

# Annual Report

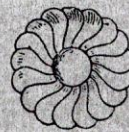
of the Town Officers

— OF THE TOWN OF —

Berlin, Mass.

For the Year Ending March 1,

— 1894. —





## Report of Trustees of the Free Public Library.

"Knowledge is power," and a free public library is a storage-battery of this power, from which, whosoever will, may draw for his own benefit.

It is true that at first sight the chief use made of a public library appears to be merely the entertainment of an idle hour with light and pleasing fiction, rather than an earnest seeking after knowledge and self-improvement. Better that it be so, however, than that the idle hour should be filled with low and degrading thoughts.

Reading as an idle indulgence can be safely condemned, only when temptation to worse forms of indulgence is entirely banished. This should be considered by those who are inclined to question whether reading for amusement may not become, in the language of F. W. Robertson, "an excuse for the mind to lie dormant, whilst thought is poured in, and runs through, a clear stream, over unproductive gravel, on which not even mosses grow?"

If the many read for innocent pleasure only, we must not forget that a few do read for improvement. And the immense influence in forwarding civilization, which the library exerts through these few, is shown by the following quotation. Thomas Greenwood, of London, England, writing in "Science," (Vol. XXII, No. 561, Nov. 3, 1893,) says: "It is only those who come closely in contact with the more intelligent of the working classes, who know the nobility of character and the earnest reaching out toward higher things to be found among them, who can be familiar with the in-

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tense longing to have within their reach institutions such as Museums, Art Galleries, and Free Libraries, to which they can have easy access. That such as these are the institutions which already exist, is most amply and conclusively proved by the ocular demonstration of those who have visited the Museums in any large towns of the country. The nation should never forget that some of its greatest benefactors have belonged to this class of intelligent working men, James Watt, the stone-mason geologist, Stephenson, the collier-railway projector, Arkwright, the weaver-inventor, and scores of others who could be named. Where, indeed, should we have stood as a nation had it not been for the sturdy common sense of the intelligent and thrifty working classes?"

Those who have been led by recent events to read the life of Columbus, must have remarked how much his faith in a land beyond the western ocean was confirmed, if not created, by the books he consulted.

And Ben Franklin still relates in his own words to our school-children how much he owed to the influence of a single book.

Indeed, what truly great man and public benefactor could give an adequate account of himself without acknowledging his debt to books?

Where would be the high level of the general intelligence and morality in our land, which exists to-day, but for books?

What a prophecy of marvellous progress in the future is to be seen in the multiplication of free libraries!

What a grand uplift of intelligence and prosperity will be seen when her sister states of the Union imitate the example of Massachusetts in this respect!



During the past year we are glad to note a gradual increase in the number of books taken from our library, beginning with 116 in March, and reaching as high as 167 in December.

It has been suggested that if the library were open on Wednesday evenings, especially on Grange nights, a larger number of books would be borrowed.

Your trustees are considering the advisability of such a change, at least for a time, and as an experiment.

We hope, also, to be able to open the library on some afternoon, for the especial benefit of those living at a distance.

As soon as it can be compiled a new catalogue will be issued, for which one cent a copy will be charged to defray expense of printing.

An excellent list of new books is now in preparation and will soon be purchased.

Encyclopædias may hereafter be taken home like other books.

To Prof. F. W. Morse, of New Hampshire State Agricultural College, our acknowledgments are here made for a subscription to "Science," presented by him.

The library shared with the whole community in the great and sudden loss by death of Miss Sarah I. Hastings. In the responsible post of librarian she exhibited administrative talents of a high order. She will be remembered long as a noble example of lady-like self-reliance, energy, ability, fidelity and extraordinary usefulness.

Miss Mamie M. Babcock, who had occasionally assisted Miss Hastings in the library, was selected as her successor. Miss Babcock entered upon her duties November 18, 1893. She has now been in charge of the library for fifteen weeks, proving herself well fitted for the position. Her report is herewith subjoined, together with the trustees' financial statement.



*LIBRARIAN'S REPORT.*

Number of books last reported,	793
" " " worn out,	3
" " " remaining,	790
" " " added,	13
" " " now on shelves,	803
Largest monthly circulation (December),	167
Smallest " " (August),	109
Average, " " "	137
Total number of books taken out,	1,644
Fines have been reduced from five cents to two cents a week.	
Amount collected from fines,	\$4.55

The library has been open every Saturday evening during the year.

MAMIE M. BABCOCK, *Librarian.*

*FINANCIAL STATEMENT.*

## RECEIVED.

Balance on hand, Feb. 18, 1893,	\$47 76
Received from Union Library,	5 55
" " Fines,	4 55
Total,	\$57 86

## EXPENDED.

Paid Mr. Isaac Holbrook, on previous year's account,	\$10 00
Estes & Lauriat, for books,	10 83
For other books,	4 10
For express,	15



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For postage,	10	
Salary of Miss S. I. Hastings,	11 40	
“ Miss M. M. Babcock,	4 88	
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Total,		\$41 46
Balance on hand Feb. 20, 1894,		16 40
		<hr/>
		\$57 86

Respectfully submitted,

G. F. PRATT,  
WILLIAM BASSETT,  
F. H. CROSSMAN,

*Trustees.*

Berlin, Feb. 20, 1894.

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