

Historical Libraries—New Style¹

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A STUDY of the basic principles of historical libraries might well open with a definition of terms—the subject seems weighty enough to warrant it. As it happens, however, “the historical library” is a troublesome expression. It is easier to describe in action than to define in words, and its principles are more readily grasped from illustrative examples than from theoretical statements. You will not be disturbed, therefore, if this discussion, as it proceeds, takes on something of the aspect of a medieval mystery play, in which the plot develops on broad and simple lines, the few characters tend to become types, and action and argument are freely interspersed.

In lieu of a definition let us begin with an obvious fact, namely, that any library on any subject or subjects, after it has existed for a considerable number of years, becomes at least partly historical, and the longer it lasts the more historical it is. The reason is simple. Every subject that human beings study makes some progress from age to age, and the books that were of current practical interest a generation ago may be of merely historical interest today. This process is sometimes fast, sometimes slow. The faster and farther knowledge advances, the more rapidly the books recording that knowledge become outmoded.

An outstanding example of this process took place during the eighteenth-century enlightenment. Previously there had been

two fascinating sciences—nowadays we call them pseudosciences—in which most persons believed. One was astrology, which apparently originated in Babylonia several centuries before the Christian era. The other was alchemy, which seems to have originated in China just about the time of the Christian era. All through the Middle Ages and on into the Renaissance, astrology and alchemy were part of the accepted scientific lore. They regularly provoked a certain amount of skepticism and dissent, and every now and then a pope or an emperor tried to ban one or the other of them. Nevertheless, for centuries most educated people believed that the future could be foretold from the stars and that there were secret methods of turning base metals into silver or gold. To be sure the astrologer often slipped up in his predictions and the alchemist's gold often failed to stand the assayer's tests, but there were enough apparent successes to keep both beliefs alive. People, as always, remembered the hits and forgot the errors.

And now there comes an historic change. During the eighteenth century, with the spectacular rise of astronomy and the development of experimental chemistry, the older “sciences” are discredited. This does not take place overnight, but it does take place in a comparatively short time. And what, we may ask, then happens to the astrological and alchemical books and manuscripts? By the hundreds they are thrown out of the libraries as trash or are shoved up into attics or down into cellars, there to gather dust for about a century.

This is not quite the end of the story;

¹ Address to Friends of the Library, Baldwin-Wallace College, June 19, 1949.

if it were, there would be no point in telling it here. Toward the close of the nineteenth century the historians began to wonder what lay back of the new sciences of astronomy and chemistry. It was obvious that the origins were to be sought in the older astrological and alchemical works, and scholars began pulling these out of the attics and cellars and examining them. Hundreds of copies, even after the invention of printing, were still in manuscript form. Other hundreds were printed. Most of them belonged to public or university libraries, though a good many were still in private hands. For those in institutional libraries several special catalogs were compiled. One series, covering the Greek astrological manuscripts in all European libraries, first appeared in 1898 and ran to about a dozen volumes.² A similar catalog of Greek alchemical manuscripts reached eight volumes.³ The cataloging of the Latin manuscripts has just fairly begun but should in time prove an even larger task.⁴

The renewed interest in these records, it should be said, was purely historical. There was no revival of astrology and alchemy for their own sake. The historians were not consulting the old books in order to cast a horoscope or to produce two ounces of gold where one had been before. They were trying to understand the thinking of older generations, to trace its development from age to age, and to appraise each stage fairly for what it was or was not worth. The scholarly attitude toward the so-called occult sciences was never better expressed than by Bouché-Leclercq, the brilliant historian of Greek astrology, who closed the preface to his *L'Astrologie Grecque* with the hope

² *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, edited by F. Cumont and others, 1898-1934, 11 volumes, some of them in several parts.

³ Union Académique Internationale, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Alchimiques Grecs*, edited by J. Bidez and others, 1924-32, 8 volumes.

⁴ Union Académique Internationale, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Alchimiques Latins*, 1939, vol. 1, edited by J. Bidez and others.

that he might not appear to have wasted his time in investigating that on which other men had wasted theirs.

