

## SOME NOTES ON THE PREPARATION AND USE OF THE GENERAL CATALOGUE OF PRINTED BOOKS IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.

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THERE is a more adequate recognition to-day of the difficulties incidental to the construction of a detailed catalogue of a large collection than prevailed seventy years ago when the Report of the "Commissioners appointed to inquire into the constitution and management of the British Museum" was published. This is due in part no doubt to the appearance of that monument of scholarship—the catalogue of the printed books in this national institution. The construction of that vast guide to the world of literature, which owes its inception primarily to Sir Anthony Panizzi, provided a visible demonstration of the scope and effective powers of a catalogue. No catalogue having any pretensions to importance published subsequently can fail to be under great obligations to that of the British Museum, whether the debt be openly admitted or not. The whole of the long series of printed volumes, comprising that great bibliographical work, was already published, when in 1900 the preparation of the supplementary catalogue of the John Rylands Library was on the point of commencement. The original author catalogue of this Library was issued in three volumes in 1899. New works were constantly being added to the Library for which fresh entries were required. With the whole of the British Museum catalogue now available it became a question whether the style of cataloguing should not be approximated more closely than had been possible hitherto to the methods adopted in that authoritative work. It was decided—and the decision has never been regretted—that the British Museum catalogue should henceforth be the standard for the compilation of our own catalogue, and that the code of rules governing its construction should, with certain

exceptions and modifications, form the guide to our own practice. The catalogue of the British Museum, together with the code of rules, has not always being exempt from criticism, but it remains immeasurably superior to any other yet published. Cataloguing is a subject of which it may truly be said : "*La critique est aisée, et l'art est difficile*".

Reference has already been made to the difficulties attendant on the compilation of the catalogue of any great library. It may be that some indications of a few of more frequent occurrence may be welcome. The catalogue of any important collection will be used by specialists in every branch of knowledge. It must be adequate therefore to meet the requirements of each. The bibliographical information must be exact, whilst, subject to the limitations inherent in its form, a catalogue cannot ignore the latest views on any question of disputed authorship. The extent of the bibliographical details supplied will vary according to circumstances, but in any case the information must be unimpeachable in point of accuracy.

A few examples drawn from the catalogue may serve to illustrate the method of its compilation, and so prove useful to readers in consulting it. In this library, the supplementary catalogue is in two portions : (1) authors, (2) subjects. This arrangement has been preferred to that style of catalogue known as the dictionary catalogue (in which both are combined in a single alphabet) in the belief that the dual form is more intelligible to the average reader. We shall draw attention then first to a few points connected with the author catalogue, and afterwards touch briefly on the subject index.

The primary rule is that a book is entered under the name of the author (or authors), or some substitute for the same. Under this apparently simple rule arise numberless questions which are of almost daily occurrence, occasioned for the most part by uncertainty as to what constitutes the correct form of the name for cataloguing purposes. In the case of writers of the later middle ages, for instance, it is a constant source of perplexity whether a man has a real surname or only attaches an appellative of some kind to his Christian name for purposes of distinction. Robertus Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, and John de Sandale, Bishop of Winchester, might be cited as examples. In the case of well-known people it is comparatively easy to decide the question, but in dealing with persons less notable there is often so little

definite information available that one is frequently at a loss as to the correct course to be pursued. Of a similar kind are the difficulties arising in the identification of the early saints, such as may be mentioned in a series like the *Studi e Testi* of the Vatican Library. It must be borne in mind that the writer of an article may hesitate to express an opinion on the identity of a particular martyr and is able to state his reasons at length for such indecision. The compiler of a catalogue is prevented by the form of it from any discussion of the question ; his opinion has to be expressed in the definite formula of a heading which gives no indication of the reasons that have led to its adoption. Other individuals of the same name may appear in the catalogue, or the same person may be referred to under different forms of the name. One has merely to suggest these possibilities for it to be seen how many and varied are the problems that may arise in this way alone.

As we have spoken of the saints, it may be useful to point out that saints, popes, sovereigns, and princes of ruling houses are entered under their Christian name, or forename, as well as members of religious orders who by the constitution of the order discard their secular names.

FRANCIS [Xavier] *Saint*. The life and letters of St. Francis Xavier. By Henry James Coleridge. . . . Third edition. [Quarterly Series 4]. London, 1902. 2 vols. 8vo.

LOUIS I [de Bourbon] *Prince de Condé*. A Declaration made by the prince of Conde, for to shew and declare the causes, that haue constrained him to take vpon him the defence of the Kinges authoritie of the gouvernement of the Queene, and of the quietnes of this Realme. . . . Printed at London by Roulande Hall, for Edwarde Sutton. . . . 1562. 8vo.

