

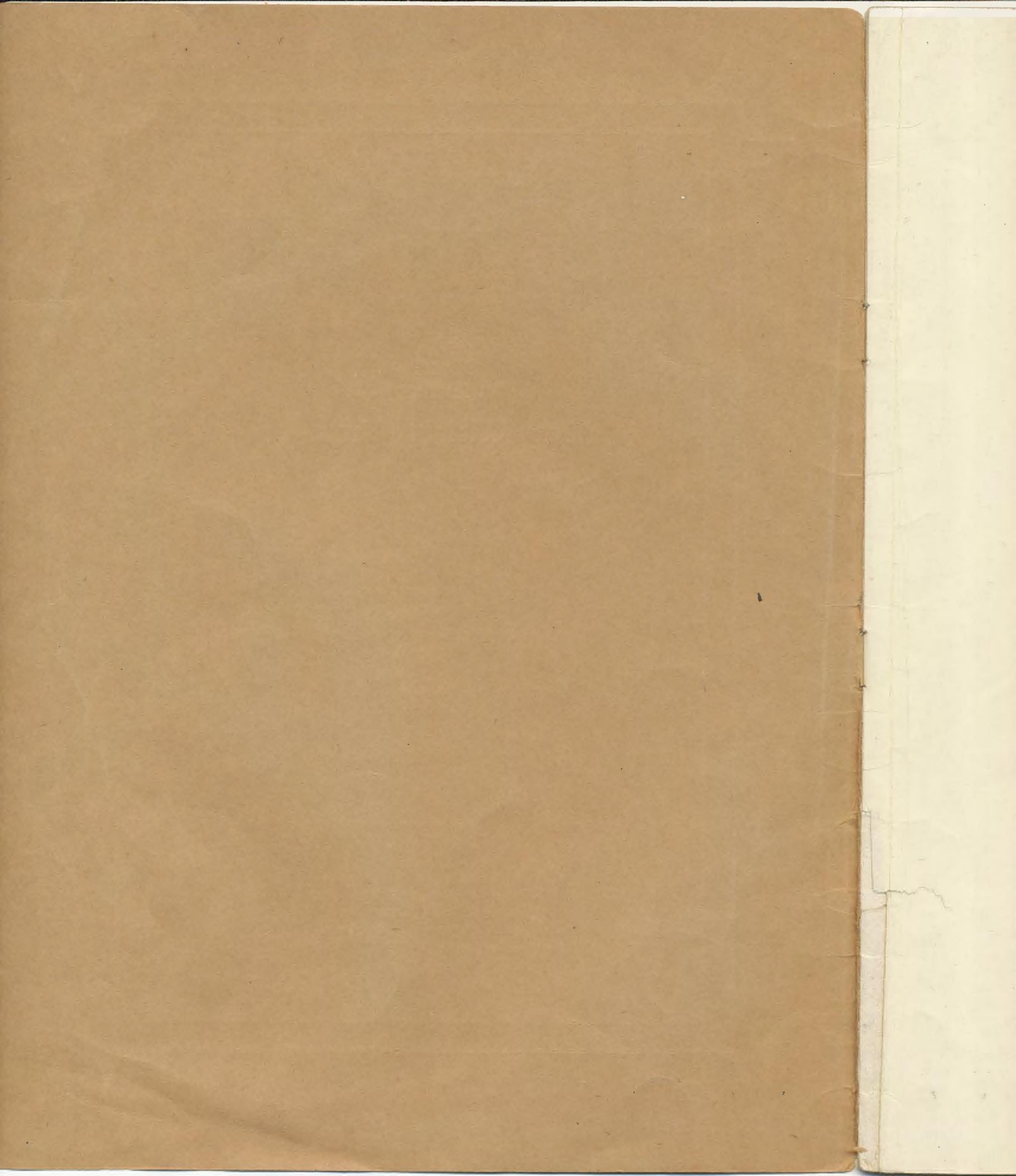
# New York Library Club

Meeting  
In Memory of  
Mary Wright Plummer

Stuart Room  
New York Public Library  
Thursday Evening  
November Sixteenth  
1916

*Participating*

American Library Association  
New York Library Association  
New York Public Library  
Library School of the New York Public Library  
New York State Library School  
Pratt Institute  
Library of Congress







Mary Wright Plummer

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## A LIBRARY LIFE

A SYMPOSIUM IN HONOR OF THE MEMORY AND IN GRATITUDE FOR  
THE WORK AND INFLUENCE OF

### Mary Wright Plummer

September marks the Earth's first slumbering  
But Nature sleeps for strength to build anew,  
And ere the last leaf falls and Summer's thru,  
The ground is pregnant with the unborn Spring.  
We will not mourn without remembering,  
That you who long have worked so well and true  
To do the things your brave heart bade you do,  
Can never cease to be a living thing.

The earthly time allotted Man is brief,  
And we are many who with heartfelt grief  
Now mourn what seems the passing of a friend.  
But years to come shall echo with your praise  
And bring fond memories of bygone days,—  
For friendship such as yours can never end.

FORREST B. SPAULDING.

THERE is a small group of members of the American Library Association to which it owes most of its ideals and much of the guidance which has brought such success to the Library movement in this country.

In this group Mary Wright Plummer held a prominent place. What would it mean if we were to eliminate from its history all she accomplished—all she did for library school training, all her professional papers and text books and, what has counted most of all, the inspiration and enthusiasm with which she passed the torch to her pupils, so many of whom are now

in the front rank of library workers all over the country.

It is not possible to over-estimate our loss, but I would rather dwell upon the thankfulness we feel for having had some association with the richness of her life. It was a revelation of her wide friendliness to hear at the last conference of the Association so many expressions of high regard and affection which came with the expressions of sorrow because of her absence.

So much of what she did, and so much of what she was, still lives abundantly, that it will be a long time before we realize that she is not still with us.

It is a great satisfaction to acknowledge for the American Library Association our indebtedness to her influence, which will long be a very part of library work.

WALTER L. BROWN,

President, American Library Association.

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This symposium includes addresses, revised and condensed, made at the memorial meeting in the Stuart Gallery of the New York Public Library Nov. 16, 1916, of which a report is printed elsewhere. The last portrait of Miss Plummer, which was taken at the close of 1915 and published in the LIBRARY JOURNAL for January, 1916, is duplicated in this number, and may replace the earlier print as frontispiece in the bound volume, or be used for framing.

## SOURCES AND OUTGIVINGS

WE are to do honor and to give thanks for a friend, a helper, and a leader in a great profession; and that honor can best be done by emphasis on the work and the influence which her name means to all of us. I shall therefore not ape the genealogical fiend who is a bane in our libraries, or delve into biography and bibliography in particulars, but an American as well as a Chinaman may honor and revere his forbears, and a student of man must emphasize heredity and environment in the making of character. It is good to know that Mary Wright Plummer came of Quaker and pioneer stock, and that she was born—" 'twas sixty years since"—in that quiet Quaker town of Richmond, Indiana, which has sent forth so many men and women of worth into the larger world. Her quiet manner came from the Quaker stock, her energy and power from the pioneer stock. As you have journeyed down from among the hills, along a river made up of the rills from the mountainside you have come sometimes to a lovely lake, calm and unruffled, mirroring on its placid surface the beauty of sky and shore. Then as you come further down the valley you note where the reserve force from that reservoir is transformed into power, and in these modern days you see next those almost unseeable filaments which convey this power to far-off and varied fields of industry. It seems to me that this is peculiarly a simile and a symbol of our friend and her life, her work with its far-reaching influence, silent and invisible, which all of us know, which we in part only represent in this gathering here, and which will go on far beyond the life which is closed, the life of any of us now and here present.

