

For Members Only

PRONOUNCEMENT. More than a year ago (Sept. 1949), in commenting here on initials, we stated that "MLA" is not susceptible to pronunciation as "a new and haunting word." A member writes: "It would not be English, but I see rich possibilities in that sequence of letters. Our former Spanish professor . . . used annually to ask me if I was 'going up to the *mêlée*.' This, if not new, is in its way haunting."

MLA MLA MLA

MÊLÉE? The 1950 Meeting is scheduled to be held in New York City on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, December 27, 28, and 29, with headquarters in the Statler (née Pennsylvania) Hotel.

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STYLE. In the next Bibliographical number of *PMLA* (April 1951) we plan to publish an eclectic or "variorum" MLA Style Sheet, giving the current editorial practices and preferences of four or five dozen learned journals in our field. The practice of the majority will be printed in regular type, exceptions in reduced type. *PMLA* and at least 35 other journals have agreed to adopt the majority practice in every instance, as a service to the profession. Offprints in quantity, with covers, will be made available, approximately at cost, to members, journals, and graduate departments wishing to use them; and since the cost will decrease as the size of the total order increases, your Secretary invites *tentative orders*, which may be confirmed later when the cost is known. Incidentally, some offprints of the McKerrow and Silver articles, bound with 12 pages of other useful material, are available to members who will send us six cents in stamps. We can supply copies in quantity at five cents each, postage free.

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DISTINCTION. In his counsel to scholarly authors, which we had the pleasure of reprinting in the April *PMLA*, McKerrow warned, "Do not try to be humorous." As an editor we have been reflecting upon this, and firmly endorse the advice. Learned journals are no place for the strained jest, the desperate whimsy, the untimely attempt to be funny. We are, however, glad that McKerrow avoided saying "Do not be humorous"; for we personally relish humor or wit in the writing of scholars who know so well what they are talking about that they can sound relaxed in the process of argument or elucidation. Humor is no disguise, and no fit ornament, for ignorance. But it can look comfortable, and can even inspire confidence, when worn by assured scholarship. Not to beat around the bush, we offer McKerrow's own article in evidence.

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AWARD. The Elizabeth Clay Howald (postdoctoral) Scholarship, Ohio State University, was awarded to Gerald W. Wade (Tennessee) for the academic year 1950-51. Professor Wade will work on an edition of the *Santa Juana* trilogy of Tirso de Molina. He was good enough to inform us that he read about the Howald Scholarship in "For Members Only."

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FACULTY STUDY FELLOWSHIPS. The following MLA members are among the thirteen recipients of the new ACLS fellowships (see the April *PMLA*, page 129) for 1950-51: Guy Adams Cardwell (Washington Univ.), G. Bruce Dearing (Swarthmore), Roy H. Pearce (Ohio State), Frank G. Ryder (Dartmouth), Louis F. Sas (City College), James H. Sledd (Chicago), and J. Kester Svendsen (Oklahoma).

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HELP WANTED. The Société d'Histoire du Théâtre is conducting a survey of the production of French plays, in the original language or in adaptations, in American colleges and universities during 1945-50. The findings will be published in the spring number of the *Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre*. Information should be sent to Dr. Sylvie Chevalley, 468 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N.Y.

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For Members Only—Continued

PROMOTION AND SCHOLARSHIP. Whether scholarly training is partly responsible or not we can't say, but we have long disliked publicity. We still skip ads in magazines we read (except *PMLA*), and we have often tossed in the wastebasket unopened our second or third-class mail. Now we find ourselves (for our sins) editing a series of MLA monographs and trying to answer the complaints of authors who are sure their books would long since have sold out had we only advertised them enough. We wish we knew at what point the Law of Diminishing Returns sets in when books of limited appeal are being publicized. Frankly, we are experimenting in *PMLA* in an effort to get the answer. As part of our experimentation we mean to mention for a while in this place a single book whose author has *not* complained, a book published by the MLA nine years ago. Only 250 copies remain. We wonder if we can sell those 250 copies to members or, through them, to libraries, just by mentioning their existence and by describing the book. We refer to Veré L. Rubel's *Poetic Diction in the English Renaissance*. It has always been priced at \$3 (326 pages). To those who wish the 250 remaining copies we offer them at \$2. More later.

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FULBRIGHT. Your Secretary, who for the past two years has served as chairman of two different advisory screening committees, during 1950-51 will be one of the twelve members of the Committee on International Exchange of Persons of the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils. He will be glad to try to answer questions by MLA members concerning the Fulbright educational program.

