

WHEATLEY

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BENJAMIN

HOW TO CATALOGUE A
LIBRARY

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«Public Domain»

Wheatley H.

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Henry B. Wheatley

How to Catalogue a Library

PREFACE

Those who are interested in library work are constantly asked where a statement of the first principles of cataloguing may be found, and the question is one which it is not easy to answer. Most of the rules which have been printed are intended for large public libraries, and are necessarily laid down on a scale which unfits them for use in the making of a small catalogue. I have divided out the subject on a plan which I hope will commend itself to my readers, and, after discussing the most notable codes, I have concluded with a selection of such rules as I trust will be found useful by those who are employed in making catalogues of ordinary libraries.

Here I must express the hope that my readers will excuse the frequent use of the personal pronoun. If the use of "I" could have been avoided, I would gladly have avoided it; but as the main point of the book is the discussion of principles and theories, it seemed to me that such value as the book may possess would be entirely destroyed if I did not give my own opinions, founded upon a somewhat long experience.

In dealing with a subject such as this, I cannot hope to convince all my readers, but I trust that those who disagree with my arguments will be willing to allow them some force.

The compilation has been attended with constant feelings of regret in my own mind, for almost every page has brought up before me the memory of two men with whom I have at different times discussed most of the points here raised,—two men alike in their unselfish devotion to the cause of Bibliography. Mr. Henry Bradshaw's work was more widely known, but Mr. Benjamin R. Wheatley's labours were scarcely less valued in the smaller circle where they were known, and both brought to bear upon a most difficult subject the whole force of their thoroughly practical minds. I have learned much from both, and I have felt a constant wish to consult them during the preparation of these pages.

All those who prepared the British Museum rules are gone from us; but happily cataloguers can still boast of Mr. Cutter of Boston, one of the foremost of our craft. Mr. Cutter has prepared a most remarkable code of rules, and has not only laid down the law, but has also fearlessly given the reasons for his faith, and these reasons form a body of sound opinion. May he long live to do honour to Bibliography, a cause which knows no nationality.

H. B. W.

October, 1889.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Before we can answer the question implied in the title of this little book, it will be necessary for author and reader to agree as to what a catalogue really is.

The word "catalogue" is used to mean a list or enumeration of men or things. Thus we have a catalogue of students, but in actual use we differentiate the two words, and a list ("a mere list") is understood to mean a common inventory, often in no particular order (although we can have alphabetical or classified lists); while a catalogue implies something fuller and something disposed in a certain order. What the limit of that something fuller and what that certain order as applied to a catalogue of books really are, it will be for us now to consider.

It was formerly very much the fashion for those who knew little of the subject to speak as if nothing was easier than to make a catalogue. All you had to do was to have a sheet of paper and the book to be catalogued before you, and then to transfer the title to the paper. No previous knowledge was necessary. But those who were better acquainted with the difficulties that beset even the cataloguer, realized that Sheridan's joke about "easy writing being damned hard reading" was applicable to the work produced under these circumstances. Since the discussion on the British Museum Catalogue, and the consequent attention to the first principles of bibliography, these ignorant views are not so generally held, but still many erroneous opinions are abroad. One of these is that the clerical portion of the work of cataloguing or indexing is derogatory to a superior person, and therefore that he should have an inferior person to help him. The superior person dictates, and the inferior person copies down; and the result in practice is that endless blunders are produced, which might have been saved if one person had done the work.

Another vulgar error is that cataloguers form a guild, with secrets which they wish to keep from the public. This is a grievous mistake. The main object of the good cataloguer should be to make the consultation of his work easy. He knows the difficulties, and knows that rules must be made to overcome these difficulties; but he does not care to multiply these rules more than is absolutely necessary. The good cataloguer will try to put himself into the place of the intelligent consulter—that is, the person who brings ordinary intelligence to bear upon the catalogue, but has not, necessarily, any technical knowledge. Some persons seem to think that everything is to be brought down to the comprehension of the fool; but if by doing this we make it more difficult for the intelligent person, the action is surely not politic. The consulter of a catalogue might at least take the trouble to understand the plan upon which it is compiled before using it.

Formerly it was too much the practice to make catalogue entries very short, and to leave out important particulars mentioned on the title-page; but now the opposite extreme of writing out the whole title, however long, is more common. It should be remembered that in the judicious compression of a title-page the art of the cataloguer is brought into play, for any one can copy out the whole of a long title. I cannot help thinking that this latter extreme is caused by some misunderstanding of the relative conditions necessary for the production of bibliographies and catalogues. Of course catalogues form a section of the class Bibliography; but we understand also by the word "bibliography" a collection of titles of books on a special subject, or belonging to a particular literature.

The uses of a bibliography, either of a national literature or of a subject such as *History*, are to find out what books have been written, either by a particular author or on a particular subject; to find whether a certain point is dealt with in a certain book; or, it may be, to see whether a book you possess is the right edition, or whether it is wanting in some particular. For these purposes it is most important to have full titles, and collations with necessary additional information given in the form

of notes. Very often the particulars included in the bibliography will be sufficient in themselves to save the consulter from the necessity of searching for the book.

The uses of a catalogue are something quite different. This is in the same house as the books it describes, and is merely a help to the finding of those books. It would be absurd to copy out long titles in a catalogue and be at the cost of printing them when the title itself in the book can be in our hands in a couple of minutes. Sufficient information only is required to help us to find the right book and the right edition. How far this should be given will be discussed in a later chapter. It is necessary for us, however, to remember that when the catalogue is printed and away from the library it becomes to some extent a bibliography, and therefore when a library contains rare or unique books it is usual, for love of the cause, to describe these fully, as if the catalogue was a bibliography. This is the more necessary because we are so deficient in good bibliographies. The ideal state, from which we are still far off, would be a complete and full bibliography of all literature, and then cataloguers could be less full in their descriptions, and reference might be made to the bibliography for further particulars. It is a standing disgrace to the country that we have no complete bibliography of English authors, much less of English literature generally.