It was not until the plentitude of womanhood, in fact, until more than half of her years as we now count them, had passed, that Miss Plummer came to her life-calling in this great library profession, which she honored, and in which we have honored her. But earlier she had come into touch with the literary life, for the magazines, at least early in the '80's, were publishing poems from her pen, which were collected

afterward, tho but fifteen of them, in the charming privately printed volume of 1896. Those poems show a depth of thought and feeling, a breadth of view and vision, a height of poetic and felicitous expression that mark her as a real poet; and the few poems reflect very wonderfully the currents of life and of death, of doubt and of faith—those many elements which made her soul. That lovely poem "My own," in which she voiced the tender yearning to touch and mother little children, which is a part of true womanhood, prophesied her interest for children in the library. That exquisite sonnet on life which reaches so high and feels so deeply; and too, the poem on the "Conquest of the air," not there published, but which it is proposed to include in a reprint volume, in which she expresses dread lest the messenger of the air should not be the dove of peace, but the instrument of war—these spring from the deeps of her mind. Of course, with her Quaker soul she longed for peace, and yet she was ready to do her part in any valiant fight that might call for her, in any work which she undertook to do, and to which she rose, calling others to the cause. And these poems are but the expression of the great soul facing such life work.

She was a pioneer, as you well know, in library work, for it was only the pioneers who became members of that first class of 1888 in the first library school which called her and fitted her for the library profession. Before the Friends Association, and later before this very club she read, in 1897, a paper which was reprinted in the LIBRARY JOURNAL for November of that year, and which prophesied in a wonderful way the purposes and the methods of the children's library of today, in a development which then only the highest imagination could reach. In her library work, as you know, she reaped all honors of achievement and of fulfillment and of the highest usefulness. It was in 1890, after a year at St. Louis, and after her first visit to Europe, that she came to us in Brooklyn, and became associated with the Pratt Institute Library, where she remained either as the Director of the Library or of the Library

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School until she came in 1911 to her great work in shaping the Library School of the New York Public Library. In 1891, she was a member of that first party to California, one of the bright and shining members of that pilgrimage, and out of that journey, in a visit, I think, to the Mission of San Juan Capistrano, came a charming little story which represents one of her achievements in another field of literature. I need only recall that she was president of the New York Library Club, of the Long Island Library Club, which was for a time separated from this, of the New York State Association, and of the American Library Association; and even our own country was not the only field for her work.

She was in every way great, a great woman, a great friend, and a great librarian. She was also in her way a great scholar, for she mastered not only French and German, but Italian and Spanish, and made herself so sympathetic with the latter country as to compile the volume from the modern Spanish novelists on "Contemporary Spain," as well as to compile for the children the "Stories from the Chronicle of the Cid." She was a great traveler also, and from her travels in Mexico and Canada came her two books of travel for children, "Roy and Ray in Mexico" and "Roy and Ray in Canada"—not great books, but happy and useful books for the little people she loved so well. You perhaps all know her "Hints to small libraries" and her "Seven joys of reading." It is impossible, however, to follow into the several fields of her work the many details of her achievements. All that and more will be told you, I think, by those who will come to you reflecting the shining from the many facets of her many-sided life.

There is always one thought present in my mind when I come to think of such a life as this. It is the doctrine of the apostolic succession translated into the secular world. In this our friend was a most shining example. We often hear the classic simile of passing the torch on from one to the other. Perhaps in these modern days the simile transforms itself, as I have suggested, into those invisible currents which reach far afield, which no man can see, and

which no man can to the end measure. But I may mention one or two specific instances which will show you how much her life meant in such relation. In this palace of the people, the greatest public library of the greatest library system in the world, where she did the last of her great work, we may well remember that it was thru her suggestion that the present Director of the library made choice of the library calling and ultimately came to this place in association with Dr. Billings, whom we last honored in this room. It was from her lips that he learned of the library profession, and found in it his true calling in turn. And when he went to Pittsburgh, there he started the school for children's librarians, as a specialization from the library school which she had developed from the training class at Pratt Institute. How much that means in library work, this first school for children's librarians in Pittsburgh, you know better than I. But there is a still more striking example. Among the students in Miss Plummer's classes was Miss Wood, whom you know as the Librarian of Boone College in China, a lighthouse for that dark empire, an empire ready to receive, not that civilization of the west which comes by force of arms, but that higher and finer civilization which this profession and this building and Miss Plummer and Miss Wood represent. The Boone College Library became at once the source of library inspiration for China; and last year Miss Plummer had the pleasure of graduating from this school Mr. Seng, who had no sooner got back to China with immense ideals, immense hopes, immense purpose for the deliverance of his people, then came Mr. Hsü who is now a student in this school. There you will see has been a leading out from this one woman, thru one person after another, so that the antipodes are really to be helped and guided in large measure by her influence. Everywhere thru the library world she is known and remembered, for in 1900 she represented us in the library councils of the Paris Exposition. Everywhere in Europe, she had friendships as with Professor Biagi in Florence, her intimate friend, and with others in England, in

France and in Scandinavia. All these count as her friends, catching up her inspiration and extending her work. It is a radiation of influence, this true apostolic succession that I would emphasize to you as the real meaning of this life which is closed after a generation of work.

I speak of the radiation of influence but I think that in her case we should speak rather of the radiance of influence. For it was a shining light which went forth from her into the dark corners, into all parts of the library work, into all parts of the library world. That is a great thing to leave behind. We can scarcely hope for ourselves any greater achievement, any greater thing to leave behind us when we go; and now that she is gone we do not so much mourn her as we rejoice, not in her perfected work, but in the work which will always be perfecting thru the many people who follow her and honor her. Now in her own words, "Life has loosed these fingers from her gown," and she is no more with us. We may well remember the faith that was hers, as expressed in the poems and the life work which were her self. And as I leave this presence, I can do no more than hope for each librarian who is here that he or she, especially in relation with the children, who are the wards of this library profession, may cherish and fulfill the ideals which our friend has left to us.

R. R. BOWKER.

#### AT THE FIRST LIBRARY SCHOOL

THE occasion is notable in that no less than six distinct associations, to all of which Miss Plummer belonged, are vying with one another to do fit honor to her memory. Of these six, three are associations of librarians in the city, in the state and in the nation. The others are the alumni of three library schools. Speaking for the first of these schools, in which she was a pupil, the part that falls to me is to recall her student life.

Her early years had been spent in Richmond, Ind. From a child she was more than fond of books. One of her family speaks of her as a "book hungry" little girl, and adds, that by special dispensation she was admitted to the privileges of the public

library of the town as soon as it was opened. She spent a year in special study at Wellesley College in 1881 and '82. Whether she came in touch with the special library interest that we know to have been active at that place at about that time, we do not know. For the following four years her home was with her family in Chicago and she was busy in giving private lessons. One day she saw an advertisement—it must have been in a Chicago paper—of a school of library economy soon to be opened at Columbia College. "There," she exclaimed, "that is what I'd like to do," and at once, she wrote to New York for particulars.

There were 40 applications for admission, from among which 20 were accepted; three men and seventeen women; and Miss Plummer became a member of the first class in the first school.

The school for library training was an experiment. For years it had been a hopeful dream gradually taking shape. The men behind the great library movement were planning for four things: 1, a journal; 2, an association; 3, a school and 4, a state department to promote and supervise library extension. The journal and the association were secured in 1876. In 1883, Mr. Dewey became chief librarian of Columbia College and asked the trustees to establish a library school. In 1884, they consented to do so on three conditions:

- 1, that it should cost the college nothing;
- 2, that instruction be given by the library staff in addition to their usual duties;
- 3, that the school be held in the library with such accommodations as might be found there.