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PARADOX LOST? We still think that the problem of scholarly publishing is one of our major problems, and so we continually seek advice from experienced scholars in the Association. These experts often tell us one of two things: (1) it becomes increasingly difficult for good scholarship to get published, and (2) far too much poor scholarship gets published every year. We suspect that our counsellors are right on both points, and therefore wonder when the MLA as a society, and its members as individuals, are going to get around to formulating criteria which can be explained and defended. Many of us now pronounce a MS "sound" or "scholarly" and then stop, as though there were nothing else to say that mattered. But *how* scholarly? And for how long? And for how many? And about what? If you discover a new fact about X, and someone else discovers one about Y, is your fact, because it is a fact (and you have documented it properly), as worthy of publication as his? If only one *can* be published, what then? Suppose Y is Goethe and X is John Taylor the Water Poet. Granted that it is difficult to define excellence, can we not define trivia? Of course a new detail in literary history may have eventual significance beyond its finder's ken, but this familiar analogy with research in physical science has a limited application to literary studies, in which we deal with acknowledged masterpieces and acknowledged trash. It may even be that there are both important and unimportant things to be said about Shakespeare. In any case, we submit that we deserve to have poor stuff published and good books go a-begging until scholars are ready and able to agree on *qualitative distinctions* in research, and the means to make them count.

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WORLD WARS I AND II "showed an appalling lack of men and women of American birth and background who were sufficiently competent in the foreign languages for expert service in communications, translation, broadcasting, and other needs of the armed forces, the Department of State, and the security service of the Department of Justice. To fill the gap it was necessary to recruit recent immigrants and other persons not fully expert in English or well-conditioned in American ideals. The need for foreign-language experts is as pressing as for any other tools of national defense. In the interest of national safety, as well as the development of our economic and cultural independence in the field of language, steps should be taken by the Federal Government to provide financial aid for the training of especially promising students of foreign languages, looking to the establishment of a body of experts certified for the national service in peace and war. This

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training should begin not later than the junior college level with the selection by competitive testing of especially promising students both male and female and the award of fellowships for intensive work in one or more foreign languages through the senior college years. After graduation, successful candidates should be provided with fellowships for language and area competence in a foreign country, and after two years enrolled in a reserve corps of 'Foreign Language Experts,' drawing an annual stipend and subject to annual refresher work under the Departments of State and of Defense. The more proficient could be inducted into the national service as need arises. The training thus provided would also open a career in teaching or in industry or commerce." (This is another of the resolutions passed by the MLA Commission on Trends in Education last March.)

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EDITORIALETTE. Fairness to fellow scholars competing for limited space in learned journals suggests that chapters of intended books should not be published as articles unless (1) their controversial nature makes a *ballon d'essai* desirable, or unless (2) the intention is frustrated by current conditions of publishing.

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EUROPEAN RECOGNITION. A member writes: "You ask about other Ph.D. dissertations published here, then translated and published abroad. Otis H. Green's 1927 dissertation on 'The Life and Works of Lupericio Leonardo de Argensola' (Univ. of Pa.) was translated into Spanish and published at Zaragoza in 1945."

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WITH REGRET we record the deaths of Dixon Wecter (June 24), Kenneth Dreyer (Aug.), Marshall Nunn (June 3), Erma M. Gill, Dorothy I. Morrill (July 26).

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YOUR attention is called to the Index to *PMLA*, Volume LXV, printed in the rear of this issue. The alphabetical listing of authors may help you locate some article hereafter.

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ARGENTINE. The contributions to *PMLA* of Mr. Henry Silver, ACLS expert on technical problems of scholarly publishing, have aroused so much interest that members may welcome a finding-list: on printing costs (May and Sept., 1949, and June, 1950); on offset publishing (Dec., 1949, and Sept., 1950); on printing in Europe (March, 1950); on preparation of manuscript (April, 1950).

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PROVOKED. An anonymous reviewer (Roman Smal-Stocki) in the June 15 *Ukrainian Bulletin* takes the April (Bibliographical) *PMLA* to task for its discriminatory classification and unscientific terminology. He assumes (incorrectly) that we "were ill advised by some Slavistic pundits of Russian extraction," some "Russian Jim Crows," and hopes that "the time is approaching when these Russian imperialistic somersaults and machinations will come to an end" in the *MLA*. Some of the detailed criticism is sound, and we shall profit from it hereafter.

