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LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY





C. C. Washburn

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THE

LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY,



LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN,

NOVEMBER 20, 1888.

67.692.

W. J. BOYCOTT, PRINTER.

.....

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

CALLING THE MEETING TO ORDER,
BY MAYOR DAVID AUSTIN,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

OVERTURE,
BY TIPPMANN'S ORCHESTRA.

PRAYER,
BY REV. S. W. HORNER.

DUET.
BY MISS LINCOLN AND MISS GRACE MEDARY.

REPORT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE.
BY JOSEPH CLARKE.
Trustee.

ADDRESS.
BY HON. BENJ. F. BRYANT.

PIANO SOLO.
BY MRS. S. W. HORNER.

ADDRESS.
BY PROF. ALBERT HARDY.

SOLO.
MISS LINCOLN,
with Violin Accompaniment by Miss Fanny Losey.

PRESENTATION ADDRESS.
BY G. VAN STEENWYK,
Vice President of the Board of Trustees.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE USE OF THE LIBRARY FOR THE PEOPLE.
BY THE MAYOR.

BENEDICTION.
BY REV. DR. THOMAS.

A. D. 1888.

THE

TRUSTEES OF THE LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Have Caused This Tablet to Be Inscribed to the
Memory of Its Founder,

CADWALLADER C. WASHBURN,
Who Bequeathed the Sum of FIFTY THOUSAND
DOLLARS for the Establishment and
Maintainance of This Library;

Also as a Memento of the
YOUNG MEN'S LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
Which Closed a Long Career of Usefulness by
Donating SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS to
Aid in the Erection of This Building.

MEMORIAL TABLET IN THE LIBRARY.

DEDICATORY EXERCISES.

THE LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY was formally opened and dedicated to the public, on the evening of Tuesday, November 20, 1888. The exercises were held in Library Hall and attended by as large an audience as could be accommodated, while during the evening a still larger number inspected the book room and various other apartments.

His Honor Mayor David Austin in opening the exercises, said:

Ladies and Gentlemen: We have met upon this occasion to dedicate this beautiful structure, founded by the munificence of one of your most distinguished fellow citizens. Your presence is an assurance of the deep interest taken in this important public institution which I trust will equal your highest expectations as a means of promoting education. You will now give attention to the exercises.

REPORT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE.

BY JOSEPH CLARKE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The committee appointed to arrange the exercises of dedication, thought it would be proper and appropriate that some information should be given you this evening on behalf of the trustees regarding the construction of this beautiful library building.

It is doubtless known to most of you, that the \$50,000 bequeathed by Governor Washburn to establish and maintain a Public Library in this city, was divided into three distinct parts or funds, \$12,500 being set aside for the purchase of suitable grounds and the erection of a library building; a sum not exceeding \$17,500 was to be used in the purchase of books, and the remainder of the bequest unexpended at the expiration of two years from the completion of the building, was to constitute an investment or revenue fund. As before stated, the fund for grounds and building was \$12,500, and the trustees were prohibited under severe penalties from expending any more of the bequest for this object than the sum set aside for that purpose. It had, however, come to the knowledge of the trustees, through Governor Washburn's long-time intimate friend, General VanSteenwyk, that the Governor, after executing his will, had decided that the amount he had directed to be expended for grounds and building, would not be sufficient to secure such grounds and erect such

an edifice at La Crosse as he desired, and it was his intention to add to the building fund on his next visit to this city; but the hand of death was laid upon him before that visit could be made. The Trustees therefore had to face the fact that \$12,500 was the maximum amount that could be taken from the \$50,000 fund for grounds and building, with the imposition of penalties should they disobey instructions; at the same time they had a strong desire to erect such a building as Governor Washburn wished and would have provided for had his life been spared a little longer; but as the terms of the will could not be departed from, the trustees could only resolve to do the very best that could possibly be done with the means at their disposal. At this juncture, the Young Men's Library Association, which for nearly twenty years had maintained a most creditable library in this city, came forward with a proposition from its Board of Directors, in which they offered to sell all the books and outfit of the Y. M. L. A. to the Public Library for the sum of \$5,000, agreeing to add to the proceeds of the sale the sum of \$2,000 then in its treasury, which sum had been accumulating slowly year by year for fifteen years and was regarded by its members as the nucleus of a building fund of their own. This total sum of \$7,000 it now proposed to donate to the La Crosse Public Library to be added to its building fund, increasing said fund from \$12,500 to a total of \$19,500 available for grounds and building.

The proposition having been approved and ratified by both the life and annual members of the association, was gladly and thankfully accepted by the Trustees of the Public Library who now felt they would have the means to construct such a building as would suit the present wants and future needs of the growing city of La Crosse, one that would do credit to the generous donors and be the pride of all our citizens.

The first work of the building committee was to prepare and mail 1,000 circular letters to the libraries of the country

asking for such information as would aid them in securing for LaCrosse the very best building that could be erected for the money at the command of the trustees. Then the two lots upon which the library building now stands, with the two frame dwellings then upon them, were purchased for the sum of \$6,500. A thirty foot strip of land adjoining on the south was bought for \$2,000. Next, the two dwellings were moved and fitted for tenants at an expense of \$2,000. This made a total expenditure of \$10,700. As the two dwellings would readily rent for such sum as would pay an annual income of six per cent. on the principal sum of \$10,000, the trustees thought proper to charge that amount to investment account as the value of the dwellings and ground upon which they stood for income purposes. This left the building site of about 100 feet square as a debit to the building fund in the sum of \$700 only, which amount deducted from the aggregate sum of \$19,500 left \$18,800 at the disposal of the trustees for the building and its equipment.