Such developments in the world of scholarship had one very practical result. They presented an opportunity to the rare book trade. Dealers, sensing the renewed interest in these subjects, began to buy up alchemical and astrological books and manuscripts, and include them in their sales catalogs. Many of the volumes had striking illustrations, elaborate astrological tables, or diagrams of furnaces, stills and other alchemical apparatus. Naturally these appealed to the fancy of book collectors, and the prices gradually rose, until some of the better items, especially if they were manuscripts illustrated in colors, brought several hundred dollars each in the open market. A century earlier they could hardly have been given away.

This Cinderella-like story—I almost called it a parable, but it really is true—illustrates several of the principles that seem to govern historical libraries. The first and most obvious is that such a library depends on historians. Toward the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries there were no historians who were interested in astrology and alchemy, and during that time there were no historical libraries covering these subjects. There were only junk piles, up in the attics, down in the cellars, off in the storerooms, where the sourcebooks on those subjects had been thrown. The junk piles were not libraries in any proper sense. Not until the scholars became interested in the subjects and the librarians began to examine, catalog and classify the sourcebooks did the junk piles take shape as organized historical libraries on alchemy and astrology.

This is the end of the prologue, and three of our actors have already made a fleeting appearance. Before they step out on the stage for their main act, let us charac-

terize them a little more closely. Consider first the historian and the librarian. Each of these stands for an essential principle of library development. Without some active human interest in a field of history no historical library in that field will develop. On the other hand, without rational organization no pile of books will become a usable library. Generally speaking, the interest in the subject is supplied by the historian, whereas the organization is supplied by the librarian. Occasionally these are one and the same person, but probably more often they are distinct.

And which comes first, the historical scholar or the historical librarian? This is like the hen-and-egg conundrum. At first one is tempted to say naively, "The historical scholar comes first, of course. He supplies the interest in a given field. He writes a sketch of the history, he stimulates public discussion of the subject, and he inspires if possible a group of pupils to carry on his work. After this, when the pattern has been set, the historical librarian takes up the task of organizing the sourcebooks in the field."

But not too fast—not too fast! Did you notice the word "sourcebooks"? Where did those sourcebooks come from? How do they happen to be still in existence? Oh, they came from the junk piles. Where were those junk piles? Chiefly in the attics, cellars, and remote storerooms of the libraries. Why had they been kept in the attics, cellars and storerooms instead of being burned as trash? Oh, some librarians couldn't quite bring themselves to throw the things away. Hundreds of the astrological and alchemical books and manuscripts were destroyed, it is true, but other hundreds were kept in the librarians' junk piles, so that after a century or so, when the scholars got around to investigating the history of those subjects, some of the sourcebooks were waiting to be examined.

Observe in this one of the outstanding characteristics of the historical librarian. He is a natural hoarder. He hates to throw records away. He has hunches that some day somebody will be interested in the things. To state the matter more elegantly and abstractly, he tries as best he can to foresee the interests that future historians will or ought to develop, and to some extent by means of his junk piles he partially provides for those interests.

There was a little old lady, you may recall, who never could bear to throw anything away. After her death they found among her effects several packages neatly done up and carefully labelled: "Pieces of string too short to use." Every good librarian has a touch of that instinct. Some of his hunches are right, some wrong. Some of the bits that he saves are literally too short to use and never are used. In other cases a use develops; the historian finds unexpected ways of splicing those pieces together and making of them the thread of his narrative. Your true historical librarian is a wise old bird, a sort of cross between an owl and a magpie, and I sometimes feel that his magpie instinct is the most elemental thing about him.

You will begin to sense by now the difficulty in deciding priorities. Which came first, the historical scholar with his interest in the subject and his knack of interesting others in it, or the historical librarian with his hoarding instinct and his talent for organization? There is no clear answer. Sometimes the initial impulse to the formation of the historical library comes from the historian. Theoretically it ought to come from him, since he openly proclaims his interest in the subject, and interest is the logical antecedent of action. Practically the initial impulse comes almost as often, I suspect, from the librarian, whose hoarding instinct constitutes a sort of general, undifferentiated interest in all the processes of

the past and all the records pertaining thereto. In this modern world of specialists, as someone has observed, the general librarian is the only person left that resembles the universal scholar of days gone by.

