the plan, (p. 25):

"N. B. It will be seen that in the above plan Mr. Poole, in the rooms at the opposite end of the building from the main entrance, which measures 28x53 feet and contains 1,484 square feet each, proposes to put 45,000 volumes per room, while in the rooms to the right and left of the area, measuring 45x50 feet

and containing 2,250 square feet each, he proposes to place only 40,000 volumes per room.

These discrepancies scarcely speak well for Mr. Poole's excellence as a computer. Such looseness in arranging details as is indicated by this one may account for many of the mistakes and errors so evident upon the face of Mr. Poole's plan."

Comment of the above statement is unnecessary. Another of my "mistakes" was in estimating the cost of the building proposed at one fourth the amount which my critic says it ought to cost. The estimates were not mine, but were made by an experienced architect whose name I mentioned (p. 21), and whose professional reputation is well known. They were not made on the basis of the cubic foot of internal capacity, as my critic makes his estimates, taking his unit of cost from buildings wholly unlike the one proposed in purpose and design. They were, on the other hand, careful and detailed estimates based on the precise requirements of the plan and the prices of labor and materials in Chicago at the time. Contracts could then have been made in Chicago for erecting the building and putting it in complete readiness for occupation for the sum named, \$640,000. This sum, by the way, my critic does not mention until he has rung all the changes he can upon \$530,000. Here his trickery, if not dishonesty, again comes in. Professing to quote what I said about materials and cost, he omits the words I have put in italics: "The cost of the building complete, including the steam apparatus for heating, *but not including the shelving and furniture*, will be \$530,000. *The shelving, which will be of hard wood, with the furniture, will cost \$110,000, making the entire cost of the building in readiness for occupation, \$640,000.*" He then comments on my shelving as being of hard wood, while his is of iron, giving the impression that the entire cost was intended to be covered by the sum of \$530,000. He later mentions the sum of \$640,000, but not in a connection which corrects in the reader's mind the impression already made.

Now a word as to my critic's estimate that "Mr. Poole's building will cost \$2,160,000, instead of \$530,000, or \$1,630,000 in excess of his estimate." He makes the estimate by comparison, per cubic foot of internal capacity, with the New York City Post Office building; a government building at Knoxville, Tenn.; and another government building at Omaha, Neb. There is no resemblance or analogy between the buildings compared. This sort of estimate may serve for the latitude of Washington, but it is not used by any reputable architect with whom I have an acquaintance. Why he did not include in his estimate the cost per cubic foot of the Chicago Post Office building, which, from its inception, has been the occasion of quite as much scandal as has the New York Post Office building, does not appear. Is the cost of all government buildings a matter of public scandal? and for this reason did he select only government buildings for the comparison? Is there to be the same old, old story in the erection of a building for the Library of Congress? Let us hope that one public building, dedicated to literature, science, art, and the highest culture, can be erected without a scandal. I beg to inform Mr. Smithmeyer that in the estimate of \$640,000, as the cost of the building proposed, there were included no jobs, no pickings, no stealings; no soft tidbits for the architect and contractors; nothing for the eminent citizen in public or private life who facilitates the acceptance of the plans by the committee and their passage through Congress; nothing for his nephew or cousin; nothing for the mob of lobbyists; nothing in compensation for the folly and extravagance of beginning the structure before its details are decided upon, and with the expectation of changing the plans as the work goes on; nothing, in short, which would not have been included if the owner had been a private citizen and knew how to conduct his business on the square. If we had been estimating the cost of a government building at Washington, we should have applied to a Washington architect for information as to the cost of the items which we did not include.

Now if Mr. Smithmeyer will give estimates of the cost of *his* building by the same rule which he applies to mine, it will be a curious piece of information, and serve as the basis of some curious arithmetical problems. If he will give his estimates by any rule, he will be a public benefactor. Estimates on his own plans he carefully avoids; it is more convenient for him to criticise mine. He avoids also giving dimensions on his drawings or in his letter-press, and hence he expects that the absurdities of his plan will escape detection. On the elaborate picture of his plan, delineated on page 10, there is not a single dimension in feet or inches, in meters or centimeters, and only one in the letter-press. He could not withhold the boast that his central reading room is "100 feet in diameter like the London reading room," which, by the way, is 140 feet in diameter. Assuming this information as a proportional standard for other dimensions, the nave of his book rooms—the books being stored in the aisles—is only eight feet wide, and through this narrow slit he expects to light his five tiers of alcoves mainly from skylights in the ceiling. The side light he gets is from areas, which are shafts or pits twenty-five feet wide and sixty or more feet high. He will have plenty of heat; but what sort of light will he get from such conditions? He nevertheless questions the quantity of light I get from an uninterrupted outlook on the outside of my rooms, and from an open area eighty-three feet square, on the inside.