Plans of many of the noted libraries of the country and a number of sketches submitted by different architects, were examined and passed upon by the trustees, the plans of the present building, as submitted by Mr. C. C. Yost of Minneapolis being finally approved and accepted. The contract for the erection of the building was awarded to Messrs. Davis, Sorenson & Co., the brick and terra cotta work being done by sub-contractor Mr. J. E. Rawlinson, and the painting by Mr. Christian Nelson. The furnaces were furnished by Messrs. Dittman & Jorstad, and the plumbing and piping by the W. A. Roosevelt Co. The construction was under the supervision of Mr. Gustave Stolze, architect of this city. The total cost of the site and building furnished and equipped ready for use, including the bronze memorial tablet, the lawn, sidewalks, etc., is inside the sum of \$19,500, leaving a small balance unexpended to the credit of the grounds and building fund.

In connection with the work of construction it will not be inappropriate at this time to say something in reference to the ways and means of enlarging the library building at some future time. Under the terms of the bequest, no additions can be made during the first ten years, and the trustees are of the opinion that none will be necessary; but the present building has been so constructed that at the expiration of ten years, the book room which now has a capacity of 20,000 volumes, can be extended thirty feet, by moving off the dwelling on the south, increasing the capacity of the book room to 30,000 volumes; or an extension can be made of the reference room, small reading room and assembly hall by moving off the dwelling on the east, Governor Washburn having made provision for future enlargements from the accumulations of the investment fund.

Although not in the line of construction, it has been suggested that a few words regarding the investment fund and operating expenses of the library may not be out of place at this time. In addition to the \$50,000 received from Governor Washburn's executors, the trustees have received from rents and interest on loans the sum of \$3,000, which with the \$7,000 donated by the Y. M. L. A. makes the total amount received in all up to date, \$60,000. The total amount paid for site and building will be \$19,500. For books about \$10,500, which will leave a balance of \$30,000 in the investment fund. This fund it is estimated will earn the library a net income of from \$1,800 to \$2,000 per annum. Under the terms of the bequest, one half of the income must be added to the principal annually for the first ten years; the other half is to be used for the maintenance of the library. After ten years only one-fourth part of the income is to be added to the principal and the remaining three-fourths may be used for current expenses.

The estimated expense of maintaining the library, keeping same open every afternoon and evening, is \$2,000 per annum, as follows:

Salary of Librarian and Assistant.....	\$720.00.
Salary of Janitor.....	200.00.
Fuel \$300, Lights \$200	500.00.
Insurance.....	100.00.
Magazines.....	50.00.
Rebinding Books.....	200.00.
New Books and Incidentals.....	230.00.

Making a total of..... \$2,000.00.

From this exhibit it will be seen that the one half of the annual income at the disposal of the trustees for current expenses for the first ten years will be from \$900 to \$1,000 per annum, or only about one half the amount required. It must therefore be apparent to all that the other \$1,000 needed to sustain the library, and keep it free, must be provided from some other source until that part of the annual income set aside for the purpose shall be sufficient. The Common Council, in accordance with authority given them by the city charter, have already kindly made an appropriation extending to December 31, 1888, at the rate of \$1,000 per annum to aid in maintaining the library, and it is confidently hoped a continuation of this aid will be extended as long as there shall be a necessity for it, particularly as the library is free to every resident of the city over fourteen years of age.

The trustees are only interested as trustees and public servants in the management of a trust created by the generosity of Governor Washburn for the benefit of every man, woman and child in the city of La Crosse, and in this matter their only desire is that they may have the means to operate the library to the satisfaction, and for the greatest good of their fellow citizens.

ADDRESS.

BY HON. B. F. BRYANT.

It would have been gratifying to all of us, had fate permitted it, to have seen the beneficent founder of this public library sitting with us here to-night, and to have been witnesses while he formally presented to our people the gift which he had generously provided for them. But although we are denied the satisfaction of receiving from him personally, on behalf of our people, this substantial token of remembrance and regard, there yet remains both the gratification and the pleasure of standing by while the almoners of his bequest throw open the doors, and in his name bid the public a hearty welcome to their inheritance. Long may it survive as a monument to his generosity and interest in our welfare, and as an ornament to our city.

It marks an era in any town when a public library is established there. If it comes, as such institutions usually do, as the gift of a wealthy citizen who takes this way of showing his love for his home, and for the place where fortune poured her bounties into his lap; or if it comes through the yearning of the people for the fountains of knowledge and culture, and by their united efforts, it indicates maturity and advancement, and the presence of forces which are sure to elevate and enlighten.

Much as men individually value property and material prosperity, collectively they place a higher value upon the things which educate the public in knowledge and taste, and they feel, and by their acts if not their words, confess that

it is nobler, after all, to furnish the means of intellectual and aesthetic training and culture than to pile up fortunes.

If one have a longing, a noble ambition to make a resting place for his name, that it may not perish when he is dead, let him connect it as Cadwallader C. Washburn has done, with a public charity which will survive longer than the massive granite monument which stands by his grave. The sentiment of gratitude is deeply imbedded in the nature of man. Both those who are the recipients of other men's bounteous gifts, and all those who come to know of such worthy and generous actions, cherish and thereby perpetuate the remembrance of the gift and the name of the giver. And when the gift is embodied in permanent form by having material shape and location, there is a pledge of long lasting. It is not evanescent; it does not easily vanish from men's eyes or memories. How much more is this true when it becomes the treasure house of the world's literature, the most immortal of earthly things!

Rejoicing now in our good fortune, it is but natural that we should examine and estimate the value of the gift. I do not mean exactly that we should take an inventory of the property and seek to learn its value in money; but that, while we feel and express our joy at coming into possession of a fortune, we should permit our thoughts to dwell upon its advantages and its capacity for usefulness. The library is the treasury of knowledge, the permanent resting place of all the useful information which is embodied in books. Public libraries are not educators in the same sense in which schools are; and yet their influence runs in that direction. They are like schools, stimulants to knowledge, and their proper use may supplement the training which schools impart.