It has long been the dream of the bibliographer that a universal catalogue might be obtained by the amalgamation of the catalogues of several collections. Thus it was the intention of Gerard Langbaine, Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, and Keeper of the University Archives, to have made a classified catalogue of the Bodleian Library, and to incorporate with it all the books not in the Bodleian but in other Oxford libraries, public and private, so as to show at a glance all the books that existed in Oxford. He died, however, on February 10th, 1657-58, without having carried his design into execution. Dr. Garnett, in his valuable paper on "The Printing of the British Museum Catalogue" (*Transactions*, Fourth and Fifth Meetings of the Library Association of the United Kingdom, 1884, pp. 120-28), gave words to his aspiration "that the completion of the Museum Catalogue in print may coincide with the completion of the present century," and he continued that no better memorial of the nineteenth century could be produced than a "register of almost all the really valuable literature of all former centuries." This is very true; but I think that catalogues can only form the groundwork for bibliographies, and are not sufficiently satisfactory to supersede them. Moreover, each country should produce its own national bibliography.

Mr. Cutter divides libraries into (1) those for study, and (2) those for reading; and this division must always be kept in view. We shall chiefly consider the first division, although it will not be right altogether to pass over the latter. Libraries for reading have been rightly considered in the light of educational institutions; and the various points connected with the information to be given to readers, as to what they should read, and how they should read, perhaps belong more properly to Education than to Bibliography.

As to the order in which the catalogue should be disposed we have considerable choice, and Mr. Cutter has given in the *United States Special Report* (pp. 561-67) a most elaborate classification of the different species of catalogues, but the main divisions are the classified and the alphabetical. Years ago the classified was considered the ideal; but when this ideal was brought down to practice it usually failed, and the result was almost useless. The late Professor De Morgan made the following pertinent remarks on this point:—

"A classed catalogue is supposed to be useful to those who want to know what has been written on a particular subject. Now, in the first place, who are the persons who look at a book list with any such view? Not beginners in a wide field of research. Did any one in his senses ever go to a library to learn geometry, for instance, and take the subject in a classed catalogue, and fall to work upon some author because

he was therein set down? This attempt to feed the mind *à la carte* would certainly end in an indigestion, if, which is rather to be hoped, it did not begin in a surfeit."¹

Again:—

"Any one who is willing to trust the maker of a catalogue, however highly qualified, with the power of settling what books he can want in reference to a given subject, is either a person who consults only the most celebrated works, and has nothing to do with research, or one who is willing to take completeness upon trust, and to content himself with blaming another person if he do not reach it."²

It is a common mistake to speak of a classified catalogue as a Catalogue Raisonné. A Catalogue Raisonné is a catalogue with bibliographical details and notes, in which the merits or demerits of the books are discussed. Therefore a Catalogue Raisonné can be alphabetical as well as classified. An alphabetical catalogue can be either one of authors, or of subjects, or what the Americans have styled the Dictionary Catalogue. A catalogue of authors will contain the description of anonymous books under headings in the same alphabet, and it may either have an index of subjects, or subject cross-references included in the general alphabet. But as the rules to be considered later on relate chiefly to the catalogue of authors, it is not necessary to say more on this point here. Again, De Morgan has made some excellent remarks on the catalogue of authors:—

"An alphabetical catalogue has this great advantage, that all the works of the same author come together. Those who have had to hunt up old subjects know very well that of all lots which it is useful to find in one place, the works of one given author are those which occur most frequently. Again, those who go to a library to read upon a given subject generally know what authors they want; and an alphabetical catalogue settles the question whether the library does or does not contain the required work of the author wanted. We believe that of those who go into a place where books are collected, whether to read, buy, borrow, (or even steal), nineteen out of twenty know what author they want; and to them an alphabetical catalogue is all-sufficient."³

Mr. Cutter has written the history of the Dictionary Catalogue in the *United States Special Report* (pp. 533-39), and he traces it back in America to about the year 1815.

Mr. Crestadoro, in his pamphlet, *The Art of Making Catalogues of Libraries*, 1856, recommended an inventorial catalogue of unabridged titles arranged in no order, but numbered, and an alphabetical index to the numbers of this inventory. The index thus formed was somewhat similar to the Dictionary Catalogue (*United States Special Report*, p. 535). Mr. Bradshaw held very strongly the view that an alphabetical catalogue was an index, and that a full shelf catalogue was the real catalogue; and few things he enjoyed more than to read through a list of the books as they stood on the shelves.⁴ In a letter to me, dated September 9th, 1879, he wrote:—

"It is a cardinal point with me that an alphabetical catalogue of a library is really an index, or should be so, to any other kind of catalogue you choose to make; while if you once lose sight of this fact you are quite sure to cumber the catalogue up with bibliographical details which are entirely out of place."

¹ *Dublin Review*, October 1846, p. 7.

² *Dublin Review*, October 1846, p. 12.

³ *Dublin Review*, October 1846, p. 6.

⁴ I remember very vividly a pleasant day spent in the Pepysian Library with Mr. Bradshaw, under the kindly guardianship of Professor Newton. Mr. Bradshaw was specially delighted with Pepys's own MS. catalogues.

Scientific cataloguing is of modern invention, and to the British Museum it is that we owe the origination of a code of rules—rules which form the groundwork of all modern cataloguing. Good catalogues were made before rules were enunciated, but this is accounted for by the fact that bibliographers, like poets, are more often born than made.

Carefulness must be one of the chief characteristics of the cataloguer, for he will frequently find himself beset with difficulties. Mr. W. F. Poole, the author of that most useful work the *Index to Periodical Literature*, states this very forcibly when he writes:—

"The inexperienced librarian will find the cataloguing of his books the most difficult part of his undertaking, even after he has made a diligent theoretical study of the subject. He will find after he has made considerable progress that much of his work is useless, and scarcely any of it correct."⁵

The cataloguer must not jump to conclusions upon insufficient authority, or, as some persons have proposed, take a short list from the books and amplify the titles from bibliographies. Such a course will lead to endless blunders, and create confusion like that described by Professor De Morgan:

"Lalande, in his *Bibliographie Astronomique*, wrote from his own knowledge the title of the second edition of the work of Regiomontanus on Triangles, Basle, folio, 1561. He knew that the first edition was published about thirty years before, and so he set it down with the same title-page as the second, including the announcement of the table of Sines, Basle, 1536. Now, as it happened, it was published at Nuremberg in 1533, and there was no table of Sines in it. The consequence is that Apian and Copernicus are deprived of their respective credits, as being very early (the former the earliest) publishers of Sines to a decimal radius. No one can know how far an incorrect description of a book may produce historical falsehood; but there are few writers who have the courage to say exactly how much they know, and how much they presume."⁶

Before concluding this Introduction it may be well to say something about a few catalogues that have been issued in the different styles. One of the best classified catalogues ever published in England is that of the London Institution, which was first printed in 1835, and completed in 1852.⁷ This has indexes of subjects, and of authors and books. The catalogue is very useful as a bibliography; and as the library was well selected, the reading of its pages is very instructive; but what shows the general uselessness of a classified catalogue for the work of a library is that in actual practice an alphabetical finding index has been in more constant use than the fuller catalogue.