The librarian was in earnest, the conditions were accepted and notice given that in two years the new department would be opened. This would have been in the fall of 1886. But a fresh obstacle appeared in the form of a great and unreasoning dread of introducing women to the college and the plans, so far advanced, were warmly contested at the last moment on that account. But reason prevailed and the school opened in the first week of January, 1887, for a term of three months.

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school a rather crude affair. They had lectures enough but they had little to work with beyond the skill and earnestness of their teachers and their own enthusiasm aided by the college library and a few catalogs and bibliographies. They brought their chairs into one alcove to listen to lectures and carried them back to tables in other recesses and corners where they practiced the library hand and struggled with accession sheets and card slips. The rules for cataloging were not so well settled as they have since become and many were the questions and debates over technical details. Instructors and pupils came into close relations with each other and the students, being anxiously desirous of learning, there can be no question that they learned.

We have on record, in addition to the annual report of the director, four printed statements regarding the work of that first term. The A. L. A. was profoundly interested. The school had been discussed on its platform for four or five years and there was a committee to watch, examine and report upon the progress and character of the school. At the summer meeting of 1887 at Thousand Islands, the committee reported. Each of the three members, Mr. Green of Worcester, Mr. Foster of Providence and Miss James of Wilkesbarre had visited the school. Miss James had spent two weeks with them. With one voice they approved and praised the school, for its thoroughness, its breadth and the spirit of enthusiasm which prevailed. Mr. Green, feeling that some slight criticism was due, ventured to say that the atmosphere seemed to be "slightly feverish."

In order to present to the association a more complete picture, a student was then introduced. Miss Plummer had taken her rank as leader of her class and, with that clear simple way of writing, of which she was mistress, she told the convincing story. "Perhaps," she began, "no body of instructors ever had a more expectant class or one more ignorant of the subject to be entered upon. . . . It is almost a wonder that the ferment of energy and enthusiasm with which we listened to and attempted to follow our instructions did not burst out

the walls of the superannuated building. It was a clear case of new wine in old bottles." She described the several items of the work done and the wonderful spirit shown by the students, adding a word to be remembered. "One feeling," she said, "was common to the class, that, whatever place and whatever division of labor might fall to our lot, we should not be satisfied with less than our best work, now that we had a standard. With the untried enthusiasm of tyros we even yearned for small libraries in straitened circumstances that we might show how much could be done with a little." That spirit of devotion which she then expressed and afterward taught is still the glory of the library work.

The expected term of three months was found insufficient and, on unanimous request of the class, was extended to four months. In the following October, a class of eleven members including nine of the original class of 20, began their senior course of seven months, accompanied by a junior class of 20. Miss Plummer, in her senior year, was also an instructor. One of that junior class, Miss Underhill of the Utica Public Library, has contributed the following letter:

"My recollections of Miss Plummer as instructor are not so distinct as are my remembrances of her personality and her earnestness and enthusiasm. I remember seeing her in frequent consultations with Miss Cutler over disputed cataloging problems and our cards frequently bore red ink traces of her careful scrutiny.

"We used to corral her occasionally when we were struggling with joint authorship, 'sees' and 'see alsos,' the difference between editors and compilers and other problems of equal mystery, because she had a way of making clear such troublesome and bewildering things. All this was in the library room, a part of the old college, in one of the funny little alcoves.

"Her own desk stood in the college library proper not far from the horribly-respected classed catalog, filled with cards of various hues and many colored inks, and close to the shelves weighted down by all the fearful bibliographical tools: and

there again we would refer to her in our puzzled moments, finding her always ready to help.

"Then, too, I know I liked to ask her questions because she was good to look at and always wore pretty clothes.

"There were shelves given to the new books, and I recall how frequently she was to be seen there between duties and after hours. In fact, she is the one, after Miss Cutler and my own special companions, who gave to those early days much of their interest and lent to them happy recollections, not so much for what she did or said but just by virtue of what she was."

At the close of the school year, Miss Plummer was called into the service of the public library in St. Louis and there spent two years as cataloger. Then she came to Brooklyn to the Free Library of Pratt Institute and took up anew the work of training for librarianship; and ever after, when a manual on that special subject was needed, there was no one else who could write so good a statement, so clear, definite and convincing as Miss Plummer wrote. Her very name seemed to stand for thoroughness and for training for that or any other valuable service. She will always be remembered as one who could not be satisfied with anything less than her best work.

WILLIAM R. EASTMAN.

THE LIFE INTIMATE—AT PRATT INSTITUTE

AND then she came to Pratt Institute! It was in the fall of 1890. There was no actual position for her to fill, but she was considered such valuable material that the Institute secured her with the understanding that she should make a place for herself by assisting Miss Miller in the detailed management of the library and by helping Miss Healy in the direction of the library and in the organization and conduct of a class for the training of librarians. In these ways she spent four years, and so well did she do her work and with such skill and tact did she handle a difficult situation that at the end of that period she was appointed to the headship of the library and the library school and was given a year's leave of absence for rest and study

to fit herself more adequately for her new duties. That year, 1894-1895, she spent in Italy. It was, I think, the most delightful period of her life. The charm of an old civilization, the delight of rare companionships, the joy of leisure, and the anticipation of the new opportunities before her were hers, and she never tired of living over again in memory those happy days.

Miss Healy left to be married in the summer of 1895 and, in the September of that year, Miss Plummer returned to the Institute to her new duties and to a place on the Institute faculty.

Mr. Charles Pratt had his own ideas of what an educational institution should be like, and I am sure that no one ever came nearer having a right conception. His theory was that the best way to organize a great school was to put up a building of mill construction, whose outside walls were built in such a way as to stand up by themselves, without the help of interior partitions, so that internal arrangements of floor space could be changed with every wind and wave of educational doctrine. Into this box, he proposed to put just as many men and women of strong personality, ability and genius as he could hire, hoping that, left to themselves, they would work out—even if it were by a method that would put to shame the famous Kilkenny cats—a school with a purpose, a plan and an achievement. He builded better than he knew.

Into this bit of history in the making Miss Plummer came to play no insignificant part. Pratt Institute was young in those days, but it was a lusty infant and taxed its guardians to their utmost.

The members of the faculty met Miss Plummer with a cordial welcome. She was known to them all and had already commended herself to them thru her work in the library. "Helen is my friend and Dorothy's Peter's, but Aunt Mary is everybody's friend," a little kindergarten child said to me the other day, and so Miss Plummer was "everybody's friend."

*Art* claimed her for its own; *Domestic Science* looked for sympathy and comprehension to so thoro a student and so excellent a housekeeper; *Engineering* knew

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that she at least was intelligent enough to understand the value of the expert; the *Kindergarten* felt secure of her co-operation because of her love of children and her interest in general education; while *Domestic Art*, delighting in her interest in suitable and pretty clothes felt certain of justice at her hands. She helped them all. She bought books for their special lines of work; she hunted up needed information; she made reading lists; she lent a sympathetic ear to tales of trouble and of joy, and she gave helpful advice as opportunity offered. She was very wise and just and very generous. In short, her office became a sort of clearing house for all departments. A picture of that so-called office—it was really nothing but a roll-top desk crowded in behind the stack—comes to me as I speak. I recall distinctly how it looked when I first saw it. Mr. Pratt took me to her after hours. She looked up from her writing and welcomed him with her frankly friendly smile, hanging up her glasses on her little gold hook with a quick movement that was very characteristic. She listened to Mr. Pratt's explanation of who I was and what was expected of me. . . . I, too, had been called to make a place for myself . . . and when he added "I want you to take care of her and help her," she took my hand in her two exquisite little hands and looked at me out of her deep brown eyes and I knew—oh, wonderful experience—that I had found a friend. Her adoption of me was no perfunctory manner. For a year I lived in her home and I always—even after I had a home of my own—carried the key to her apartment in my pocket. My summer vacations, too, were spent with her for many, many years. This makes it hard for me, at this time, to separate the professional from the personal in the memories that crowd upon me.