The education which any one receives at school as the foundation of life's work is after all, nothing but a foundation. The most extensive acquirements of the longest course of stu-

dent life, bear but a small proportion to what is usually learned after leaving school. And this is especially true of such as are denied the advantages of any superior education.

The young man and young woman on leaving school, have the whole of life before them in which to supplement school training and repair deficiencies. To the mass of people who have the heart to make up for deficiencies in early education, there is no opportunity, or at least none which can be used to such advantage as a free public library. And for such persons it is both a stimulant and a means. It beckons one to enter, and also supplies the opportunities for advancement.

We have thus far considered the question of the usefulness of a public library in its relation to the acquisition of knowledge. There is, however, another side to the question, which if not of equal importance, is still of very great importance indeed. Some people make use of its opportunities, principally as a pastime, as means of pleasure and recreation. They read the books they select there because they furnish a certain sort of enjoyment which cannot be derived from any other source. And indeed every one, the learned along with the unlearned, would be entirely unwilling to lay out of account the nameless joy there is to be found in works of taste and imagination, of wit and humor.

This demand of our natures is taken into account by those who are intrusted with the selection of books for public libraries, and few persons have any cause of complaint that the books which minister to such enjoyment, are not furnished with reasonable liberality. It is not for me to say now in what proportion the substantial books, and the works of light literature and *belles lettres* should be mingled. I recognize the presence of a demand of our being which will not be curbed, the gratification of which it is impossible to deny, and which at best can only be pruned and directed.

We devote our lives in many ways and to a considerable

extent to the pursuit of pleasure; we should otherwise consider them ill-spent; and since books claim so large a share of our time and attention, it is in keeping with our conduct in other things for us, in the use of books, to cultivate and indulge the fairer and more graceful side of our natures.

Certainly the worth of public libraries, and the benefits to be derived from them consist in a very large measure in bringing within the reach of every one the readable books of taste and imagination which are to be found in all cultivated languages.

A public library must from necessity be a compromise. In selecting the books which are to be placed on its shelves, a proper deference ought to be shown to the tastes of those who are likely to seek its benefits. It would hardly be expected, however, that all persons, especially the learned, and those who devote themselves to special studies, or to amassing information on special subjects, would be able to find there every book they might desire to read. But I should consider that a serious error had been committed, unless the great master pieces of all European languages, ancient and modern, were included in the selection. Those which were not written in English should of course, appear in translations. They are comparatively few and reasonably cheap. In experience in the use of the library, they would never be found in the swift flowing current. The masses would pass them by, and they would rest quietly in their own alcoves. But they would not remain there unused. The thoughtful of mature years would seek them out. The educated would renew there the loves of student life, and many a youth who had been denied the aid of a liberal education would in this way, make his acquaintance with the writings of the great immortals, who otherwise would rest in ignorance of their contents, uninspired and unmoved by their lofty thoughts and their matchless art. The great masterpieces of the ancient

languages have survived all the mutations of time. They have continued, since they were written, to hold their way in the onward march of the world with undiminished force. Each new generation has supplied them with companions on their journey, which, with few exceptions, have successively fallen out and perished like lost stars, while they have remained in their pristine life and vigor. They survive because they are worthy to live. They embody thoughts, imagery, form and expression which have made them the admiration and despair of all scholars and writers.

I have not the time even if I had the inclination to treat with thoroughness the general subject of the proportion in which books of various classes ought to be chosen. But I cannot refrain from dwelling briefly on one department or class of books which I think we ought to aim at making more complete than they are usually found to be in public libraries. I desire to urge that care should be observed to bring into prominence the permanent works of American authors. I do not insist on this for the purpose of supplanting the writings of foreign authors. We are beholden to them and more particularly to English writers in our selection of books. A twofold purpose is to be subserved by this course. It is desirable and quite necessary to our well-being as a people that the young should be correctly taught and well informed in everything relating to American history. We may trust that American life will inspire them with a proper love of country, but it is necessary also, that the true spirit in which our nation was founded, and which is breathed through all the writings of the American fathers, should inspire the youth of the land. To this end the truthful story of early American history as told by American writers in many detached books ought to be made accessible, and there should be grouped with them the speeches and political writings of eminent Americans of the past and the early part of the present century.

If we consider what a mine of wealth was found in the speeches of Daniel Webster when we were defending our right, in the domain of reason and argument, to resist and overcome by force every attempt to disrupt the union, we shall more fully perceive the necessity of keeping within easy reach the works I have mentioned, and of fortifying the intelligence and heart of the young with a knowledge of what our greatest and best men have thought and felt concerning our history, our government and our national life.

The other purpose to be subserved, relates to the foundation of a distinctively American literature.

We have to concede as fair men that we do not possess a literature which bears any just and fair proportion to our greatness in all material things. I think I am within bounds in saying that, excepting the political writings and speeches of our greatest statesmen and orators, we have no prose writers of the first class, and that we have no poets even of the second class. We must wait for the men and women to come, the children of genius and song, who shall crown our name and nation with the unfading laurels of literary greatness and fame. When they come their methods and success will conform to the experience of other nations. The materials out of which they will construct their works will be found in the writings of their own countrymen, and in the history and traditions of their own country.

England did not possess a great literature before the days of Shakespeare. His writings and the writings of his time were possible only because laborers in the same field had preceded them, and because a distinct national tone and flavor had permeated the writings of earlier English authors.

Does not every one know that there were no stars of the first magnitude in the German literary firmament until Goethe and Schiller appeared, and that the creation which they ushered in came, by applying their matchless genius,

learning and art to the field of German effort where earlier writers had cleared the way for their triumphal advance.