The Rare Book Dealer

So much for the two main actors in our little drama, the historian and the librarian. Enter at this point a third and quite important character. Some would call him the villain in the piece, but in that I do not concur. He provides an element of conflict, it is true, but he is no more of a villain than is the historian or the librarian. This third character is the rare book dealer. He has been absolutely indispensable in the building up of historical libraries to their present state of excellence. He has conducted his business usually on quite high ethical standards. He is also surprisingly generous in giving service. If you are a librarian in a recognized institution, or if you are an accredited private collector, he will send you a book or manuscript on approval, and if for any reason you do not want it he will take it back. In his sales catalogs he gives descriptions of his wares, and if any volume that you buy has defects that were not mentioned, he will make an adjustment.

Even so, of course, his descriptions will bear watching. He is in the business to make money, and his advertising, like any other advertising, is intended to "move the goods." His catalog statements may all be literally true and yet be so constructed as to make on a casual reader an exaggerated impression of the importance or rarity of the book. For this there is no legal remedy; the only hope lies in the shrewdness and intelligence of the customer. An experienced buyer soon learns to discount the exaggerations and to recognize and esteem that small group of dealers who err, if at all, by understatement.

Complaints are sometimes heard that the profits of the rare book dealer run from 100 to 300 per cent and occasionally higher. In reality this is not exorbitant. Turnover is slow in the rare book trade, there is no mass market, and there are some risks. Percentage-wise the business is about on a level with the restaurant. Food that costs 50¢ in a chain grocery store will cost about \$1.00 when served at a college cafeteria, probably \$2.00 in a good restaurant, and \$3.00 or \$4.00 in a swanky hotel. In food, and likewise in rare books, if you want swank you pay for it. Also, only the high-priced establishments handle the choicest goods.

Another complaint against the antiquarian bookman is that he constantly capitalizes on our sentiments, patriotic or otherwise. This is true, and I do not see what can be done about it. We Americans are a highly sentimental people and also an intensely commercial people, and there is no possible way of keeping the two things apart. Every deep and widespread sentiment is a standing invitation to commercialization, and the more intense the feeling the greater the business possibilities. Consider what has been done with Mother's Day in this country—"Consider and bow the head!" Consider also Father's Day, and how much less successful it is commercially. The cash register has measured how much deeper the sentiment about mothers is than the sentiment about fathers, and in this respect the cash register does not lie.

The rare book dealer does a similar thing. He is constantly estimating sentimental values in terms of money. Suppose he auctions off a manuscript of the *Gettysburg Address*. One can walk into any bookstore and buy a printed copy of this speech for a few cents. Why did a Cuban bibliophile recently pay \$54,000 for a copy in Lincoln's own handwriting? It was sentiment pure and simple—\$54,000 worth

of sentiment. Certainly no one supposes that Señor Cintas bought it in order to have a copy of the text handy to read. The manuscript doubtless reposes now in a safe or vault, and the purchaser has indicated his intention of giving it ultimately to some institution. There it will probably again go into a safe but will come out on special occasions for exhibition. It is no ordinary historical text. It is a museum piece.

The antiquarian bookman deals both in museum pieces and in historical texts, but he loves the museum pieces best because they bring the highest prices. In fact he likes nothing better than to take an historical text and make a museum piece out of it by finding that it has some rare and unusual quality or some special association value.

A "first edition," provided of course that the work itself is important, automatically commands a high price. Then there are certain specially qualified types of first editions. Suppose the real first edition was in Latin, published in London. If a "first edition in English translation" can be found, it will command a little premium, though not so much as the original Latin. The same with a "first edition in Spanish translation" or a "first edition published in Italy" or a "first English edition published in Holland." This sort of thing can go on for a long time—and has. There may be a "first issue of a first edition," and a recent catalog even offers, with all the emphasis of solid capitals, a Darwin item in "THE FIRST STATE OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE FIRST EDITION."⁵ There may also be a "first edition with engraved frontispiece" or a "first edition with the glosses of the commentator." The Library of Congress in its last annual report mentions the acquisition of a copy of the first edition *in book form* of Poe's "The

Raven," al. previous editions having appeared in periodicals.⁶

Many books are important because of their association with some famous personage of history. About a year ago Boies Penrose III, in Philadelphia, showed me a plush-bound copy of a *Psalter* printed on April 25, 1544, for Henry VIII. Apparently it was a one-copy edition, or if I may try to be technical about it, a variant issue of STC 3002, dated May 25, 1544. The volume was apparently struck off especially for the king, a month ahead of the main edition. As I leafed through the book, I came to the Penitential Psalms, there headed "Psalmes for Forgyveness of Synnes," which seemed appropriate for Henry. I looked to see if those pages had been particularly worn with use, but there was no sign of it. At any rate, here was a beautiful example of association value and first-issue value combined in one volume.

