

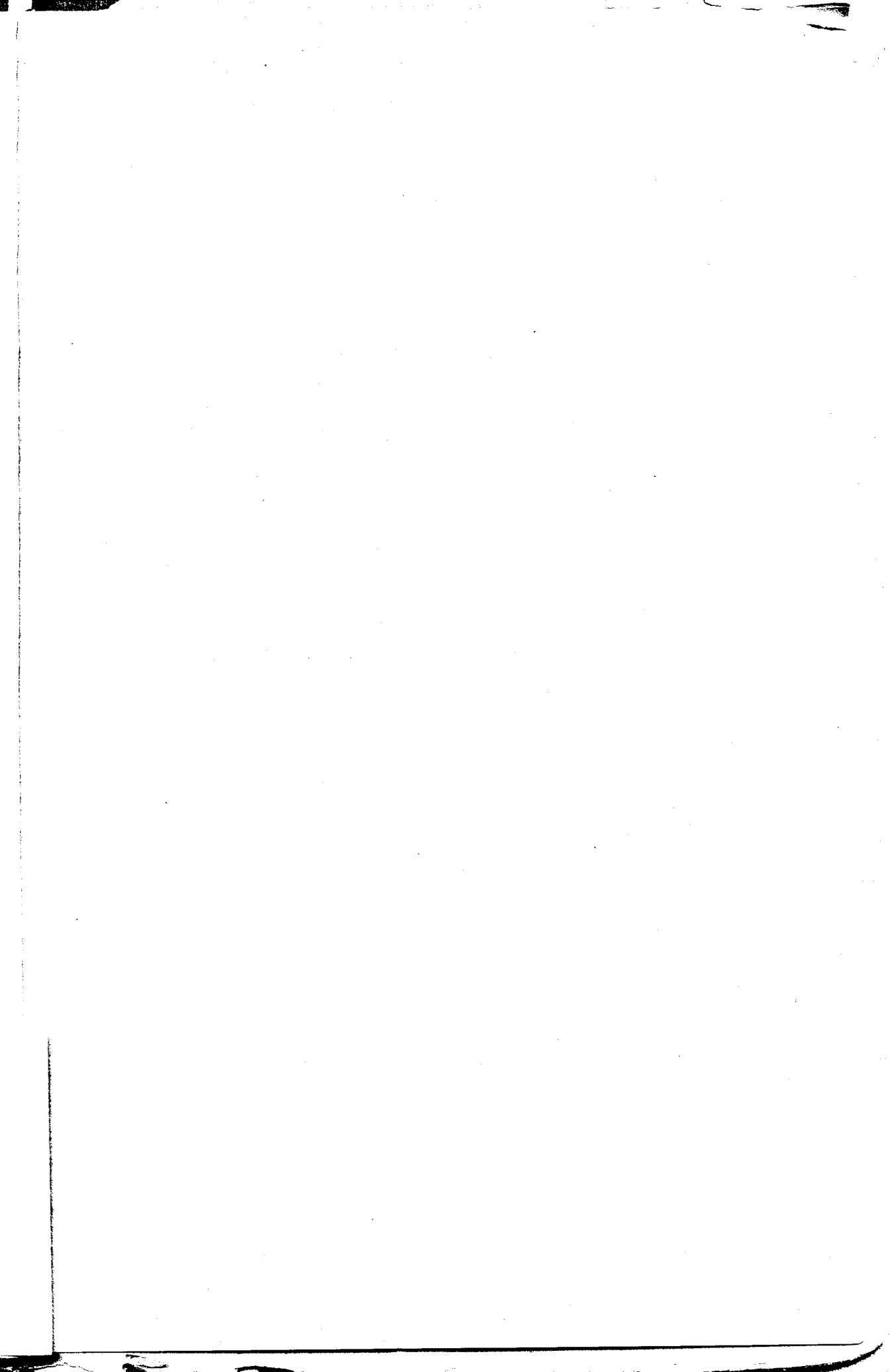
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Hispano-Americana in the Library of Congress

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SECTION

HISPANO-AMERICANA IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Dr. Herbert Putnam, director of the Library of Congress, in an address on "The Library of Congress as a National Library", after a brief but luminous characterization of the distinctive fields of state, municipal, academic, and special libraries, cites four functions which may properly be performed by the National Library. It may serve (1) as a library of special service to the federal government; (2) as a library of record for the United States; (3) as a library of research, reinforcing and supplementing other research libraries; and (4) as a library for national service—that is, a library which shall respond to a demand from any part of the country and thus equalize opportunities for research now very unequally distributed.