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WE RECOMMEND most earnestly that all *MLA* members read (or re-read) the first article in this issue of *PMLA*, the "Lowry Report" so called—and then bring it to the attention of their deans, presidents, and colleagues on curriculum committees. If one out of every ten of our members takes the slight trouble to show it to only *one* such person, we might reach 500 administrative officials who need to know more about the place of "Literature in American Education." Are you one in ten? Yes, we have some offprints available (for a dime, or nine cents in stamps), but why not lend your copy of *PMLA*?

For Members Only—Continued

ANY UNMARRIED WOMAN under the age of 35 who has demonstrated ability to carry on original research in some aspect of *French language or literature* may apply for the 1951 Mary Isabel Sibley Fellowship (stipend, \$1,500). Application forms (request them from the Sec. of the Fellowship Committee, 415 First Ave., New York 10) must be filed before March 15, 1951. Only those doctoral candidates will be considered who have completed "course" or "residence" requirements and expect to devote full-time work to research.

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MEMBERS SAY: "The 'For Members Only' section adds both warmth and light to *PMLA*." . . . "I hope that you will notice that I have tried to submit my paper in the form suggested by Mr. Silver. His article is certainly one of the most valuable services you have done for us—and for yourself and all editors." . . . "It's a fine thing that you have done, and ought to do something to improve the wretched quality of 'learned' papers." . . . "I thought the April issue a marvelous example of compilation and editing. The present-day scholar certainly has all the 'modern conveniences.' Some of us were apparently born, literally, thirty years too soon." . . . "The first aim of the *PMLA* should be solvency. I am not in favor of increasing the bulk and hence the cost of publication." . . . "It occurs to me you might, sporadically, issue a Review Supplement or Criticism of Scholarship. No such exists." . . . "I believe *PMLA* could use articles of more fundamental character. I should like to see more discussions of the philosophical and humanistic content, less on purely technical matters." . . . "Apropos of your criterion of interest, not to the general public, but to the public represented by the Association, which is of course right, why don't you tell us in a later editorial how you arrive at this interest and in what terms you conceive it?" . . . "I should like to add my word of praise for the vast improvement in *PMLA* in the last year or so." . . . "Have you considered abandoning the annual bibliography? It seems to me to be unnecessary in view of the special ones now flourishing." . . . "The annual List of Members serves most of us as a convenient address-book; would it not be well again to include the residential addresses of at least those members who prefer (as I do) to receive correspondence at their homes?" [We shall try to honor explicit requests for this service received during December.—ED.] "I have been catching up on *PMLA*, which continues to be good. Editing it is a difficult job, and from long experience I feel that few appreciate the amount of work you have put into it." . . . "I was quite surprised from your last editorials that so many of the old fogies, among whom I was for some unaccountable reason counted, were as progressive as they were." [The reference is to the results of the questionnaire.—ED.] . . . "I should like to thank you and the other editors who went to the trouble of giving me detailed criticism on my [rejected] paper. To have one's efforts analyzed with such care, skill, and authority is perhaps the most unusual privilege included in MLA membership." . . . "In an experience somewhat longer than most of your contributors I have never had my wings so completely clipped. . . . I hope to profit by this severe criticism. The policy of *PMLA* in getting these criticisms is wise." . . . "If *PMLA* = 'Pamela,' why does not *MLA* = 'Emelia' or 'Amelia'? From Richardson to Chaucer or Thackeray." . . . "Why not number the introductory pages of *PMLA*? . . . The blue cover may be artistic, but much of the printing on it is hard to read. Light grey or brown would be easier on the eyes." . . . "Many thanks for forwarding the extremely valuable criticisms. The service is worth the price of membership any day. Since the criticisms were relatively encouraging, I am taking the liberty of submitting another article." . . .

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MICROFILM PROGRAM. The L.C., for the benefit of American scholars, hopes to microfilm finding aids (e.g., bibliographies, calendars, guides) to collections of source material in foreign repositories, and has recently established in the National Union Catalogue a "Clearing House of Information for Extensive Microfilm Projects" which will supply information on projects proposed, in progress, or completed. Write to Dr. Lester K. Born, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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TIPS ON TIPPING. Returning travellers report that in Argentina, Benelux, Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and Switzerland there is a 10 to 15 per cent service charge in hotels, with no extra tipping expected. There are also service charges in France and Italy, but extra tipping is often expected. In New York (we say nothing of the rest of America) the bellhop in better hotels expects a quarter per bag, per message delivered, per bucket of ice cubes. Taxi drivers are usually glad to receive about 15 percent of what the meter says. Ten cents is right for a hat-check or wash-room attendant; most of them turn in their tips. In the better restaurants 15 per cent of the check is appropriate. We like air travel—no tipping expected or accepted. We dislike (and do not tip for) unwanted attentions—as Chaucer said, “Profred servyse stynketh.”