The stage is now set for the climax of our drama. We find our historical librarian continually drawn by two conflicting forces. These are personified, respectively, by the historian and the rare book dealer. On the right stands the historian, to whom the librarian owes deep and willing allegiance and for whom he is always seeking to acquire additional reading matter on some subject or period—more, in fact, than the budget can afford. On the left stands the book dealer, constantly dangling rarities, naturally at rare prices, before the librarian's fascinated eyes.

"Can you take a moment to look at this?" says the dealer insinuatingly. "Wouldn't it be an interesting item to put on display at the annual meeting of the Friends of the Library? A first edition, in perfect condition, and quite reasonable at \$3500. Another copy, lacking the blank leaf at the

⁵ Wise words as to these and related terms are given by Paul S. Dunkin, "The State of the Issue," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 42:239-55, 1948.

⁶ Pungently worded advice as to the economic value of first editions, damaged copies, and the like is offered by Richard Booker, "Basic Non-Stock for Antiquarian Book Shops," in *Antiquarian Bookman* 4:113-14, July 16, 1949.

end, went for \$4375 at Lord Humpty Dump's auction sale three years ago. Except for that copy and this, I know of none that has come on the market in the last half century. And don't forget that our copy has the blank leaf at the end." If the librarian shows signs of hardening his heart, the dealer may add in a low voice, "If we could come to a decision this afternoon, I think I could shave 10 per cent off the price."

Poor librarian! You remember the words of Launcelot Gobbo, in the *Merchant of Venice*. Torn by an agony of indecision, wishing to run away from his master but knowing that he ought not to go, he exclaims:

"Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, you counsel well"; "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well."

It is a classic example of divided purposes, and I think we may imagine our librarian-hero paraphrasing the speech somewhat as follows:

"Buy," says the dealer. "Buy not," says the historian, adding in severe tones: "What this library needs is not rarities but reading matter. Remember those 86 volumes of *Abhandlungen* of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, *Historische-Philosophische Klasse*, that we don't have and you decided last month that we couldn't afford to get? They wouldn't have cost a third as much as this."

The conflict of interests is dramatic. The scholar asks for reading matter and the bookman offers rarities, while the librarian, with a strictly limited budget for new acquisitions, is the little man in between. He may try to satisfy both masters—a good many librarians have attempted it—but we have it on high authority that you cannot serve God and mammon. Some librarians have never been quite clear whether they were conducting a literary museum of rarities or a scholarly workshop

of sourcebooks. Some of them, trying to do both, have developed split personalities, and one such, on the day when he had to apportion his annual budget for acquisitions, is said to have paced the floor with a daisy in his hand, pulling off the petals and murmuring: "Rarities! Reading matter! Rarities! Reading matter!" I do not vouch for that story, but it could have happened.

And now it is time for a change of scene and tempo. Let us flash back to the Franco-Prussian War and the siege of Paris in the winter of 1870. Within the beleaguered city was an exceptionally skilled photographer who had developed the art of making miniature pictures of famous scenes in Paris. He put them on bits of photographic film and fixed them in a device like a telescope, which magnified the pictures to the point of visibility. These were quite in demand and brought rather high prices.

The photographer was named Prudent René Patrice Dagron. As the siege of Paris progressed, he conceived the idea of photographing pages of printed news dispatches and conveying them on tiny films by carrier pigeon across the German lines. The chief need was to get news into the city from the outside. He therefore loaded his photographic equipment into two balloons, which he named the "Niepce" and the "Daguerre," in honor of the two famous inventors of photographic processes. The "Daguerre" was shot down. The "Niepce," carrying Dagron, one assistant, and 600 kilograms of equipment, passed the German lines but landed uncomfortably close to them. Disguising themselves as farmers transporting wine, the refugees with their baggage managed to elude the pursuing Germans and after nine days reached Tours in an unoccupied portion of France. From here, during the course of the winter, Dagron sent some 115,000 dispatches to Paris by carrier pigeon to give the city news.