In the present paper an attempt will be made to consider in brief and general terms another function of the Library which, while not specifically and authoritatively formulated, may be considered as implied in those stated by Dr. Putnam and as realized in its present resources and development. This additional function is its position as a library of record for the Hispanic American Republics—its ability to respond to the demands of statesmen and investigators regarding Hispanic American political, economic, and social history.

This function, moreover, seems peculiarly appropriate to the National Library, situated as it is in the Capital and holding its distinctive relations to the federal government, for from Washington radiate the most important lines of political, economic, and cultural relations between this country and the republics to the south, the recognition of the importance of which has increased immeasurably during the past few years.

"Washington", says Dr. Hiram Bingham, "is the most important center in this country for Hispanic-American research by virtue of the diplomatic and consular archives of the State Department, the collections of the Naval War Record Office, the Columbus Memorial Library of the Pan-American Union and the extensive collections of the Library of Congress".¹

¹ Cf. "The possibilities of South American History and Politics as a Field for Research," in *Monthly Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics*, XXVI. 233.

A few words in general regarding the development of this collection may not be amiss. Some conditions that distinguish it from other notable collections have been favorable, others unfavorable.

As instances of the first, we may again quote Dr. Putnam: "Among the sources of increase are those which are unique: (1) The copyright deposits, which ensure to the Library two copies of every article copyrighted on or before the date of its publication; (2) international exchange—the returns from the issue to foreign governments and institutions of publications of the United States Government, 100 copies of which are placed at the disposal of the Library for this purpose; (3) the returns from the exchanges of the Smithsonian Institution with learned societies all over the world; and the surplus returns (not otherwise retained) from the exchanges of other departments and bureaus of the Government at Washington. From these three sources the Library has already the largest single collection of American imprints, of official documents of all countries, and of the publications of learned societies existing in any single institution". Increase from these sources has also greatly relieved the appropriations for purchase.

Circumstances that have retarded development are historical and economic in character. The Library was originally intended to serve but one branch of the Government, the Legislative, and as such was housed with inadequate accommodations in the Capitol.

During this period of its history the annual appropriation for the purchase of books never exceeded \$10,000.00, an amount which, though inadequate to systematic development, did permit of the acquisition under favorable conditions of the market of many rare and intrinsically valuable "nuggets".

In 1897 the Library was moved into its new building and since then Congress has given concrete recognition to its growing importance and expanding functions by largely increasing its appropriation for the purchase of books, periodicals, etc. The amount at present available—\$100,000.00 in round figures—makes possible symmetrical expansion by deliberate selection and purchase.

It will thus be seen that the Library has arrived late in the market, a fact of twofold significance as regarded from the point of view of rarity and price.

Aside from the primary and unique manuscript sources, there are many important items in the early printed Americana that rarely appear in the market. Henry Stevens in his *Recollections of Mr. James Lenox* gives numerous instances of these and says: "I found that a very

large number of the choicest historical and bibliographical nuggets relating to the 'age of discovery', with the exploration and development of the New World, occurred but once in my time, in the market for sale".

As to prices, the enormous advance in Americana is a phenomenon too well known to need comment. Since the days of those pioneer collectors, Obadiah Rich and Henry Stevens, the efficient agents of John Carter Brown, James Lenox, and other early collectors, ruling prices of rare items have practically put them beyond the reach of most libraries with limited funds and specific demands. An interesting comment is found in a letter of John Carter Brown quoted in Winship's *History of the John Carter Brown Library*. Writing in 1847, Mr. Brown said: "So many people of late have gone crazy on the subject of 'American Books' and prices have ruled so high at the sales in Boston and New York that I am strongly tempted 'to submit' my own collection 'to public competition' as the London auctioneers phrase it". One hesitates to conjecture what would have been Mr. Brown's feelings and their possible effect upon the development of his incomparable collection had he faced a list today of Hiersemann, or Vindel, or other specialists in Americana.