We can never know, before their coming, where the creators of American literature may appear. Self taught they may arise, unexpected and unheralded above the horizon. We are sure to hasten their coming by keeping before our youth, side by side with all good books, *the* books which tell what Americans have done, and felt, and thought.

ADDRESS.

BY PROFESSOR ALBERT HARDY, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

Presupposing free common school education, the free public library, next to the newspaper, is the most potent factor in our civilization, the best means of increasing the intelligence of our citizens.

This is also true of the past. The first real step from barbarism was made when man began to record his thoughts and deeds in permanent form and to hand them down to the next generation. In this way each generation has inherited the wisdom of the past, preserved it, added to it, and passed it down.

Thus, writing is the conservator of knowledge, has saved each generation from the painful toil of rediscovering; has made possible the progress and improvement of the human race. The art of writing is now so common, so common-place, that we do not realize that without it, the world would still be sunk in barbarism.

It is not too much to say that a nation's intelligence, its progress in science and art, are measured by its libraries. So too, is its enterprise in discovery, invention and commerce.

Only to a limited extent is "necessity the mother of invention." The true mother of invention is the deep, silent meditation of the study, a meditation begotten of the library, a knowledge of the past.

The nation of keenest thinkers in all abstract and abstruse matters, is the most progressive, the most inventive, the most practical nation. This is true of antiquity; it is true to-day. The Germans, a nation of philosophers, of theorists, of dreamers, are to-day first in war and first in the arts of peace.

They are fast supplanting the English in the world's markets. This is the fruit of books, of the library, of profound thought and study, based on a knowledge of the past.

In ancient times men massed in a few spots; thus Athens was Greece, Alexandria, Egypt, Rome, the world. Then there were only a few great libraries; only the great, the powerful, the rich were educated. The grand distinctive feature of modern civilization, is its diffusiveness. Education, knowledge, are not now the heritage of the few, but the privilege of the many. This is especially true of our glorious republic. Here every city of enterprise, has a free public library, or aims to have one. Not the least glory and pride of our beautiful city is this free public library.

Having thus outlined briefly the importance of the library as an index of a people's intelligence, and a means of its progress, I will ask your consideration of the true functions of a public library.

They are two:

First. The conservation of knowledge.

Second. The diffusion of knowledge.

Of the first use of a public library, viz: to preserve the accumulated knowledge of the past, I have already spoken.

Only by planting one foot firmly on the past, has the other been able to reach forward and upward. Painfully, step by step has the race made progress. Each new experience, thought, discovery has been recorded, kept and handed down. Thus each generation has been wiser than the preceding, the children, than the fathers. With the invention of printing,

came the age of cheap books, the age of libraries. The world has made more progress since the invention of printing than in all the ages before. The ease with which knowledge is preserved, and diffused measures progress.

This is the age of libraries. This, the most literary age, is the most utilitarian, is the most active in improving man's material condition, in increasing the facilities and comforts of daily life.

This age of profoundest study and investigation in all the fields of thought, is the most practical age.

There are two fields of investigation, the material universe, and man himself—the history of his past thoughts and deeds. In either field the investigator needs a collection of books such as only the public library can give. The scientist, the inventor, needs to know what has been done in the past to move surely forward. Edison says that his want of education, his ignorance of what had been done in electrical discovery, caused him untold loss in time and labor. But it is in political and social science that a history of the past, *the library*, is most useful, most necessary. Never in the history of the race, has investigation in its past life and history been so active as now; and with good reason. No age has been so fruitful of new problems; problems in government, in economic conditions, in social and moral relations, in education.

To build surely and securely, we must build on the solid foundations of past life and history. No nation can cut loose from its past, its inherited traits and forms of life, any more than an individual. A nation is made up of individuals. Both individually and collectively, it is an organism. It has an organic life and growth; as much so as a plant, or an animal. As such, as an organism, its future life and progress, depend on its inheritance, its past life and history. To understand the political, social and moral tendencies of the age, we must know our past, what we inherit therefrom. Here is

one of the greatest values of libraries. Fortunately the old libraries are rich in materials that throw light on the past and scholars are delving into this "curious and forgotten lore," old charters of towns, manuscripts, records, parish and family, even old accountbooks, everything that will throw light on the political, social, religious and economic life of our ancestors.

This well illustrates the first use of a library to *conserve knowledge*. Even a local library, like ours, has a work to do here. We are a part of the national life. To know national life, local life must be studied. There is great activity now, in all parts of our country as well as in England in the study of past local history, and in collecting materials of the present life, customs and manners. The State Historical society is doing a great work in its library. This work needs to be supplemented by local libraries. We build not for a day, but for future time and generations.

Thus our library has a work to perform in this line. By preserving matters of local interest and history, it can serve both the present and the future generations. Some of the most valuable records of the past, had once only a local value and importance.

The most important function, however, of a free public library, like ours, is the dissemination of knowledge among all. It is the glory of our age and of our free land to make education and knowledge free to all; here, knowledge knows no caste, or rank, no creed, no sect, no party, color or condition of men. The rich and the poor, the man of leisure and the toiler, the educated and the ignorant, are alike welcomed here. To meet the needs, wants, and tastes of all kinds and conditions of men, is this library's aim.

To serve its true purpose a library must cover the whole field of human knowledge. This is not saying that a library must contain all there is written on a subject; no library can

do that. But it should contain the best books on the subject, so that no one, no matter how special his calling, his needs or taste, shall go away empty. This has been the aim of the trustees and the book committee of this library. Of the aims of the committee I can "speak as one having authority." How far the aims have been accomplished, time and experience only can prove.

