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The Library of Parliament

(Second Installment.)

In a recent number of The Civilian the history of the Parliamentary Library was traced. The present article deals with the Library itself.

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“That place that does contain
My books, the best companions, is to
me
A glorious court, where hourly I
converse
With the old sages and philoso-
phers;
And sometimes, for variety, I con-
fer
With kings and emperors, and
weigh their counsels;
Calling their victories, if unjustly
got,
Unto a strict account, and, in my
fancy,
Deface their ill-placed statues.’

* * *

During the erection of the Govern-
ment buildings in Ottawa, the pres-
ent library was used as a carpenter
shop. The dome shaped roof had
not then been added to the edifice
and rough boards served as a cover-
ing for the big circular room.

In 1876, the castle of books was
eventually completed and formally
opened with a large dance.

Hopes ran high that an ideal place
had at last been found. The Librar-
ians dreamt of ommittee rooms, map
rooms and other advantages natur-
ally to be expected in a systematic-
ally planned Library.

“Someone had blundered.”
Through a mistake, the structure
was a great deal smaller than it
should have been and would only

hold one third of the books requir-
ed.

Though keenly disappointed, the
keepers of the books summoned up
courage and set about to do the best
they could in their new home. As a
result, the Library is today one of
the most beautiful of its kind on the
continent of North America. Dis-
tinguished visitors forget all else in
admiration of this noble example of
Canadian workmanship. Their
praises are many and sincere.

A noted English authoress, in a
recently published book of hers,
dealing with the Dominion, says of
the Library in part:

“It is an architectural gem. Built
in rotunda form, its lofty dome is
supported by massive and flying
buttresses crowned with pinnacles.
The interior is inviting looking to
the last degree—just the sort of
place where you would like to be
turned into loose, during a Canadian
winter. The choicest Canadian
woods are inlaid upon the floor, the
book-shelves are richly carved in
white pine.”

She feels as most of those who
come here do. Within the thick
walls of solid masonry, one seems
shut off from the outside world.
There is peace and quietness and
time for contemplation.

Upon entering the Library—after
passing through the low passage
way that divides it from the main
building—the first thing that catch-
es one’s eye is a large marble statue
of the late Queen Victoria, as she
was at the time of her Coronation.
The monument is in the middle of
the room and brought into excellent