THE RAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY, AT FRANKLIN, MASSACHUSETTS. BY IRENE SARGENT

As a monument of civic art, the Ray Memorial Library, just completed in the manufacturing village of Franklin, Massachusetts, will lend great distinction to that community for a long period to come. Locally standing for something which the outsider can not fully realize, since it perpetuates the remembrance of a worthy, enlightened, public-spirited citizen, it possesses, beyond this sentimental quality, an æsthetic value which entitles it to national consideration.

The Library stands "somewhat back from the village street," facing the famous old Dean Academy, a large red brick structure of nondescript architecture, adjacent to a church built of white stone, and of which the principal exterior feature is an English Gothic painted window. Into these surroundings the chaste severity of Greek line and mass brings an element accordant with New England traditions. Set within sufficient free space to display its characteristics, the Library, like its ancient temple-prototypes, gives the impression of size by means of its perfect proportions, rather than by its actual measure-
ments. It is built of granite, like the stone of the Boston Public Library; its façade gaining dignity by the unbroken wall which rises, devoid of windows, to a point just above the pediment of the slightly advanced Ionic portal. Then, monotony is prevented in the exterior, while, at the same time, the purpose of the building is suggested, and the interior provided with daylight in the most desirable manner by the system of fenestration which, carried completely around the building, is broken at short, regular intervals by pilasters rising from simple moldings: a device giving a rhythm and accent very pleasing to the eye. Above this, the plain band serving as a frieze, preserves the chasteness of the design, and does not prevent the eye from rapidly seizing the plan, as would be done by sculptured ornament. This plain frieze, capped by a cornice of sharp profile, is thus contrasted with the latter member, and by this simple means the façade is again saved from insignificance; since that which may be termed the projecting brow of the building lends dignity to the structure, just as the prominent forehead and sometimes an overhanging throw of drapery were given, with the same intention, to the human face by the late Attic school of sculptors. In this well-calculated exterior effect the portal is allowed due importance; constituting a type and model of its kind, while remaining chaste and restrained enough to comport with the prevailing style. In this feature, material and design concur in a whole to which the eye returns again and again, gratified by a harmony and a refinement of proportion which are truly Greek. Nor is any detail omitted which could add to the completeness of the scheme, such as the bronze door, having as its sole ornament the egg-and-dart molding, the bosses of which are slightly tinged with veritique. Another detail of the exterior especially worthy of mention exists in the low screen-wall seen at the right of the illustration. This wall, divided into three descending sections, by the very fact of these divisions, offers variety to the eye as it directs it to the column supporting electric lights placed on the boundary of the library lot; thus unifying a street fixture with the building proper. The column at first excites comment as presenting a composite capital, and being therefore at variance with the general scheme. But this detail is justified when the spectator pictures to himself the effect of an Ionic capital which should replace the actually existing one: substituting for graceful plant-like forms the flat cushion with its large volutes,
designed always to be placed beneath an entablature. Again, the screen-wall breaks the square outline of the building which, in the absence of this device, would be too aggressive in its isolated position. The wall further and principally serves to modulate the difference in level between the façade and the side of the building, which latter by this arrangement affords sufficient height to be pierced by a series of basement windows, and by a second doorway treated simply, in order not to detract from the chief entrance.

As a whole, this exterior, apparently so lacking in complexity, is found to be the result of the most careful, intelligent and skilful architectural work. It prepares the spectator for the beauties of the interior, in the same way that the overture attunes the ear and mind of the listener to the musical scheme which is to follow, by presenting the principal motifs in their unadorned force.