I will now venture a word as to how a library may be made most useful to the community as a public educator. Lord Bacon says, "books teach not their own use." It is the experience of those quite familiar with books and their use, that instruction and guidance are of the greatest service. While much general intelligence may be the result of indiscriminate "browsing" among books, still, to be truly valuable, a library must be supplemented by special aids.

Experience has shown that popular lectures covering the various fields of knowledge with reference to the authorities on those subjects, and the special books thereon, are almost indispensable. Short printed outlines of courses of reading with the titles of books are most helpful.

Lastly, the free public library may be made a most efficient and valuable aid and supplement to public school education. The young, especially need skillful and wise guidance in what to read and how to read. Not only is it important that a taste for reading be stimulated, but a taste for the best reading, and that the reading habit be cultivated. Pupils need to be taught how to use books in connection with their school studies, to compare authorities, to weigh evidence. Thus, books of travels, descriptive of countries, peoples, their customs and habits, books of biography, may be most helpful in the study of Geography and History, increasing interest in study, widening the intelligence, and above all cultivating habits of thoughtful study. This work can be best done under the direction of teachers.

In some such way this free public library and reading room may become a most powerful aid to popular education, in preparing the rising and future generations to become intelligent, patriotic citizens of a free, self-governing republic.

I close with an incident related by the late, lamented Matthew Arnold, of his visit in Boston.

Mr. Arnold was greatly struck by this democratic government of our reading room when he was in Boston. He came in here one day and saw a little barefooted newsboy sitting in one of the best chairs of the reading room, enjoying himself apparently for dear life. The great essayist was completely astounded. "Do you let barefooted boys in this reading room?" he asked. "You would never see such a sight as that in Europe. I do not believe there is a reading room in all Europe in which that boy, dressed as he is, would enter." Then Mr. Arnold went over to the boy, engaged him in conversation, and found that he was reading the "Life of Washington," and that he was a young gentleman of decidedly anti-British tendencies, and, for his age, remarkably well informed.

Mr. Arnold remained talking with the youngster for some time, and as he came back to our desk the great Englishman said: "I do not think I have been so impressed with anything else that I have seen since arriving in this country as I am now with meeting this barefooted boy in this reading room. What a tribute to democratic institutions it is to say that instead of sending that boy out to wander alone in the streets, they permit him to come in here and excite his youthful imagination by reading such a book as the 'Life of Washington!' The reading of that one book may change the whole course of that boy's life, and may be the means of making him a useful, honorable, worthy citizen of this great country. It is, I tell you, a sight that impresses a European not accustomed to your democratic ways."

PRESENTATION ADDRESS.

BY HON. G. VAN STEENWYK.

Friends and Fellow-citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As one of the trustees of the La Crosse Public Library, I feel deeply gratified for the interest which you manifest by your presence on the solemn occasion of the dedication of this new and, as we trust, well adapted building and library, which we owe to the generous bequest of our late friend and townsman, Governor Cadwallader C. Washburn.

Though myself desiring to say something befitting the place and the hour, I am well aware, that the duty and privilege of addressing you might have been left by the trustees entirely to those more competent and experienced in addressing large audiences; but my personal and intimate relations to our deceased friend and benefactor seemed to call on me, to offer my well meant, though inadequate tribute of gratitude to his memory, in the acknowledgement of his great services to his country as a citizen and a patriot during peace and during war; as an active and liberal promoter of education and science, and as a true, warm-hearted and practical philanthropist. I therefore, fellow-citizens, thankfully accepted the opportunity.

Governor Washburn was born at Livermore in the State of Maine, on the 22d day of April, 1818, and was the fourth son of a large family of children, seven sons and three daughters, of whom three sons and two daughters yet survive.

The Washbournes or Washbornes are the descendants of an old, well-known and prominent English family, reaching back by extant records and monuments to the time before William the Conqueror, as is stated by Camden in his celebrated "Britannia." They all sprung from Worcestershire and Gloucestershire stock, and as a recent English author, the Rev. Alex. B. Grosart, says: "It were easy to tell of many wise and brave, gentle and fair scions of this illustrious house," and he adds at another place, "all the American Washburns are descendants from our Washbourns."

Our Livermore Washburns are worthy of such record. Though born and brought up in a small country town, away north in the Pine Tree State, far from the centres of modern progress and civilization, the care of a noble mother and a father worthy of the blood from which he sprung, gave to the Congress of the United States in the times which tried men's souls, three Washburns, statesmen and patriots of the most illustrious of this great nation, Israel of Maine, Elihu B. of Illinois and Cadwallader C., of Wisconsin, a triumvirate, whose counsel and advice in the days of danger, of treason and rebellion, will remain noble examples for future generations.

Israel, at a later date became the governor of his native State; Elihu B. was, during the trying times of the Commune, the ambassador from the United States to Paris, where in the midst of scenes of fire and blood, of blind furor and destruction, he protected the lives of thousands upon thousands under the broad shield of the great Republic; and our Cadwallader C. went to the field of battle, fought bravely and successfully during the whole of the war, and returned, after Lee's surrender, covered with laurels, as Major General of Volunteers of the army of the United States, to his adopted State, Wisconsin; which honored itself by sending him again repeatedly to the halls of Congress, and ultimately by electing him Governor of our Commonwealth,

It is with reluctance, that I give you here scarcely more than the names of the other brothers: Sidney, an honored citizen and a banker, in the State of Maine, where he died before the commencement of the war of the rebellion; Samuel B., who commanded, during the war, a steamer of the U. S. navy on the Mississippi river; Charles A., who was minister of the United States in the South American Republic of Paraguay; and last, though not least; William D., who has worthily, the youngest of them all, followed in the footsteps of the illustrious triumvirate, by serving his adopted state, Minnesota, repeatedly with signal ability in the halls of Congress, and of whom more yet may confidently be expected in the future.