When the war was over, Dagrón wrote a book about his exploits, and to each copy he attached a sample of the actual film that had been used during the siege.⁷ At the Library of Congress I recently examined this work and its 79-year-old piece of film. The reduction ratio is large—about 32 to 1, or almost twice the reduction customary today. The old film is therefore not legible in our modern reading machines, but with the aid of a low-power microscope an enlarged print has been made. This, though a little blurred, is still readable.⁸

So far as is known, that is the first time that written or printed documents were ever copied photographically on microfilm. How the invention has spread! Today, as you know, the documentary microfilm is a commonplace throughout the business world and the learned world. Banks use it to record checks. Factories use it to multiply blueprints and plans. Libraries use it to charge out books. Also, research libraries use it to copy the texts of articles and books wanted by out-of-town patrons. Moreover—and this is of present importance—they are beginning to use it extensively in the copying of *historical documents and rare books*.

At this point sound the bugles. A white knight comes riding over the distant hill. As he draws near, we see that his shining raiment is really a photographer's apron. In one hand he carries a camera and in the other a reading machine. That is not a halo on his head but a roll of microfilm. He is

⁷Dagrón, P. R. P., *La Poste par Pigeons Voyageurs* . . . [Paris] 1870-1871, 24 pages. A translation, in extremely stilted English, was also published in the same year under the title: *The Post by Travelling Pigeons*. The Library of Congress has both editions. The Huntington Library has a copy of the French.

⁸The enlargement was made from the piece of film attached to the copy at the Huntington Library, and samples of the enlarged pages were published by L. Bendikson, "How Long Will Reproductions on 35-Millimeter Film Last?" in *Library Journal* 60:143-45, 1935. Each film contained 16 pages, originally about 32 cm. high. All except the first or cover page contained three narrow columns of brief dispatches, about 100 lines to the column. Each strip of film measured 3 x 5 cm., and 18 of these strips—Dagrón calls them "pellicules"—were inserted in a feather quill and attached to the leg of the carrier pigeon. The load for each pigeon was about 1 gram.

hurrying to rescue our hero from schizophrenia.

No longer need the historical librarian on his budget-apportionment day pull petals from a daisy. So far as the need for sourcebooks is concerned, the microfilm has measurably freed him from the book dealer's monopoly. If his own library does not have a desired rare book, some other library is almost sure to have it and to be willing to let it be filmed, probably at a cost of a dollar or two. First, of course, if the work is quite unusual, one must find what library has a copy, but there are union catalogs, both regional and national, which make a business of that.

Some consider the invention of documentary microfilming to be as great a revolution as the invention of printing. This I rather doubt, but its influence has been considerable. Not only does it bring an occasional book from an out-of-town library for an individual scholar, but it has made possible in historical fields the kind of acquisition program now being attempted in our Cleveland Branch. We have there the older books from the Army Medical Library—in general, those published earlier than the year 1800. For the fifteenth century we have about 300 separate editions of medical sourcebooks. There are known to be about 850 such editions in all. We have therefore about one third of the total and are trying to secure the rest on microfilm from other libraries. Such editions are usually so rare that they will never again come up for sale, and we could not afford to purchase them if they did. Microphotography offers the only possible chance of securing most of these texts.

