

THE DANTE SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Boylston Hall
Harvard University
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

NEWSLETTER #3

During the MLA Convention in Chicago most of the members of the National Committee met on December 27 in the room of Dr. and Mrs. Cioffari. Present were Professors Fucilla, De Vito, Parker, Clements, Hall, Iacuzzi, Mathes, Molinaro and Lograsso. The discussion centered around the part which each member of the Committee could play in promoting activities within his region or locality. Among the proposals was a roster of lecturers which would be prepared and circularized through this Newsletter, so that communities would have qualified lecturers available for invitation. It is hoped that all those who are preparing serious lectures of a general appeal will send to the Dante Centenary Committee the title of their proposed lecture, the duration, the language in which it will be delivered, and whatever stipulations they have regarding fees, travel expenses, etc. The list will be sent to the members of the Dante Society and other interested organizations and arrangements will be made directly between the community concerned and the lecturer. The Centenary Committee will serve as a clearing house on this matter.

The discussion centered also on the needs for funds and the purpose for which these funds will be used. The Centenary Committee will outline in detail the cost of the various projects contemplated and then seek funds from some of the Foundations. Funds for general objectives such as a permanent home for the Dante Society should be solicited by individual members from lovers of Italian culture everywhere. The total funds received to date amount to \$1952.00.

There was a discussion of Dante lecturers from Europe. Dr. Cardillo, the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, is investigating the possibility of making several outstanding Italian scholars available through the Italian government as a supplement to the American contribution to Dante scholarship by American-trained scholars. Professor Clements undertook the responsibility of contacting the Columbia Broadcasting System to interest them in providing a program on Dante. He likewise undertook to contact the Director of Life Film Strips to interest them in providing a film script that could be used as a basis for lectures. He will report on his progress in the course of time.

For the purpose of celebrations, the centenary year was defined as the actual calendar year 1965. However, some universities very likely will start activities in the fall of 1964, and others may continue into the spring of 1966. Cambridge, the home of the Dante Society, was considered the logical place for any celebration of national scope, and the most appropriate time would be the annual May meeting, which coincides closely with the date of Dante's birth.

So much then for the meeting in Chicago. Now for other news.

Professor Bergin informs us that he has started working toward a Dante memorial stamp. We have great hopes that he will succeed, as in all his other undertakings. He is also finalizing his book on Dante for the Orion Press.

Mr. Thomas C. Chubb is pursuing the matter of enrolling an international celebrity in Washington to lend support to the Dante Centenary as honorary chairman. Developments will be announced as they materialize.

Professor Fucilla has promised to devote at least one number of Italica entirely to Dante articles and reviews. Among the Dantists who will collaborate are the following: Stambler, Gilbert, Hatzfeld, Freccero, Lograsso, L. Rossi, Cioffari. For celebrations in the Midwestern area he has secured promises of lectures from Theodore Silverstein (University of Chicago), Louis Rossi (Northwestern), Luciana Stefani (Roosevelt) and Professor Danilo Aguzzi (Chicago). He has other interesting plans which will be announced later.

Professor Clements has appointed the following as members of his supporting committee for the Fédération Internationale de Langues et Littératures: Professors Herbert H. Golden, Howard R. Marraro, Archibald T. MacAllister and Joseph G. Fucilla (already a member of the National Committee).

We have had a most interesting letter from Professor Henry Grattan Doyle describing the membership and activities of the Dante Centenary Committee for 1921. In the next Newsletter we shall discuss the contents of this letter and the help and inspiration which the present Committee plans to derive from it.

Other preparations reported are:

Harvard: The Centenary Committee consists of Professor Nicolae Iliescu, Chairman, and Professors Dante Della Terza, James S. Ackerman, Sydney Freedburg, Myron Gilmore and Nino Pirota.

Nazareth College of Rochester: Display of Centenary edition of works of Dante sponsored by the Italian government; translation of Dante chapters from two works on the Trecento unavailable in English to be done by Professor Charles Mills; offering of advanced Dante course requested by upperclassmen; continuation of the policy of basing one term of Freshman English on study of the Commedia; address on the Paradiso by Professor Joseph A. Mazzeo.

University of Oregon: The theme of the University of Oregon Festival of Arts for 1965 will be "The World of Dante" and will be held in February, 1965.

University of Puerto Rico: The Centenary Committee consists of: Professors Manuel Alvarez Nazario, Giovanni Previtali and Robert Riccio. Plans include: Lecture in Spanish on the allegory of the Commedia by Professor Previtali over the television network of the government; this lecture will also publicize a lecture on Dante in Spanish by an eminent scholar; establishment of two yearly prizes for excellence in Italian studies, one to a student not of Italian origin for excellence in the Italian language, the other to a student for excellence in the study of Italian culture; reception and dinner; a Dante film (if available); exhibit of the Doré illustrations.

Wellesley College: The Italian Department, with the support of the Pastene Fund, will present a symposium on different aspects of Dante scholarship on October 20-21, 1964. The main lecture will be given by Professor Charles S. Singleton. It is hoped that there will be lectures also in the fields of art and philosophy. There will be an exhibit of mss. and rare editions from the Wellesley College Plimpton Collection.

Hanford Henderson writes from Rome that he is offering in 1965 a prize of \$100.00 for the best essay on Dante by a student at Haverford or Bryn Mawr.

Other plans will be published when reported.

A reminder to scholars contemplating publications connected with Dante: please transmit to the Secretary a brief summary (100 word limit) of work in progress describing the exact nature of the publication.

Vincenzo Gioffari, National Chairman

Anthony J. De Vito, Secretary

George H. Gifford, President of the Dante Society