Such were the seven brothers; and the sisters, Mrs. Stephenson, of St. Paul, Mrs. Holmes, of Minneapolis and the late Mrs. Buffum, of Louisiana, Missouri, were worthy of them and of the best type of American womanhood.

And now, my friends and hearers, ladies and gentlemen, look over the whole field of ancient and modern history; where do you find the equal, where do you find the parallel of such a family? I never could.

But Governor C. C. Washburn was not only an illustrious statesman and citizen-soldier, he was also an eminently sagacious, clear-minded, far-seeing business man. Our sister State, Minnesota, more than to any other man or men, owes to him the improvement of the immense water power of the Mississippi river at the falls of St. Anthony and the building up of the marvelous city of Minneapolis.

And our State of Wisconsin, his adopted State, will never forget while history records its wonderful growth and development, what it owes to him as a business man, as a citizen, soldier, statesman, promoter of education, science and industry and as a philanthropist.

Our state capitol, Madison, has its "Washburn Astronomical

Observatory," one of the prominent and best equipped institutions of this kind, built under his own care and supervision, and donated to the State. Two of its directors, Messrs. Watson and Holden have given it the lustre of their names in the scientific world.

It has also in "Edgewood," an institution devoted to the education of Catholic children. The Governor, though himself a devoted and liberal Protestant, generously gave his late residence with its beautiful grounds and surroundings for the establishment of this institution, for which there seemed to him to be urgent demand.

To Minneapolis he gave its magnificent Orphan Asylum, dedicated to the memory of his well-beloved and venerated mother. It is prominently and beautifully situated three or four miles from the center of the city, surrounded by twenty acres of rolling land, hill and dale, generously contributed by the munificence of the Governor's brother, the Hon. W. D. Washburn. The appointments of this institution are excellently adapted to their purposes and are managed by its able trustees with the utmost sympathy and care. The institution is entirely cosmopolitan. All are welcome, who are deprived of the fostering care of parents and friends, without distinction of sect or creed or nationality.

And here in our own city, we dedicate to-night "The La Crosse Public Library," for now and forever to the use of our people, on the same broad ground for the use of all; and we hope and trust that it will become and remain, for this and for future generations, a substantial means for imparting useful assistance in the acquisition of valuable knowledge in science and art, and in the promotion of such education, as will make virtuous, noble and enlightened citizens.

Governor Washburn says in the 10th section of his last will and testament: "It is my intention during my lifetime to found a library in the city of La Crosse, in the State of Wis-

consin, to be called 'The La Crosse Public Library', and to endow the same on a scale, as I conceive, suitable to the present size and prospective growth of the city. If I fail to accomplish this object in my lifetime, I appoint the seven persons below named to carry my intentions into effect, to-wit: the Mayor of La Crosse, ex-officio Trustee and Chairman of the Board, G. VanSteenwyk, Joseph Clarke, Frederick A. Copeland, Theodore Rodolf, J. M. Holley and C. L. Colman.

It is my intention to spend fifty thousand dollars for this purpose, and so much thereof as I may not have expended during my lifetime, I direct my executors to pay over to said trustees."

It was not vouchsafed to the testator, to execute in person his intention either in whole or in part, but it was left to his executors to pay over the whole of the bequest to the trustees as soon as the settlement of affairs of the estate permitted the same, and it was done accordingly.

The duties of the Board of Trustees, (which in the mean time had been organized under the laws of the State, and as directed by the will) then actively commenced. Lots were selected and purchased; the handsome structure, in which we now celebrate our dedicatory services, was commenced and carried through to completion; a selection of classical and standard works was carefully made and its purchase as the nucleus of the "La Crosse Public Library," completed; and the remaining funds were safely and profitably invested as a permanent fund, as directed by the testator.

While the work of the trustees was thus carried on, the directors of the "Young Men's Library Association," an institution, as most of you are aware, which for about a quarter of a century has been a chief resource of literary information (by means of its valuable library and lecture course,) concluded that it would be a wise measure, in view of the public interest, to sell their whole library of five thousand volumes of well-

selected and of miscellaneous literature to the "La Crosse Public Library," thereby concentrating the entire interest of the whole community, and most emphatically promoting the "*Vis Unita Fortior*," or "In union there is strength." The plan was approved in a meeting held for the purpose by the members of the Association, and the Board of Trustees of La Crosse Public Library made the purchase for five thousand dollars.

But thus far, my hearers, only one-half of the generous intention of the Young Men's Library Association has been told. As soon as sale and purchase were completed, the Directors of the Association in a largely attended meeting of its members proposed to complete the objects in view, and to donate all of the purchase money, all their cash funds on hand, amounting to about two thousand dollars more, and the whole of their library furniture to our institution. This plan which was generally understood, was submitted to vote and all but unanimously adopted.

The trustees are profoundly thankful to the donors, and tender their grateful acknowledgments to the late Young Men's Library Association, not for their munificent gift only, but for the worthy example they have set to all who may be able in the future to contribute by works of literature and art, antique and modern, to the growth, beauty and usefulness of our library, and in the course of time to a Museum of Art, History and Antiquity, worthily connected with it.

And now permit me to quote some, in my opinion, eminently appropriate remarks from the address of the Hon. William S. Shurtleff, at the dedication of the Wallace Library, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, July 1, 1885.

Speaking of the library, he says: "Here will come the searchers for knowledge and they will be supplied, and they will go hence to spread what they here acquired far and wide. Here the lovers of song and the born singers will come

to school and with lyre and lute attuned will go forth to sing new and perhaps sweeter songs to the world.