The new Pratt Library building was a hole in the ground when Miss Plummer came back from Italy in 1895. In the spring of 1896 it was a glorious reality. She had been consulted in regard to its plan before she went abroad, and she had full charge of its final arrangements and of the purchase of its equipment. To those

of us who know that library and love it, it seems as if there never were a building so well adapted to its purpose and so charming in its atmosphere. It was the first library to have a children's room and I remember how we all sat in the little chairs to see if they were child-high or child-low, and how we stole peeps into fairy-tales when we should have been about more grown-up business. It was, too, I think the first of the public libraries to set apart so adequate an art-reference collection for general use. In these two new developments, Miss Plummer took an especial interest and pride, rejoiced, too, in the sunny quarters provided for the library school, and the students, who had passed a sort of Mahomet's-coffin type of existence between the literature class-room on the fifth floor and the cataloging department in the basement were glad to find rest and a local habitation.

Miss Plummer blossomed in her new environment and the library and the school developed with her. She insisted on high standards of work. The public was inspired and helped; students were taught to use books; and the library school pupils were given a vision of their profession that sent them out into the world equipped for a wonderful service to their generation.

Miss Plummer had the gift of vision and the practicality to make her dreams come true. In fact, her first impulse upon grasping an idea was to do something to put it into practice. I remember, one fall evening, meeting a chestnut vender, on my way home. It was the end of a glorious day. A marvelous sunset came tumbling up the Lafayette avenue hill, bringing the lure of the autumn and the woods in its wake. When I came in to her, I said, "Isn't this the time of year for a trip up the Hudson and a week-end walk in the Catskills?" Then such an evening as we had, talking about the great, wonderful out-of-doors. She read prose and poetry—and how she could read!—I went to bed perfectly satisfied. What actual experience in field or wood could have compared in any way with that treat of rare memories, wonderful companionship, and vivid imaginings? Can you understand my tumble to earth

the next afternoon when, upon my return from work, I found her at her desk sitting in the midst of time tables, maps of the Catskills, and a boarding house list which she had secured from the Brooklyn *Eagle*? If it was a good thing to sigh for the hills, it was right to take steps to get to them. That Friday the Hudson River boat took us to a week-end that is blessed in my store-house of happy memories. However, one learns by experience, and, after that, I never talked to her of a thing I wasn't really willing to do.

That was what she did for us all. She made us ashamed, if we failed to make a constant effort to make real all of our hopes, our visions, and our plans. She herself was never lazy, never self-indulgent, and never too discouraged to work on.

I never knew a more resourceful person. You could not put her in a position from which she would not think of some plan by which she might extricate herself and all those who put their trust in her. We found ourselves counting upon her in emergencies, still it was with a little surprise that I saw Mr. Perry—in that little fifth-floor office where he, Miss Plummer, Miss Avery, Mr. Hopkins, Miss Beth Hendrickson, and I worked upon the *Pratt Institute Monthly*—take scissors to the galley-proof and cut a word into two parts, and hear him ask Miss Plummer for a substitute word, having five letters and ending in a "g"! I can commend these early copies of the *Pratt Institute Monthly* to you. They are full of worthwhile articles; alive with new ideas; and are printed—thanks to Mr. Perry—in a form that delights the eye.

Not only thru the *Monthly*, but in other ways, Miss Plummer came into the general life of the Institute. She was our "bell sheep"—we sent her ahead of us out into the world to represent us, hoping that the world would judge us by the impression that she made.

She wore herself out in her efforts to interest her fellow-workers in what we all

considered her too Utopian schemes for the social life of the Institute. She longed to put the students in touch with all the wonderful life of a great city and to give them all the cultural opportunities possible during their brief stay with us. But it was the beginning she made and the vision she showed us that has now taken definite shape at Pratt Institute in the Men's Club, the Women's Club, the Rest House, the Free Lecture Courses, the Concerts, the Neighborhood Settlement and the regular morning chapel services.

She longed for a wise satisfying social life not only for the Institute but for her friends, and she never gave up the hope that she could help to make such a life possible. She opened her charming home freely in her efforts to realize her ideals. Some of her social gatherings, of course, were pathetic failures, but some were great successes. She never seemed discouraged or elated. She just kept on, believing that if a thing were worth accomplishing it was worth working for. I shall never forget one of the successful parties, when I chaperoned her and Mr. Crothers at luncheon and listened to talk that was like the *Atlantic Monthly* come to life.

Her conversation was always an inspiration. I have never known anyone who habitually expressed herself so clearly and in such faultless English. She believed, too, that everyone could talk, and talk well, if they would be honest and give voice to their first-hand thoughts, and if they were not too lazy to look after their choice of words. She herself was vitally interested in all topics, and she knew how to draw people out. Her failure-parties came when she made the mistake of asking more than *one* guest and providing no adequate supply of geniuses to look after the surplus.

She was always so vital, so alive, so persistent, that, when she gave herself to a person or to a cause, something was sure to happen.

We were sitting, one afternoon, at the foot of the lower fall at Bush Hill, and I had been thinking of her tremendous vitality, when suddenly she turned to me and asked—"Do you really believe in personal immortality?" I told her I did, and then

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she said, "What is to you the 'unanswerable argument for such a belief?'" I looked into those wonderful, deep brown eyes of hers and answered, "You are." "I think it was Emerson," I continued, "who said, 'you may not be immortal, but I am,' but I am far more ready to say, 'I may not be immortal, but you are.' I could never think of you as annihilated or absorbed." She made no further comment, but started up the long climb ahead of us. When we came to the corner of the Cresco Road, "The London Miss James" and "The Wilkes-Barre Miss James" were waiting to carry us off to a porch tea and an evening of talk under a starlit sky. Several years after, when The London Miss James and The Wilkes-Barre Miss James had both left us and stepped out into the unknown, Miss Plummer recalled to me our conversation. She spoke of the two friends whom we had lost, of their dominating personalities, and ended by saying, "Such folk make the 'unanswerable argument,' after all."

So, to-night, let us rejoice that we cannot think of her as dead. Surely in some other realm she is more alive than we ever knew her to be. Our sorrow is not for her—but we grieve that in Pratt Institute, here in the New York Public Library, and in the various organizations that are represented here to-night, we shall have her no more.

It seems to me that this solemn hour should be to each one of us who had the privilege of knowing her an hour of re-consecration. May we not make for her a form of earthly immortality by keeping alive here in our midst the ideals for which she stood. She loved this great city of her adoption; she longed to see its institutions rise to their greatest possibilities; she looked forward to the time when its home-life should be simple and fine; when its amusements should be uplifting and sane; when its public life should be pure; and its social life genuine and inspiring.

To make all this possible she did what she could—surely we, who have known her, cannot now be satisfied to do less than our best.

CAROLINE WEEKS BARRETT.

#### STATE-WIDE INSPIRATION

It was Stevenson who said "There are just two reasons for the choice of any way of life. The first is an inbred taste in the chooser, and the second some high utility in the industry selected." The traditions to which Miss Plummer was heir made inevitable her interest in the freedom, the rights, the equal opportunities for work of the women of America; and her keen and active mind, her broad vision, her fine integrity of character, made certain that she would not hide her talents in a napkin, and that the industry she selected should indeed have high utility. Her wide human sympathies, her rare appreciation of literature, her vision of the possibilities before the library movement, made librarianship appeal to her. We are fortunate that our profession had for thirty years the benefit of her reflective, yet keenly perceptive and creative mind, her quiet spirit, her ideals, so fully realized in her own life, her strong personality.

