



An Introduction To Library Science

Pierce Butler

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LIBRARY SCIENCE by PIERCE BUTLER. FOREWORD: THE Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago was established in 1926 in response to a desire on the part of many librarians and organizations interested in education for librarianship that a library school should be provided in connection with one of America's great universities which would devote itself to advanced study and investigation in the field of librarianship. In urging the establishment of such a school its advocates were impressed with the rapidly increasing resources of American libraries and their consequent growing complexity. They were also convinced of the necessity of providing instruction in accord with the highest standards of modern scholarship in order that the most effective forms of library organization and administration might be insured. The rapid expansion of public, county, school, and special libraries also offered convincing evidence that the relationships of these organizations to society and government were of such a nature as to require consideration as comprehensive and scholarly as that given to the development and direction of social and economic institutions. The University of Chicago, in assuming responsibility for the development of such a school, has constantly kept these objectives in mind. Accordingly, the Graduate Library School, established on this basis, has undertaken to realize these objectives through the organization of its curricula, the methods of investigation which it employs, and the correlation of its work with that of other schools and departments of the University which seem to have something of value to contribute to the study of librarianship. The School has also undertaken the publication of the Library Quarterly through which members of its staff and student body, librarians, and others may present the results of investigations or record significant developments in the various fields of library interest. In order to carry this work further, the School herewith begins the publication of a series of studies in Library Science in which will appear from time to time the results of more extensive studies than can appropriately be presented through the pages of the Library Quarterly. The present volume, An Introduction to Library Science is the first of these studies to appear in the series. It has been prepared by Dr. Pierce Butler, formerly of the staff of the Newberry Library and now Professor of Bibliographical History in the Graduate Library School. As the title indicates, it is concerned with the consideration of librarianship as a science. It should be pointed out, however, that the title will prove misleading if it is interpreted too literally. The volume is not an elementary handbook which deals with library rules and procedures. On the contrary, through the essays which constitute the volume, Dr. Butler sets forth the essential nature of science as he conceives it, and shows how the problems of the modern library as an important social institution may be studied in accord with its spirit and methods. In this respect it reflects the approach made by the School to librarianship and the attitude assumed by it in the study and investigation of library problems. That many librarians will not agree that librarianship can properly be studied in this way is to be taken for granted. Differences of opinion on this point have already been expressed and will continue to be. It is the hope of Dr. Butler and of the School, however, that while this diversity of opinion will continue to exist, those who hold such a contrary opinion will accord his presentation a sympathetic hearing...

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