

PIERCE BUTLER 1886-1953

Dr. Pierce Butler, professor emeritus of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago and visiting professor in the School of Library Science of the University of North Carolina, died at the Alamance County Hospital in Burlington, N. C., on Saturday, March 28, 1953. His death followed an automobile accident near Burlington on the night of March 26, in which George F. Bentley, Assistant to the Director of Libraries of the University of North Carolina, lost his life, and Miss Sarah Rebecca Reed, of the School of Library Science, and Miss Dorothy Long, of the Medical School Library of the University, were severely injured.

Dr. Butler, a native of Clarendon Hills, Illinois, was born December 19, 1886, and received A.B. and A.M. degrees from Dickinson College in 1906 and 1910. He studied at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, 1907-09, and received the degrees of B.D. and Ph.D. from the Hartford Theological Seminary in 1910 and 1912. In 1916, he became reference assistant in the Newberry Library of Chicago, and served as head of book selection, 1917-19, and custodian of the Wing Foundation of Typographical History, 1919-31. During this period he made frequent visits to European countries as purchaser of rare materials in the fields of manuscripts and early printing. In 1931 he joined the staff of the recently established Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago as professor of library history, from which he retired in 1952.

Dr. Butler was author of a number of books, articles, and reviews dealing with the history of manuscripts, books, and libraries, three of the most notable being *An Introduction to Library Science*, 1933; *The Origin of Printing in Europe*, 1940; and *The Reference Function of the Library*, 1943. He was a member of the editorial board of *The Library Quarterly*, of a number of important bibliographical societies and institutes, and was a frequent lecturer on various aspects of the history of libraries. The July 1952 issue of LIBRARY QUARTERLY, containing articles by his colleagues and former students, was dedicated to Dr. Butler in recognition of his distinguished services as teacher and librarian.

As a member of the staff of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, he participated in the organization of its curricula leading to the doctorate in librarianship, and through his intimate contact with its students for two decades 1931-52, he conveyed to them and to many of his librarian associates, much of his fine enthusiasm for high scholarly attainment. His study, *An Introduction to Library Science*, published in 1933 and since recognized as a classic in the field of the philosophy of librarianship, was the first publication issued by the School in its forty-odd volume series of The University of Chicago Studies in Library Science. As a private collector of the works of early and distinctive presses, he has likewise built up an extensive collection of materials that splendidly illustrate the subjects with which he dealt.

Dr. Butler was an ordained minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church and served as assistant pastor of St. Paul's Church in Chicago from 1938 until his death. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Ruth Lapham Butler, curator of the Ayer Collection in the Newberry Library, and a brother, Dr. Charles C. Butler, a physician, both of Chicago. A commitment service was held at the Walker Funeral Home in Chapel Hill on Sunday, March 29, and a graveside service was held in Maple Grove Cemetery, near Paw Paw, Michigan, on the following Tuesday.

—LOUIS R. WILSON
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