She was one of the few with sufficient insight to survey and plan the roads thru the wilderness, that most of us can only help to build and repair. But her life will surely inspire some among us to energy and even to a measure of wisdom, in the cause to which she gave herself.

Miss Plummer's influence was more than national, but we in New York are peculiarly fortunate that here among us she lived and worked. We, of our own experience, appreciate her value and benefit by her life. The high standards she set for herself and so nobly attained, the quiet power of her thought and personality, have touched us all. Those who enjoyed the rare privilege of her friendship have received a special inspiration that must tell in their own lives.

Miss Plummer was undoubtedly more closely affiliated with the local library club and the national association than with the state association. But, nevertheless, one perceives in studying the history of the State Association that her thought and action have profoundly influenced its work during the last fifteen years.

She became a member in 1890, the year of its organization. Until the "library week" was started at Lake Placid, in 1900,

the regular annual meetings were for the most part up-state affairs, and the work, outside of the meetings themselves, was almost wholly confined to the upper and the western counties. In the winter of 1895 and for several years thereafter, the association held joint meetings in New York with the New York Library Club, at many of which Miss Plummer was active. At the 1896 joint meeting she read a paper describing the new library building of Pratt Institute, and exhibited building plans. It is interesting to us, who know so well the charm, clearness and force of Miss Plummer's writing, that the secretary reported that the paper "was admirably written, the technical subjects handled with clearness and simplicity, and tautology avoided in dealing with similar details." This recalls the fact that the building she was describing was the first library to include a children's room as part of the original plan, and that it was she who first recognized the need of special training for work with children.

She was usually in attendance at the state meetings after 1900, and always the centre of groups of librarians, who were devoted to her. She served year after year on the resolutions and nominating committees. In 1905 she was elected president. For months before the Twilight Park meeting in 1906 she was in Mexico, and returned just in time to preside. As a program maker Miss Plummer showed marked ability. Those which she planned for the New York Library Club, the Long Island Library Club, and the American Library Association, when she served as president of these organizations, were notable. The program for the Asbury Park meeting last June is a remarkably fine piece of work, showing most careful and intelligent consideration, and constructive ability of a high order. Her address as president at Twilight Park, on the "Functions of a state library association" was an achievement; the sort of address which clarifies everybody's ideas, recommends a definite program of action and puts every one to work. It is interesting to note that at the close of the meeting the Executive Board took definite steps to

carry out every one of the plans she outlined in her address, and many of them have been followed in the state work to this day.

One direct result was the survey which the State Library made of the libraries of the state the following year, an account of which was published in the third annual report of the Education Department, and later reprinted separately. One idea which she developed in her address was the need of library training in normal schools, that teachers might more efficiently manage school libraries and direct the reading of children. Miss Plummer was thereafter, for some years, the head of a committee on schools.

At the Sagamore meeting in 1909 Miss Plummer read her delicately humorous and altogether charming paper "The seven joys of reading," afterward printed in the *Sewanee Review* and later twice issued in pamphlet form. At the 1910 meeting at the Sagamore she made a characteristically delightful address on "Poetry in the children's room," later repeated frequently before various library schools, and which it is hoped may now be printed.

Her quiet but keen humor, the charm of her conversation and the sincerity of her friendliness during those days, will ever be precious memories. It is given to few to combine the rare qualities of mind which were hers with such delicious humor, such appealing humanness, such pervasive charm of manner. To talk with her was a joy, to be her friend a perpetual delight and inspiration.

FRANKLIN F. HOPPER.

#### THE NEW LIBRARY SCHOOL—IN NEW YORK

TEN days before the opening of this building, on May 12, 1911, it was announced that Mr. Carnegie had made possible the maintenance of a library school for a period of five years and that its principal was to be Mary Wright Plummer.

I well remember the expressions of pride, of gratification, and of confidence on the part of chiefs of divisions, branch librarians and members of the staffs of the reference and circulation departments at the announcement.

There were many on this side of the river whose work had been enriched by personal association with Miss Plummer; there were those who had known her long and intimately as a cherished friend as well as a leader and guide in library training and service; there were those who remembered her visits to the Lenox Library and the classes of students she had sent there to work with incunabula; there were children's librarians and branch librarians who had listened to her "Seven joys of reading" at one of their own meetings at Hudson Park; there were even children who remembered her reading of poetry at their story hours in the libraries at Washington Heights and Jackson Square.

There were others who had not known Miss Plummer personally but who had felt the charm of her presence at local, state, or national meetings; who had visited her library to gain new ideas for their work, or had read her varied contributions to library periodicals. And there were to come those to whom she would prove a revelation—to these her later students, now the Alumni of the Library School of The New York Public Library, the years are bringing memories and associations such as came to us her earlier students on the day her coming to establish a new library school was made known.

"We do not meet many of the truly great men and women of the world," is the recent tribute of a children's librarian, "but those of us who knew Miss Plummer feel that she belongs to that company. To have had our work crowned by her interest and sympathy and understanding for so many years will be an inspiration to us always."

There comes back to me with peculiar vividness a long walk and talk with Miss Plummer in Central Park one beautiful spring afternoon, before the announcement of the new library school was made—a talk in which her plans and purposes were projected in broad outline. . . . There came to each of us, in a moment of silence, a vision of what lay ahead in the opening of this building for which New York had waited so long—of what it was going to mean to put behind the service of a great library in a great cosmopolitan city the

spirit of the city itself made personal and effective thru the co-ordination of many forces, the quickening of many intelligences—the shaping of ideals and standards in the midst of bewildering and overwhelming processes of daily routine in libraries and schools.

"It is going to mean a new school for new needs, but we must not limit its field to New York for New York," was her comment. I knew that she was thinking of Europe as well as America, of her graduates in China, in Germany, in Scandinavia.

Two weeks later the new library was opened. No one who lived in it that first summer will ever forget the on-rush of the public, the quick adjustment to a new environment, the challenge to a high standard of personal service in every department.

With the quietude so characteristic of her, Miss Plummer launched the new library school, without faculty, without students, without equipment, without even an environment, for the class rooms were still being used for storage purposes.

Fifteen years before I had seen Miss Plummer direct the moving of an entire library from temporary and inconvenient quarters into a spacious and well equipped building of her own planning. The picture of her in garden hat and apron pausing, duster in hand, in one of the old stacks of the Pratt Institute Free Library to read a letter and calmly advise me, a student, on a matter of minor importance, was now to be matched by others showing even greater poise and calmness in the face of conditions to which she was entirely unaccustomed.

Miss Plummer lost no time in mobilizing all the resources at her command. She knew New York. She knew what she wanted and she knew how to get at it. Before the first three members of her faculty were chosen, she had engaged lecturers outside and inside the library and had begun to shape courses for a "class of ten or fifty" as the case might be. One marvels at the breadth of interests and the intimate knowledge of institutions and the persons who could best represent them displayed in the list of lectures for the first year. . . .

The class numbered 37 regular students, and there were 17 probationers. Miss Plummer says of it: "Too much praise cannot be given to both faculty and student body for the way in which they have ignored inconveniences which were bound to arise from hasty equipment, and have taken the whole thing in the nature of an adventure." . . .