For the administration of the library he has assigned two rooms, each about 20 x 40 feet in dimensions, which is not enough for a library of one fourth of its size. The administrative department of a large library includes not only the special work of the Librarian, but the office duties of many assistants, the cataloguing department, the searching of booklists and making orders for the purchasing department, and space for the receiving, arrangement and classification of books and pamphlets. No place seems to be assigned for the more general and miscellaneous administrative work of a

large library, where persons may come and make inquiries without knowing precisely what they want, and hence need information; where intelligent assistants can verbally give the information; and where talking can be done without disturbing readers. If it be intended that this miscellaneous business is to be done in the great reading room "100 feet in diameter, like the London reading room"—where, by the way, no talking is allowed, and no person is admitted unless he has a reader's ticket—it will be a serious annoyance to readers. In my plans I thought it necessary, in a library of two million volumes, to assign more than ten times as much space for the administrative department as Mr. Smithmeyer has done, and that students should have opportunities for quiet study where they would not be disturbed by the miscellaneous business of the library. But why should I spend time in pointing out defects of this kind in Mr. Smithmeyer's plans, when their name is legion, and it is the boast of the architect that he is not planning a building for special use as a library, and for the convenience to students and readers, but as a show-place for curiosity-hunters and sight-seers?

If any reader expects to get from Mr. Smithmeyer's pamphlet an idea of the distinctive features in my scheme of library construction, he will be mistaken; and it is not my purpose here to recapitulate them. My paper has been printed for gratuitous distribution at the expense of the Government, and can be had on application to the Honorable Commissioner of the Bureau of Education.

It is a singular fact that amidst the superfluity of self-laudation over his own plans and the announcement emblazoned on every page, that in the judgment of a Committee of Congress his plans were superior to those of forty-one other competitors, there does not appear the commendation of a single librarian of this or any other country. Setting aside the claim of being one of the number, I may say there are librarians in the United States whose opinions on such matters are worth having; who, in foreign countries, are recognized as

authorities and whose names are household words in the British Museum, the Bodleian at Oxford, the Advocates' at Edinburgh, and the National libraries at Paris and Berlin. They are all interested in library construction, and would be the first to recognize and commend a good thing in that line as soon as they saw it. Why has not the Committee of Congress, at some time, asked the views of some of these library experts as to the plan of a building for the Library of Congress? Why have they consulted only an army of architects, some of them eminent in their own specialties of work, but having no technical knowledge of the wants of a library? The committee has, quite likely, from the want of such assistance as the librarians could have given, selected one of the worst designs which were offered, simply because it made a pretty drawing on paper. Mr. Smithmeyer has not quoted the commendation of any librarian for the reason that he could not secure one. The librarians have publicly expressed their views in a series of resolutions, unanimously adopted at a meeting of the American Library Association, in Cincinnati, May 26, 1882, two of which were as follows :

“Resolved, That the plans submitted to this Association, at the Washington meeting, by Mr. J. L. Smithmeyer, and adopted by the Joint Committee of Congress, embody principles of construction which are now regarded as faulty by the whole library profession; and, therefore, as members of the American Library Association, we protest against the erection of the building for the Library of Congress upon those principles.”

“Resolved, That we reaffirm the resolution adopted at the Washington conference, by a unanimous vote, in the following words: ‘That in the opinion of this Association, the time has come for a radical modification of the prevailing typical style of library building, and the adoption of a style of construction better suited to economy and practical utility.’ ”

What would be thought of the wisdom of Congress, if, in the construction of a national telegraph system, it should adopt an old, discarded plan of transmitting messages, against the protest of every telegraph expert in the country?

Perhaps Mr. Smithmeyer may reply that Mr. Spofford, whom I take pleasure in ranking as one of the leading

librarians of the country, has commended his plans. When and where? I find no evidence of such commendation in anything I have seen which Mr. Spofford or Mr. Smithmeyer has written. The former was present when the latter read his paper and explained his plans at the Washington meeting. Mr. Spofford spoke at the same session on the wants of the Congress Library, and mentioned the adoption by the committee of the Smithmeyer plans, but said not a word either for or against them, which at the time was a noticeable and significant fact. If they met his approval he could have commended them freely, and given his reasons; but if he did not approve them, he could not express his views without giving offense to the committee and the architect. The next day Mr. Spofford telegraphed me at Baltimore—the last day's session being held in that city—to return to Washington, as his guest, to talk over library plans. I found at Mr. Spofford's house Mr. Winsor of Harvard College Library, and Mr. Cutter of the Boston Athenæum. We four had a long and pleasant interview and exchange of views. There was no difference of opinion among us concerning the demerits of Mr. Smithmeyer's plans, though we did not wholly agree as to what should take their place. I left Washington with the impression that, so far as Mr. Spofford's opinions and influence were concerned, the Congressional Library building would never be built on the Smithmeyer plans.

