

THE PINEHURST OUTLOOK

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Readers will confer a favor upon the publisher of this paper and benefit their friends by sending the addresses of those who ought to know about Pinehurst, so that copies of THE OUTLOOK may be mailed to them.

FRIDAY, FEB. 24, 1899.

THE recent disaster to the well-known firm of publishers and book-sellers, A. C. McClurg & Co., of Chicago, in which fire destroyed a priceless collection of rare books and manuscripts reminds us to be thankful that our greatest and most valuable libraries are housed in buildings which are as nearly fire-proof as it is possible for human wisdom and skill to make them. Particularly is this the case with the Library of Congress at Washington. We take no greater satisfaction, certainly, in knowing that it is the largest and most convenient library building in the world than in the fact that on account of the quality of the materials of which it is made it will be practically impossible for it to burn.

It ought to be everything that the users and lovers of books can wish, for it has cost enough in time and money. Ten years it was in building, having been completed in February, 1897, and seven millions of dollars were expended.

In another year this great national library—for it aims to be that, although it is called the Library of Congress,—in 1900 it will have completed a full century of existence. For it was in April 1800, when Congress was sitting in Philadelphia, that the first appropriation of five thousand dollars was made to establish and support it. From that time to this it has had a somewhat eventful career. For the first fifteen years the librarians were the clerks of the House of Representatives, and one of them, Mr. Patrick Magruder, was censured by Congress for not getting the books safely out of Washington before the British entered it in 1814. With a vandalism which would be quite impossible now, and indeed, seems almost incredible, the British made use of the books on the shelves for setting fire to the Capitol.

President Madison appointed the first regular librarian in 1815, and there have been only five librarians in all. Of these Mr. Ainsworth R. Spofford served the longest time, thirty-three years, and the late John Russell Young, the shortest,

less than two years. Since the death of the latter the office has been vacant until the recent appointment by President McKinley of Hon. Samuel J. Barrows of Massachusetts. Mr. Barrows is a man of high character and scholarly attainment, a member of the present Congress, an editor and author. The appointment is most fit, and should be promptly ratified.

It was in Librarian Spofford's time that the library made its most rapid growth. This was largely due to a change in the copyright laws which requires that two copies of every new publication must be deposited with the librarian of Congress. There are now over eight hundred thousand books and two hundred thousand pamphlets and a vast collection of prints in the library. Yet no alarm need be felt lest the building shall speedily become overcrowded. It will take four and one half millions of volumes to fill it full.

Best of all is the fact that this great library is one of the freest in the world. Every one of suitable age is allowed to use the books, without card or other formal permission. By this means it becomes something much greater and more beneficial than a library of Congress. It is the National Library of the American people.

THE announcement of a forth-coming magazine *de luce* which is just now being industriously circulated by the press is almost too silly to be true, and yet it is given with so much circumstantial detail that one is almost forced to believe it. It is said that the "Royal Magazine" will cost five dollars or more each number and that its contributors will be mainly royal personages and members of the nobility. As Lady Randolph Churchill is to be editor, probably nobody less titled than a lord will be admitted to that charmed circle. Emperor Wilham of Germany will contribute to the first number. Can the insanity of snobbery go beyond this? And to think that Lady Randolph Churchill, an American woman, should lend her countenance to such foolishness.

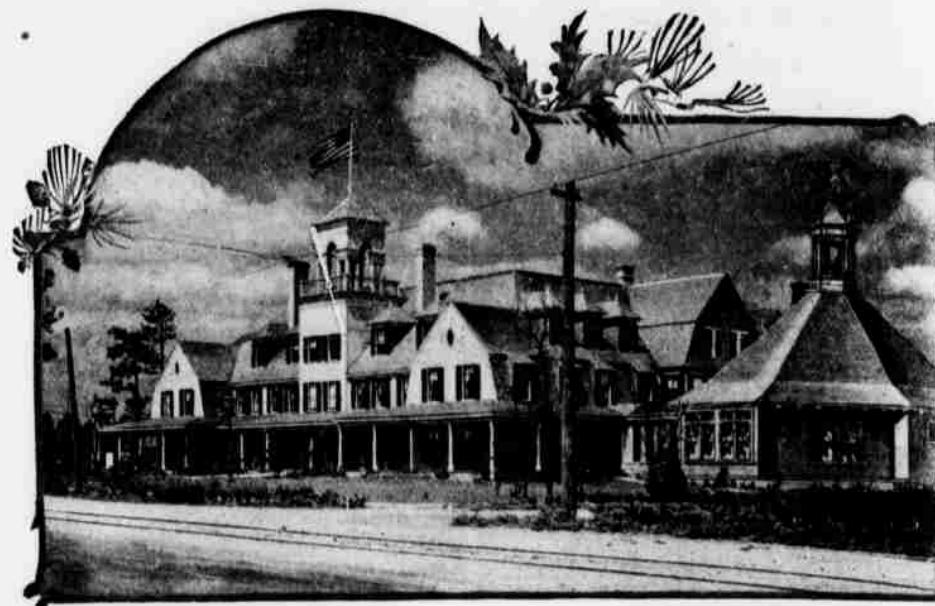
However one ought not to be too harsh in judgment. It is a hopeful sign when snobdom aspires to be literary. Evidently the "chappies" are "going in for reading and writing and all that sort of thing, doncher know" and if they want a magazine so costly and exclusive and deadly dull that it can be all their own, certainly they will be allowed to have it. Judged by its prospectus the "Royal Magazine" will be well adapted to the undeveloped minds of its constituency. There will be nothing in it to give its readers a headache.

But there, it is necessary to drop the subject by saying the same thing that we said at the beginning. The announcement is too preposterously absurd to be anything more than a newspaper romance. We refuse to believe it, and shall until our friend the market boy comes and tells us what his friend the under-butler, was told by the butler himself that he heard it from no less a person than Mrs. Gouverneur Vanderlip's own maid that she actually had seen with her own eyes a copy of the Royal Magazine lying on a table in the boudoir of her mistress.

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