



Gentl

Philad^a 2 Dec: 1809

Permit me to mention a circumstance which operates as an inconvenience & detriment to the Shareholders of the Library Company.

By the rules of the institution, if any person shall ^{keep} a book beyond a certain period, he incurs a fine; & I doubt not that this regulation is strictly & impartially enforced: yet, to my certain knowledge, it ^{does} not remedy the evil: for, it is a notorious fact, that books, & new books especially, are often kept far beyond the times allowed by the rules of the company. The consequence is, that it is very difficult to get a new work of any celebrity from the library under a year or more after it had been procured: nor is this all:— after getting a 1st vol. & keeping it the full time; the reader, not unfrequently, may ask again & again for the next vol: without being able to procure it — & so of subsequent vols —

I might suggest, that gross abuses may be practised agt the institution by such improper detentions of books — but this is not necessary on the present occasion: since my object is simply to suggest a mode by which the evil already mentioned may be done away, or,



at least, greatly diminished. I take it for granted, that the fines now collected are not to be put into competition with the privations & inconveniences that are felt under the present system; & I would also premise, that it is better to prevent delinquencies, than to punish them: especially, too, as it may frequently happen, that the fault is of a venial nature; perhaps, arising from the treachery of memory.

Suppose, then, that provision was made for serving notices on all who did not return the books which they borrowed within one week after the stipulated times for which they were loaned; & that, if the same were not returned within days from the date of service of such notice, the books so kept back were charged to those who detained them.

This to be distinctly stated in the notices; which, perhaps, had best be circular. The expence of service, in addition to the usual fine, to be charged to the persons to whom they were addressed. These ^{notices} might easily be conveyed thro the medium of the post office - Only, in that case, it might be proper for the person who puts them into the office to be prepared to prove that he had done so.

By this plan, books which might be detained,

could be soon replaced by the Directors without expense to the institution - & farther, if any book so detained could not be replaced; it might be competent for the Directors to take such farther order as to them appeared ^{best calculated} ~~best adapted~~ to cure the evil thence arising - Either, by declaring the share of the person who withheld such book forfeited until it was returned, or replaced; or, in such other mode as they deemed best adapted to promote the welfare of the Institution.

I respectfully submit these hints to your consideration, without preface or apology; believing, that, so far as they may appear worthy of notice, they will receive it; & more than this I ought not to expect.

May, I, however, be indulged in one farther suggestion; were one set of the Reviews to be always kept in the Library, this would be a great convenience: these are works which are referred to, rather than read; & very often, one or two articles are all that attract the particular notice of many persons - I remain, Gentl

Yours with sincere respect

James Taylor.

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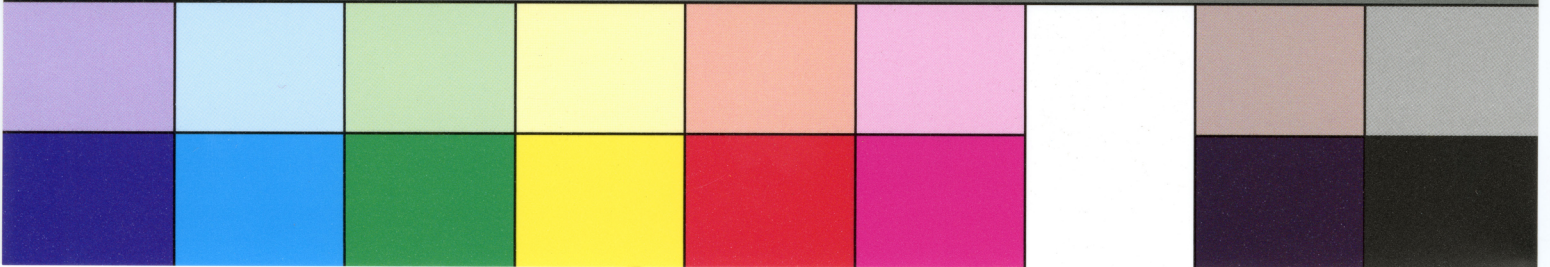


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James Fay for 2 Dec 1864

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*Directors of the Library Company
of Philadelphia*