THROUGH the beautiful Ionic portal previously described, the visitor enters a spacious vestibule known as the Memorial Hall. This occupies the entire width of the building; having a floor-plan of twenty by sixty-two feet, and a height equivalent to two stories. Arrived here, one feels no diminution or flaw in the antique spirit announced by the exterior. Marble, bronze, mural paintings, and rich wood combine in a result recalling the descriptions of the classic authors when treating of civic structures. Here the strongest color-note is given by the red-brown of mahogany, which appears with a soft, dull surface. Red again occurs in the floor laid in brick, and this color is heightened by the dark green given to the walls, above the facing of black marble running like a wainscot about the hall, and itself topped by a band of Numidian marble, from which rise pilasters of the same stone, dividing the space into wide panels up to the bronze frames of the mural paintings, which form a frieze about three sides of the hall.

The color scheme here employed is one which might have easily become heavy and sombre, but it is saved from such a fault by the use in the ceiling of a bluish-green, which shows a fine appreciation of the nature of color; since one element of the combination, the green, acts as an opiate, or anodyne, to the eye; while the other, blue, gives the effect of space and distance. This color, which is shaded, is acted upon by the daylight transmitted through the prismatic glass,
and thus acquires a luminous golden quality most valuable in the decorative scheme.

The Memorial Hall derives its name from the large, effective bronze dedicatory panel set into the wall facing the entrance, and bearing the inscription:

"In memory of Joseph Gordon Ray and Emily Rockwood Ray, this building is dedicated by their daughters, A. D. MCMIV. Quam dulce est meminisse."

Spaces, already bounded by bronze frames, are also reserved for the portraits of the persons in whose memory the Library was erected, and at the left of the entrance, on the end wall, and over the black marble staircase descending to the Lecture Hall and the Children's Room, appears a landscape by Mr. Henry H. Gallison of whose qualities as an artist we shall have later ample occasion to speak. The subject of this picture, like the themes of the mural decorations here found, and in common with all similar work seen in recently erected American libraries, makes distant, rather than direct, allusion to books and to the scholar's life. "The Dream City" is a fitting title for this canvas representing domes and minarets illuminated by a morning sun-burst, and set high upon a cliff which overhangs the sea, whose gray waters stretch out to meet low-lying, leaden clouds.

As may be inferred, the Memorial Hall is, in all points, treated as a prelude to the rooms beyond. This is true especially of the frieze which, although strongly decorative, is here kept subordinate; while in the Reading Gallery the same feature becomes the most pronounced element of ornament. Both these schemes, the work of a single artist, although they are familiar as to their design, to all students of historic art, have yet a quality of extreme freshness; since our American school of mural decoration, following French traditions, has produced nothing susceptible of comparison with them. It is indeed interesting to study the design here employed; to select its various component elements—the antique, the Renascence, and the modern—and to note the skill with which they are combined. The subjects, also of very frequent occurrence, are interpreted so decoratively as to absorb and nullify all commonplaces. Line, mass and color so gratify the eye that the mind forgets to question the meaning of this or that figure, although conventions and symbols may be discovered in great numbers by those who seek allegories rather than pictures. "Day"
and "Night," the three divisions made of the twenty-four hours into periods of work, play and sleep—all these signify to one spectator a mosaic or bouquet of color, a structural scheme of lines, an equilibrium of masses, a study in chiaroscuro; while to another they may be simply beautiful illustrations of mythology in which it is a pleasurable task to identify each figure by its attributes; as for example: Prudence by her mirror; Vengeance by her dagger; and Fortune by her wheel.

In examining this frieze, no one acquainted with the history of art could attribute it to any but an Italian painter, so vividly does it recall the Vatican with its antique marbles, and the Roman palaces and villas with their frescoed walls and ceilings. Yet it is no painstaking copy of historic work, such as might be built from the notebook of a student. It simply shows on the part of the artist who produced it, a continuity of development from classic principles which has been preserved in him by both racial instinct and teaching.

Occupying the central space of the wall facing the entrance, "Eight Hours of Pleasure" are represented in Raphaelesque drawing, but with a rhythm derived from the close study of Greek bas-reliefs and vase-paintings. The continuous sweep of the arms, the alternation of the nearer with the more distant heads produce upon the eye an impression equivalent to that which is made upon the ear by a well-accented musical theme composed in common time. The vision is further gratified by the draperies, whose broadly treated masses form the base of the composition, and are painted in sapphire-blue, green, violet, rose and yellow; the figures in this picture, as well as in all other portions of the frieze, being projected against a gold background.

