PROCEEDINGS OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AT THEIR EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING, HELD AT PLYMOUTH, SEPTEMBER 15TH TO 18TH, 1885

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Proceedings of the Library Association of the United Kingdom at their eighth Annual Meeting, held at Plymouth, September 15th to 18th, 1885 by Ernest C. Thomas

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LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

AT THEIR

Eighth Annual Meeting

HELD AT PLYMOUTH, SEPTEMBER 15TH TO 18TH, 1885.

EDITED BY THE HON. SECRETARY

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Late Librarian of the Oxford Union Society

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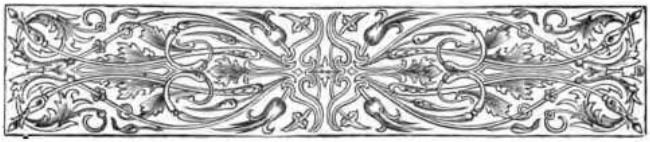

THE following Papers read at the Meeting are printed in *The Library Chronicle*, vol. III, at the pages indicated.

REPORTS

Presented to the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Library Association of the United Kingdom, at Plymouth, September 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, 1885.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

THE Council have the pleasure of presenting their Eighth Annual Report on the work and progress of the Association during the past year.

Dublin Meeting.—The Annual Meeting at Dublin was one of the most enjoyable and successful of our annual gatherings. The attendance of members was very satisfactory, and an unusually large number of local members and associates testified the interest felt in our proceedings by the people of Dublin. The arrangements made for our reception were of the most hospitable and gratifying character, and the Council beg to tender their hearty acknowledgments to the Local Committee, and especially to Dr. Ingram, the President of the year, and to the Hon. Secretaries of the Local Committee, Mr. William Archer and Mr. John Beveridge, the Town Clerk of Dublin, for their unwearied exertions to render our visit a success.

Members.—The rapid increase in our Membership which was reported last year has been maintained. The number of members on our books at August 31st is 495, being a net increase in our subscribing membership of 67. The number of life members is 31, of honorary members 32. The number of libraries now represented in the Association is 191. A considerable number of members have already joined us for the Plymouth meeting, and a still further increase may be expected.

Obituary.—The Council have to regret the loss by death of one of our members, Mr. W. S. W. Vaux, the well-known antiquary and scholar. Mr. Vaux was a member of the Organizing Committee of the original Conference of Librarians in 1877, and was for some time a Member of our Council.

Officers.—The office of President not having been filled up at Dublin, the Council on January 9th resolved unanimously that the Mayor of Plymouth (Mr. Edward James, J.P.) be requested to accept the office of President of the Association for this year.

A resolution was passed at the Dublin meeting "That not less than three Special General Councils shall be held in London during the year, of which a fortnight's

previous notice shall be given." Accordingly, during the year three Special General Councils have been held to consider questions of importance, and the following country members of Council have attended one or more of them:—Messrs. Bradshaw (Cambridge), Briscoe (Nottingham), Haggerston (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), MacAlister (Leeds), Rev. W. D. Macray (Witney), Messrs. Madeley (Warrington), Wright (Plymouth), and Yates (Leeds), besides those country members who have attended at ordinary Councils. As some of these members have not availed themselves of the privilege accorded by the resolution passed at the Dublin meeting, authorizing the Treasurer to pay their railway fares, it may deserve consideration at the Plymouth meeting how far it is necessary to continue the privilege. Five out of the thirteen Council Meetings held during the year have been held at the Gray's Inn Library, and the Council beg to tender their acknowledgments for the kindly courtesy thus extended to them by the Master of the Library and the Benchers of the Honourable Society.

Finance.—The Council and officers have had continually under their consideration the difficulty of carrying on the work of the Association with the limited means at their disposal. On the one hand, the members of the Association, year after year, instruct the Council to continue to print a Monthly Journal as well as a volume of Transactions; while, on the other hand, they are not prepared to increase the amount of the subscription. These instructions the Council have always been most anxious to follow out. It is obvious that with so considerable an increase in the number of members the amount of mere routine work and correspondence must necessarily increase; but so long as so much printing has to be done it is impossible for the Council to pay for the necessary clerical assistance, and in this way a wholly unreasonable burden is imposed upon the officers of the Association. Under these circumstances it must be a matter for serious consideration what is the proper course to be taken in the future. The Council propose to take the opinion of the Annual Meeting as to the desirability of imposing an entrance-fee of 10*s.* 6*d.* and of increasing the amount of the life-subscription to £8 8*s.* including entrance-fee.

Monthly Meetings.—The usual monthly meetings have been held during the year. The use of their committee-room has been continued to us by the kindness and courtesy of the Board of Managers of the London Institution, and the Council have again to tender them hearty thanks on behalf of the Association.

At the First Meeting (November 7), the Hon. Secretary read a Paper on "The Classification of Literature." It was resolved that a classification of books be drawn up suitable for Free Public Libraries, and a sub-committee was appointed to report to the Council by the Plymouth meeting.

At the Second Meeting (December 5th), Mr. H. R. Tedder read a Paper on "The British Museum Catalogue of early English Books to 1640."

At the Third Meeting (January 2nd), Dr. Richard Garnett read a Paper entitled "A Memorandum by the late Rev. H. H. Baber on the Removal of the British Museum Library from Montague House."

At the Fourth Meeting (February 6), the Hon. Secretary read a Paper on "London Libraries in 1710." Attention was called to the unsuitable binding in which the last volume of the Calendars of State Papers had just been issued, and the following resolution was passed on the subject, and directed to be forwarded to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office:—"The Library Association beg to represent to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office the undesirability of issuing the volumes of Calendars of State

Papers in the unsuitable binding which has been adopted in the case of the last volume just issued, and to point out that the new binding is not only not uniform with the old, but is inferior to it in character and appearance, and that the half binding in cloth and paper is a very undesirable economy from the purchaser's point of view."