Of an alphabetical catalogue of subjects an example may be found in that of the Library of the Board of Trade, which was published in 1866. Here the authors are relegated to an index, and all the titles are arranged under the main subject. This may be convenient under some circumstances, but it is not satisfactory for general use. The idea of the scheme was due to the late Mr. W. M. Bucknall, then librarian to the Board of Trade; but the catalogue itself was made by the author of this book. The system adopted was to use the subject-word of the title as a heading; but an exception was made in the case of foreign words which were translated. For instance, there is a heading of Wool. Under this first come all the English works; then the French works under sub-headings of *Laine*, *Laines*, and *Lainière*; then German under *Schafwollhandel* and *Wollmarkt*. From these foreign words in the alphabet there are references to Wool. There is, however, no more classification than is absolutely

⁵ "On the Organization and Management of Public Libraries" (*United States Special Report*, p. 490).

⁶ *Dublin Review*, October 1846, p. 20.

⁷ *Catalogue of the Library of the London Institution, Systematically Classified*. London: 1835-52. 4 vols., royal 8vo.

necessary; and it may be said that if all the books had been anonymous the scheme would have been an admirable one.

The Dictionary Catalogue mostly flourishes in America; but a very satisfactory specimen of the class was prepared by Mr. D. O'Donovan, Parliamentary Librarian, Queensland. It is entitled, *Analytical and Classified Catalogue of the Library of the Parliament of Queensland* (Brisbane: 1883. 4to). The books are entered under author and subject with full cross-references, and all the entries are arranged in one alphabet. There are abstracts of the contents of certain of the books, and references to articles in reviews. In the preface Mr. O'Donovan writes:—

"I have made a catalogue of authors, and index of titles, and an index of subjects, a partial index of forms, and having thrown the whole together into an alphabetical series, the work may be referred to as an ordinary dictionary."

Of the usefulness of the Dictionary Catalogue there cannot be two opinions, but the chief objection is that it is a waste of labour to do for many libraries what if done once in the form of a bibliography would serve for all.

A most important example of this class of catalogue is the *Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, United States Army*, of which nine large volumes have been issued. This owes its existence to Dr. J. S. Billings, and the publication was commenced in 1880. An enthusiastic friend is inclined to describe it as the best of published catalogues.

Authors' catalogues are the most common, and it would be invidious to point out any one in particular for special commendation.

It is rather curious that the United States, which is now to the fore in all questions of bibliography, should have produced in former times many singularly bad catalogues. There is one classified catalogue which may be mentioned as a typical specimen of bad work. There is an index of authors, with such vague references that in some cases you have to turn over as many as seventy pages to find the book to which you are referred.⁸

The oddities of catalogue-making would form a prolific subject, and we cannot enter into it at the end of this chapter; but space may be found for two odd catalogues which owe their origin to the Secretary of the old Record Commission.

The sale catalogue of portions of Mr. Charles Purton Cooper's library⁹ is a literary curiosity. It contains two hundred and fourteen pages, but only one hundred and eighteen of these are devoted to the catalogue of books for sale, and the remaining pages are filled with appendixes which contain many amusing notes. The first appendix consists of a "Catalogue of Books mostly in English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh History and Biography now at Autun, which will be included in the sale of further portions of Mr. Purton Cooper's Library unless previously disposed of by private agreement." On page 159 is this note to a catalogue of a collection of grammars and dictionaries "now at Louvain": "My passion for languages (a very unwise one) ceased many years ago." Mr. Cooper notes on page 167, in relation to some books of miscellaneous antiquities "now at Brussels," that "the most expensive of the following works are presents from Foreign Sovereigns, Universities, Cities, and Towns, principally in the period 1831-1840." To the catalogue of miscellaneous books on page 182 is appended this queer autobiographical note: "These books, formerly kept in the house in New Boswell Court, so long used by me as chambers (1816-1850), and from whence all my correspondence as Secretary of Records was dated (1831-1838), are now in chests waiting some place of deposit. What

⁸ *Catalogue of the Library of Congress in the Capitol of the United States of America*: Washington, 1840. 8vo. The third entry in the Index is *Abdy*, and the reference "xxix. 215. i.;" xxix. applies to the class, which is *Geography*; the title is to be found in section v., *America*; so that actually seventy pages of the catalogue have to be glanced through before the work of *Abdy* can be found.

⁹ "*Bibliotheca Cooperiana*. Catalogue of Portions of the Extensive and Valuable Library of Charles Purton Cooper, Esq., Q.C.... These portions will, by Mr. Cooper's direction, be sold by auction by Messrs. S. Leigh Sotheby and John Wilkinson ... on Monday, April 19th [1852], and seven following days."

will be their destination I know not. Grove End Road is let. Denton Court (near Canterbury, my new residence) has undergone such changes in the hands of its last literary owner (the late Sir Egerton Brydges) that it will hardly afford convenient space for a schoolboy's collection." Mr. Cooper goes on to say: "Indifferent as I am become to the mere possession of books, still the selection was a task with which (having no check but my own will) I dared not trust myself."

