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OUR STATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

The Illinois State Library School has been in existence at the University of Illinois just four years, but the school was established in 1893 at Armour Institute of Technology, Chicago. At the time of its establishment, there were Library schools in connection with the University of the State of New York, at Albany, with Pratt Institute, at Brooklyn, and with Drexel Institute, at Philadelphia, and it was thought appropriate to start similar work at the new technical school of the Middle west.

A high school course or its equivalent was required for entrance, and ten students were chosen by competitive examination. The course of instruction covered one year. At the close of the first year the course was doubled, the entrance requirements remaining the same, although college graduates were admitted without examination. At the end of four years, the school was transferred to the University of Illinois, two years of college work were required for entrance, and admission was granted to all who met the requirements.

Now at the close of four years more it is being urged to require a baccalaureate degree for entrance, it has 66 Seniors and Juniors taking all of their work in the Library School, and thirty or more preparing in the Freshman and Sophomore classes. Moreover, seventeen of the Juniors are college graduates, and the others come from Leland Stanford Jr. University on the West and from Smith, Wellesley and Vassar on the East, with representatives from the

principal colleges between.

The school began eight years ago in a room 50 x 60 ft. which was also the book room and the reading room of Armour Institute. Its equipment of books was about 10,000 volumes. It now occupies quarters in one of the most beautiful library buildings in the country erected by the State of Illinois at a cost of \$160,000. Its laboratories are the University library of about 50,000 volumes, and the Champaign public library of about 8,000 volumes.

The change from the city of Chicago with its large libraries to the interior with limited libraries has often been questioned, but the move has proven beneficial, as the success of the school depends upon the collection of books with which it is immediately connected, rather than upon the collections which it may consult at intervals for research work. The school is now near enough to Chicago to allow necessary visits. The greatest advantage, however, is the university atmosphere which gives students an incentive to higher work, and shows their own specialty in proper perspective.

The students now have experience in all kinds of college library work and public library work also, owing to cooperation with the Champaign public library, in the interest of the clubs and the schools. Each woman's club in Champaign and Urbana sends its program for the year to the Library School, where a reference list is made on each subject, specifying in which library the material is to be found. One very interesting and practical class exercise held in connection with this work was in charge of a member of the class who posed as the librarian of a public library. Each other

student represented a member of a woman's club who was anxious to receive some help in her club work, and the questions which were put to the librarian were very suggestive. The students also make lists for the various grades of the public schools.

The branch of the Champaign public library is entirely in charge of Library School seniors. Seniors also spend a definite time in the children's room of the Champaign public library where they develop their own ideas as to advertising methods, picture bulletins, decoration, reading lists, etc. Each student who is adapted to the work gives a talk to the children upon some timely subject, and invitations to these talks are posted in the schools. All special holidays are observed by bulletins and reading lists, and birthdays of distinguished people are called to the children's attention. This practical work averages two hours a day for two years, making four months of practical experience, counting eight hours a day. This is, however, more valuable, because more varied than if confined to four months.

Students are urged to independence in thought and action by a comparison of methods. The school has a large collection of blanks and forms illustrating administration in all parts of the country, and these are studied by subject. Problems in organization are assigned as class work, and each senior is placed in charge of a small squad of juniors for a limited time to test executive ability. Visits are made to Chicago libraries and allied institutions with each Senior class, and lectures are given at this time by specialists

in the city. For example, last spring Miss Starr lectured in her work shop, on Bookbinding, Mr. Way in his studio, on Modern private printing presses, Mr. Andrews at the John Crerar Library, on Printed catalog cards, Mr. Moss at the Chicago Institute, on Jail libraries, Mrs. Dixon at the University of Chicago, on Departmental libraries. In connection with these visits, students are allowed time to work in Chicago libraries on their theses and bibliographies, which are required for graduation. Last year, the theses formed chapters on the History of printing.

Another advantage to the school from its University connection is the cooperation of the professors in special bibliography. Throughout the two years, students read and review the leading new books and consider principles of selection. In addition to this, the specialists at the University contribute lectures outlining the development of their subjects, and calling attention to the leading authorities.

The class of books added to the University library gives excellent practice in difficult classifying and cataloging, and proves the need of the foundation of a college education including languages. The most common question is, what do the students find to study to take them two years. The answer is possibly not clear to a layman.

The instruction begins with the placing of an order, and follows the regular routine through adding the book to the library, classifying, cataloging, and shelf-listing it. The first year is mostly technical, the second year is advanced and comparative technical-work-

technical work with historic and bibliographic work predominating. Students consider broad questions affecting founding and government of libraries, library legislation, library architecture, library administration, traveling libraries, home libraries, and current problems in public and college library work. Then students consider methods of lending books to the public, the age at which children may use the library, the necessity of a guarantor for every borrower, the number of books allowed at one time, whether they may be renewed, if renewal shall be allowed by mail or by telephone, is it fair to reserve popular books, is it legitimate for a public library to rent duplicates of popular books, the amount of fines and methods of collecting them, the desirability of preventing duplication of expensive works by lending books between libraries, the effect upon public library circulation of such private enterprises as the Book lover's library, and many similar questions. Then binding is considered both as to materials and methods, and repairing is practically demonstrated. They study history of libraries by types and by countries, and history of printing and binding, illustrated by lantern slides.

All of this work requires maturity, a trained mind, and a broad general education. A baccalaureate degree should be required. If possible, the professional degree should be given to those only whose work ~~work~~ can be recommended. Students who take the prescribed Freshman and Sophomore years do not get enough of any one subject to give them either knowledge or training. Those who select for two years usually choose History, Literature and the languages, and

the discipline of mathematics and the sciences. Moreover, a college degree today means only four years in residence, with a passing grade.

This is not enough when the student is a graduate of a course preparing him for work with the public. The mere scholar will not succeed, the mere technical student will not succeed. The personal element must always have great weight. The student who has the social gift, other things being equal, will have the advantage over the recluse. Trustees applying for a librarian almost always ask about personal appearance and disposition. In the Illinois State Library School each instructor reports on each student's practical work under the following points in addition to a scholarship percentage: Spirit, Executive ability, Originality, Observation, Speed, Accuracy, Order, Neatness, and Attention.

Students are urged to keep informed upon current events as well as upon past history, to be progressive without being radical, to be sympathetic without being sentimental, to know the difference between a fact and a principle; in short to be natural members of their own communities, and not peculiar beings set apart.

Catharine R. Sharp

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