The colors mentioned and their ground naturally suggest an early Christian mosaic, although they have a tapestry-like softness: an effect due alike to the material upon which they are designed, and to the process employed in painting them. The former is a specially woven canvas; while the peculiar process, although well known in Europe, was here used by Mr. Juglaris for the first time in America. In order to secure the results desired, the pulverized mineral pigment is mixed into a preparation of cobalt, spirits of turpentine and beeswax, which have been boiled together. The completed mixture has the consistency of jelly, and is diluted by the artist according to his
needs. It must be separately prepared for each color; it must be rapidly used, and being once applied, can not be modified without peril to the tapestry-like effect; since a thick coating will give a result not unlike an ordinary oil-painting. But the process properly accomplished, assures a canvas which improves with age and constantly acquires depth and tone. One can therefore imagine what the exquisite quality of the Juglaris frieze will be, when time shall have dulled the gold and veiled the first brilliancy of the colors.

But it is necessary to return to the remainder of these pictures in the Memorial Hall, in order to note certain beauties which should not be passed over in silence. Such, for instance, are the beautiful lines found in the composition called "Morning," at the left of the "Hours of Pleasure." Here, the dark, sinister figure of "the cruel goddess" Fortune plays an important rôle; since it adds the weight to the compact mass at the right which is necessary to balance the
freer, more diffuse group on the opposite side. Then, owing to the separation of the groups naturally effected by the chariot, two fine, irregular, sweeping lines are produced, curving downward, and leaving much open space; while the upper portion of the background is made sufficiently interesting by the outstretched arms and wings, and the attributes of the figures.

Another portion of the frieze worthy of comment is the picture entitled "Eight Hours of Sleep." This, divided into three sections, is a most interesting study, if considered simply as a happy union of Greek and Renascence art. It is the middle section which shows the antique influence; possessing that perfect symmetry which was the first requisite in all Greek pediments, bas-reliefs, and groups. It is evidently studied from the beautiful sarcophagi so abundant in the Vatican, and upon which Sleep, instead of Death, is usually represented with the delicacy characteristic of the people who avoided ideas and words liable to cause strong or painful emotions, and who sought constantly, through art, to teach the dignity and power of calmness. This middle group and that of the flying "Hours of Pleasure" are the finest details of the frieze in the Memorial Hall, and it would be difficult, even in Greek art, to find a group-treatment excelling that of the central motif of the Sleep. Complex in line, it contains no element of confusion. It is exquisitely balanced, as may be seen by reference to the two figures whose nude backs and arms are opposed in the most charming of swelling and diminishing curves. It is a masterpiece, in which nothing Greek is wanting, with the exception of the heads which show more individuality than was allowed by classic principles. The side groups of this picture are also studies from the antique, but not direct ones; having lost their chasteness and restraint by passing through the Italian Renascence. Especially is the violin player, who accompanies the lantern-bearing Dawn, a modern conception; but the idea is a pleasing one, suggesting, as it does, the companionship of music and vivid color.

Other details equally interesting and significant could be selected from this frieze which condenses into visible form and within a small space the study and experience of a life-time. But exigencies of time and space demand that they be left for the consideration of other features of the Library.
MORNING, ACCOMPANIED BY PRUDENCE AND FORTUNE: MURAL PAINTING IN MEMORIAL HALL.