At the Fifth Meeting (March 8), Mr. H. R. Tedder read a Paper on "The Barkers and the Early History of the Royal Patent for Printing the Bible." The Hon. Secretary reported that a reply had been received from the Assistant-Controller of the Stationery Office acknowledging the receipt of the resolution passed by the last Monthly Meeting as to the binding of the Calendars of State Papers, and announcing that the new binding had been settled after consultation with the Master of the Rolls, and that it was not likely to be altered.

The first Friday in April falling on Good Friday there was no meeting this month.

At the Sixth Meeting (May 1), Mr. Henry Bradshaw read a Paper on "Early Printed Bibles."

At the Seventh Meeting (June 5), Mr. J. R. Boosé read a Paper on "The Progress of Colonial Public Libraries."

At the Eighth Meeting (July 3), Mr. Joseph Gilburt read a Paper on "Library Surplusage," and the Hon. Secretary read a Paper on "MSS. of the Philobiblon."

By a resolution of the Council the Meetings for August and September were suspended.

Transactions.—The publication of the annual volume has been a cause of considerable anxiety to the Council; of the London and Cambridge volume issued in February 500 copies were printed, and pains have been taken to make the volume known amongst libraries in this country and in America by the distribution of nearly 1000 prospectuses. The number of copies printed leaves a large stock after supplying our own members, and it may be hoped that in course of time this stock will be realized, but the process must be a slow one. Several sheets of the Liverpool volume have been issued during the year, but the editor reports to the Council that the final instalment of the concluding paper was only received from its writer in the present month of September. The *Proceedings* were edited and largely in type before the Dublin Meeting, and no further delay is anticipated with regard to this volume. The Council have not seen their way to the publication of the Dublin volume until these arrears had been disposed of; and as the Plymouth Meeting will be asked seriously to consider the question of dropping either the annual or the monthly publication, they have proposed to leave the whole matter open for full discussion at Plymouth.

Library Chronicle.—The financial responsibilities involved by the carrying on of the *Chronicle* on the scale on which that publication was commenced in pursuance of the instruction given by the Annual Meeting at Liverpool, and repeated at Dublin, were so great that the Council were obliged to deal specially with the whole matter in the spring. After carefully considering the cost of the *Chronicle*, and the other calls upon the funds of the Association, the Council came to the conclusion that they could not undertake to continue the *Chronicle*. The following resolution was passed at a Special General Meeting on January 19th:—"That the funds of the Association do not allow the publication of the *Library Chronicle* in this present form concurrently with the *Annual Transactions*; in consequence, however, of various contracts, the Council feel justified in continuing its publication until the March number." It was afterwards proposed and seconded—"That the Council feel that the Members

generally would be much averse to the termination of the *Chronicle*, and are willing to consider the proposal of a number of Members of the Association to take over the *Chronicle* and publish it upon a business basis." The discussion on this motion stood adjourned, and will be re-opened at Plymouth. The view taken by the Council was communicated to leading Members, and their opinion invited upon a suggestion which had been made to the Council that a small Company should be formed among our Members to carry on what is really a trading concern, which to be thoroughly successful requires to be worked upon a proper business footing. Meantime, in accordance with the former of these resolutions, the *Chronicle* accounts have only been included in the Treasurer's statement up to March, and since then it has been carried on by the Hon. Secretary so as to keep it alive until the question of its future can be fully discussed and finally determined. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the balance in favour of the Association in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities is subject to the repayment of the expenses incurred in the publication of the *Chronicle* since March, if such repayment is approved.

Examination of Library Assistants.—In accordance with the announcement made in our last Annual Report, an examination of library assistants and others was held in July. The extent of the interest felt in the matter was shown by numerous letters received from library assistants in reference to the examination. The number of candidates who actually entered their names for the examination was only three; but this may be explained by the desire probably felt by many assistants to profit by the experience of others, and also by the somewhat severe requirements of the examination scheme. The examination was held in London and at Nottingham, under the superintendence of Mr. J. B. Bailey in London, and of the Secretary at Nottingham. The thanks of the Council are due to Mr. Bailey and Mr. Briscoe for the facilities they afforded for the due conduct of the examinations. The papers set by the examiners will be found in the *Library Chronicle* (Nos. 16-17, June-July). The examiners will, no doubt, make their report at the Plymouth meeting. It may be hoped that the scheme which has thus been effectually begun may continue to prosper.

Classification.—The difficult and complicated subject of Classification has been under the consideration of several annual meetings. The November Monthly Meeting appointed a sub-committee to draw up a classification of books suitable for Free Public Libraries, and it is hoped that they will be able to report to the Plymouth meeting.

Village Libraries.—The subject of Village Libraries was brought before the Council in December last by the Rev. Chancellor Parish, and the Council undertook to place the subject in their Plymouth programme. The matter may be fitly discussed in connection with Mr. Trevail's Paper on "The Extension of the Free Library System to Rural Districts."

Curators.—A resolution was passed at the Dublin meeting, on the motion of Mr. E. Howarth, Curator of the Public Museum, Sheffield, requesting the Council to consider the desirability of so enlarging the scope of the Association, as to include officers connected with museums and art galleries. The Council have discussed the matter, and feel that the proposal is deserving of further consideration, but are not as yet in a position to make a definite recommendation.

Junior Assistants.—The opinion of the Council was invited as to the desirability of extending facilities to junior assistants to become connected with the Association. They were naturally inclined to receive with favour any suggestion that would tend to