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INTERESTING AND VALUABLE REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER AND MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

From Papworth's "Museums, Libraries and Picture Galleries."

In determining the general division of books, many circumstances render desirable the adoption of that prefixed to Brunet's "*Manuel du Libraire*," &c. 8vo. Paris, 1844, of which the principal features of each subject are alone extracted on the present occasion. Each branch should have its history, mode of study, theory, dictionaries, and general treatises prefixed viz:—

- I. Theology.—*a.* Bible, 647 works. *b.* Liturgies, 112. *c.* Councils, 40. *d.* Fathers, 344. *e.* Systematic Theology, 992. *f.* Singular opinions, 75. *g.* Judaism, 15. *h.* Oriental superstitions, 38. *i.* Freethinking, 50.
- II. Jurisprudence.—*a.* Natural and social law, 10. *b.* Political law, 12. *c.* Civil and criminal law, 742. *d.* Ecclesiastical law, 130.
- III. Sciences and Arts.—*a.* Philosophical sciences, 900. *b.* Physics and chemistry, 262. *c.* Natural sciences, 20.1. *d.* Medical sciences, 1259. *e.* Mathematics, 1100. *f.* Occult philosophy, 178. *g.* Fine arts, 1179. *h.* Mechanical arts and trades, 89. *i.* Gymnastics, 171. *k.* Games, 36.
- IV. Belles Lettres.—*a.* Philology, 1495. *b.* Rhetoric, 220. *c.* Poetry, 4711. *d.* Prose fictions, 1173. *e.* Criticism, 509. *f.* Dialogues, 36. *g.* Epistles, 273. *h.* Polygraphists, 453. *i.* Collections and extracts, 116.
- V. History.—*a.* Prolegomena, 1866. *b.* Universal, ancient and modern history, 71. *c.* History of religion and superstition, 1841. *d.* Ancient history, 335. *e.* Modern history, 5705. *f.* Archæology, 3122.
- VI. Encyclopædias, journals, reviews, &c.

The figures above attached refer to the number of *works*, not of volumes, mentioned under each head in Brunet's Manual. Experience has shewn, in a library of more than 10,000 volumes, that they averaged 2½ volumes to a single work or title.

Each member of the Library Committee should give, in addition to his general duties, his attention to the formation or perfection of that branch of these divisions with which taste, opportunity, or education may have made him well acquainted.

In determining the probable extent of the accommodation to be provided for each branch of whatever division of the books may be adopted, the great point is to decide what is to be the general or particular *object* of the library in question, public or private; and if public, whether it is to be accompanied by a reading room, or whether the books are ever to leave the building, *i. e.*, to be a *lending* library. Libraries are not storehouses merely, but should be the *fittest* place of study, in which the overawing abundance of literary resources and of applicants for them, must secure that precision of working, and attention to the public, both in matter and form, which can never be attained in the secluded study of the German author, or in the turmoil of a French café.

Of course the greater the accessibility to a reader, the more restriction will there be as to the books in a library; the regulations as to the admission of books, require notice at some length. The recommendation to the librarian ought to carry some weight; it is always desirable to have a register for the titles of books that are wanted by the readers, with the understanding that they will be recommended for purchase, if a certain number of persons ask for them; sometimes a number, two, five, or ten, &c. if fixed beforehand in proportion to the extent of the library, will give a desirable freedom of choice.

Public libraries, to be successful, should be well supplied with new books, and this causes a difficulty in preventing the reading room from becoming a sort of club, which it ought not to be. The librarian may give every facility to those who want to acquire information or to improve themselves, but the reading room ought not to be merely a saloon to which people could go and spend five or six hours at leisure with the first book whose title they may remember; the setting apart therefore a room for reading periodicals, such as literary and scientific journals, &c., is a really grave question, and is not here recommended; the general reading room, if supplied like those of the British Museum and Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, with dictionaries of all sorts, the best editions and translations of classic authors and principal polygraphists, the elementary and general treatises upon the arts and sciences, the best works upon ancient and modern history both general and particular, topographical works, the principal voyages, the accademic collections, the blue books, and a gazette or annual register, with a few of the literary and scientific journals—will always be sufficiently amusing for a lounge in a public library; such a reading room is nearly a representation of the library; which ought to possess these large collections, such as memoirs of foreign societies, laws, &c., not