TOMMASO JUGLARIS

EIGHT HOURS OF PLEASURE: MURAL PAINTING IN THE MEMORIAL HALL. TOMMASO JUGLARIS

NIGHT (DIANA), ACCOMPANIED BY PEACE, VENGEANCE, SLEEP, PROTECTION, AND HUSBANDMEN RETURNING FROM LABOR: MURAL PAINTING IN THE MEMORIAL HALL. TOMMASO JUGLARIS

Copyright 1904, by the Ray Memorial Association
NUMBER I. MURAL DECORATIONS IN READING GALLERY; SUBJECT, A GREEK CIVIC FESTIVAL: DEPARTURE OF THE PROCESSION FROM THE CITY GATE. TOMMASO JUGLARIS

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NUMBER II. VOTIVE-OFFERING BEARERS, MUSICIANS, SINGERS AND DANCERS, LED BY THE MASTER OF THE CHORUS (CORYPHAEUS)
NUMBER III. THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES AND COMPANY OF PRIESTS ADVANCING TOWARD THE TEMPLE

NUMBER IV. ARRIVAL OF THE PROCESSION AT THE TEMPLE: THE HIGH-PRIEST ON HIS THRONE, ATTENDED BY SUB-PRIESTS AND A PRIESTESS

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NUMBER V. ATTENDANTS OF THE TEMPLE AND DANCERS ADVANCING TO BEGIN THE CEREMONIES BEFORE THE ALTAR

NUMBER VI. CITIZENS WATCHING THE REAR OF THE PROCESSION AS IT ADVANCES TOWARD THE ALTAR

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NUMBER VII. PANEL IN THE READING GALLERY AT THE LEFT OF ENTRANCE FROM THE MEMORIAL HALL; SUBJECT: MAIDENS COLLECTING EMBERS TO BE USED IN THE SACRIFICE.

NUMBER VIII. PANEL IN THE READING GALLERY AT RIGHT OF ENTRANCE FROM THE MEMORIAL HALL; SUBJECT: BEARERS OF SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS, ABOUT TO JOIN THE PROCESSION.

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NUMBER IX. PANEL OPPOSITE THE ENTRANCE FROM THE MEMORIAL HALL, AND AT THE LEFT; SUBJECT: WINE-BEARERS FOR THE FEAST, WHICH IS TO FOLLOW THE SACRIFICE AND COMPLETE THE FESTIVAL.

NUMBER X. PANEL IN THE READING GALLERY, OPPOSITE THE ENTRANCE FROM THE MEMORIAL HALL, AND AT THE RIGHT; SUBJECT: HIGH PRIEST, ATTENDED BY A SUB-PRIESTESS AND AN AFRICAN SLAVE GIRL.

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FROM the Memorial Hall doors with large glazed panels permit an uninterrupted view of the Delivery Room and the Reading Gallery. The latter, entered through the door at the right of the dedicatory tablet, fills the office of the *cella* in the antique temple, in that it is the place in which culminate the beauty and richness of the entire structure.

This large room is finished in Spanish mahogany, showing pure Ionic lines and details; the volutes and dentils being worked out with extreme delicacy. The dominant note of red is continued in the floor, which is of a *smalto*, similar to that used in Italian houses: a concrete of cement with small shells, or stones, piercing the reddish brown body with minute points of white. The movable furnishings of the room—the seats, chairs and tables—are of the same mahogany as the finish and follow the same delicacy and suavity of line. The chairs especially, as they are symmetrically grouped about the tables, please by their refined, graceful profile, and cause surprise in the mind of the visitor that this pure model occurring in vase-paintings
and other Grecian antiquities, has not been previously accepted by cabinet-makers to the exclusion of the grosser Empire type. The classic effect of the room is further heightened by a rich bronze cornice-molding, displaying the scroll-and-honeysuckle pattern, by a bas-relief set in the chimney-piece, and by lamps, all of the same metal. Other artificial light is provided by a closely-set row of electric globes, defining an oval described within the quadrilateral figure formed by the ceiling, which is tinted very slightly in green.

\[\text{Diagrams of the Ray Memorial Library.}\]

These materials and colors so judiciously employed, compose an admirable background for the second and much more important series of mural pictures painted by Mr. Juglaris. In this instance, they form a continuous decoration like a frieze, but rise from a level five and one-half feet above the floor-line to a height of twelve feet. They are painted upon a single piece of canvas, two hundred forty feet in length, and are framed by a border composed of a double Greek key painted in soft yellow upon a light green back-
ground; the border adding a height of four feet to the decoration.

