

HINTS TO SMALL LIBRARIES

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Hints to small libraries by Mary W. Plummer

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MARY W. PLUMMER

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LIBRARIES**

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HINTS

TO

SMALL LIBRARIES.

By
Mary H. Plummer.



Brooklyn :
Pratt Institute Free Library.
1894.



PREFACE.

ADMITTING the wisdom of the saying that "children should be seen and not heard," and the fact that Pratt Institute Free Library is still of tender years, it is also not to be denied that there comes a time when even children must speak and abide by the consequences. The Library has had so many letters from persons at a distance, as well as many visitors, asking advice or suggestions in regard to the starting or reorganizing of small libraries or the best methods of carrying them on, that it seems best to put its suggestions into tangible form. They profess to be no more than suggestions; some of them the Library has tried, others it has heard of and thought reasonable. The main endeavor throughout these few chapters has been to keep in mind the fact that there are libraries scattered all over the country that have very little of anything but ambition and good will to go upon. Their stock of money, labor, and time is limited, wherefore it is of no use to recommend to them tools or processes that require much of these commodities.

The trained librarian will not feel the need of such a pamphlet as this, since he or she probably knows of or could evolve a system equally well or better adapted to the circumstances, so the audience sifts itself down to small libraries which have to consider

economy, whose librarians are not trained and have no opportunity to take training. And even for them, it is hoped these suggestions may be only a point of departure from which to continue their own investigations in the field of library economy.

Thanks are due and are sincerely tendered to several friends interested in librarianship, who have kindly read these chapters, and whose suggestions have been gladly received.

To those other friends who, individually or collectively, have helped to feed the springs of interest and enthusiasm in which this little undertaking has had its origin, thanks are no less due, though their part in it can be less definitely specified. If there is any profession in which there is community of ideas, it is that of librarianship, and from the common stock every one is encouraged to take that which he can make of use to himself and others. When the long-desired A. L. A. manual shall appear, no one will greet it more gladly than the present writer; meanwhile, since the choice is between a half loaf and no bread, she feels herself constrained to offer the former.

PRATT INSTITUTE,
Brooklyn, N. Y.,
March, 1894.

M. W. P.



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CHAPTER 1.

RECEIVING AND ENTERING BOOKS.

WE will suppose that your books are already bought, and that they are still in the boxes.

Generally the librarian of the small library is relieved of the pleasant duty of selecting books by his or her committee, who are often persons of literary tastes, and who undertake to do the ordering. A chapter on selecting and ordering will be given at the end of this handbook, however, for the use of those librarians to whom the work is new, and who have the sole responsibility of buying.

The first thing to do is to compare your bills with the books, as you take them from the boxes, checking on the bill every item that is found correct. Errors in price, or books sent which have to be returned for any reason, should not be deducted from the bill, as this method would surely cause discrepancies between the library's accounts and the dealer's. Whatever is sent back should be charged to the dealer in a small book, opened for the purpose, and a bill sent. Errors in the dealer's favor should also be charged back to him in this book, and a memorandum be sent him.

Some librarians, as the bills are checked, enter a memoran-