The notes to this list are very comical. This book was given to him by a duke, that by a regius professor, another was bought at Fontainebleau, and still another "of a soldier in an English regiment, badly wounded at the disastrous assault upon Bergen-op-Zoom, and then in hospital at Breda." An edition of Aristophanes was bought at Frankfort for nine shillings, and "Lord Harrowby (then Lord Sandon, fresh from Oxford) observed that so cheap a purchase must be a piece of luck rarely occurring." An Edinburgh edition of Livy cost Mr. Cooper five shillings in 1810, "and," he adds, "not a bad bargain, considering the purchaser had not attained his seventeenth year." One of the notes said to be copied from a French book of prayers (1789), is interesting; but its substance would be said to be incredible if we did not know of the rampant villainy of the times. "In the summer of 1794 (it was somewhat late in the day) two travellers stopped at a chateau in a southeastern department of France, one of them having a slight acquaintance with the owner of the chateau, who had the misfortune to belong to the ancient noblesse of the country. Both were invited to partake of the family dinner. A dinner which in those circumstances might be considered sumptuous was served up; and the conversation, as generally happens on such occasions, became more than usually gay. When, however, the dessert was placed on the table, the conversation was suddenly interrupted by one of the travellers taking from his pocket a paper constituting himself and his companion Commissioners of the Convention, and authorizing them to seize the chateau and its contents, and forthwith to guillotine the 'aristocrat,' its proprietor. The reading of this paper was immediately followed by an intimation that a guillotine with the usual assistants had during dinner arrived in the courtyard of the chateau. The repast was discontinued for a few minutes, whilst the two guests hurried their host to the courtyard of his chateau and saw him guillotined; it was then resumed." This curious catalogue has at the end a folding coloured plate of Mr. Cooper's library at Grove End Road, with this note: "The view of the library is here introduced for the purpose of mentioning that Mr. Cooper wishes to dispose, by private agreement, of eight mahogany book-cases of the kind there represented."

In 1856 a sale catalogue of a further portion of Mr. Cooper's library was issued.¹⁰ It consisted of a hundred and fifty-one pages, only thirty-four of which are occupied by the list of books for sale by auction. The rest of the pages are filled with lists of books to be disposed of at some future time in some other manner, but there are not notes of the same amusing character as in the former catalogue.

¹⁰ "Catalogue of a Further Portion of the Library of Charles Purton Cooper, Esq., Q.C. ... This further portion, deposited with Messrs. Sotheby and Wilkinson in the summer of 1852, will, by Mr. Cooper's direction, be sold by them by auction in the spring of the ensuing year. December 1856."

CHAPTER II. THE BATTLE OF THE RULES

To Sir Anthony Panizzi we owe rules for the making of catalogues: perhaps it would be more proper to say the codification of rules, for sound rules must have been in the mind of the compilers of good catalogues before his time. When one person makes a catalogue, he usually acts upon principles which are known to himself, although he may not have committed them to writing. When several assistants are employed to make a catalogue, it is positively necessary that the compiler in chief, who will be responsible for the whole work, should give directions to his assistants, so that they may all work on the same plan.

The famous code of ninety-one rules which was given to the world in 1841 (*Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum*, vol. i., Letter A) had for its foundation a small number of rules originally devised by Mr. Baber¹¹ (the predecessor of Mr. Panizzi as Keeper of the Printed Books).

Mr. Panizzi was appointed Assistant Librarian in the British Museum in April 1831, and in 1837 he succeeded Mr. Baber as Keeper. As a new general catalogue was now required, a committee was formed to frame rules for its compilation. This committee consisted of Panizzi, Thomas Watts, J. Winter Jones, Edward Edwards, and John H. Parry (afterwards Serjeant Parry). The plan adopted was for each of these gentlemen separately to prepare rules for the purpose, according to his own views. These were afterwards discussed collectively, and when any difference arose, it was settled by vote. When these rules were complete, they were presented to the trustees by Panizzi on March 18th, 1839, with the following memorandum:—

"Mr. Panizzi has the honour to lay before the trustees the rules, which, under all circumstances, he proposes as advisable to be followed in the compilation of the Alphabetical Catalogue, accompanied by a number of illustrations. Although he is well aware that such rules must necessarily be affected by the haste with which they have been compiled, he ventures to hope they will be sufficiently intelligible to the trustees, and enable them, even in their present imperfect state, to judge of the principles that Mr. Panizzi should wish to see observed. He is fully aware that many cases may arise unprovided for, and that some of these rules and principles may be liable to objections, which may not perhaps appear in other plans, seemingly preferable; but he trusts that what seems objectionable may, on mature reflection, be found in fact less so. He cannot, at present, do more than entreat the trustees to take into their patient and minute consideration every single part, as well as the whole of the plan proposed, and then decide as they may think fit, bearing in mind that, although these rules may, if strictly followed, occasionally lead to what may appear absurd, the same objection, to a perhaps greater extent, may be urged against any other plan, and far greater evils result from a deviation from a principle than from its inflexible application."

The rules were sanctioned by the trustees July 13th, 1839, and printed in 1841. In the note prefixed to the volume of the catalogue then printed Panizzi wrote:—

"The application of the rules was left by the trustees to the discretion of the editor, subject to the condition that a catalogue of the printed books in the library up to the close of the year 1838 be completed within the year 1844."

¹¹ *Report of the Commissioners on the Constitution and Government of the British Museum*, 1850, p. 16.

Panizzi very properly disapproved of the publication piecemeal of the catalogue before it was completed, and eventually he obtained his own way, with the result that the printing was discontinued, and a manuscript catalogue was gradually built up. In the note just referred to he proceeds:—

"With a view to the fulfilment of this undertaking, it was deemed indispensable that a catalogue should be put to press as soon as any portion of the manuscript could be prepared; consequently the early volumes must present omissions and inaccuracies, which it is hoped will diminish in number as the work proceeds."

According to Mr. Fagan (*Life of Sir A. Panizzi*, vol. i., p. 259), the wasteful publication of the volume containing letter A was due to a blunder in the secretary's department. Apparently the order of the trustees was to have the catalogue ready for the press by December 1844, instead of which it was intimated to Panizzi that the catalogue was to be printed by that time.

Both Panizzi¹² and Parry¹³ pointed out in their evidence before the Commission (1848-49) how wasteful a process it was to catalogue the library by letters instead of cataloguing every book on a shelf at one time. There cannot be two opinions among experienced bibliographers of the absurdity of making a catalogue in such a piecemeal manner, and yet this is a plan of proceeding which the inexperienced in cataloguing are frequently found to recommend. Mr. Parry said: "Not only the printing of letter A first do I look upon to be an entire waste, both of time and money—a waste just as much as if the time were thrown away, and just as if the money had been actually thrown away—but the plan of taking those titles from this large body of titles and sending for the books is a serious waste of time.... In my opinion, volume A, the volume that is now printed, must be cancelled, if ever the whole catalogue is printed. The reason of that would be, that an immense mass of titles, in the further cataloguing of the succeeding portions of the alphabet, would arise to be catalogued under the letter A, which nobody would have anticipated until the whole library was catalogued." The Commission coincided with Mr. Panizzi's view, and incorporated their opinion on this point in the report. The consequence was that Panizzi was allowed to proceed on his own plan, with the result that, in the first place, a large number of volumes of manuscript titles supplementary to the old general catalogue were produced, and subsequently an entirely new catalogue, superseding the old one.

