

TO HARRY MILLER LYDENBERG

Recent reflection upon the qualities needed by administrators called upon to take over the direction of important libraries brought to mind once again the attributes of one of the prominent American librarians of the first half of the twentieth century, Harry Miller Lydenberg. For over fifty years he has been demonstrating his prowess as bibliographer, biographer, bookman, historian, essayist, editor, translator, administrator, and trustee.

Having gone to New York Public Library in 1896 as a cataloger at the time when the card catalog was just evolving as a major library tool, he remained to build up and direct the use of one of the greatest reference collections in this country, to inform scholars everywhere of the Library's great riches through the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, and to pioneer in the development of various techniques for providing wider access to man's recorded knowledge. Dr. Lydenberg's achievements can be understood only in the light of the almost insurmountable difficulties in obtaining essential materials in times of war and economic depression. In the Lydenberg *festschrift*, Keyes Metcalf took pleasure in pointing out that the collections built up by his former chief were stronger than those of any American university library surveyed by Waples and Lasswell for their report on *National Libraries and Foreign Scholarship*.

As well as Lydenberg understands and loves books, he loves people more. His own faith, courage and devotion have ever inspired equally consecrated trust and support both from his boards of trustees and his staffs. He, in turn, whether residing in Scarsdale, New York, or Greensboro, North Carolina, has ever been a ready and effective library trustee. If a report is to be made to the city's finance committee, HML's advice and assistance are invaluable. If a renovation is the first order of library business, HML can wield a trusty paint brush. He has even been known to provide both implements and manpower for a successful woodpile operation. Along with people, books and libraries comes his love of the out of doors. Probably no one can recall all the gardens Lydenberg has made nor all the myriad paths he has hiked. But scores of friends cherish memories of flowers shared and trails made doubly enjoyable by his good fellowship. Here indeed is a man who has a green thumb not only with plants but with people and projects as well.

Upon the occasion of Lydenberg's New York Public Library retirement, his Brooklyn neighbor, Milton James Ferguson, remarked that whenever any hard job of top importance was being considered, Lydenberg's name always seemed to come to mind like magic.

Of the innumerable individual and cooperative bibliographic projects to which he has given unstintingly of his dynamic intellectual and physical energies, two particularly difficult undertakings were the completion of the last third of Sabin's *Dictionary of Books Relating to America* and the preparation of the monumental *Union List of Serials*. In addition he has chaired most of the ALA committees having to do with availability of materials here and abroad during World Wars I and II. And when the Library of Congress wanted a man to head up the 1946 Mission to have a look at the library situation and the book trade in Germany, HML was the man chosen to go. He it was who in the eyes of librarians and bookmen possessed the perception, perspective, strength and warmth which would achieve the Mission's goals and at the same time carry courage and spiritual replenishment to his war-weary colleagues abroad.

Only recently ACRL has established a committee designed to integrate the Association's interests and activities with those of the various scholarly societies. Formerly this interaction was achieved through such librarian-scholars as Lydenberg. Immedi-

ately preceding his ALA presidency in 1932-33, he served for two years as president of the Bibliographic Society of America. Among other organizations in which he has served with distinction are the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, the American Historical Association, the New York Historical Society, the Century Club, the American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Typophiles.

One month after his retirement from one of the busiest library corners in the world, he became Director of the Bibliotheca Benjamin Franklin in Mexico City. With his active regard for a healthy intellectual and spiritual climate for the exchange of ideas and information, who could have been a more appropriate candidate for this experiment in bringing the American way of life through books to a people with so rich a culture of their own? Once again, his strong historical orientation, his ability to inspire teamwork of the highest calibre, his modesty, his youthful spirit and inspiring friendship enabled him to create an institution of international importance, for it was this pioneer venture which did much to prepare for the use of American librarians throughout the world in the United States Information Service.

Equally appropriate was his next assignment as Director of the International Relations Board of the American Library Association. Needless to say, his accomplishments in laying the groundwork for the UNESCO library and bibliographic programs were prodigious, and his retirement in 1946 was reminiscent of earlier ones. Commenting upon Lydenberg's decision, Luther Evans labelled it an international cultural crisis, but even that human dynamo recognized in Lydenberg's modesty an impregnable barrier.

Harry Miller Lydenberg has ever been occupied with the creative forces among which he deems it his privilege to live. With his own eyes he has watched people rise above the economic crises of 1907 and 1929, the filth, vermin and desolation of the Russian Revolution, and the destruction of two world wars. At the same time he has experienced again and again the reassurance of warm pregnant earth turned in the misty quiet of early morning; he has watched the faces of children listening entranced by Marie Shedlock's recounting of "The Nightingale," "The Princess and the Pea," or "The Little Tin Soldier"; he has witnessed the rapt attention of several hundred high school youngsters listening to Guthrie McClintic's reading of Galsworthy's "Escape." From a wealth of experiences such as these, this distinguished American has formed the habit of looking clearly at the present, relating that present to past and future, and then turning his attention with wisdom, courage and enthusiasm to the day's demands.

How has Lydenberg influenced those who have risen under his tutelage to be administrators—Charles Adams, David Clift, Charles Gosnell, James Gourley, Harold Lancour, Keyes Metcalf, Quincy Mumford, Andrew Osborn, Paul North Rice, *etc.*? What has each of them gained from their consciousness of this one man's deep personal and professional integrity, of his sense of responsibility for the library as a link in the chain reaction of ideas in the minds of men, of his constant concern for the care and use of books as purveyors of ideas? What does the library profession gain from these men—a positive philosophy of librarianship? a better understanding of library values? a vision of new services? new techniques? To whom could the members of the library profession look for leadership if not to men such as these?

Lydenberg himself combines so blithely those very virtues of loyalty, sympathy, vision, gentleness and scholarship which he has acclaimed in a score or more of the members of the staff of the New York Public Library and other colleagues. One wishes that he could be persuaded and trusted to write his autobiography with the same fullness of meaning he has accorded others, but his humility is as much a part of him

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as his capacity to recognize greatness among his fellowmen. Perhaps Deoch Fulton, who wrote of him so wisely and well in the April, 1953, *ALA Bulletin*, and earlier edited *Bookmen's Holiday: Notes and Studies Written and Gathered in Tribute to Harry Miller Lydenberg* (New York, The New York Public Library, 1943), will undertake a full-scale biography of this remarkable man.

Meanwhile, HML, it is an honor and a privilege to have you and Mrs. Lydenberg here among us in North Carolina. May newfound friends delight you as truly as those with whom you have shared so many Book Table luncheons, may every rose in your garden bloom especially brightly for you, and may your green thumb continue to work library magic for us for many years to come!

This tribute to Mr. Lydenberg was written by Sarah Rebecca Reed, Assistant Professor of Library Science, University of North Carolina. The editors are pleased to publish it as a grateful recognition, by members of NCLA, of Mr. Lydenberg's choice of residence in the Tar Heel State, his active service as a trustee of the Greensboro Public Library, and his readiness to support library development throughout the state.