The Library Bureau.

In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Library Chronicle*, in October, 1888, I proposed the establishment in London of a Library Bureau, and roughly outlined the kind of work which I thought it might do. Among other things I suggested the following features :—

(1) A permanent exhibition of models, of library fittings and appliances, labels, forms, &c., &c. ; specimens of library bindings, of leathers, and of other covering stuffs.

(2) Lists of duplicate, surplus, and odd volumes from different libraries, the clerk of the bureau to carry out exchanges mutually profitable to those concerned.

(3) Libraries' lists of "Books Wanted," which booksellers would be invited to examine.

(4) Plans and drawings of libraries would be kept, and copies supplied. Carefully compiled statistics of everything relating to the cost and management of libraries would be prepared and kept up to date.

(5) *Arrangements would be made with the publishers by which copies of new books and editions would be kept on view.* In addition to this, there would be a well-selected bibliographical library, and a collection of publishers' catalogues, thus enabling book-buying deputations and librarians to make up their purchasing lists on the spot, after seeing the books and with every convenience for reference at hand.

It was a keen disappointment, not only to myself, but to the leading librarians throughout the country, that financial difficulties prevented this scheme from being realised, but I am delighted to find that what could not be done by librarians and amateurs, now promises to be a thorough success in the hands of capable business men, and that the financial stability of the founders of the British bureau now established at 10, Bloomsbury Street, London, is to be enforced by Mr. Cedric Chivers, as manager, who is well known to and trusted by the library world as a gentleman of energy and resource.

There can be no question that the most important and valuable feature of the library bureau will be the exhibition of newly-published books. At present librarians and other book-buyers have to depend upon the very limited and almost haphazard stocks of their respective booksellers (who cannot, under the modern exigencies of trade, afford to keep large stocks), and consequently many books, which if they could only be seen, would be promptly bought, are now deferred until by chance a second-hand copy turns up which enables the librarian to judge of its merits.

My original scheme provided that no books should be sold by the bureau, and I believe that this also will be the rule in the bureau now established. With this understanding the trade will promptly see that the bureau should prove an excellent friend to publishers and booksellers alike, and I entertain the most sanguine hopes for its permanent success.

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