The history of the catalogues of the British Museum Library is a curious and interesting one. A catalogue prepared by Dr. Maty, the Rev. S. Harper, and the Rev. S. Ayscough was published in 1787 (2 vols., folio). This was soon superseded; and in 1806 Sir Henry Ellis and the Rev. H. H. Baber (then Keeper and Assistant Keeper respectively of the Printed Books), carrying out the instructions of the trustees, commenced the compilation of a new catalogue, which was published in 1813-19 (7 vols. in 8 parts, 8vo). Ellis was answerable for the letters A to F, with P, Q, and R; and Baber for the remainder of the alphabet.

Now that we have an excellent catalogue of the library, which we owe to the exertions of Panizzi, we are too apt to forget the services of Ellis and Baber as compilers of the very valuable old catalogue. Panizzi took delight in finding faults in this catalogue, and one of the blunders which he pointed out was the entry of a French translation of one of Jeremy Bentham's works, in which the author's name, having been translated in the title-page of the book into French, was transferred in the same form—"Bentham (Jérôme)"—into the catalogue.¹⁴ Doubtless there are many bibliographical mistakes; but it is an excellent practical catalogue, and does the greatest credit to the compilers. Even now, although the print is almost lost in the mass of manuscript, and the volumes are nearly worn out, the copy in the Reading Room may still be used with advantage when a book cannot be found in the more elaborate new catalogue.

¹² See Questions 4207, 4212, pp. 254-55.

¹³ See Question 7223, p. 469.

¹⁴ Fagan's *Life of Sir A. Panizzi*, vol. i., pp. 143-44. Mr. Fagan writes "Jérôme," but it is really Jérôme in the catalogue.

In 1847 the Royal Commission, already alluded to, was appointed to inquire into the constitution and government of the British Museum, and the report of the Commission, with minutes of evidence, was published in 1850. This report appeared in a large folio volume of eight hundred and twenty-three pages, which is still full of interest from a bibliographical point of view.

The Commissioners considered arrangements connected with the management which have since been changed, and therefore are of little interest now; but the evidence chiefly related to the new rules for the catalogue, and resolved itself into an arraignment of Mr. Panizzi's plans, with Panizzi's reply to the arraignment at the end of the evidence. The report shows how unsatisfactory were the relations between the officers of departments, and how strong was the antagonism to Panizzi's rules and arrangements among literary men.

Many authors whom one would have expected to know something of the art of cataloguing showed the most amazing ignorance, and a love for careless work that makes us extremely glad that their cause was defeated. Some witnesses exhibited a dislike to the rules merely because they were rules. Mr. J. G. Cochrane, then Librarian of the London Library, in answer to the question, "Have you read the ninety-one rules?" said, "I read some of them, and it appeared to me that they were more calculated to perplex and to mystify than to answer any useful purpose;" and again, when asked, "Do you object to rules in any compilation of catalogues?" he said, "Yes, very much" (p. 460). Further on in his evidence he said, "I think that in bibliography, as well as in geography, it is always advisable to keep as much to uniformity of system as possible" (p. 464). But he did not make it clear how uniformity was to be obtained without rules.

The greatest grievance which "readers" seem to have had is one which we can scarcely realize at the present day. Mr. Panizzi ruled that whoever wanted a book should look it out in the catalogue, and copy the title on a slip with the press-mark before he could receive it. Mr. Carlyle refused to look out in the catalogue for a pamphlet which he knew to be in a particular collection. His account of the matter is as follows:—

"I had occasion at one time to consult a good many of the pamphlets respecting the Civil War period of the history of England. I supposed those pamphlets to be standing in their own room, on shelves contiguous to each other. I marked on the paper, 'King's Pamphlets,' such and such a number, giving a description undeniably pointing to the volume; and the servant to whom I gave this paper at first said that he could not serve me with the volume, and that I must find it out in the catalogue and state the press-mark, and all the other formalities. Being a little provoked with that state of things, I declared that I would not seek for the book in that form; that I could get no good out of these Pamphlets, on such terms; that I must give them up rather, and go my ways, and try to make the grievance known in some proper quarter" (p. 280).

Dr. J. E. Gray expressed the opinion that the feeling against this rule respecting the press-mark was very general (p. 491). It is necessary to bear in mind that "the old system was, that you merely wrote the title of the book you wanted without the necessity of looking for it in the catalogue. If you wanted a particular edition of it, then you looked in the catalogue for the particular title or date, and the book was brought to you if it could be found" (7684, p. 491).

Although many of the witnesses showed a lamentable ignorance of the principles of sound bibliography, others proved themselves quite capable of setting right the ignorant.

The Right Hon. J. W. Croker, when asked, "Are you of opinion that the labour and difficulties in the management and cataloguing of a library increase merely in the same proportion with its extent?" made this very true observation, "I think the difficulties would increase, I may say geometrically rather than arithmetically" (8734, p. 570).

Mr. John Bruce considered it a fault in the new catalogue that the titles were too full (pp. 417-18); but Prof. A. De Morgan pointed out very clearly the many dangers of short titles (p. 427). Mr. Croker strongly advocated the use of long titles. He said: "There will of course be a few remarkable instances of great prolixity of title-page, which really are worth preserving as curiosities, if for nothing else. But generally speaking there is nothing that is quite safe and satisfactory to a person who goes to look for a book, but a full title; I will add, a most important consideration in a library like this, which people come to consult; it has happened to me twice, I think, within the last ten days to find it unnecessary to send for a book that I intended to apply for, by finding an ample title-page, which showed me that I should not find there what I wanted" (8709, p. 567).

Dr. Gray in his pamphlet (*Letter to the Earl of Ellesmere*, 1849) makes this extraordinary statement: "The works with authors' names, or with false names, should be arranged alphabetically, according to the names of the authors, taking care that the names used should be those that are on the title-pages; and, if an author have changed his or her name, that the work published under the different names should be in different places in the alphabet" (p. 5).

