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THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

ment to render active and accomplished aid to scholarship. These librarians appear to take a pride and pleasure in their enlightened and enlightening work, and to this interest is no doubt due the courtesy and efficiency to which I am glad to pay tribute.

Delight - Understanding - Discrimination

Rt. Hon. SIR NORMAN BIRKETT, P.C., K.C., M.A., LL.B.

President of the National Book League.

As President of the National Book League, I am glad to have the opportunity of paying a special tribute to the Public Libraries on the occasion of their hundredth anniversary. The growth in the number of libraries and the immense development in their usefulness have now become quite commonplace, and it is well to remember the small beginnings and the devoted service of the pioneers who had vision enough to plan for the future. The variety and richness of the treasures contained in books, the rare delight which they perpetually give, the understanding and insight which they bestow, the discrimination and taste they cultivate—all these things are made available through the Public Libraries. These things, too, become more valuable every day, not merely because the making of books has become more expensive and pockets somewhat emptier, but because of the immense increase in the reading public during the last decade. Many are discovering for the first time the wealth ready to hand in the field of letters, and finding that their lives are immeasurably enriched by the new experience. This centenary, therefore, is not merely a matter for warm congratulation, but may be the occasion also for the Public Libraries to dedicate themselves afresh to the great task in which they play so tremendous a part—that of bringing home to more and more people the inestimable value of books and the lasting joys they hold.

A Literary Nursery

H. E. BATES

Author.

More than half my education came from the shelves of the public library. There I browsed, groped, read and took first steps into the literary dark. Without it I should have had no easy access to literature, no means of forming for myself comparative standards of expression. It was my literary nursery.

Blessings of Fortunate Communities

EDMUND BLUNDEN, M.C., M.A., F.R.S.L.

Author and Poet.

It is excellent that *The Library Assistant* will commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the first Public Libraries Act. Every author, as such, will surely look on the occasion with gratitude, and every reader, too. As one with a liking for my own bookshelves, I nevertheless bless the Public