For the sixteenth century we have about 4000 medical editions in Cleveland. From the New York Academy of Medicine we are trying to secure on film some 500 others which they have and we do not have. From the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris we are

hoping to secure films of about 1000 more. Still others we shall attempt to get wherever we can locate them. When the job is done, we shall tell you how many sixteenth century medical editions there are. Our present guess is from 10,000 to 12,000. If we ever finish the sixteenth century, the seventeenth century will be awaiting us, and after that, if any one has the courage to attack it, the eighteenth.⁹

Medicine is not the only field in which the possibility of assembling a complete historical collection now opens up. For some 20 years the Library of Congress has used microfilm as an acquisition tool and has accumulated a total of about 75,000 rolls and strips. Its major project of this nature has centered on the sources for American history in foreign archives and manuscript collections. Over 1,000,000 exposures from such material have been assembled to date.¹⁰ The Library of Congress is also collaborating actively in the task of filming the early records of our various state governments.¹¹

This comprehensive type of collection, as you will have suspected, is what I had in mind in announcing the topic, "Historical Libraries—New Style." Thanks to microphotography, it is now possible for a really determined person to assemble a fairly complete library on the history of any particular

⁹ In an early issue of the *Library Quarterly* I am publishing a more complete description of our medico-historical microfilm project than is possible here.

¹⁰ These figures are reported by Dan Lacy, "Microfilming as a Major Acquisition Tool: Policies, Plans, and Problems," in the *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 6:8-17, 1949. His article is a systematic reconsideration, with a view to expansion, of microfilm acquisition policies, especially for "retrospective materials which can often be obtained only in microcopy," i.e., for historically significant rare books and documents.

¹¹ This is now known as the State Documents Microfilm Project, which is the third stage of a Legislative Journals Microfilm Project entered into in 1941 by the Library of Congress and the University of North Carolina. It has been recently described by the director, William S. Jenkins, "State Documents Microfilms as Research Sources for Law Libraries," in *Law Library Journal* 16:77-87, 1948. See also the project's *Progress Report 1947-1948*, 31 pages, mimeographed, signed by the director. The 11 classes under which the materials are being arranged are described by William S. Jenkins, "Records of the United States, a Microfilm Compilation," in the *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 6:3-7, 1949. At present there are some 1200 100-foot rolls representing nearly 3,000,000 pages of text, both printed and manuscript.

subject. He will never secure quite everything. There will always be a few items in private hands which the owners will not allow to be copied. There will also be a few editions of which there is no surviving example. And yet, with these and perhaps other limitations, such a library can be made nearly complete—far more so than has ever before been possible. No collector living, say, in the seventeenth century could have done half so well. Communication was then too difficult, and there were no comprehensive book lists when the art of printing was young.

The style of such a library is new in two notable respects. On the one hand, as we have seen, it can aspire to completeness. On the other hand, it will inevitably contain more microfilm copies than it does actual books. These features present advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage of its being comprehensive is obvious, and a subsidiary advantage is the fact that when such a collection has once been assembled and is adequately described in a catalog or list, the work will not need to be done over again. The material should be ready for historians of this or any future generation to use.

Completeness and finality—these are two great advantages, even though they can never be quite perfectly attained. Against them must be set the disadvantage of having a large proportion of the collection not in book form but on film. No film copy is ever so satisfactory to use as the book itself. With this in mind we have adopted in the Cleveland Branch a policy of continuing to buy the actual books if they are available, paying much more for them than we would have to pay for a film copy. The decision to pay a premium price is based on several factors, the most important being the presence of illustrations, especially colored illustrations. These seldom show up well on film. We also dislike to have the entire lit-

erary tradition of any given title on film only. If possible, we aim to secure in book form at least one edition, preferably the first.

From the financial point of view the film in some cases has an advantage for the historical student. If his desired sources are in out-of-town libraries and can be sent to him only in the form of microfilm copies, he is usually expected to pay for making such a copy. But a film copy made from a film costs only a fraction as much as a film copy made from the book. The latter requires a good deal of hand work by the operator in turning the pages. The former is produced mechanically by a contact printer in a very few moments and at rather slight expense.¹²

Dagron's memorable experiment has had revolutionary results, some of them certainly not yet fully exploited. Among other things it is making possible this new style of historical library, which in turn is influencing the work and the interrelations of three important professions, those of the historian, the antiquarian bookman and the librarian.

To the historian it is bringing an almost embarrassing wealth of source material, practically pooling for his use the holdings of the world's libraries. These resources are just beginning to be organized according to subjects on the basis of the new methods, but when such organization is complete, the historian will certainly no longer complain of the lack of adequate source materials. Already in some fields he has been heard to complain of a superabundance, and at times he wryly admits that in many ways history was easier to write when the records were

fewer. Neater theories were then possible, unhampered by too many inconvenient facts.