Mr. Parry gave much sensible evidence, and this point was submitted to him. The question of the chairman (Earl of Ellesmere) was, "Have you heard it proposed that each book should be catalogued under the form of name appearing on the title, without any regard to uniformity, and without regard to the different forms of name adopted by an author, or arising from the different languages in which works by the same author may be printed?" Mr. Parry's answer was as follows: "I have never heard that suggested, except by Mr. Gray. I have read it in Mr. Gray's pamphlet; and I have heard it from Mr. Gray when he was an assistant.... I certainly do not wish to be offensive to Mr. Gray, for I have the pleasure of his acquaintance, but I think the thing perfectly absurd. I might be permitted to say, that the noble lord in the chair has published under two or three names; and that I should prefer to see all his lordship's works under one heading, and not scattered in three different places in the Catalogue under the name of Gower, of Egerton, and of Ellesmere.... I remember Mr. Gray used occasionally to come and talk about the Catalogue, but it always seemed to me that he had never given any consideration to the subject. It is by no means an easy thing to make a catalogue; a person to make it, must have a very large and special knowledge of books and of languages" (7338, p. 470).

The witness whose evidence was the most unfortunate for himself was Mr. Payne Collier. He committed himself by submitting some titles which he had made in illustration of his views. There were twenty-five titles, which had been made in the course of an hour. These were handed to Mr. Winter Jones, who reported upon them very fully, with the following result:—

"These twenty-five titles contain almost every possible error which can be committed in cataloguing books, and are open to almost every possible objection which can be brought against concise titles. The faults may be classed as follows:—1st. Incorrect or insufficient description, calculated to mislead as to the nature or condition of the work specified. 2nd. Omission of the names of editors, whereby we lose a most necessary guide in selecting among different editions of the same work. 3rd. Omission of the Christian names of authors, causing great confusion between the works of different authors who have the same surname—a confusion increasing in proportion to the extent of the catalogue. 4th. Omission of the names of annotators. 5th. Omission of the names of translators. 6th. Omission of the number of the edition, thus rejecting a most important and direct evidence of the value of a work. 7th. Adopting the name of the editor as a heading, when the name of the author appears in the title-page. 8th. Adopting the name of the translator as a heading, when the name of the author appears on the title-page. 9th. Adopting as a heading the title or name of the author merely as it appears on the title-page—a practice which would distribute the works of the Bishop of London under Blomfield, Chester, and London; and those of Lord Ellesmere under Gower, Egerton, and

Ellesmere. 10th. Using English or some other language instead of the language of the title-page. 11th. Cataloguing anonymous works, or works published under initials, under the name of the supposed author. Where this practice is adopted, the books so catalogued can be found only by those who possess the same information as the cataloguer, and uniformity of system is impossible, unless the cataloguer know the author of every work published anonymously or under initials.¹⁵ 12th. Errors in grammar. 13th. Errors in descriptions of the size of the book. We have here faults of thirteen different kinds in twenty-five titles, and the number of these faults amount to more than two in each title.... When we see such a result as is shown above, from an experiment made by a gentleman of education, accustomed to research and acquainted with books generally, upon only twenty-five works, taken from his own library, and of the most easy description, we may form some idea of what a catalogue would be, drawn up, in the same manner, by ten persons, of about six hundred thousand works, embracing every branch of human learning, and presenting difficulties of every possible description. The average number of faults being more than two to a title, the total is something startling—about one million three hundred thousand faults for the six hundred thousand works; that is, supposing the proportion to continue the same."

Then follows a searching examination of each individual title, with the result that any claims to be considered a correct cataloguer which Mr. Collier may have been supposed to have were entirely annihilated.

The Report of the Commissioners enters very fully into the various points raised by the evidence before them, with the result that it was considered advisable that Mr. Panizzi should be given his own way, and that the new catalogue should be completed in manuscript.

The British Museum Rules are, as already stated, printed in the *Catalogue of Printed Books (Letter A, 1841)*, and in Henry Stevens's *Catalogue of the American Books in the Library of the British Museum at Christmas, 1856*. They are given in Mr. Thomas Nichols's *Handbook for Readers at the British Museum (1869)*, under the various subjects in alphabetical order, with a series of useful illustrations. Some slight modifications of the rules have been made since the printing of the catalogue has been in hand, and a capital *résumé* of the rules, under the title of *Explanation of the System of the Catalogue*, is on sale at the Museum for the small sum of one penny.

The strife which was caused by the publication of the rules was gradually quelled, and the British Museum code was acknowledged in most places as a model.

Professor Charles Coffin Jewett published at Washington in 1853 a very careful work on this subject. His pamphlet is entitled, "*Smithsonian Report on the Construction of Catalogues of Libraries, and their Publication by means of Separate Stereotyped Titles, with Rules and Examples*. By Charles C. Jewett, Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution."

Mr. Jewett makes an observation with which all who have considered the subject with attention must agree. He writes:—

"Liability to error and to confusion is ... so great and so continual, that it is impossible to labour successfully without a rigid adherence to rules. Although such rules be not formally enunciated, they must exist in the mind of the cataloguer and guide him, or the result of his labours will be mortifying and unprofitable."

With respect to his own rules he writes:—

¹⁵ This is the most extraordinary reason ever given. If it were accepted as valid it would settle the question, for under no circumstances could the authors of all anonymous works be discovered.

"The Rules which follow are founded upon those adopted for the compilation of the Catalogue of the British Museum. Some of them are verbatim the same; others conform more to rules advocated by Mr. Panizzi than to those finally sanctioned by the Trustees of the Museum."

The rules are classified as follows:— pp. 1-45, Titles; pp. 45-56, Headings; pp. 57-59, Cross-references; pp. 59-62, Arrangement; pp. 62, 63, Maps, Engravings, Music; p. 64, Exceptional Cases.

The number of rules is not so large as those of the British Museum, and rule 39 stands thus: "Cases not herein provided for, and exceptional cases requiring a departure from any of the preceding rules, are to be decided on by the Superintendent."

Jewett's rules, with some alterations, were adopted and printed by the Boston Public Library.

The *Rules to be Observed in Forming the Alphabetical Catalogue of Printed Books in the University Library*, Cambridge, were drawn up after the authorities had decided to print the catalogue slips of all additions to the library, and also gradually to build up a new catalogue by printing the titles of the books already in the library as they were re-catalogued. These rules were, to a great extent, founded upon those of the British Museum. In the year 1879, Mr. Bradshaw, Librarian, in conjunction with Messrs. E. Magnusson and H. T. Francis, Assistant Librarians, made some alterations in the rules, and as thus altered they now stand, numbering forty-nine.

