

Within New Patterns

THE YEARS of agonizing over form are not wholly done with, but the worst must be over. ACRL, like the other divisions of ALA, may—must—now return to considerations of content. We shall all have to learn to live within new patterns and to expect and treat abrasions as they occur. The essence of reorganization, however, is that we shall be enabled, as individuals and groups, to do more effective work in all aspects of librarianship. The patient will recover from the operation; what he needs now are strong infusions of substance. It is good to know that we may return to our primary interests and aims.

ACRL has much to do. We must explore our own boundaries; if they are somewhat narrower than of old perhaps the enclosure should be probed in greater depth. The province clearly staked out for us clamors for solid work, involving more of our members than ever before. Where our interests overlap with other divisions, we shall work jointly, each part strengthening the other.

For academic librarians, facing with their colleges and universities the problems of rising enrollments and proliferating higher institutions, there is genuine need for a vigorous and clear presentation of the place of the library in higher education. There must be studies of what is now done and of what might be done to serve students and teachers even better than in the past. For the research and special libraries, aiming at better service to an ever increasing num-

ber of skilled and inquiring users, the challenge is equally great.

Even through the energy-consuming process of reorganization, work has been carried ahead on many fronts in ACRL, though some has had to be scamped or deferred for lack of time. Existing sections have many notable projects afoot and many contemplated. New sections may, with reason, come into being and must be harmonized with the old ACRL activities. To our standing and *ad hoc* committees we entrust much power, but with this goes the burden of hard work and grave responsibility. Our publications program is distinguished and its continued success and responsiveness are matters of concern to us all. State representatives and councilors act to relate us to local members and interests and have much to do with strengthening ACRL. Every member should give to and get from ACRL whatever professional help can most effectively be rendered through our organization. All in all, ACRL is burgeoning with vitality and diverse competencies. We must constantly assess our field of responsibility, however, to see that we are covering needs and placing emphasis where it belongs.

Perhaps the most significant gain to ACRL in the reorganization of ALA comes about through the merging of the Specialized Libraries Division with ACRL. Members of the SLD were rendered homeless by the reorganization. ACRL has enthusiastically welcomed them into membership. The two groups can become one, and a better group than either of the old groups alone. We share

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a community of interest that is greater than it seems at first glance, for with special collections through special services to special users we are essentially aiming at the same objectives. Now, through mutual enrichment, we can blend into a broader and deeper stream of constructive librarianship. The specialists are full partners; ACRL is as much theirs to shape as it is the academic and research librarians'.

The years ahead for ACRL will be increasingly demanding, but, I think, increasingly exhilarating. All of us who work for ACRL can take pride in the past, but this is not enough. The libraries and profession we serve must, by their very nature, face change, solve old problems, meet new problems. ACRL is a powerful instrument for progress if it uses and is supported by us all.

The "Wonderful Forgeries"

"I am very sorry at your disappointment concerning the MSS. They looked genuine. I thought the writing rather large for O. W.'s later period & not Greek-like enough—but they are wonderful forgeries." Thus one bookman condoled with another when, in the summer of 1922, a valuable collection of Oscar Wilde manuscripts were finally declared by Christopher Millard to be forgeries. Ever since the manuscripts were offered for sale in April, 1921 to William F. Figgis, a Dublin bookseller, by a man signing himself "André Gide," they have formed a valuable and yet puzzling piece of Wildeana. Examined and accepted as undoubtedly genuine by Christopher Millard, the Wilde bibliographer and expert, they were declared forgeries by him only a few months later. Vyvyan Holland, Oscar Wilde's son, dismissed them as late as 1955 as an "impudent" fraud. Dudley Edwards in his article for the *American Book Collector* of January, 1957 is more cautious in his judgment and inclines to believe that perhaps some portion of the collection may, after all, be genuine.

Thirty-six years have now passed since they first appeared on the market, and they have finally found their way to the Clark Library; several personal letters, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *The Sphinx Without a Secret*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and some unpublished pieces, magnificent in their impudence, a frightening tribute to the art of the forger, a tantalizing suspicion of a hope, not yet dead after thirty-six years, that perhaps. . . .

The forger? Oscar Wilde's nephew, Fabian Lloyd, also known as "André Gide," Dorian Hope, Sebastian Hope, B. Holland, Arthur Cravan . . . a mysterious figure drifting in and out of the unknown until the early nineteen-twenties, and then again disappearing into total obscurity. The value of the collection, accompanied as it is by the correspondence regarding it in which book-dealers and experts participated, is beyond doubt, not only for its peculiar and fantastic history, but also for the simple reason that no student of Oscar Wilde's manuscripts will ever be able to pass these by, if for nothing else than to acquaint himself with the snares of the field."—John C. Finzi in the *UCLA Librarian*, (September 6, 1957), 168-69.