The Library of Congress has not benefited to the extent that other notable collections have benefited by the gift or purchase *en bloc* of special collections of Hispano-Americana. Furthermore, the rare and curious book, as such, is not the object of major interest; intrinsic value and historical importance being the criteria to selection and acquisition. The collections of the Library, therefore, are not preeminent in primary sources, original, and rare editions. But diligent and systematic selection and purchase have brought together a strong and well-rounded collection of secondary authorities, reprints, and facsimiles of the rarer editions, compilations of documentary and other source material, and especially of contemporary description, history, and interpretation. It may thus serve to supplement special collections which from lack of adequate funds, have not kept *al corriente* with the increasing number of publications in this field.

For a more intensive consideration of the Hispano-Americana possessed by the Library we may divide it into two broad classes: (1) books published during the colonial period, to be subdivided into European and American imprints; and (2) books published since the overthrow of Spanish domination. These periods, of course, do not apply to Brazil whose colonial history and democratic transformation present special aspects.

The first group has been thoroughly covered by the comprehensive and scholarly bibliographies of Señor Medina which furnish an excellent instrument for testing the positive and comparative strength of any collection of Spanish-Americana. Considering the subdivisions of this group, it is not surprising to find that in the collection of the National Library the European Americana predominate in number, and in importance to historical students. The discovery of America was an event of transcendent importance and reacted strongly and in manifold ways upon European thought and activities, profoundly affecting the imagination, stimulating the spirit of adventure and maritime enterprise and affording a mass of new data to enlarge the bounds of geographical knowledge and cartographic methods.

In this field the Library is very strong. Its collection of maps, atlases, and material illustrating the progress of the geographic knowledge and cartography of America in the sixteenth century is possibly the most complete on this continent. Valuable catalogues exhibiting in part the resources of the Library in this field have been prepared by Mr. P. Lee Phillips, Chief of the Division of Maps and Charts.

Of fundamental historical value and of great bibliographical rarity are the early accounts of discovery, exploration, and settlement (including letters and reports of the early navigators and explorers, with the contemporary relations of their achievements), the descriptions and histories of the New World by the royal "Cronistas de las Indias", and other works of special character. The Library has an excellent working collection of this material but, of course, the general exception noted above as to the absence of the rarer editions, applies especially to this group. The Columbus apparatus is extensive both in his writings and in the critical apparatus but the 1493 and other rare and practically unobtainable editions of the letters are wanting. The same may be said regarding Vespucci and Cortés. Of Peter Martyr, that privileged and diligent gleaner and sifter of information concerning the New World—and its first historian—the Library has the *Enchiridion*, Basle, 1521, the *Three Decades*, Basle, 1533, the *Complete Edition*, Paris 1587, and other later editions and translations; but not the Seville, 1511, nor the Alcalá, 1516 editions. It has the first edition, Seville, 1519 of Fernández de Enciso's *Suma de Geographia*; Oviedo's *Historia General de las Indias*, Seville, 1535 and his *Libro XX de la Segunda Parte*, Valladolid, 1557; Acosta's *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, Seville, 1590 (the first edition of the Spanish translation) and the Latin edition *De Natura Novi Orbis*, Cologne, 1596; the *Hispania Victrix* of López

de Gómara, Medina del Campo, 1553, (but not the Zaragoza, 1552 edition); the princeps of Marín Cortes's *Breve Compendio de la Sphera*, Seville, 1551; the *Historia General of Herrera*, Madrid, 1601-1615 and also Colín's Latin, French, and Dutch translations of Herrera's *Descripción*, Amsterdam, 1622; the first editions of Garcilaso de la Vega's *Primera Parte de los Commentarios Reales*, Lisbon, 1609, and *Historia General del Peru*, Cordoba, 1617, and other works of a similar nature. These illustrations will indicate the character of the collection with respect to the early authorities. In later reprints, facsimile editions, translations, and the critical material the library is well equipped.

The same conditions obtain in the case of the famous early collections of voyages and travels, of such great importance to the investigator and of such superlative interest to the collector, De Bry, Hulsius, Hakluyt, Purchas, Ramusio and others; and to the early compilations and treatises on colonial legislation and administration, such as the *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reynos de Indias*, Solórzano Pereira's *Politica Indiana*, etc.