The subject of the painting, necessarily chosen from Greek life, followed an equally strict necessity in treating some feature of a corporate existence, since the city was for the classic peoples—both Greek and Roman—the type and embodiment of civilization. It was further desirable that the fullest expression of this corporate existence—the festival of the guardian god of an ideal city—should be represented in pomp and splendor.

The city, as the parent of culture, and therefore to be recognized by one of the most prolific modern means of diffusing knowledge—the library—is accordingly represented at the beginning of the continuous picture; the sharp flanks of an acropolis, with temples enveloped in an azure haze, being displayed upon that portion of the canvas which is fitted about and above the doorway leading to the Delivery Room.

Considered as a whole, the decoration represents the course and the incidents of the festival; the procession of those who honor the god—ordered according to the various functions of the participants—issuing from the city-gates, advancing along terraces and through sacred groves to the temple; then, upon the opposite wall, its arrival before the high-priest, while the altar-fires are alight and the sacrificial lamb lies bound ready for offering.

To listen to the bare description of this decoration might, perhaps, induce the belief that it resembles scenic painting in which the commonplaces of classic art and antiquities are quickly combined and brought into “composition,” with the sole aim of securing a certain bold effectiveness. Such is not the case. Classic antiquity is indeed present here; but not of the kind which exhales the musty odor of the lexicon; nor is it even the Alma Tadema classicism, which presents itself in such abundance and heaviness as to recall Taine’s criticism of Rubens, that the Flemish painter “mounted to Olympus with his heels weighted down with quintals of Dutch cheese.” Once again, it contains no element approaching those travesties of antique art crowding the expositions of modern paintings and sculptures periodically held in the Italian cities, and causing in the spectator an inclination to ridicule not remote from that aroused by the Roman dustcarts, which are stamped with the S. P. Q. R. made glorious by the military standards of the ancient Republic.
On the contrary, the painting of Mr. Juglaris shows a comprehension of the antique spirit unusual in a man of our times. The Vatican and the National Museum, Naples, are evidently the sources of the artist's inspiration, and in the long file of the civic procession the student can recognize the most careful and intelligent adaptations of the priests, prophets, soothsayers, chorus-masters, bacchantes and dancers of the schools of Asia Minor and Athens. But all these types are rendered in an original, independent spirit, as by an artist contemporary with the creators of the models; one who uses in a free, assured manner material lying ready to his hand, and is a trained enthusiast possessed of a distinction and of qualities rarely found among Italians, whose traditions and surroundings have fostered imitation and smothered originality. Showing no traits of the copyist, Mr. Juglaris belongs to the comparatively small number of his compatriots who have really assimilated the principles of classic art, and have used them to their own delight, in the spirit of Michelangelo, when in his blind old age, he was led daily to the colossal torso of the Hercules, that he might follow with his hands the lines of its superb muscular development.

The festival procession, therefore, constitutes an excellent school for the study of the human figure, as rendered by the Greeks, draped or semi-nude, and students of the fine arts throughout the United States would make a wise expenditure of time and means by visiting the Library, at Franklin, with a purpose similar to that which prompts students of music to make much personal sacrifice, that they may hear the Wagner operas at Bayreuth.

Further than the extensive course of instruction in figure-drawing which the Juglaris decoration so lavishly offers, it affords a study in the use of color for mural painting not to be neglected by the student.

