

# **LIBRARIES AND READERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649632237

Libraries and Readers by William E. Foster

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM E. FOSTER**

**LIBRARIES  
AND READERS**



# Libraries and Readers

BY

WILLIAM E. FOSTER

*Librarian of the Providence Public Library*

Free libraries are engines for *creating* the habit and power of enjoying first-class literature, and thus carrying forward the work of civilization which is commenced in the primary school.

WILLIAM STANLEY JEVONS.



NEW YORK

F. LEYPOLDT, PUBLISHER

1883

257. C. 95

Copyright, 1883.  
By F. LEYBOLD.

E. W. GREEN'S SON,  
PRINTER, ELECTROTYPES AND BINDER,  
14 and 16 Duane Street,  
NEW YORK.

## PREFACE.

---

THE purpose and significance of this little book should not be misunderstood. At various times during the past few years the writer has been asked to present some phase of library work for the consideration of his fellow-citizens; sometimes in the form of an address or lecture in his own city or elsewhere; sometimes in the form of a paper read before a meeting of the American Library Association, or before bodies of teachers; and sometimes in the form of an article contributed to the *Library Journal* or other publications. It has been interesting to notice, in the treatment of these various phases of the subject, how wide and suggestive is the field thus opened, and how intimately this matter of reading, and the use of books and of libraries, are connected with the daily life of our generation. It is thus that the material of this book has accumulated.

Yet suggestions and counsel on the use of books have by no means been wanting before this; nor have these books been wanting in value and effectiveness. A writer might well hesitate, therefore, before adding another book to their number. Yet the vigilant publisher of the *Library Journal*, whose untiring interest in everything relating to the advancement of library work is well known, has judged that the peculiar

evolution of this volume from actual contact with the problems and experiences of library administration, entitled it to a place of its own; and there has been a very general request for such a volume from those who have listened to the delivery of the addresses referred to. It is therefore given to the public in this form.

The book is not a treatise. Although various phases of the question are considered, there is no attempt to make this volume cover the ground exhaustively. The important question of fiction reading, though incidentally referred to, is not here treated at length. The equally important question of relations between libraries and schools is conspicuous by its absence, for the reason that the papers in which the writer has discussed this matter are elsewhere published\* almost simultaneously with this volume.

Mr. Emerson has somewhere maintained that a man should be, above and before all things else, a man;—not a teacher or "a thinker", but a man teaching and "a man thinking." The writer disavows all claim of being an author or a lecturer, and will be abundantly satisfied if the reader of these pages shall attribute them to "a librarian writing" and "a librarian speaking", and in this way using two very effectual methods of enforcing the principles of his work.

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY, NOV. 1, 1886.

---

\* "Libraries and schools," edited by S. S. Green.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
SOME HINTS ON RIGHT READING .....	7
CHAPTER II.	
CORRECTION OF AIMLESS READING.....	48
CHAPTER III.	
THE SPECIALIZING OF READING, FOR GENERAL READERS..	48
CHAPTER IV.	
"CURRENT LITERATURE" AND "STANDARD LITERATURE"..	60
CHAPTER V.	
SECURING THE INTEREST OF A COMMUNITY.....	83
CHAPTER VI.	
WHAT MAY BE DONE AT HOME.....	91

## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
HOW TO USE A LIBRARY; A RUDDIMENTARY CHAPTER.....	99

## CHAPTER VIII

BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON READING .....	117
-------------------------------------	-----

## Libraries and Readers.

---

### I. SOME HINTS ON RIGHT READING.\*

At the outset, some one may be asking himself;—"But what is meant here by 'right reading' ? Is it right methods of reading, or, reading the right books ? It is both. We are not doing ourselves full justice, even while reading the best books, if our habits of reading be defective; nor will it avail to have adopted the most approved methods, should the material of our reading be valueless. Let us then consider these two sides of the question, in succession; giving our attention first to the subject of "the right books to read."

(A) *Material.*—But some one at once inquires: "Well, and how are you going to lay down rules? The 'right' books for some one else to read may not be the right ones for me,

---

\* This chapter was originally delivered as a lecture in Providence, and afterwards in Philadelphia. This fact will account for certain peculiarities in the form of presenting the subject.