Members of the faculty past and present, speak of her social spirit—her realization that many of the students would come from a distance and would have neither friends nor relatives in the city, and that they would be obliged to live in boarding houses, in surroundings not always congenial. Her definite recognition of this need led to the establishment of informal teas in the class room following afternoon lectures.

Miss Plummer's intimate knowledge of the students and their capabilities was a continual source of wonder. Her power of concentration, her capacity for turning off work, and her ability to plan for future accomplishment, were a daily example. In the planning of her programs, she never forgot to put some of the city into the lives of the students. The theatre, music, art exhibitions, were all thought of. Her reading of poetry, her lectures on foreign fiction, her sense of world interests, her generous sharing with the entire library staff such lectures as those of Dr. Crothers, Alfred Noyes, Vachel Lindsay and Dr. Winchester, have been spoken of by many during the past few weeks.

Her Sunday afternoons at home for students brought the junior and senior classes together in groups, "making us feel," says one of the alumni, "Miss Plummer's interest in us as human beings, not merely as would-be librarians. She always came to all of the student festivities and apparently enjoyed them. I remember a valentine party for which Miss Plummer made a personal valentine for every student and member of the faculty. A witty rhyme of her own took us off to perfection and showed how intimately she knew our interests and characteristics."

But in the minds of faculty and alumni there rises a picture of her Christmas

party or *kaffee klatsch* as she called it. The *kaffee klatsch* was her own party. It was varied from year to year, but there was always a Christmas tree with a little personal gift for each student and member of the faculty, Christmas carols were sung, and a story was told.

Miss Plummer had always loved the children's room at Christmas time, and she was behind the first of the Christmas exhibits as she was behind the library story hour. She was a wonderful listener at a story hour, for she had the rare power of suspending her critical faculty completely. In this, as in other ways, she often reminded me of Dr. Billings.

Respecting Miss Plummer's relations with children and with story-telling, Miss Shedlock, the "fairy godmother" of the story-telling hours, writes:

"When Hans Christian Andersen died they said to him: 'He is not dead: he will live forever in the hearts of children.'

"Miss Plummer will have a large space for her memory. I put the children first because she loved them, and this gave her the special interest in children's librarians, and made her help so valuable to those who had to deal with children. But her influence was not limited to any age, any time, any country, and it will never pass away.

"May I add this little personal tribute—an expression of gratitude for the way Miss Plummer gave the first start to my own modest work in America."

The New York Public Library has lost in Miss Plummer, as it lost in Dr. Billings, a great personality. She was herself very chary in her use of the word personality. Somewhere she has written: "The word personality, as often used now, does not get its full meaning; we forget that it consists not only of what one looks like and sounds like and apparently feels like, but of all that one has made one's own out of the realm of knowledge, and all that one has assimilated and made profitable from one's experience."

Such gifts as hers are not measured by years in life or death. We are deeply grateful that she came to us when she did—that she accomplished in five years the

work of a lifetime—that we may bear her name, and work, and friendship, in our remembrance.

ANNIE CARROLL MOORE.

THE LITERARY LIFE

THO Miss Plummer's literary work forms a single part of her life service, her whole life, in the personal, in the vital, sense of the word, was always a literary life—a life centered in ideals and in thoughts, and in their expression in literature. Hers was the student spirit, that silently, unchangingly, follows the gleam, and for whom the common light of day is always tinged by some prismatic reflection from the heavenly vision. And her literary work—produced during a life absorbed by exacting professional duties—was so markedly the expression of that inner spirit that it may be best appreciated by recognition of the qualities that she brought to it.

It has always seemed to me that Miss Plummer's nature had four controlling currents: her love of humanity, in the larger sense; her love of literature; her love of children; and her inborn sense of humor. Emotional feeling or expression had little part in her Quaker heritage; her gift was reflective and analytic, rather than creative; and like all who cherish a high ideal her own literary work was to her but a ladder to the star. It is both inspiring and beautiful to those who loved her that her last utterance should have been a plea for the pursuit of truth—for that was ever the quest of her own spirit. In her writings these different currents of her nature were evident. Her finest work is the sheaf of verses, gathered into a slender volume printed privately in 1896, as a gift to her father and mother on their marriage anniversary. These poems, a few of which had appeared in different periodicals, she had written during the previous fifteen years. Poetry was always her lodestar, and her own vein of poetic expression was of fine and genuine quality, tho sparing in its yield. It was richest, perhaps, during her youthful years, and the strongest and most striking of her poems is still the first in this collection, written when she was in her twenties, that

moving vision of the wind-swept multitude in the Inferno, drifting,

. . . whirling and turning swift;  
Blown thru the cloud and the rift,  
Whither we know not and list not.

With its pity, there is the stern note that so often marked her uncompromising moral judgments, echoing in the thought that

Love that was uncontrolled,  
Killed by the ceaseless cold,  
Holds like a weight in its arms the  
price of the heaven it sold.

Her deep concern for justice and truth in human affairs is expressed in the fine sonnet on "The divine right of kings," which to her meant the right of the ruler "to sow his land so full of happiness, of peace and justice, love and courtesy;" while the tenderness for children that was one of her strongest characteristics inspired the touching and beautiful poems, "The birthday in Heaven," "My own," and "Inheritance." In later years her verses were even more infrequent, but they never lost their high quality. Her powerful sonnet on "The chosen people," evoked by the Kishenev massacres, will be remembered by many for its intense pity, veiled in ironic questioning.

Among her other writings her essay on "The seven joys of reading," contributed to the *Sewanee Review* in 1910, and later twice separately reprinted, gives us a glimpse of what books had meant in her life and of the wide sympathy and catholicity of her literary tastes. To read this little essay must be, I think, to many of her friends, as it is to me, like hearing Miss Plummer speak. It has the simple, direct quality of conversation, and it has all those familiar little personal characteristics—the quiet manner under which enthusiasm or feeling glowed so warmly, the orderly marshalling of facts or reasons, and the constant whimsical turns of humorous thought or expression, so delightful and so appealing. Her writings never expressed the full measure of her gift of humor; this was rather to be enjoyed in personal intercourse and in her delightful letters. Her constant absorption in her profession, with its unbroken

executive and instructional demands, kept her from the productive work in literature that she would undoubtedly otherwise have done; it turned much of her talent into professional channels, where her "Hints to small libraries" (one of the first manuals in its special field), her various reports and expositions of library training, and her articles on library work for children, have given practical help and inspiration to library workers during a quarter of a century. But this necessary predominance of the practical never narrowed or formalized her intellectual life. Her unceasing devotion to language study constantly widened the range of her reading. Indeed, all foreign literature was of great interest to her, and there are few European countries with whose writers she was not thoroly familiar, either in the original tongue or in translation. It was her delight in modern Spanish literature that led her to the preparation of her little book called "Contemporary Spain," in which she presented extracts from present-day Spanish novelists, hoping to lead other American readers to share in her enjoyment. In her last utterance, her president's address at the American Library Association conference, written in physical suffering and exhaustion only a few short months ago, we can see, I think, how noble a spirit had been fused from the conjoined forces of thought and aspiration; can realize how her firm faith in democracy was rooted in her broad understanding and sympathy for every honest human endeavor, and in her recognition of the fact that, as she says, "in every generation fear and distrust of the mental and spiritual processes of others are the drags on the wheels of the chariot that sets out in pursuit of truth."