The rules of the Library Association of the United Kingdom may be considered as somewhat "academical," because they were not made for any particular library. They have gained, however, in importance in that they were adopted by Mr. Edward B. Nicholson, Bodley's Librarian, for the Catalogue of the Bodleian Library. These rules were originally formed for the purpose of making a foundation for a Catalogue of English Literature, as proposed by the late Mr. Cornelius Walford. This catalogue, however, gradually receded into the background, and the rules were adapted to the purposes of a general library catalogue. The rules have been modified at successive annual meetings of the Association.

Although Mr. Nicholson adopted the Library Association Rules in the first instance, he printed in 1882 a set of *Compendious Cataloguing Rules for the Author-Catalogue of the Bodleian Library*, which has since been added to, and the number of rules is now sixty.

We have, in conclusion, to take note of by far the most important code of rules after that of the British Museum. I allude of course to the remarkable second part of the *Special Report on Public Libraries in the United States* (1876), which consists of "Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue, by Charles A. Cutter." This work stands alone in the literature of our subject. Not only are the rules set out, but the reasons for the rules are given. This is usually considered as a dangerous proceeding, and it requires a man with the clear-headedness and mastery of his subject for which Mr. Cutter is distinguished to carry out such a scheme with success. I am not prepared to agree altogether with the principle of the Dictionary Catalogue, or with all the reasons for the rules—in fact, some of them are highly stimulating, and prove strong incentives to argument; but it would be difficult to find anywhere in so small a space so many sound bibliographical principles elucidated.

It is now nearly fifty years since the British Museum Rules were published, and at the present time we can scarcely understand the antagonistic feeling with which these rules were then received. We can now see how much we are indebted to them. To their influence we largely owe the education of the librarian in the true art of cataloguing, and the improved public opinion on the subject; and to them we owe the noble Catalogue of the British Museum, which is a remarkable monument of great knowledge and great labour combined. We are therefore bound to do honour to the memory of Panizzi, who planned the work and endued with his spirit the many distinguished men who have followed him and completed his work.

CHAPTER III. PRINT v. MANUSCRIPT

There has been much discussion on the relative advantages of Print and Manuscript. Panizzi's objection to print was a sound one, as he considered that no titles should be printed until the catalogue of the whole library was completed. When this time came the objection was no longer valid, and arrangements were made in due course for printing the catalogue by instalments. Before this was decided upon there were some who insisted upon the actual superiority of manuscript over print; but this was really absurd, because, if the extra cost of printing can be defrayed, there must be great advantage in the clearness and legibility of print, as well as in the saving of space caused by its use.

Mr. Parry, with his strong common sense, advocated, in 1849, the use of the printing-press. He said in his evidence: "I think the Catalogue ought to be printed; not merely for the purposes of the library, and of reference out of the library, but also because I think the Catalogue of this library is a work that ought to be in every public institution where men of letters resort, either here, on the Continent, in America, or in any other part of the civilized world; still, it ought not to be printed until the whole of the books are catalogued up to a certain time. I say 'up to a certain time' because the whole of the books never can be catalogued in a library where there are constant accessions. But a limit may be fixed, and when that limit is reached and the whole of the books within that limit are catalogued I would then print the Catalogue, and not before. I have said before that the volume of letter A must be cancelled; that is inevitable. Nobody after this Catalogue is completed, no librarian, no man of the most ordinary literary acquirements, would presume to print the Catalogue without cancelling this volume: that arises from the circumstance that, as the cataloguing goes on, thousands of works will turn up as necessary to be inserted in letter A."¹⁶

Mr. Parry added, that in ordering this partial printing the trustees gave way to pressure from without, which he defined very justly as "a sort of ignorant impatience for a catalogue by persons who do not really understand what a catalogue is or what a catalogue should be."

Dr. Garnett read a very interesting paper on "The Printing of the British Museum Catalogue," before the Library Association, at the Cambridge meeting, in 1882, in which he tells how the present system of printing came about.

Mr. Rye, when Keeper of the Printed Books, strongly urged the adoption of print; but Dr. Garnett adds, "Other views, however, prevailed for the time; and when, in October 1875, the subject was again brought forward by the Treasury it fell to my lot to treat it from a new point of view, suggested by my observations in my capacity as superintendent of the reading-room. I saw that, waiving the question as to the advantage or disadvantage of print in the abstract, it would soon be necessary to resort to it for the sake of economy of space. There were by this time two thousand volumes of manuscript catalogue in the reading-room, exclusive of the catalogues of maps and music. There would be three thousand by the time that the incorporation of the general and supplementary catalogues was complete. Hundreds of these volumes in the earlier letters of the alphabet were already swollen with entries, and required to be broken up and divided into three. Sooner or later every volume would have undergone this process. By that time there would be nine thousand volumes of manuscript catalogue, three times as many as the reading-room could contain, or the public conveniently consult. The only remedy was to put a check upon the growth of the catalogue by printing all new entries for the future, and to mature meanwhile a plan for converting the entire catalogue into a printed one. I prepared a memorandum embodying these ideas, and entered into the subject more fully, when,

¹⁶ It must be thoroughly understood that this catalogue of letter A is in itself an excellent piece of work. Its shortcomings are entirely due to incompleteness caused by premature printing.

in January 1878, it was again brought forward by the Treasury. These views, however, did not find acceptance at the time.... The question was thus left for Mr. Bond, who became Principal Librarian in the following August. As Keeper of the Manuscripts, Mr. Bond's attention had never been officially drawn to the catalogue of printed books, but as a man of letters, he had formed an opinion respecting it; and I am able to state that he came to the principal librarianship as determined to bestow the boon of print upon the Catalogue and the public, as to effect the other great reforms that have signalized his administration."¹⁷

Dr. Garnett, near the end of his paper, said, "My aspiration is that the completion of the Museum Catalogue in print may coincide with the completion of the present century;" and I believe he still holds the opinion that this is possible and probable.

