



Foreword to Harvard Library Bulletin, Volume I.1

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Foreword

IN the spring of 1876 appeared the first issue of the first periodical publication undertaken by the Harvard Library, bearing the title *Harvard College Library. Bulletin No. 1* and prepared by John Langdon Sibley, Librarian of Harvard College 1856-77. A predecessor in the field had been the *Bulletin* of the Boston Public Library, issued since October 1867. The first numbers of the Harvard periodical were devoted entirely to lists of the more important new accessions, but with No. 6, 1 December 1877, shortly after Justin Winsor, Librarian 1877-97, took office, additional material, providing information about the Library, catalogues of special collections, and general bibliographies, was included, with change of title to *Harvard University. Library Bulletin*. A second expansion occurred with No. 18, 1 April 1881, when by vote of the Corporation the *Library Bulletin* became the *Harvard University Bulletin* and was thenceforth to include 'official announcements, notices of original investigation, and other literary and scientific intelligence,' as well as the matter relating to the Library. In practice the added material consisted chiefly of excerpts from the records of the Corporation and Overseers, and of necrologies. Performing this doubled function, the *Bulletin* continued through No. 58, or Vol. VII, No. 6, published in May 1894.

The greater part of the life of the *Bulletin* was paralleled by another serial publication of the Library, initiated by Winsor in the autumn of 1878 and entitled *Library of Harvard University. Bibliographical Contributions*. These *Contributions*, numbered consecutively and issued at irregular intervals, at first consisted entirely of selected reprints from the *Bulletin*, but beginning with No. 12, 1881, many of them appeared independently of the *Bulletin*. Among the latter were periodic lists of the publications of the University and its officers. The *Contributions* survived the suspension of the *Bulletin* in 1894, continuing to No. 60, printed in 1911.

Since 1911 the Harvard Library has had no regular — or irregular — serial publication except the Annual Reports of the Librarian and the Director, the Reports of Accessions of the Houghton Library, which began with 1941-42, certain monograph series in departmental or spe-

cial libraries, and the unofficial *Harvard Library Notes*, the first issue of which was published in June 1920 and the last (No. 32, or Vol. IV, No. 2) in March 1942. It is not planned to continue the publication of these *Notes*.

The *Bulletin* is now revived as the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, Volume I, Number 1. Since its title varies in wording from any of the previous forms, it will not be called 'New Series.' In appearance and contents it will differ more widely from its predecessors. It will not attempt to list new accessions except in cases where a single item or a collection is of special importance, it will not include routine descriptions of collections previously acquired, and it will not cover general University matters. On the other hand, as a publication of the Harvard University Library, it will represent all the Harvard libraries, eighty-two in number, and its content will deal primarily with these libraries, with the results of research based upon their holdings, and with more general library problems in the light of Harvard theory and experience. Its contributors will be drawn both from within and from without the University. It is published in the belief that one of the great libraries of the world cannot meet in full the responsibilities inherent in its position unless it has a regular publication which will make known to the Harvard community and to the scholarly world in general its collections, its experience, and its ideas.

With these considerations in view, the BULLETIN will plan to cover from time to time, if not in each issue, the following broad fields:

1. First, and largest in the total number of pages year by year, will be articles of productive research derived at least in large measure from material belonging to one or more of the libraries in the Harvard University complex. Several examples of this type of article will be found in the present issue, including the longer ones by Hamilton V. Bail, Philip Hofer, William A. Jackson, and Mrs Ethel B. Clark, as well as several shorter 'Notes.' Some of the articles in this general category may be bibliographical in character, and in the longer articles of this nature the emphasis will be upon comprehensive bibliographies of authors or subjects important in Harvard holdings rather than upon catalogues or selective reading lists.

2. Descriptions of important sections of the Library's collections, of which the first example, appearing in the present issue, is the article on the Celtic Collection, by Fred N. Robinson. As indicated above, it

is not planned to include routine descriptions of collections such as are found in the four editions of Alfred C. Potter's *Descriptive and Historical Notes* on the University Library, the latest edition of which was published in 1934. A new edition of this handbook, planned for completion within the next five years, will provide revisions of these descriptions, though it may also reprint discussions of collections, which, because of special importance, have appeared in the BULLETIN.