Accordant with the system of figure-drawing employed, the use of pigments is here strictly classical. Varied, delicate and cheerful, the color notes increase the effect of the graceful or dignified forms; complementing them, and responsive in each case to the meaning conveyed by line and pose: accommodated to the figure, whether it be represented as standing at rest, or as moving; as one to command respect through its connection with office and ceremony; or to inspire pleasurable, sensuous emotions, like the dancers and the bearers of offerings. In the robes and accessories, white, faint pinks, old rose
THE ARABIAN DESERT; MOONLIGHT; DELIVERY ROOM. HENRY H. GALLISON

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THE CITY ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT;
TWILIGHT: DELIVERY ROOM
HENRY H. GALLISON

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THE RAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

running from a light to a deep shade, cream, straw-color, violet and golden yellow compose a scheme studied from old models, yet appearing spontaneous and natural, as if easily devised, and carrying no suspicion of a concealed text-book. The colors sing as they go, and through them the procession seems to acquire the real motion which it simulates. Altogether, the decoration, as to its use of color, beside possessing remarkable intrinsic beauty, is valuable as showing a return to old principles, rather than the evolution and complexity so evident in the work of our American mural decorators. It cannot fail to recall that small, exquisite fragment of antique fresco, practically hidden in the Vatican Library, and known under the name of the "Aldobrandini Marriage." From this, "the pale ghost of a beautiful work," the Juglaris painting would seem to have been incarnated and intensified: inspired with that color which is the requisite and life of modern art. The Italian of to-day, in this important decoration, has given proof that the classic principles are not yet exhausted and effete; that they constitute the foundation of all thorough art study, just as the Greek and Latin languages must continue to form the basis of all thorough literary culture.

ONE other decorative feature of the Library is worthy of extended consideration, but it can receive justice only from the visitor; since words fail to render its peculiar quality, and mechanical means of reproduction are equally inadequate to the task. This is the frieze of the Delivery Room, painted by Mr. Henry H. Gallison, to whom the first artistic idea of the building itself is also due. The four paintings composing this decoration, alike in subject and treatment, defy any but the most summary description. They represent the great deserts of the world, viewed under various conditions of time of day and atmosphere: moonlight, twilight, mid-day, and sunset. In one instance, a silvery tone permeates the picture, transparent, yet strangely dominant; in another, the silhouettes of mosques and minarets are projected against the sky, which is felt to be rapidly turning from the bronze of late sunset to the cold, gray steel effect of nightfall. In a third, responsive to the direct rays of the sun, steaming vapor rises from a wide stretch of sand, which extends to meet the sky, giving the effect of an evil force of Nature, hostile to life, and showing no mark of man's passage, except in the ruined and
half-buried temple which appears in the foreground. A fourth offers a less depressing scene: an oasis and pool in the distance, tinged with brilliant evening red; the only sinister suggestion lying in the birds of prey and carcass, which are painted in the contrasting waste of sand of the foreground.

The beauty of these pictures, in common with all other examples of Mr. Gallison's work resides in the exquisite adjustment of values; a considerable distance being necessary to their proper effect, and this given, they fall into their places, like the notes of the musical scale. It is greatly to be regretted that these transcripts of the desert are obscured in the subdued light of the Delivery Room, and thus lose much of the force and the charm which give to their author a distinctive place among American landscape painters. But still their presence is felt, and their breadth of treatment apparently increases the dimensions of the small room which they decorate.

In reserving this smaller, less brilliantly adorned portion of the Library for the last to be inspected, the visitor obtains a better modulated transition from the ideal to the real world outside, than he could make, were the impressions of the Reading Gallery the last and most vivid in his mind. The quiet, the vagueness of the Delivery Room allows him the occasion to gain a conception of the general structural and decorative scheme. He can not be otherwise than grateful to the donors for their wise expenditure of wealth, and to the architects and painters for their equally generous outlay of talent and learning; since, united in effort, they have produced a strictly classic example of art, which by its chaste beauty, at least, recalls the small perfect Ionic temple of Nike Apteròs on the slope of the Athenian Acropolis.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The address of Ex-Governor Long of Massachusetts, delivered at the dedication of the Ray Memorial Library, is so replete with information and suggestions of general interest as to justify somewhat extended quotation from it in this place:

"One of the most creditably distinctive features of Massachusetts is her public libraries. Of her 350 towns and cities not one is without that benefit. Nothing more eloquently than this fact could testify to
her intellectual and moral culture. Hardly a hamlet within her borders that is not more than ancient Athens in the intelligence and cultivation of her people. Formerly, more than now, many of these libraries, the book more vital than its cabinet, the meat more than the shell, were lodged in meagre quarters, sometimes in a single room of some dwelling house, thereby perhaps all the more significant of the eager and unquenchable thirst for knowledge which has always characterized the New England spirit. To-day the growing wealth and aesthetic taste of the time, often the loyalty of some grateful son or daughter of the town to his or her native or adopted heath, has provided them the beautiful enclosures which adorn so many of our cities and villages with beautiful architectural effects.

"How fitting it is that this should be the case in this interesting and historic town of Franklin, which has a wealth of glory in its very name. It was incorporated in 1778 at the crucial time of the American Revolution. Benjamin Franklin, the great apostle of common sense, in some respects the most comprehensive intellectual product of our country; physical, mental and moral philosopher; liberal far beyond his age in religious and social thought; statesman; diplomat; scientific discoverer; man of the world, of the people, of the study, and of practical life; at once the Poor Richard of the proletariat and the sought companion of royal courts and of the still more royal guild of the scholar, had recently rendered an incalculable service to the cause of American independence by securing the romantic and sentimental as well as the practical alliance of France and of the hearts of its people with the American cause. Although the name of Exeter had previously been decided upon for the new municipality, that of Franklin was, on second thought, substituted and has since served as the designation for this jewel in the crown of Massachusetts, by that name honoring at once itself and this great son of hers.

"You all know of the correspondence with him that followed—the town’s suggestion to him that, in recognition of the compliment paid him, he should give it a bell for the church steeple, and his Franklinesque reply, offering books instead of a bell, ‘sense,’ he said, ‘being preferable to sound.’ And books he gave ‘as the commencement of a little parochial library for the use of the society of intelligent, respectable farmers such as our country people generally consist of.’ Even his broad outlook could not anticipate the marvelous
growth of the century and a third before him, or the transformation of an agricultural community into this hive of the varied industrial and manufacturing crowded population of our time, or the expansion of his hundred volumes into thousands of volumes, enclosed in a building of architectural grandeur and classic beauty. . . . While this building is unique in its purpose, it is yet—to the honor of our American civilization, be it said—only in the line and easy evolution of our New England system. It is as much a flower of the Pilgrim and Puritan seed, as much a part of the providential scheme of the Mayflower and of John Winthrop’s landing, as much fused with the flavor of Harry Vane, as much a result of that vote of 1647, which declared that ‘learning should not be buried in the graves of our forefathers,’ as is Harvard College or our common school system; or as if every stone under its roof, every book on its shelves, every picture upon its walls, had been in the mind’s eye of the founders of Massachusetts. Still more does it partake of the elements of our later consummations—our marvelous industrial growths. In its very amplitude it yet embodies the idea of that homely saving economy, that intelligent thrift, that careful provision for future needs, which characterizes New England. It embodies the idea of those great agencies and massings of skilled and citizenized labor, which at once employ a multitude of hands and at the same time stimulate as many activities of invention and brain, and so combine manual toil and intellectual genius in that splendid union of which our national institutions are at once the cause and the result.

