

LOAN OR CHARGING SYSTEM.

The primary requisites of any system for keeping a record of books borrowed in a public library, are speed, simplicity, and the minimum of trouble to the borrower. In some libraries readers are driven away by unnecessary and exasperating "red-tape"; and in others the efficiency of the library is sacrificed to the impatience of borrowers. Either extreme is in the long run fatal to the growth and efficiency of the library. And yet it is not always easy to attain that happy medium which should be the aim of every right-minded librarian. Borrowers are not always patient and reasonable—as instance the case of Mr. Carlyle, a ready referred to—and the temptation is doubtless often strong upon the well-meaning librarian to sacrifice accuracy and thoroughness upon the altar of popular favour.

The oldest of the various systems at present in use for charging books, is what is known as the Ledger System. In this system—which is widely used in English, Australian and Canadian libraries, as well as on the Continent,—the record of books borrowed and borrowers' names is kept in a ledger, each borrower having a separate page. When a book is taken out, the number is entered on the proper page, with the date, and when the book returns, the charge is cancelled. A day-book is frequently used with this system, for the sake of speedy charging. The advantages of the system are its permanent form, compactness, speed, and the fact that each borrower's record

do not pretend to cover the literature of the subject with any approach to exhaustiveness:—

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