Special efforts have been made to secure the earlier and later chronicles of the religious orders, Jesuits, Dominicans, Augustinians, Franciscans, and others. These are of great value, for apart from its religious significance, the mission, in its political and social aspects, was the primary pioneering agency through which Spain extended its frontiers and spread its culture over the New World, and the records of the activities of the missionaries form the key to the most interesting and distinctive feature of Spain's colonial policy—the application of its humanitarian principles to the discipline, *i. e.*, to the conversion, civilization, and elevation of the natives.²

The books printed in America are of different character. The press was introduced into Mexico about 1539 and before 1640, the date of the publication in Cambridge, Mass., of the Bay Psalm Book, 515 items are listed by Medina as having been published in the city of Mexico. It was, however, difficult and expensive to publish in the colonies. Apart from the inevitable difficulties of craftsmanship, there were severe administrative restrictions. The double censorship, civil and ecclesiastical, was strictly enforced. Moreover Americans or Spanish domiciled in America were practically forbidden to print the results of their study and observation of conditions in the colonies by the requirement that such matter must first be submitted to the Consejo de las Indias for

² H. E. Bolton, "The Mission in the Spanish-American Colonies," in the *American Historical Review*, October, 1917.

examination and approval. This necessitated an arduous and expensive trip to Spain by the author or the forwarding of his manuscript—with risk of loss at sea—and reliance upon the services of a frequently unscrupulous and irresponsible agent. Thus it was that few books dealing with the state of affairs in the colonies were published in America, although their presses were active in satisfying the most urgent demand for books of instruction: cartillas, catecismos, doctrinas, artes, vocabularios, confesionarios, and the now rare and valuable books on the native languages. At the end of the sixteenth century, there had been published in Mexico and Lima books in Mexican, Otomi, Tarascan, Mixtec, Chueon, Huastec, Zapotec, Maya, and other languages, among them the vocabularies of Molina, Gilberti, Córdoba, Alvarado, and Villapando.³

This linguistic material is well represented in the Library, several of the original and other rare editions being included, but in general the most of these early American imprints do not come within its special field of acquisition; they belong more properly to the museum library.

With respect to the second group, that is, books published since the Revolution, the Library is adequately equipped. This group includes material treating of the earlier period, such as collections, compilations, publications of unedited manuscripts, etc., and, of even greater importance the mass of publications recording and interpreting the origin and development of the Hispanic American Republics as sovereign political entities. The collection of official documents, the invaluable source material of political and economic history, has received special attention and contains more or less complete sets of reports of the departments and bureaus of the various governments. There are, it is true, many serious lacunae which the Division of Documents by the systematic exercise of all the means at its command, is endeavoring to fill. In all branches of law and jurisprudence comprising the proceedings of the legislative chambers, court decisions, codes, compilations, and treatises, not only of the federal governments, but also in many cases of the component states or provinces, a notable collection has been developed.

Of special interest are the works on constitutional law and administration, for the United States has furnished the prototype of their constitutions, and the adoption and development of an exotic political system affords a fruitful field for the student of comparative constitutional law.

³ See V. G. Quesada: *La Vida Intelectual en la América Española durante los Siglos 16-18*, chap. I.

The historical apparatus is exceptionally strong and the Library has made special efforts to secure sets of the journals, proceedings, and other publications of the various academics and learned institutions and societies, literature of the numerous boundary disputes growing out of the application of the *uti possidetis* of 1810, literature of the ethnography and antiquities of the Indians, and similar materials.

The important collections—of the highest value to the historical student—have been added, among which may be mentioned: *Colección de Libros Raros y Curiosos que Tratan de América*; *Colección de Libros y Documentos Referentes a la Historia de América*; *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de América y Oceanía*; Calvo, *Recueil Complet des Traités . . . et autres Actes Diplomatiques de tous les États de l'Amérique Latine*; Angelis, *Colección de Obras y Documentos Relativos a las Provincias del Río de la Plata*; *Memorias de los Virreyes que han Gobernado el Peru*; Medina, *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Chile*; *Colección de Historiadores de Chile*; *Documentos para los Anales de Venezuela*; *Mercurio Peruano*; Odrizola, *Colección de Documentos Literarios del Peru*; García Icazbalceta, *Colección (y Nueva Colección) de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*; Navarrete, *Colección de los Viages*; and others.

The large and increasing number of books of description, travel, social life, etc., good, bad, and indifferent, is largely represented.

Constant attention is devoted to strengthening the collection in all fields by systematic selection and purchase, and as it is rounded out, it is being found possible to secure not only the important general works, but also those of more special or limited aspect, and of less intrinsic value, which though perhaps of only occasional use are essential to the special investigator.

The growth of the collections of historical material may be shown statistically by comparing the number of books and pamphlets classified in these sections in 1901 and 1918.

