PUBLIC EXERCISES ON THE COMPLETION OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, DEC. 12, 1883

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OF THE

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DECEMBER 12, 1883.

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CONTENTS.

COMPLETION

OF THE

LIBRARY BUILDING.

The completion of the Library Building was an event of so much importance in the history of the University that it was decided by the Regents to celebrate it in an appropriate manner. Accordingly, on the evening of December 12, 1883, in the presence of a large concourse of people, including invited guests from various parts of the state, exercises were held as follows:

Prayer was offered by the Right Reverend Bishop Samuel S. Harris, S. T. D.

The Choral Union then sang the chorus of Haydn, "The Heavens are Telling."

Regent James Shearer, Chairman of the Building Committee (which consisted of Regents Shearer, Walker and Grosvenor) made the following report:

REPORT OF REGENT SHEARER.

MR. PRESIDENT:—It is well known with what earnest longings the wish was wont to be expressed, "that this great University might soon have a Library worthy of it, and a building that would safely keep and permit convenient use of the books therein."

The Committee on Buildings and Grounds cannot promise

the books, but they have the great pleasure of offering to you a building worthy of a great library.

It may be instructive, and certainly will be interesting, to trace the initiation and progress of this work. First, of course, was the great need felt for a means of protecting and using a library. Second, an appropriation by the Legislature of the necessary funds. Third, the selection of a design that would combine convenience, capability for extension and safety from fire. Fourth, and of equal importance, a contractor, who would honestly, and with professional pride, execute the various works.

How nearly all of these necessary steps have been accomplished, will appear as we proceed.

As to the first step, much might be said, and many names be mentioned as earnest workers with the Board and Professors in giving form to this strongly felt need, but these names are too numerous for mention.

The first formal action taken by the Board of Regents was on September 8, 1880, by resolution offered by Regent Duffield, requesting the Library Committee, representing the several departments of the University, to prepare a memorial, setting forth the need of a library building.

This committee reported to the Board on January 12, 1881, and the Committee on Buildings and Grounds were then associated with them.

Secondly, The bill appropriating the amount required for a library building was introduced in the Legislature on the 25th of February, 1881, and your committee have great pleasure in saying, that the public sentiment of the State, as shown by the action of the representatives of the people, had been fully educated up to the great need of a library building. But not so, as to the one hundred thousand dollars, said to be necessary for its erection and completion.

The Legislative Committee, however, having heard the representations of Regents Grosvenor, Van Riper and Walker, and of Professors Adams and Tyler, decided to visit

the University, more fully to inform themselves as to their just duties in the matter, and by the results of this visit it may be assumed that nearly all the members of the Legislative Committee returned fully impressed with the need of a library building, and of the wisdom of appropriating the entire amount asked for. The bill was passed in due time.

Third. As to the design for the building, Professor Chas. K. Adams, (who had been active in the matter from its initiation) with consent of the two committees, procured a design from sketches for a library building made by Messrs. Ware & Van Brunt, of Boston, that had been used in presenting the case to the Legislature. But the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, to whom the matter of procuring a design had been referred by the Board of Regents, were obliged by the terms of the Act of Appropriation to advertise for competitive drawings. This was done on the 5th of April, 1881. The committee, among other requisites, instructed competing architects "that an ornate design was not required, but that convenience, good proportions, and good construction must govern, and that the whole must be as nearly fire-proof as the sum to be expended would allow." In response to this advertisement, three designs were offered on the 15th of June following, all of which possessed merit, but did not embrace the requirements of the committee as to the safety of the library and convenience of arrangement.

The design of Messrs. Ware & Van Brunt, not coming within the terms of the advertisement for designs, was not considered by the committee, but, by order of the Board of Regents, was referred to them for their report.

After due consideration, the committee reported that the design made by Messrs. Ware & Van Brunt was much superior in convenience, construction and adaptability, to the others presented for their consideration, but that many minor changes were desirable before adoption.

The Board of Regents thereupon directed Regent Shearer to proceed to Boston and have such changes made in the