Miss Plummer's love for children strongly influenced both her literary and her professional life. All children, from babyhood to youth, wakened in her a warm, affectionate delight, and there was no phase of library work so close to her heart as that which brought children into the magic realm of books. She was always an inspiring force in the movement that within the last twenty years has given the children's department its important place in

modern public library activities. One of the most valuable early contributions to that movement was her article on "The work for children in public libraries," published in the *LIBRARY JOURNAL* in 1897, where, lightening the carefully marshalled facts and earnest argument, we find the gleam of her joy in the children themselves, as in her reference to the "little squirrel who wriggles to the top of the librarian's chair until he can reach her ear and then whispers into it, 'There couldn't be no library here 'thout you, could there?'" It was this feeling for children that led her, within recent years, to the preparation of her three best known books, the two "Roy and Ray" volumes of travel, in Mexico and Canada, and the "Stories from the Chronicle of the Cid," in which she re-told for young readers the famous romance of Spanish chivalry. In their simplicity, their quiet, matter-of-fact detail, always pleasing to children, and the sympathy with which she drew the figures of her little travelers, the "Roy and Ray" books—which were carefully based on her own Mexican and Canadian itineraries—have made for themselves a worthy place in the children's literature of the day.

In all its interests and manifestations hers was a rich and fruitful life, given unstintedly to service; to the inspiration, for ideals and for work, of the many to whom she was friend as well as teacher, yet given also in full measure to the things of the mind, and ever seeking truth and wisdom for the interpretation of life. The influence she left in her profession is an abiding one; it will reach out to many to whom she herself must be unknown; but we who loved her know that influence as only a part of the warm living personality, the true friend, the lovable woman, the earnest spirit, that for our own comfort we must think of, in her own words, as "journeying on to dip her hands into Truth's fountain."

HELEN E. HAINES.

*IN DEFENSE OF STANDARDS*

WHEN one comes to figure over the influences of the last twenty-five years, I fancy that all of us will be glad to acknowl-

edge that no one person, save Dr. Putnam, has contributed so much constructively to the general elevation and dignity of the library profession in America as Miss Plummer. It has been her steadfast insistence on high ideals in library training and the personal quality which stood for that sort of thing, which has, more than anything else, kept library training from drifting into the frivolities of technique. It wasn't what she did for the learned side, altho her insistence on including at least a symbolic sample of this side in her courses, was, I think, a far-sighted and valuable contribution, but it was her steadfast standing for thoro attention to the work in hand and high ideals as to the quality of practical service in its most elementary aspects which contributed to the net result wrought by her own teaching and influence and thru her graduates. It was the combination of having the accomplishment and individuality and the knack or power of having that touch other libraries at the right time in the right way.

E. C. RICHARDSON.

*THE WOMAN LEADER*

No other woman in library work has so merited the devotion and admiration of her colleagues as did Miss Plummer. Her clear and sane vision, her warm and tender sympathy, her wide knowledge, and extraordinary gift for firm and quiet administration, made her easily the chief among women librarians of the world.

It was my privilege to know Miss Plummer intimately for more than twenty years. We were brought together not long after her going to Pratt Institute thru our mutual friendship for Miss M. L. Avery. Personal acquaintance soon ripened into great professional esteem and respect. I sought Miss Plummer's advice and aid on numerous occasions and never found her wanting. What she has been to hundreds of young women who have studied under her is known best to themselves. The library profession in America has lost in her one of its truest leaders, and the coming years will only intensify our sense of loss on the professional, as well as on the per-

sonal side. Miss Plummer was a great trainer of librarians, but she was a greater woman. Careers such as hers give the lie to those gloomy prophets who foretell that men and women cannot work together on the basis of mutual respect and admiration.

She was never too busy to take time to read, to think, to write. She was never too much engrossed in the daily grind to keep clear and sweet her own soul. There is no one to take her place in our admiration and in our affections.

WM. W. BISHOP.

*THE WOMAN IN THE LIBRARY*

I WOULD not willingly have been absent from this meeting, for it is to express our sense of the value of a life unusual in its service and of a character unusual in its qualities. Also, I think, something more: the tribute of our profession as a whole to that group within it whose qualities and whose service distinguish American librarianship from that abroad. I mean, of course, the women students and the women workers. Perhaps the time should pass for referring to women as a group. But I think it oughtn't to pass. For their qualities as workers are not merely supplementary to those of the men: they are absolutely complementary. The material with which we deal, the constituency which we serve, and the service we render has each its feminine side;—a side which can best be interpreted by feminine intelligence and feeling. There have been women—among them Miss Plummer herself—who possessed and have demonstrated abilities—scientific and administrative—supposedly characteristic only of men; but there are no men who have brought or can bring to such work the qualities which are the unique possession of woman. The lack in women of the abilities which have been characteristic of men may be made good by the ampler social and business experience which the times assure; but the lack in men of the qualities characteristic of women, can never be made good except thru the auxiliary co-operation of women themselves.

Fortunate indeed, therefore, it was that

so early in the development of the modern public library amongst us women were brought into the service. The potent agency for bringing them was the professional Library School: which, admitting them into its curriculum on an equal basis, enabled them to prove themselves. Without the Library Schools we might still be subject to the conservatism which abroad for the most part still holds them aloof.

The school gave the opportunity; and the proof was ample. The effect of it has gone beyond the number of trained women whom they have supplied: it has stamped with their authority the capacity of the sex for this sort of work, has given their position in it both dignity and certainty. And the result, due largely to them, has been such an accession of women to the service that they now form a considerable majority within it; and, with this accession, the introduction into the work itself of the qualities which are the distinctive characteristic of library work here as against that elsewhere: a more sympathetic appreciation of what may be termed the feminine side of literature—the humane side and that which affects taste and feeling;—a warmer, more patient, more personal, more suasive commendation and interpretation of this to the public;—an understanding of, and appeal to, portions of the public—especially the young—hitherto neglected; and, in the inner work of the library, the application to routine of similar qualities, especially those of patience, of enthusiasm and of loyalty—which have served to confine chiefly to women that vast mass of detail incidental to the organization of rapidly growing collections into an effective mass, and the equipment of them with efficient apparatus.

But the creation of this opportunity for women,—the effective use of it by them—involved problems requiring wise guidance which could be supplied understandingly only by one of their own sex. Doubly fortunate, therefore, both for them and for the libraries which they were to serve, that in the first class of the first of our library schools was a student who brought not merely the qualities which would assure her personally a successful career in the pro-

fession, but also in an eminent measure those which would enable her to serve a larger purpose thru the wise guidance of others. Miss Plummer's intelligence was clear, and straightforward. She had always a right sense of scientific values. The least of a pedant—on the contrary, blithe and girlish in spirit, even as a woman of middle age, with quick appreciation of the humorous, and distinctly adventurous,—she had a strict conscience for the truth in study and in work. Pretense and affectation were absolutely foreign from her. She did not denounce them: she was too modest to denounce—and denunciation was not her business. But their approach caused her to withdraw into herself. And such a withdrawal—not by a weak nature, but by one obviously strong—was a disapproval more searching than mere denunciation.

A strong nature, I say, whose strength lay not in aggression of opinion or of expression, but rather in a quiet steadiness of motive and of action; in the application to a particular problem of uncommon "common"-sense; and in a tolerance—where the adverse opinion seemed sincere—due to an essential and controlling humility. For she was under, rather than over-confident of herself; was in fact, diffident. I fancy that this very diffidence must have strengthened the influence of her opinion and her counsel in advising others. For, the trait known, an opinion or counsel advanced with assurance would naturally have the greater weight; and in a person who has both experienced and achieved diffidence is both inviting and convincing.

In any publicity of expression it embarrassed her and had to be overcome by conscious effort. The result was the more creditable in that it gave always the impression of convictions calmly formed and of a character calmly poised. Whatever the perturbations within, her demeanor did not betray them. It was notably placid;—not imperative (for her nature was not) but never needlessly deprecatory. It suggested tranquillity without lethargy.