	1901	1918
Mexico	685	3,189
Central America	500	1,606
West Indies	814	2,721
South America	1,894	7,600

Other sections that have been receiving greater attention in recent years are those containing titles on jurisprudence, economics, and similar subjects.

The collection of periodicals contains complete or partially complete sets of some of the more important reviews; *Revista de Buenos Aires*; *Revista Argentina*; *Revista de Filosofía*; *Revista de Derecho, Historia y Artes*; *Revista Argentina de Ciencias Políticas*; *Revista del Río de la Plata*; *Revista Chilena*; *Repertorio Colombiano*; *Revista de Cuba*; *Cuba y América*; *Revista Cubana*; *Revista Bimestre Cubana*; *Cuba Contemporánea*; *Reforma Social*; *Centro América*; and others. Recently a complete set of the interesting literary review, *El Cojo Ilustrado*, has been secured. The Library is also receiving and binding some of the more important newspapers, such as: *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires; *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro; *Mercurio*, Santiago de Chile; *Star and Herald*, Panama; *La Lucha*, and *Diario de la Marina*, Havana; *El Demócrata*, *El Pueblo*, *El Universal*, and *El Excelsior*, of Mexico. In addition to these, it has many fragmentary sets, especially from Mexico, that are valuable in many cases because of the period covered. These are shown in *A Check List of Foreign Newspapers in the Library of Congress, 1904* (additions in manuscript). It is of interest to note the recent acquisition of a complete set of *Two Republics*, Mexico, 1867—established by Major Geo. B. Clarke, an ex-Confederate Officer.

While the primary object of this paper is to attempt to describe in general terms the collection of Hispano-Americana in the Library of Congress as an historical apparatus, the present writer feels that no apology is necessary for including some closing remarks upon the material of purely literary form. To justify this inclusion, a general statement regarding the relation of literature to collections specifically historical may be permitted. In this connection no effort will be made to formulate or express a literary valuation.

It is considered, not as a literature of power, but as a literature of knowledge, as an invaluable, if not indispensable instrument for becoming acquainted with the habits, thoughts, and ideals—in a word, with the national character and cultural *ambiente*—of our neighbors. History is more than a record of events; it is the interpretation of a social complex, and an understanding of the literature and art of a people will afford an intimate acquaintance not to be derived from political history, sociology, ethnology, or political economy.

Looked at from this point of view it will be seen that the literature possesses a practical as well as a cultural value as a material auxiliary and supplementary to history, and, as such, forms a logical and necessary acquisition for any library specializing in Americana. "Las letras son el mejor vehículo de los afectos."⁴

⁴ Blanco-Fombona: *Letras y Letrados de Hispano-América*, p. iv.

It is gratifying to chronicle the fact that the Library of Congress has the nucleus of a collection in this field, having now some 1,100 volumes and pamphlets classified in the section devoted to literature. These include not only the classics of the early periods, Ercilla y Zúñiga, Oña, Castellanos, Balbuena, and others, but representative authors of the nineteenth century, and the contemporary modernists: Amado Nervo, Bello, Avellaneda, Sarmiento, Gutiérrez Nájera, Fernández Guardia, Rubén Darío, Gómez Carrillo, Casal, Vargas Vila, Torres, Santos Chocano, Blanco Fombona, Blest Gana, Matta, Orrego Luco, Lugones, Ghirardo, Payró, Ugarte, Bunge, Rodó, Reyes, Herrera y Reissig, and many others.

The material on literary history and criticism is full and the important anthologies and collections have been acquired. Among these we may mention: Puig, *Antología de Poetas Argentinos*; *Biblioteca Argentina*; *Cultura Argentina*; *Biblioteca Andrés Bello*; *Colección de Autores Mexicanos*; *Biblioteca de Escritores Chilenos*; *Parnaso Colombiano*; *Parnaso Venezolano*; *Parnaso Cubano*; *Antología Dominicana*; *Guirnalda Salvadoreña*; and others. The collection is being conservatively strengthened.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote the authoritative expressions of Dr. Putnam regarding the future development of the Library in its general aspects: "With appropriations as they are there should be good hope of accumulating here the most nearly comprehensive collection in the United States of secondary material that concerns the student of history as well as the student of those other departments of literature in which the National Library would be expected to be pre-eminent, *i.e.*, political and social sciences, economics, administration, public and international law, and jurisprudence in general."⁵

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⁵ *Annual report, American Historical Society, 1901, I. 119.*