Mr. Cutter enters very fully into this question of *Printed or Manuscript?* in his elaborate article on "Library Catalogues" in the *United States Report on Public Libraries*, 1876 (pp. 552-56). The advantages of a printed catalogue he states under five heads: "(1) that it is in less danger of partial or total destruction than a manuscript volume or drawers of cards;" "(2) that it can be consulted out of the library;" "(3) that it can be consulted in other libraries;" "(4) that it is easier to read than the best manuscript volume, and very much easier to consult. A card presents to the eye only one title at a time, whereas a printed catalogue generally has all an author's works on a single page. Time and patience are lost in turning over cards, and it is not easy either to find the particular title that is wanted or to compare different titles and make a selection;" "(5) that several persons can consult it at once."

The disadvantages are stated by Mr. Cutter under three heads: "(1) that it is costly;" "(2) that a mistake once made is made for ever, whereas in a card catalogue a mistake in name or in classification or in copying the title can be corrected at any time;" "(3) it is out of date before it is published. As it cannot contain the newest books, the very ones most sought for, fresh supplements are continually needed, each of which causes an additional loss of time and patience to consulters. The average man will not look in over four places for a book; a few, very persevering or driven by a great need, will go as far as five or six. It becomes necessary therefore, if the catalogue is to be of any use, to print consolidated supplements every five years, and that is expensive."

Of the advantages the main one is No. 4, and of the disadvantages the only one of any importance is, it seems to me, No. 1.

As to disadvantage No. 2, it is more apparent than real. A mistake in print will of course remain for ever in the copies of the catalogue outside the library, but it can easily be corrected in the library copy either in manuscript or by reprinting the single title in which the mistake occurs. The card catalogue cannot be used outside the library, and the catalogue in the library can be as easily corrected whether it be printed and pasted down on pages or arranged on cards. The two are equal in this respect. Disadvantage 3 is the stock objection. But what does it really come to? He who consults the catalogue of a library away from that library knows that a given book is there if he finds it in the catalogue; but if it is not in the catalogue, he does not give up hope, but either visits the library or sends to know if the book he requires is in. He is no worse off in this case than if there had been no printed catalogue; and in the former case he is much better off. The library copy of the catalogue can be kept up as well in print as it can be in manuscript, and here at all events there will only be one alphabet. It will therefore be a question for the consulter alone whether it is better worth his while to consult several supplements than to go straight to the library. For the purposes of the library, it is quite unnecessary to reprint or consolidate your supplements, because your library copy of the catalogue will always be kept up to date. If the library is a lending one, the subscribers will probably insist

¹⁷ *Transactions* of the Fourth and Fifth Annual Meetings of the Library Association, 1884, pp. 122-23. In the discussion which followed the reading of this paper, I ventured to speak of the British Museum having been converted to the advantages of printing. Mr. Bullen in his speech said: "There were those in the Museum, Mr. Garnett and himself among them, who, long before the present time, advocated printed, in contradistinction to manuscript, catalogues. As a manuscript catalogue was one of the greatest advantages to a library, so a printed catalogue must of course be of a hundred times greater advantage" (p. 207).

upon having new catalogues, as the supplements become too numerous; but this is only an additional instance of the advantages of a printed catalogue.

A printed catalogue should never be added to in manuscript, as this causes the greatest confusion; and, moreover, it is not necessary. It is quite possible to keep up a catalogue in print for many years; and even when worn out, if the printed sheets have been kept, a working catalogue can be made up afresh without printing again. The plan adopted by my brother, the late Mr. B. R. Wheatley, is so simple, that it seems scarcely necessary to enlarge upon its merits; but as it has not been generally adopted, I may perhaps explain it here with advantage. It will be seen by the specimen on [page 59](#), that each page of the library copy of the catalogue is divided in two. On the left-hand side is pasted down the catalogue as it exists at the time, and the right-hand side is left for additions. These additions may be printed as annual supplements, or they may be printed from time to time at short intervals on galley slips on one side only, without being made into pages. This can be done as suits the best convenience of all concerned; and it is just as easy to have the titles printed frequently as to have them copied for insertion in the library copy of the catalogue. The ruled columns are for the press-marks, and these are arranged on the outside of each column for purposes of symmetry. It is not advantageous, as a rule, to print the press-marks in the catalogue, although this is done in the case of the British Museum. There are two advantages in having two columns of type on one page. One is that there is a saving of space, and the other is that it is easier to keep the alphabet in perfect register if it becomes necessary to insert a page. However well arranged a library copy of a catalogue may be, it will probably become congested in some places before the whole catalogue requires readjustment. Now suppose each page contains only one column of print, and the left-hand page is left for additions. When both pages are full, and it is necessary to insert a leaf for fresh additions, it is clear that the correct order of the alphabet will be thrown out. But if there are two columns on each page, then the additional leaf will introduce no confusion; for the recto of the additional leaf will range with the verso of the old leaf, and the verso of the additional leaf with the recto of the next leaf in the book. The only difference will be that you will have to run your eye along four columns instead of two.¹⁸

¹⁸ I find that the merits of this plan are not so self-evident as I thought, for my friend, Mr. J. B. Bailey, Librarian of the Royal College of Surgeons, who has had experience of a double columned catalogue, prefers a single column with the *verso* of each page left for additions. I allow that there may be advantages in the latter, but as an octavo page of print is very narrow it is wasteful of space to have only one column. Where it is no disadvantage to have a catalogue in several volumes, this question of space need not be considered.

Case.	Shelf			Case.	Shelf
B	1	LE BRETON (Anna Letitia). Memoir of Mrs. Barbauld, with Letters and Notices of her Family. Sm. 8vo, London, 1847.		N	5
B	2	—Correspondence of Dr. Channing and Lucy Aikin (1826-1842). Sm. 8vo, London, 1874.			
			LIDDELL (Henry Geo.), and Robert SCOTT. A Lexicon, abridged from "Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon"; 14th edition. Sm. square 8vo, Oxford, 1871.		
G	4	MCCNICOLL (David H.). Dictionary of Natural History Terms, with their derivations, including the various orders, genera, and species. Sm. 8vo, London, 1863.			

The advantage of this plan is that the library catalogue can be actually kept up for any length of time without any reprinting. When the catalogue is filled up, and there is no room for any additions, the whole may be pasted down afresh as in the first instance, always presuming that copies of the catalogue and its supplements have been retained.

Sometimes the pasting down of the print is delegated to the binder; but it should be done either by the librarian himself, or at all events under his eye, for much judgment and knowledge are required for the proper leaving of spaces where the additions are likely to be the thickest.

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