"Here the votaries of science will come for research, and, deducing new corollaries from the solved problems of the past, make new departures towards still more wonderful unexplored domains. Here the theologian will come to trace the paths of philosophy and spiritual science and learn to eliminate errors and elucidate truths."

"Good books" he goes on to say, "are the best of benefactors, bad books the worst of malefactors to mankind."

"The market is full of trash, but none must find its way within the portals of this library. It is time for the establishing of a severer censorship for books that seek admission to public libraries. None should be placed on the shelves except such as are of value for study, culture, reference or healthful recreation. No building is large enough to contain all the good books, and there is no room in any to afford space for the bad or worthless.

"From here will go forth preachers and poets, orators and scientists to teach *truth to error*, if the trustees, who are to carry on this great work, shall *be always as judicious, as its founder and benefactors have been generous.*"

It has been, ladies and gentlemen, the privilege of all the trustees appointed by Governor Washburn in his last will and testament, though one or two of them exceed in age the period of life usually allotted to man, to co-operate actively in the establishment and construction of this beautiful building, and (for its present size) well appointed library; and I trust that the well-considered lessons, inculcated by the gentleman above quoted, have been steadily before our minds' eyes, and will be a guide to us and our successors in the future.

I am profoundly thankful to a kind Providence, and my fellow-trustees doubtless fully share the sentiment with me, that we all have been permitted to perform our task, as we be-

lieve, faithfully and creditably so far; I congratulate you all for what has been accomplished to realize the intentions of our benefactor. I hope that all of us, and our children with us and after us, will reap abundant benefits from this noble institution and I now announce to our Mayor, as the representative of all our citizens, and declare "The La Crosse Public Library" opened and dedicated to the use of our people.

ACCEPTANCE ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC,

BY MAYOR DAVID AUSTIN.

Honored Sir:—As an executor and intimate friend of the late Governor Washburn, it is indeed eminently fitting that you should this day, in accordance with his will, tender to the people of La Crosse, for their use, this beautiful building and its valuable contents.

Upon the sides of that tall monument in yonder cemetery, is carved in simple words, the testimony that he who sleeps beneath, was, during life, a legislator in the halls of Congress, a soldier in our country's need, and was by the expressed wish of its citizens made Governor of this great State; indeed had very nearly reached the summit of American ambition.

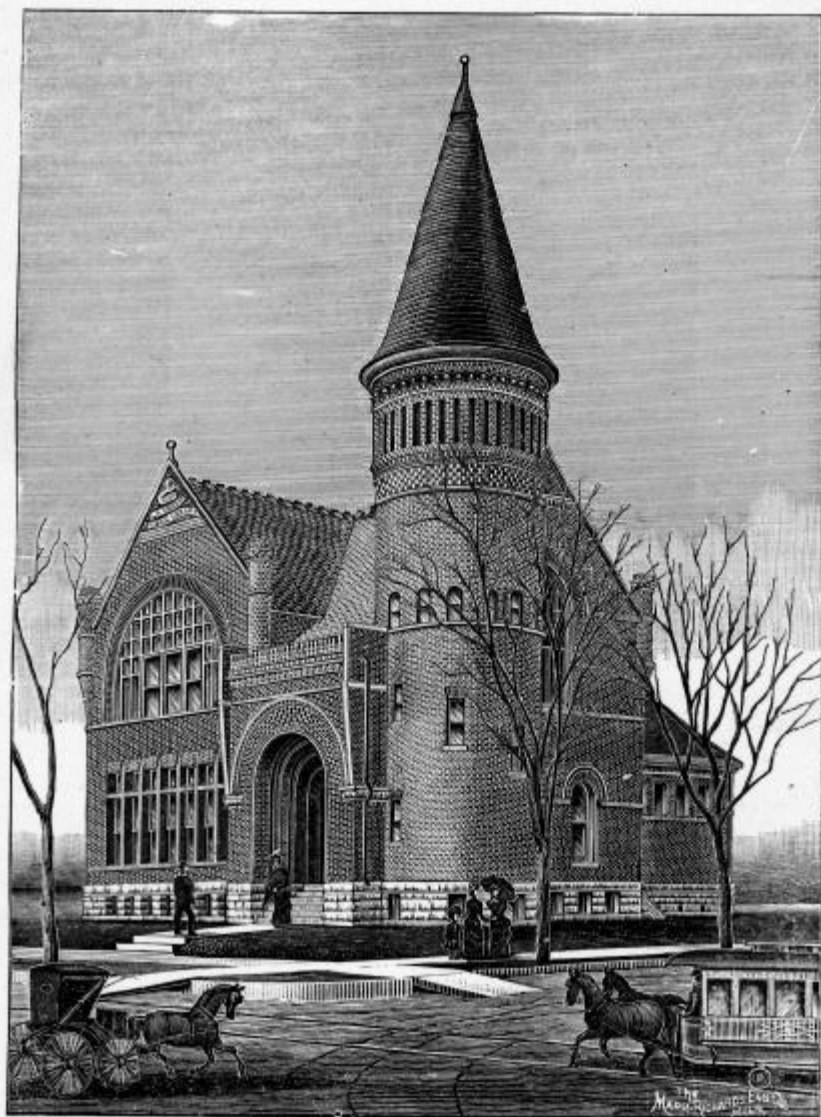
And yet, here in this library building and books contained therein, the free use of which he has bequeathed to the people of La Crosse forever, is reared another monument which will commemorate the name and worthy deeds of Cadwallader C. Washburn far into the future.

But it is useless for me to try to convey our thanks in words, as words are wholly inadequate to express our heartfelt gratitude for this valuable gift to our people. But in accepting this trust for our citizens, which is not only designed for the present, but for generations yet unborn, we fully realize the duties and responsibilities incumbent on the Board of Trustees; and should they be able to so manage the affairs of this library, as to reasonably comply with the wishes and expectations of the generous donors we are sure that great good will forever flow out among our people.