To the antiquarian bookman the new-fangled processes of microcopying may appear to offer an economic threat. Actually the danger to his monopoly is not too great, though some change is inevitable. The economic adjustment required, however, by the microfilm is slow and slight in comparison with that required, in this present year of grace, by the reopening of the continental book markets. Indirectly, moreover, the microfilm, by facilitating historical research in the smaller universities and colleges, should spread the interest in things historical to the remoter regions and ultimately stimulate the purchase of rare books over a wider area. To be sure, what the trade knows as "cripples" may, under the competition of the film, become increasingly difficult to sell. But no film, it is well to remember, will ever match the lure of a "first edition in perfect condition." Literary museums in this country seem destined to increase in number and size, and they can only be built out of fine books, not out of photographic copies. I have yet to see anyone lean over a display case and exclaim at the beauty and rarity of a roll of microfilm.

It is the librarian, naturally, who receives the principal impact of the new style of historical library. Dagron's invention has influenced him in a dozen different ways, but in no way more fundamentally than by helping him to distinguish his functions. These are basically two, and it is not mere facetiousness to suggest that a clear distinction between them has an almost psychiatric value for the librarian. As a literary museum his institution must have books, real books, rare and fine books. As a collection of historical texts for scholars to read, it might conceivably consist of film copies only. For centuries these two aspects of the his-

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¹² Lacy, *op. cit.*, p. 10, discusses the question of the pricing of "positive prints of negative microfilm." By this he evidently means not full-sized positive prints on paper, but microphotographic positive films made from negative films. He suggests charging in, say, one-fourth of the original cost of making the negative film whenever a customer orders a positive microfilm made from that negative. The suggestion is likely to be resisted. He also recommends "the general acceptance of the interlibrary loan of positive prints of microfilms." This the Army Medical Library is already doing.

sober citizen the use of books within the building. Is it not far more practical to allow the outsider to take his book with him and use it at home, provided the volume is not restricted because of class use, reference use, fragility, rarity, etc.?

Home use is a great convenience to most people. The trust implicit in such a loan will occasionally return dividends. (Many have joined the "Friends" because of the borrowing privilege. Checks as high as \$50 have come from these people.) There need be no special fear of the book thief, who will steal regardless of the borrowing privilege. Pennsylvania has had almost no trouble with late return, and promptly weeds out the careless. On many occasions, loans of single books have been approved for people who were transients, without request for any identification. An honest-looking, decently dressed stranger with a good reason for reading a book and enough urgency to come to the university library is a pretty safe bet for a loan worth at most a

few dollars. Loaning a book for home use is about the cheapest thing a library can do. Reference service, reading room privilege, and so on are all far more expensive. The general restriction of this privilege at the large university libraries is, in the light of our fairly long, extensive experience at Pennsylvania, based on fears which seem completely unwarranted. There is an opportunity here for the university to do a great public service and win considerable good will at very small expense, provided good judgment is exercised. The then President Gates stated the goal concisely some years ago:

The University of Pennsylvania Library . . . accepts . . . a responsibility for service to the community at large and to the student world at large. It opens its doors and extends its facilities liberally to all those seeking knowledge out of books . . .²

² Bibliographical Planning Committee of Philadelphia, *Philadelphia Libraries, a Survey of Facilities, Needs, and Opportunities*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942, p. 59.

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torical library have been confused and interdependent. Scholars have traveled to far countries at great expense in order to read books and manuscripts not available at home. Today the texts, as texts, are being made available almost anywhere. But in their quality as museum pieces the books themselves are not transportable by such means. Their prestige value and their text value are now clearly separable, with marked benefits to the peace of mind of the historical librarian. He administers, for research purposes, not merely the actual

books in his own library, not merely such microfilm copies as he may have secured from other collections, but potentially all the pertinent texts in the public libraries of the world. He administers, for museum purposes, as many fine books, illustrated manuscripts, artistic bindings and other rarities as he is able to assemble in his own institution, where persons of education and discernment may admire and enjoy them. In a society such as ours it would be venturesome to say that either of these purposes is more important than the other.