3. General accounts, descriptive, historical, and analytic, of the various libraries or other units which make up the Harvard University Library. The article in this number on the University Archives, by Clifford K. Shipton, may be considered typical of this group.

4. Discussion of problems of university libraries in general — problems faced by any university library — and considered from a theoretical or philosophical point of view. No article of this character is included in this issue, but the second issue, Spring 1947, will contain a historical introduction to the problems of a modern research library and a theoretical discussion of the space problem in a university library.

5. Discussions of university library problems as applied to the Harvard University Library. The article in this issue on an undergraduate library at Harvard, first of a series of three projected for publication, is of this type. An article on the space problem in the Harvard University Library, which will stem from the theoretical discussion noted in the preceding paragraph, will appear in the Autumn 1947 issue.

6. News of the Harvard Library, and of other libraries when of a character to affect the Harvard Library. This category is designed to include only material of general interest. The BULLETIN is not published as a house organ. It will, for instance, present only such information about the Library's personnel as seems of significance in the Library's external relationships. Examples of several notes falling within the category here discussed will be found in the present issue.

A general subdivision between longer and shorter articles will normally be followed in the BULLETIN, with the shorter articles, whether documentary, bibliographical, critical, or simply news, forming the section known as 'Notes.' Occasionally there may be need to continue an article from one issue to another, as in the case of the 'Views of Harvard,' to be published in the first six issues; or material may appear in series, as, for example, the discussion of an undergraduate

library, to be presented in three separate but related articles during the first year. Long articles or groups of articles may under certain circumstances be published subsequently in book form; it is planned so to republish the 'Views of Harvard.'

The BULLETIN will be edited by George William Cottrell, Jr, Editor in the Harvard University Library, and will be published three times a year, with the Winter number scheduled to appear in January, the Spring number in April or May, and the Autumn number in September or October. This first issue, Winter 1947, contains 128 pages, and it is planned to maintain at least an average of 96 pages in future issues. Annual subscriptions are at the rate of \$4.00, with single numbers priced at \$1.50. Contributors of articles will receive twenty-five offprints, and contributors of notes ten cuttings, free of charge. Additional offprints or reprints of articles, and offprints or reprints of notes, will be available to contributors at cost. Communications regarding the BULLETIN should be addressed to the Editor, Harvard University Library, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.

This discussion of the nature and purpose of the new BULLETIN may appropriately be rounded out by a brief statement concerning the audience for which it is designed. First of all, it is hoped that the BULLETIN will be of value to the Harvard community, providing Faculty and students not only with information as to specific material but also with an understanding of Library problems and purposes which will enable them to prosecute their teaching, studies, and research under the most favorable circumstances. This is not to say, of course, that the BULLETIN will be in itself a treatise on how to use the Library. That, as planned, should be cared for in other ways, as, for example, through the revised handbook to the Library, and through the series of *Guides to the Harvard Libraries* for graduate students in various fields of study, the first unit of which, for Economics and Business, is now in press.

The BULLETIN is, secondly, addressed to the scholarly world in general, in order that scholars and students everywhere may learn something of the resources of the Harvard Library. The material appearing in the BULLETIN should not only facilitate studies conducted at a distance, particularly when seconded by correspondence and inter-library loan, but should make easier the use of the Library by visiting scholars, who in normal times visit the Widener building alone at the rate of twelve hundred a year.

Librarians, both in this country and abroad, should, it is believed, find the *BULLETIN* of interest, since each of the types of article described earlier in this Foreword will contain material of significance for the library profession.

Bibliographers and collectors are also to be counted as forming a part of the audience for the *BULLETIN*, in view of the fact that items of concern to them will frequently be published, whether as extended articles or as brief notes, in many diverse fields.

Finally, the *BULLETIN* should have a general appeal to the Friends of the Harvard Library, to the Alumni, and to all members of the public who are interested in the gathering, housing, and making available of past and present knowledge against present and future needs.

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