

ful carvings. The building has about 1,800 windows, and the four sides of the main gallery have thirty-three great arches, the keystones of which are images representing the heads of all the races of the world. Every type of man known to ethnology has a place in one of these arches, and the faces are marvelous in their execution and character. Over the main entrance are the types of the highest order of men, such as the Greek and Latin and the Saxon, while at the back of the building you find the lowest types, such as you find in Africa and in the South Sea Islands. I can't describe the wonderful execution of these figures. They are the most lifelike pictures in stone I have ever seen, and they seem to almost talk to you as their stern, stony eyes look down at you from over the windows.

This building covers nearly as much space as the Capitol. Its dome is not so large, but its plate of gold makes it infinitely more conspicuous. If you will take five city lots and carpet them with 24-carat gold you will get an idea of the golden quilt which covers this immense dome. There is no room in the United so large that it would fit this great golden carpet, and it is the largest golden dome in the United States. It has been called the largest golden dome in the world. But this is a mistake. The dome of St. Isaac's in St. Petersburg has a smaller diameter, but it covers more space and it cost infinitely more than this. It took 200 pounds of solid gold to cover it, and when you remember that gold at the mints is worth \$17 an ounce you will see that even at that low rate the St. Petersburg dome cost \$40,000 to gild.

The gold on the dome at Washington did not cost one-tenth of that amount. I was put on in little sheets, each of which was about four inches square and one hundred and fifty-thousandths of an inch thick. It takes two thousand such sheets to make one ounce of gold, and this amount will cover a space about as large as that of the average hall vestibule. The gold made in that form costs \$27 dollars an ounce, and at that rate it must have cost over \$60,000 to gild St. Isaac's. Russia has many cathedral domes plated with gold, and the gold-plated temples of the world are many. In Burmah and Siam there are pagodas and temples covered with gold, and at Rangoon I saw a pagoda about two-thirds as high as the Washington monument which is a great round mountain just plastered with gold leaf. The dome of the capitol at Boston is gold-plated, as are also those of the Connecticut state house at Hartford and the Hotel Des Invalids at Paris. I went up to the top of this golden dome yesterday and took a look at it. The gold is laid upon copper, and it is polished so that it is as bright as a new wedding ring. It is said to be very durable, and is on the whole, I doubt not, cheaper than the white lead with which the Capital dome is painted nearly every year. The gold was put on by specialists, who worked under canvas, and one of whom nearly lost his life at the work. The top of the dome is, I judge, about one-third the height of the Washington monument from the earth. This man was working on the smooth surface, when his foot slipped, and he slid it as though it were a mountain of ice. He came to the edge at a flying velocity and shot over

it on to the railing of the granite fence, which runs around its base. His foot fortunately caught on the inside of this railing and he tumbled down in a heap on the iron pavement, which runs around the dome. Had he struck the top of the railing half an inch higher he would have slid over and would have fallen a sheer 150 feet onto the granite lying in the court below. This is the only really dangerous accident that has occurred in the building, and though hundreds of men have been employed upon it for several years, no lives have been lost.

I can't describe the wonders of the interior of the National Library. My head buzzed as I walked through the many rooms and tried to understand it all. You could lose yourself in its basement as in the catacombs of Rome and wander for hours trying to find your way out. The grand staircase, which takes up a space equal almost to that of a quarter of an acre, to be finished in white marble and the great marble columns which rise one above another are already in place and surrounded with wooden boards to keep them from injury. The reading room will be in the rotunda in the center of the building and it will be covered with the dome. This room will be as large as the rotunda of the Capitol and its area will be about a quarter of an acre. It will have seats for 300 readers and the desks of these run in concentric rows around the central desk in which the manager of the reading room will sit and from which he will have connections with all parts of the library by pneumatic tubes or other modern inventions, which will enable him to send a message in the twinkling of an eye to any part of this great book palace, and by the touching of a button bring back the book he wants. Electricity and everything that the modern mind can think of has come to the aid in adding to the conveniences of the library, and it is now thought that an electric railroad will be built to carry the books from the old library of Congress in the Capitol over to this new building.

From this great central dome run out like arms massive buildings in which are to be housed our national library of the future. These are known as book sacks, but the word conveys no idea of their character. Imagine a great, long warehouse with glass walls as high as one of the largest New York flats and hundreds of feet in length. Let the sides of these be walled with glass set into square columns of white enameled brick and have the plate glass wedged into these columns without framework, as is the case in windows. Make the interior to consist of one mass of iron network running from the floor to the roof, so that when you stand within it you see nothing but iron frames rising one above the other and filling the whole vast high room. This may give you some idea of the book stack. The iron network consists of book shelves, and these are reached by stairs which run from one tier of iron to another and by walks of iron paved with marble, which are suspended between the tiers at regular intervals from the floor to the roof. There are several of these vast book warehouses in the building. The one I have just described

will contain 800,000 books, or more than are now in the National Library. The walls of glass give perfect light and the books are so arranged that the greatest numbers can be packed into the smallest compass, making every pamphlet thoroughly accessible.

I have spoken of the 1800 windows of this building. Those of the interior and of these stacks are set into the walls, great, massive pieces of plate glass, as large as goodsized store fronts. It is not possible to raise or lower them, and they are made so for the protection of the books, in order that no dust may enter. The ventilation is all done from the roof, and these windows are washed on the outside by means of a little railroad which runs around them from story to story, on which the washers can stand and scrub them clean. The acres of floor in this great book palace will be of marble. The walls of the rotunda are of colored marbles from all parts of the United States, and in the whole vast, high, four acres of wonderful rooms not a splinter of wood has been used. All is composed of iron, stone, cement and glass, and, as Mr. Green, the engineer in charge, told me, there will not be enough wood in the building when it is completed to make a match.

This building is to cost \$6,000,000. The State, War and Navy cost \$10,000,000, and upon the Capitol has been expended, all told, something like \$18,000,000. Uncle Sam will get more for his money out of this than out of either of the others. All of the work is being done under the government, and everything is built to outlast the ages, and of the very best material. In one of the rooms I found an army of carvers at work making wonderful decorations which are to adorn the exterior, and throughout the whole building everything went on like the work of an army under perfect control and in perfect order. The building will be completed in about two years, and within two years and a half the new library will be in thorough operation.

From here I walked over to the Capitol and took a stroll through the library of Congress. Every available room in the building is packed with books, and the library proper is so full that you have to march through single file in order to get from one part of it to the other. I pushed my way past a mountain of bound newspapers up to the main desk, and asked Mr. Spofford, the librarian, to tell me something about the condition of the library today, and as to how the great American brain was acting. Every one at Washington knows Mr. Spofford. He has been with the library for more than a generation, and he knows more about books and their contents than any other man in the United States.

There are in the National Library nearly 700,000 volumes, and in addition to this there are over 200,000 pamphlets. Mr. Spofford's brain is such that he knows just where each one of the 700,000 volumes stands, and he can tell you in an instant just which of them ought to help you on any subject you are studying. It is the same with the pamphlets, and the wonder is how one little iron-gray head can hold it all. He is a curious-looking man, as dark as a Spaniard. He has black hair and