“In the engrossments of everyday life, few of us appreciate what a universal blessing a library is. I have been surprised and delighted in my observation of our towns, to find how generally people of all conditions of life and degrees of means depend upon the public library; of how many a sickroom its outflow is the light; of how many a poor man’s home it is the cheer; of how much leisure and ennui it is the relief; and how thoroughly well informed and well read the community is made by its resources. Little does he know of our New England culture who thinks it confined to the select, or who from a thorough acquaintance with New England homes has not almost invariably found in them a wealth and variety of book-study, and an acquaintance with the field of authors and their works, a literary gleaning and harvest, which a characteristic reticence often hides,
but which are as surely there as the waters, whose flow is in winter
time unheard, are under their mantle of ice and snow. But this fact
of the eager and general use of the public library only the more em-
phatically suggests that while such a resource is a mighty instrument
for delight and for good, we should not forget that it may be made an
instrument also for evil. It is no small responsibility that will fall
on those who shall have the trust in their keeping, to select the fare it
is to minister from its shelves, lest it demoralize, rather than improve
the public tone. We are nowadays especially careful what is the
quality of the water we supply or the food we distribute from the
great resources of our metropolitan centers. Let us be careful of the
intellectual and moral supply which, under the incalculable influence
of a public library, so much determines the moral sentiment of the peo-
ple; the procedures, not into their mouths, but out of them—the issues
of the heart.

"Here is the very reservoir of education, the consummation of the
common school. There is in the air, it must be admitted, a more than
whisper of a reaction against the overweighted polymix of studies and
requirements in our public schools; the variety of fads in methods,
with a view it sometimes seems to putting a penny in some promoter's
pocket or a short notoriety to his name; the swift passing and replac-
ing of textbooks; the increasing variety of mingling lines of new ped-
antries, with at the same time shorter hours of work and longer terms
of vacation; and the growing cost accumulating like a rolling snow-
bail. The wider and larger education must indeed be had; the pro-
gress of the age demands it, and every child is entitled to it. But the
question is asked, is it only to be had in this forced hotbed? Must it
be a series of undried colors, hurriedly laid on one another? There
are praisers of the old time who suggest that enough will be done at
the public cost if the simple fundamentals of education are given as
in the old days, and that these gave ample equipment for the splendid
successes of recent generations of American citizens, who had no
other schooling. If that reaction shall come in any degree, educa-
tion in its most comprehensive sense will not and should not be stayed.
Heaven forbid! But given the fundamentals, and trained to and
equipped with the ability to read, write, figure, think, see and aim;
the boy who has material in him will find in these libraries all the
resources of the most liberal education. They will supplement the
winnowing process by which those who find their needs met by the three R's, will not have their time wasted, their entrance on active and useful life delayed, and their energies misled and perhaps dulled by a crowded curriculum for which they have no zest, while those whose talents seek and demand the more elaborate lines of study and should have the opportunity therefor, can find it, to the very highest reach, in the exhaustless treasures of a public library like this, as well as in the teeming contributions of the press in its manifold form of newspaper and magazine, which are themselves the adjuncts and coefficients of the library. If anything is true and to the credit of our time, it is that education is in no degree limited to the school room, but is in the activities of our daily life, in the frictions of business and travel and converse, and in the intelligent resources for reading, the supply of which through our public libraries and the press is almost as easily turned on anywhere as is the pure water supply that in every household gushes at the turning of a stopcock.

"The Ray Memorial Library! As you think of the scope of its noble and far-reaching beneficence, with what gratitude you turn to those who gave it, although I know they would prefer no public reference to their benefaction. It stands as a memorial to those who made the name it bears a synonym for personal worth and public spirit in this community and to whom the best tribute is in their own life work which is an open book before you, and in the cordial responsiveness with which you, their fellow-citizens, who knew them through and through, have here gathered to honor them in dedicating it. It emphasizes the example of good and true lives, and so suggests not the least significant lesson of this hour. For what better inspiration can we have than to recall the honest industry and brave purpose of a career which, like that of Joseph Gordon Ray, in early youth overcomes all adverse circumstances; which conquers success; which lays out and walks a broad way of comprehensive and benevolent business enterprise; which puts a generous public spirit into every step and so makes its own success identical with the common prosperity; which commands general respect and confidence and the honors and duties of public trust, and which wins fortune to spend it again in helpful return to the sources from which it came."