There have been few in our councils whose opinions were awaited with more respect. We could be sure that, while

modest and tolerant, they would be both definite and sane. Her judgment and her personality were a valuable asset of the Associations whose officers pay tribute to them this evening. But they were also widely influential in our individual relations and problems. They were especially important to us during a period when the enthusiasm of new discoveries and new impulses tempted to hysteria. And their benefit came to us not merely in a direct way but thru the hundreds of women who after preparation under her directorship are now our associates in the affairs and the decisions of our profession. The sincerity, good sense, good humor and gentle breeding which they apply to its technique and its ethics must have been confirmed and fostered in them by contact with her, and by the evidence constantly presented of the authority amongst us which those qualities assured her.

Her influence has thus been a potent, and, as Mr. Bowker has said, a radiant one. To say that its loss to us is irreparable would be not merely superfluous; the phrase itself would be altogether too conventional. Still less could it content any one who knew her personally—who had any intimate touch with a nature at once so mild yet so firm, so friendly yet so just, so warm in its appreciations yet so undemanding for itself. No such loss is, or can be repaired. But the life itself was a gift, which, in passing from her, has gone to enrich others and to add a finer efficiency to a noble public service.

HERBERT PUTNAM.

M. W. P.

Oh! you who falter, hesitate and doubt,  
 Choosing life's paths that promise ease and speed  
 But to forsake them when they chance to lead  
 Thro' ways that, rough and dark, hope's light shut out—  
 Here was a traveler that turned not back,  
 But having chosen went straight to the goal.  
 Who made the paths she needed—whose strong soul  
 Shed its own light when shadows loomed up black.  
 Not as the weary traveler, sad and worn,  
 Regretful of the struggle he has made,  
 Came this, our traveler, to the journey's end,  
 But as a victor who has bravely borne  
 Life's day and fearlessly sees daylight fade,  
 Knowing the peace the heavenly dawn will lend.

E. M. KENNEDY

SONNETS BY M. W. P.

LIFE

Life, we, thy children, cling about thy knees  
 And pray for largess; some are babes that  
 turn  
 Sweet faces, sure of answer, yet to learn  
 That suns may shine and they be left to  
 freeze;  
 And some cast fiercely at thee words that  
 burn,  
 Or all thy steps with bitter 'plainings tease;  
 And some, grown mute from many unheard  
 pleas,  
 Go from thee, looking back with eyes that  
 yearn.  
 What charm is in unmotherly caprice  
 That, rather than be led to endless peace,  
 We court, on bended knee, thy constant  
 frown—  
 Ay, even invite the smiting of thy hand,  
 So we stay with thee? Shall we understand  
 When thou hast loosed our fingers from thy  
 gown?

A REQUIEM SONG

What is this drawing, drawing soft and strong,  
 As it would clasp me to a sheltering breast?  
 What is this rhythmic pulsing, faint and long,  
 As it would chant me to a place of rest?  
 What is this gentle loosening of my hold,  
 On all the treasures gathered thru the years?  
 What is this radiance of pearl and gold,  
 Shining and glowing thru a mist of tears?  
 What is this turning of my eyelids, slow,  
 As they would rest upon some light afar?  
 What is this greeting sweet and low,  
 Wherein at last no sounds of parting are?  
 Whose is the welcoming face that bids me  
 come?  
 Thou? Is it Thou, O Lord? Then, this is  
 Home!

THE MEMORIAL MEETING FOR  
MARY WRIGHT PLUMMER

THE memorial meeting for Mary Wright Plummer was held on Thursday evening, Nov. 16, 1916, in the Stuart Gallery at the New York Public Library. The meeting was under the auspices of the New York Library Club, in co-operation with the American Library Association, the New York State Library Association, the New York State Library School, the Library School of the New York Public Library and the Pratt Institute Library and Library School of Brooklyn, representatives from all of which associations participated in the program or were present at the meeting. The gallery was filled with a most remarkable and representative gathering of library and other friends of Miss Plummer, to the number of six hundred, including many representatives from distant cities, and greetings were received from many other representatives of the library profession. The size and character of the gathering was in itself one of the finest tributes paid to the memory of Miss Plummer.

The meeting was under the chairmanship of Dr. Frank P. Hill, librarian of the Brooklyn Public Library, as President of the New York Library Club, who confined himself to very brief introduction of the several speakers. In opening the meeting he said: "To-night we are gathered from far and near to honor the memory of another great librarian, one who for more than twenty-five years stood in the front ranks of the library profession—Mary Wright Plummer. We shall hear from those who have been intimately associated with Miss Plummer for a great many years, in her social life and in her professional life; and it is my first duty as presiding officer to present to you the honored President of the American Library Association, Mr. Walter L. Brown."

President Brown spoke briefly, introducing R. R. Bowker to speak for the American Library Association as well as for the New York Library Club. He was followed by W. R. Eastman, who spoke for the State Library School and gave a picture of the school in those first days at the Library of

Columbia College in New York City before the removal of the school to Albany, including in his address a letter from Miss Underhill of Utica, an associate of Miss Plummer in the school. Mrs. Caroline Weeks Barrett, an associate and close friend of Miss Plummer in her early Pratt days, followed with intimate recollections. Franklin F. Hopper, for the New York State Library Association, spoke of Miss Plummer's broader relations in state work. Miss Annie Carroll Moore, an early associate of Miss Plummer at Pratt as well as later in the New York Public Library, spoke of her interest in children, and of her plans and her development of the Library School, to which she gave the best work of her latter days. Miss Moore also read a letter from Miss Marie L. Shedlock, the "fairy godmother" of story-telling, who had been induced by Miss Plummer to bring her story-telling inspiration into the library field. The last address was that of Dr. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, who paid tribute from a national point of view to Miss Plummer's eminence in the profession, and emphasized especially the value of her work as a woman and the work of women in the library field, distinguishing the American library profession from that of other countries. Robert Gilbert Welsh read a letter from Miss Helen E. Haines on Miss Plummer in her literary life and also several of Miss Plummer's poems, including that on the "Conquest of the air" published in the *New York Times*, accompanied by an editorial in that journal, and "A requiem song," an unprinted late poem which seemed to remain as the writer's confession of faith. These addresses are given, revised, and with some condensation to avoid repetition, elsewhere in this number of the LIBRARY JOURNAL.

A score or more of letters and telegrams were received which could not be read at the close of the meeting because of the lateness of the hour. Among the more noteworthy were telegrams from Mrs. Margaret Healy Bancroft, who, as Miss Healy, was the predecessor of Miss Plummer at the Pratt Institute and the first shaping of the library school, and from Dr. Julia Holmes Smith, who had been for some

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years consulting physician of Miss Plummer and earlier of her mother, both of them speaking from the most intimate personal acquaintance. These telegrams were as follows:

"Sincere regrets that imperative duty prevents my sharing in the memorial meeting to honor the memory of Miss Plummer, than whom few women will be more missed from a world made better by her presence. Miss Plummer has thru her noble life been an inspiration to women, a stimulation to men who seek high ideals, and facing expected death with the courage of a martyr, she illustrated the dignity of the great adventure."

DR. JULIA HOLMES SMITH.

"Please express to those gathered at the memorial meeting my deep regret that I cannot pay in person my tribute of admiration and affection to the memory of Mary Plummer. What poise and serenity she always showed, how accurate her knowledge and literary judgment, and with what unflagging zeal and enthusiasm she performed her every task! Her fine character and great expertness in her chosen field made her a beneficent influence on the lives of her pupils and associates. My association with her at Pratt Institute was a continuing inspiration."

MARGARET HEALY BANCROFT