And to the citizens of La Crosse, I would say, that here is presented to us for all time, the use of this beautiful edifice with its valuable collection of books, containing many of the best thoughts of this and past ages; and that a careful and competent committee has seen that no objectionable books have been placed upon the shelves.

And in accepting this trust, we must see that no debasing works shall ever enter its portals, and it shall be our duty to hand it over in all its purity, to those who follow us.

And now, Sir, in the name, and in behalf of the people of La Crosse I accept the use of this priceless gift, which you have so eloquently tendered in the name of its beneficent donors.



THE LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

PLAN AND DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING.

THE LA CROSSE PUBLIC LIBRARY is situated at the southeast corner of Main and Eighth streets and fronts the north. The site is excellent, being upon principal streets and near the line where business blocks and residences meet, yet within the territory of the latter. It is convenient of access from all quarters and as nearly central to population as any available location the city affords. Its immediate surroundings are schools, churches and parks; the nearest buildings are two dwelling houses belonging to the library and forming part of the permanent investment for maintenance. It is the hope and expectation of the trustees that the time will not be long delayed when these buildings may be removed to make room for such enlargements of the library as will be demanded by the increase of books, the accumulation of art works and articles of historical or scientific interest, and especially by the growth of education and culture in the community. The site is ample for such enlargement, being 155 by 135 feet, while the total exterior dimensions of the building are 56 by 75 feet.

Architecturally the library is of the composite order commonly described as the modern Romanesque. The materials are red pressed brick and terra cotta with limestone founda-

tion. The conspicuous exterior features are the pointed round tower rising ninety-two feet, deeply recessed entrance, and semi-circular windows of plain and colored glass. In the apex of the north gable, a terra cotta tablet bears the inscription, "La Crosse Public Library, 1888." The roof is of slate.

There is but one entrance, the doors opening through a vestibule into a commodious tile-floored hall. The stairway to the upper floor, winding through the tower, opens on the right, while the basement stairway and entrance to the book exchange room are on the left. Upon the wall opposite the entrance has been placed the memorial tablet elsewhere illustrated. The hall is principally lighted by a circular west window of stained glass back of the tower.

The book exchange room occupies the center of the building; in front, separated by a glass partition, is the general reading room and the reference library; at the west end, the trustees' room. This apartment and the smaller reading room are carpeted with body brussels, well furnished and supplied with open grates and handsome cherry mantels. The general reading room is carpeted, and the book exchange and reference room floors covered with linoleum.

The book room is a one-story apartment at the rear, entered through double iron doors and proof against ordinary dangers from fire. It is provided with continuous shelving around the wall, and sections arranged at right angles to a center aisle. Numerous square windows on three sides above the shelving give ample light by day and electric lamps suspended in every aisle, by night.

The dimensions of these various apartments are: Book exchange room 19 by 28; general reading room 18 by 27; private reading room 14 by 14; trustees' office 13 by 14; reference room 12 by 14; book room 28 by 35.

The upper floor is occupied by Library Hall, a handsome audience room 56 by 32, seated with 300 chairs. Its notable

architectural features are its heavy, exposed timbers sustaining the roof to which the ceiling conforms, and the large semi-circular windows on three sides. An elaborate combination gas and electric chandelier is suspended from the ceiling and numerous bracket lamps are affixed to the walls, lighting the room amply.

The trustees regard this hall less as a source of revenue than as a means of encouraging the highest class of literary and musical entertainments, to which its use is restricted. Occupancy of the hall in no way disturbs the ordinary business of the library and its location and capacity seem to give it a special fitness for such entertainments as may be admitted.

The building is heated by two coal furnaces in the basement, and lighted by electricity but is also piped for gas and the combination fixtures admit of either manner of lighting. There are toilet rooms on the main and basement floors and in the basement a work room and ample space for the storage of fuel.

The library comprises in round numbers ten thousand volumes. It is one of the accredited depositories of government publications and receives everything of this class issued. The numbers of such volumes now on the shelves not classified is 1500, and of books issued by the state about 120.

The reference library contains 1050 volumes, of which 106 are encyclopedias, 83 dictionaries, 404 general reference and 428 bound periodicals. In the latter department will be found files of local papers from 1868 to date and the leading American magazines. The room also contains a number of finely illustrated and costly works descriptive of art, architecture and scenery in different lands, and such a range of volumes as will meet all ordinary demands of the student or general reader.

Deducting these two departments from the total, there remain about 7500 volumes for circulation. These are divided in the following general classes: Art, Biography, Drama, Essays, Fiction, History, Literature, Philology, Philosophy, Poetry, Science, Sociology, Theology and Travels.

The department of Art contains 611 volumes, Biography 699, Drama 148, History 826, Science, 450, Sociology 553, Theology 366 and Travels 360. The other departments are equally well supplied. It has been the constant aim of the Library Committee in purchasing books, to cover the widest possible range of topics in order to make the institution of universal benefit at the outset, leaving to future accretions the work of making complete collections upon special lines. The test of use is daily proving the value of their careful and intelligent work, which the trustees desire gratefully to acknowledge.

The library is classified according to the Dewey system; Mrs. M. E. Dixon had supervision of this work, assisted by the librarian Miss A. E. Hanscome. The rooms are open every day except Sunday from 2:00 to 6:00 and from 7:00 to 9:00 p. m. The library is entirely free to all citizens of the age of fourteen or upwards, with suitable provision for use by strangers or people living outside the city.

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FINANCE:

C. L. COLMAN, J. M. HOLLEY AND JOSEPH CLARKE.

Librarian:—A. E. HANSCOME.



Compliments of the Trustees

G. Van Steenburg.