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CUMANN NA GAEDHILGE. The Gaelic Society of New York (214 W. 68th St.) was founded in 1878 “to promote the study of the language, literature, music, history, traditions, and culture of Ireland.” Among other activities (including monthly *ceilidhes*) it offers classes in modern Gaelic.

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ESSAYS IN CRITICISM. This is the name of a new quarterly making its debut in January under the editorship of F. W. Bateson (of *CBEL*) and published by Basil Blackwell (\$2.10 p.a., \$4 for two years). *EIC* will attempt to “join literary criticism with scholarly responsibility”—surely a praiseworthy aim. See the ad in the 1950 *Program*.

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DE CAPO. With some of us still remembering fondly our September *fête champêtre* at Stanford, we celebrate again this year the traditional MLA Christmas, debouching from our 3,000 or more homes before the last greeting card has arrived, dutifully wearing our bright new ties and determined to pick up some old ones. Once more faculty wives will have to tell faculty children their private versions of: “’Tis the night after Christmas, and daddy’s away. Yes, Virginia, there’s *really* an MLA.” It’s a sobering thought, this seasonal thirst for scholarship from *a to zymurgy*, this journey of more or less wise men to the shrine erected in 1883 by Marshall Elliott. See you at the Statler.

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INVITATION. Next year we shall introduce among these preliminary pages a section containing *scholarly queries* sent us by members who have reason to believe that some reader of *PMLA* will know the answers. Questions must be briefly put and must relate to literary or linguistic research in the modern languages. The Editor reserves the right to publish only those queries which seem to him appropriate to *PMLA*, and he may rephrase even these to save space. All queries published must be signed. Answers, as they are supplied to us, and if they seem worth recording, will be published in subsequent issues.

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FELLOWS. Among the nineteen 1950-51 ACLS Advanced Graduate Fellows are: Lillian G. Beresnack (Columbia, American lit.), Robert M. Hankin and George Luckyi (Columbia, Slavic lit.), Robert L. Jackson (California, Slavic lit.), Louis B. McNew (Chicago, medieval lit.), Bernard S. Mikofsky (Columbia, Slavic langs.), Olga Scherer (Columbia, Polish lit.), James M. Wells (England, English lit.). Among the twenty First Year Graduate Fellows are: Stefanie D. Blank and Mary K. Daehler (Radcliffe, English lit.), Thomas R. Edwards (Harvard, English lit.), Philip N. Lockhart (N.C., comparative lit.), Elizabeth Newman (Michigan, English lit.), John P. Pool (Harvard, American lit.), Patricia L. Wells (Chicago, English lit.). For details about these fellowships write the Secretary for Fellowships, ACLS, 1219 16th St. N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

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JOBS. Experienced, native translators and reviewers are desired for work under contract from English into Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Marathi, Persian, Pushtu, Siamese, Singhalese, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, and Viet-Nameese, for publication. Excellent knowledge of English necessary. Detailed statements of qualifications and experience may be sent to the MLA Secretary, who will forward them to the agency concerned.

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PROOF. Some of these paragraphs are sent to the printer at the last minute and are never proofread by us. Results: in September, "PLMA" and "colloquim." We console ourselves by remembering that in a famous anthology of verse one could find, not only "Kubla Kahn," but also that immortal first line: "Oh, to feel the frog in your throat."

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ENGLISH INSTITUTE. The 1950 meeting, September 8-12, was considered by many the most stimulating in the ten-year history of the Institute. The four series were devoted to "A Critical Approach to Medieval Literature," "The Assumptions of Criticism," "Some Principles for the Editing of Texts," and "William Blake." There were evening talks by Margaret Mead, noted anthropologist, and Arthur Miller (*Death of a Salesman*). 1951 officers will be: chairman, James M. Osborn (Yale); secretary, Alan Downer (Princeton); governing committee, Northrup Frye (Toronto), Allen T. Hazen (Columbia), and Helen W. Randall (Smith).

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DELE & STET. We extend heartfelt sympathy, and best wishes, to the following new editors of learned journals: Dougald MacMillan of *Studies in Philology*, J. G. McManaway of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Clyde Murley of *Classical Journal*. We welcome also the revival of *Anglia* under the editorship of H. M. Flasdieck, W. F. Schirmer, and H. Papajewski.

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PRIZE. The committee which will make the first annual Phi Beta Kappa award for the best book of literary scholarship or criticism published by a university press between May 15, 1950, and June 30, 1951, consists of Donald A. Stauffer, Helen C. White, G. Armour Craig, Hiram Haydn, and Irita Van Doren.

