

To the Librarian of the  
Peabody Institute Library,  
in the year 2002.

Greeting:—

What changes in library  
methods and administration  
will have taken place ere this  
comes to your hand are of  
course unknowable to me.

That they will be great is  
sure, and that methods now  
undreamed of will be used is  
probable. Long ago the now  
 vexed question of free access or  
non-free access to the shelves by

borrowers will have been solved. Centralization and co-operation will doubtless have accomplished much, perhaps by the establishment of great central libraries, from which other libraries will draw such works as by reason of rarity or lack of general interest they cannot afford to purchase. The germ of this idea already exists in the willingness to loan between libraries today, which is being done to quite an extent, to the manifest advantage of the smaller libraries.

Doubtless you will have

"troubles of your own", as I have mine, lack of shelf room and the present unsatisfactory system of arrangement and classification being my chief ones.

The obsolete "fixed location" <sup>System</sup> is still in use, the shelves being numbered and the books being arranged upon them by book numbers

Shelves

- 1 to 121 are assigned to Social Science, Phil. and Religion
- 140 to 240 to Literature and Essays.
- 241 to 299 } to Poetry & Drama.
- 930 to 949 }
- 300 to 418 to Fiction.
- 420 to 488 to Description & Travel.
- 489 to 549 to History.
- 550 to 599 to Biography.

600 to 699 to Science and Arts.  
800 to 900. to Foreign Languages  
and Miscellaneous.

Prior to my coming here no special effort seems to have been made to keep related books together that a book came under the head say of Social Science simply meant that it went to some shelf between 1 and 40, it did not matter much which, the consequence being that to day it is possible to find on one single shelf and side by side, books on Municipal Government, Crime, Labor, Taxation, Temperance, Slavery, Banking etc.

It is my earnest hope

to change all this at no distant day, by the adoption of the Dewey Decimal Classification, the most scientific system yet devised, reclassifying and recataloguing the entire library.

Lack of funds make this difficult, but it must come.

Additional shelf-room will have to be provided before many years, most probably by the erection of an iron stack upon either the east side or north end of the present building.

The library to-day employs no skilled assistants, my only

help coming from boys in the High School, two of whom are constantly on duty between 2 and 8 P.M., the hours during which the Library is open to the public. The classifying, cataloging and practically all the work except simply the charging and discharging of books falls upon the librarian alone.

Our circulation this year will reach 40,000, our population being 11,000, and we have \$600. available for the purchase of new books.

I have previously mentioned co-operation as a probable great

factor in future library work.

The first great stride in that direction was taken the past year by Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, in inaugurating the scheme of supplying at practically cost to all libraries desiring, printed card catalog cards of all current books as published, and for non-current books as fast as same are recatalogued in the Library of Congress.

The charge today is 2 cents for the first card of each title, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent for each duplicate.

As the work of rewriting our entire card catalog was already

under way this was of great interest to us, and we promptly began purchasing cards for books as purchased, and for our old books as fast as same are printed.

Copies of cards as now supplied are enclosed, as none of this original issue may survive to 2002, together with all labels, tickets charging slips book-plates etc. in use today

The call number on the catalog card is written in hard lead pencil to facilitate the change of number when a reclassification of the library is made.



A word as to our sister institution, the Eben Dale Sutton Reference Library: today our town is strictly a manufacturing community of a cosmopolitan character, proof of which is shown in the fact that seventeen different languages are spoken here today.

In such a town a library like this Reference Library is of course not widely used nor of much popular interest.

It contains today nearly 4,000 volumes, many of them rare and costly, its collection of

Americana is a good and growing one, as your generation will appreciate.

Should the character of our population change in the years that are to come, this Library will be much more appreciated and of more benefit in your day than in mine.

Lyman J. Osborn,  
Librarian.



