

LAST WORDS

On a fine spring day not long ago I had a preview of the new Library as it will be in about another year. Walking through the spacious reading rooms and the empty stack floors on a personally conducted tour with the proud Librarian, I could easily visualize the quiet and tasteful surroundings of the modern building as it will appear on opening day. One comes up a walk from College Avenue to a square columned portico across which he passes to the high glass doors of the main entrance. Once through the double doors, the visitor is tempted by alcoves which will contain show cases of special exhibits, and his next steps may carry him in any one of four directions. He may turn right to the New Jersey Room, a high-ceilinged hall with full length windows in the far end looking out upon a sunken garden featuring New Jersey flora. Here will be more exhibits of rare books and manuscripts, while one can imagine the walls lined with locked book cases filled with other rarities. A stairway leads down to the workroom of scholars and the vault that will contain the Library's most valuable treasures. Or from the entry way one may turn left into the comfortable and well lighted current periodical room, or descend the stairs to the reserve reading room which fills the whole space on the river side under the main reference reading room.

The fourth choice of the entering visitor is to proceed straight ahead through another doorway which brings him to the catalog, reference and reading rooms of the main floor. To the left is an alcove where easy chairs will encourage browsing beside a shelf of current books. Beyond it, separated from the periodical reading room by a row of book cases, will be the general catalog for the whole library, while straight ahead in a large semicircle guarding the entrance to the stacks will be the reference and circulation desk, and beyond it the sound-proofed reading room.

The stack level with this room will contain all the bound periodicals, the one below it the books, reading tables near the windows, and seminar rooms of the social sciences, while the stack above will provide the same facilities for the sciences and the humanities. The top stack (the fifth) will have locked faculty studies with windows looking out over the Raritan and the distant wooded hills. Throughout the building air conditioning ducts in the ceiling presage cool comfort.

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