What Mr. Spofford's present views concerning the Smithmeyer plans are, it is not easy to determine. The latest expression of them which I find is in his letter to the American Library Association, in August last, printed on page 10. The view he presents of them is not very flattering. He says they have been accepted by the committee of Congress, but gives them no word of commendation. That he does not accept the Smithmeyer plan of the *interior*—which is the only part of the structure in which the librarians of the country have any interest—is evident from his statement that it has not

“been fixed upon definitely,” that “it was merely provisional, and designed to get some kind of a building from Congress.” He further states that, certain things being provided for, “I am ready to introduce all the economies of storage which the stack system, or the most utilitarian scheme proposed by any of my very respected colleagues, may involve.” If the changes indicated were made, there would be little or nothing of the Smithmeyer plan left upon which the first appropriation of half a million could be spent. There are other passages in the letter which indicate that he favors some features of the Smithmeyer plan. Now the *interior* of a building, which in this case has not been decided upon, is practically the building itself. The “Italian renaissance style of architecture,” which is put forth so prominently in Mr. Smithmeyer’s pamphlet, and in the bill before Congress, pertains only to the exterior, the shell of the building. Until the details of construction for the interior are fixed, how can the foundations of the building be laid? Does any prudent individual or corporation begin the erection of an expensive building before a definite plan has been prepared? Changing the plan of a structure when in process of erection is the most extravagant and wasteful of errors in construction. In case Congress adopts Mr. Smithmeyer’s scheme, can any substantial changes be made in his plans without the architect and contractors coming into the Court of Claims with a bill of damages? The bill before Congress reads as follows: “The construction of said building substantially according to the plan submitted * * * by John L. Smithmeyer, in the Italian renaissance style of architecture, with such modifications as may be found necessary or advantageous, without increasing the cost of the building, shall be in charge of a commission,” etc. The bill provides that “modifications” may be made in the plan—that is, the form of the thing or device may be varied; but nothing is said about “changes” being made, by which some thing wholly different may be substituted. It is not clear whether the ellipsis after “advantageous” is to be

supplied with the words "to the architect and contractor," or "to the Government." "Without increasing the cost of the the building" is probably a jocosé expression, inasmuch as the cost of the building is an unknown quantity, is nowhere given in the bill, or hinted at by the architect or committee.

With reference to the Smithmeyer plans, it is evident that Mr. Spofford, who is a sensible and practical man, finds himself in an embarrassing position; that he is not satisfied with the interior plan, and is not getting what he wants. He hopes, however, if the bill passes, and the construction of the building is put into the hands of a commission, of which he will be one, that he can make such changes as will be needful. Whether, under the terms of the bill, any material changes can be made, is more than doubtful. As the committee has, for some inscrutable reason, planted itself upon the Smithmeyer plan, will hear of nothing else, and is determined to carry it through against the protests of the leading architects and the librarians of the country, it may appear to the Librarian of Congress that the plan accepted is the best he can get, and that it is wise and prudent to yield to the decision of those who have authority over him. A new building on a vicious plan will be preferable to the inconveniences of his present quarters, and any change will improve the condition of his library.

At the last meeting of the American Library Association, held at Buffalo, a resolution was adopted urging Congress to take speedy action in the erection of a new building for the National Library, and "offering in behalf of the Association to furnish any information or assistance in its power which may be called for by the Congressional committee charged with the consideration of the subject." The committee has asked for no such information and assistance, and hence none has been given. Congress has now the subject in its own hands, and before launching out into an unknown sea, without chart or compass, can get from practical librarians and architects who have made the subject a special study, the in-

formation it needs. Every detail of construction should be settled before the work is begun, and accurate estimates made of the cost, in order that the whole building may be put under contract and completed without needless delay. If the plans are to be changed during the process of erection, of which there is now every indication, no estimate can be made of the controversies, expenditures and delays which will occur.

The librarians of the country have a deep interest in the National Library, and in the building which Congress will erect for its accommodation. The ground for this interest was expressed in the following resolution adopted by the American Library Association, at the Cincinnati meeting, in 1882:

Resolved, That the erection of the new building for the Library of Congress affords such an opportunity for improving the architecture of libraries, with respect to convenience in use and administration, safety of the books and economy of construction, as is not likely to again occur; and that it is of great importance to the library interests of the country that the old and conventional errors of construction be avoided in the interior plans of the building.

In conclusion I will say that in the views expressed I have no authority to speak for any one except myself; and where I have given the opinions of other librarians, I have taken them from the official records of the American Library Association. I should not, with my interest in the subject, have discussed it at this time, if Mr. Smithmeyer, by his garbled and distorted statement of my views on library construction, had not challenged a rejoinder.

W. F. POOLE.

CHICAGO, Feb. 29, 1884.