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FESTSCHRIFTEN. An index of them is being prepared by Miss Florence M. Craig of Stanford University.

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GUGGENHEIM. New chairman of the Advisory Board for fellowships is Louis B. Wright. Among other members are Leon Howard and Henri Peyre.

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FALLING LEAVES. Autumn, and the third dues notice, always bring a few resignations of members. Others silently steal away, having received five free copies of *PMLA*. Following is part of a recent letter of resignation: "I have decided to drop my membership because I can no longer attend the meetings because of the continuous smoking that has gone on for a number of years. . . . I am allergic to tobacco and cigarette smoke. I realize that I am in the minority but I do believe the non-smokers should have some consideration."

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NOTE. Current membership in the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English totals 2,500. Members receive *College English* in addition to other benefits. Dues (\$4) should be sent to the Sec.-Treas. at 211 W. 68th St., Chicago 21.

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VERBUM SAP. During the first three quarters of 1950 (273 days), 331 articles were submitted to *PMLA*, the distribution as follows: English literature 186 (more than half), American 38, French 30, German 29, Spanish 13, Italian 6, comparative 10, linguistic 14, miscellaneous 5. The distribution of articles published during 1950 has been as follows: English 38 (less than half), French 16, American 8, German 6, Spanish 4, Italian 2, comparative 3, linguistic 1, miscellaneous 3 (total 81). California (Berkeley), Johns Hopkins, and Yale each contributed five authors; the University of Washington contributed three. The Volume LXV authors represented 36 universities, 21 colleges. At least three of them were graduate students, 13 were instructors, 24 assistant professors.

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EVERY LIBRARY will *not* buy a copy of your book. We had a few unpleasant words to say on this subject in the September *PMLA*, and, still believing scholarship is not improved by ignorance, we return to the subject with some new facts. There are about 1,700 college and university libraries in the U.S., but 1,300 of them (according to a study recently made by the *Library Journal*) spend an average of only \$1,780 a year on books. (In 1949, 10,892 books were published in the U.S., and even more in England.) Only 82 of the 7,408 public libraries in the U.S. spend \$100,000 or more a year on books. The usual monograph addressed solely to "fellow scholars" has a poor chance, therefore, of paying for itself. The MLA has been trying to protect its own authors (and, not incidentally, to stay in business) by increasing the number of libraries with standing orders for all MLA books. In October we had 212 such libraries on our list. Do we have yours? Thus supporting MLA scholarship are the libraries of 115 universities, 63 liberal arts colleges, 16 technical schools, 6 teachers colleges.

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HOW HAD YOU figured it? In June the ACLS mailed a postcard questionnaire to all MLA members, and within two months 3,055 replies were received. Of these 3,055 replying, 846 had published 1,398 books during the past five years; 1,725 had produced 8,728 articles; 2,173 had their Ph.D., and about two-thirds had received their highest degree since 1935; 57 percent were earning less than \$5,000 a year (including summer teaching, the average salary for which was \$790); in fact, 22.7 percent of the full professors were earning less than \$5,000. On the basis of data supplied by almost half of our total membership, it would seem that one out of every five MLA members is a woman, and that one out of every three members is in the 40 to 50 age group (almost 30 percent in the 30 to 40 group).

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SOUTHERN HUMANITIES CONFERENCE. This lively ACLS affiliate purchased 1,000 reprints of the McKerrow and Silver articles for distribution in the South.

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WHAT NEXT? These two words are the full title of a paper to be read at the 1950 Meeting, when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our incorporation as a learned society. There will be other papers having this *theme*, and many papers reviewing recent scholarship in specific fields. Entire Group programs are being devoted to critical surveys of twentieth-century scholarship on the Renaissance, Milton, French seventeenth-century literature, Spanish linguistics, and present-day English; and single speakers are offering such surveys of work on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Shelley, Sade, Renart, Pennsylvania-Dutch, Romanticism, and folklore studies. Two speakers in the Portuguese Group will discuss recent Luso-Brazilian research, and two in the American literature Group will discuss new approaches to fiction and needed regional studies. Still other groups, while not attempting surveys, are offering programs carefully built around such topics as imagery, contemporary criticism, Gide, Balzac, the Boswell papers, linguistic diffusion, speech analysis, Uruguayan literature, bibliographical description, and literature and the middle class. At the General Meeting on Thursday evening members will hear papers on "History and Literature," "History and Criticism," "The Scholarly Formation of the American Humanist," and "Social Usefulness as a Criterion for Research."