In cases where an author wishes for some reason or other to disguise his identity, and consequently publishes his work under a pseudonym, or under initials, the principal entry will be found under the pseudonym or initials, whilst a cross reference under the author's name when it is known, will direct the reader to the heading where full information about the book is to be obtained. Such vague designations as Gentleman of Cambridge, Clergyman of the Church of England, Lady, etc., are not regarded as proper pseudonyms, and books on

the title page of which the author is so described are treated as anonymous.

HOPE (Laurence) *pseud.* [i.e. Adela Florence Nicolson]. Stars of the desert. [New impression.] London, [1915]. 8vo.

S. N. A concordance to the Holy Scriptures ; together with the books of the Apocrypha. . . . By S. N. [i.e. Samuel Newman]. The fourth edition. . . . Cambridge, 1698. Fol.

Anonymous books have been responsible for more difficulties, probably, both to the compilers of catalogues and to their users, than any other form of literature. The treatment of them has varied considerably in different libraries ; in their endeavours to anticipate the ideas of readers as to the style of heading which should be adopted, librarians have sacrificed consistency of method with a resulting complexity that has only been, after all, productive of bewilderment in the public. In framing the rules on this subject for the John Rylands Library, it was decided to have a very limited number, and that these should be of as natural a character as possible.

One can divide anonymous books conveniently into two main classes : (a) those relating to a person, or place, mentioned on the title page ; (b) all books not relating to a person, or place.

Books belonging to the first class are entered under the name of the person, or place, mentioned on the title page. For all others the first word of the title is taken as the heading if it be a substantive ; if it should be an adjective, the first substantive is combined with it.

On one important point our definition of an anonymous book differs from that of the British Museum and some other authorities. If the author's name does not appear on the title page proper, or some secondary title page, the volume is regarded as anonymous as far as the selection of the heading for the main entry is concerned, even though the preface may happen to be signed by the writer. Experience has, we believe, abundantly justified this definition of the term.

HUGH [*of Avalon*] *Saint, Bishop of Lincoln.* Metrical life of St. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln. . . . Printed from ms. copies in the British Museum and Bodleian libraries. Edited . . . by . . . J. F. Dimock. . . . *Lincoln*, 1860. 8vo.

LUCKNOW. The defence of Lucknow. A diary recording the daily events during the siege of the European residency, from

## NOTES ON THE GENERAL CATALOGUE 211

31st May to 25th September, 1857. By a staff officer [i.e. Thomas Fourness Wilson]. With a plan of the residency. *London*, 1858. 8vo.

ASIA. Memoirs of the late war in Asia. With a narrative of the imprisonment and sufferings of our officers and soldiers; by an officer of Colonel Baillie's detachment [i.e. William Thomson]. *London*, 1788. 2 vols. 8vo.

DISCOURSE. A discourse against transubstantiation. The fifth edition. [By John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury.] *London*, 1685. 4to.

NATURAL HISTORY. Natural history of enthusiasm. . . . Fifth edition. [By Isaac Taylor.] *London*, 1831. 8vo.

Whilst the compiler of a catalogue is expected to be familiar with the latest views on questions of authorship, it is obvious that the catalogue cannot give endorsement to such opinions unless the evidence appears to be more or less conclusive. The practice of our catalogue is threefold in this respect, according as the evidence for the authorship of an anonymous book is regarded as (1) satisfactory, (2) probable, or (3) a less tenable opinion.

These varying degrees of assent accorded by the catalogue may be exhibited by the following entries :—

(1) MARIANNE. *La belle Marianne; a tale of truth and woe.* [By Thomas Frognall Dibdin.] *London*, 1824. 8vo.

(2) QUINZE JOIES. *Les quinze joies de mariage.* [By Antoine de La Sale ?] *Paris*, 1837. 16mo.

In this case the authorship is less certain than in the preceding one, although highly probable.

(3) PEDLAR. *The pedlar's prophecy.* 1595. [Attributed to Robert Wilson.] [The Malone Society Reprints.] [*Oxford printed.*] 1914. 4to.

In this instance the ascription of authorship to R. Wilson may be regarded as more doubtful than in the previous case.

The question of corporate authorship is one on which a few observations may be useful. Public bodies and associations are considered as the authors of works issued in their name, or under their authority. By this rule the laws and other official documents of a country are catalogued under the name of the country, the bye-laws of

a city under the name the city the proceedings of a society under the title of the society the calendar of a university under the designation of the university This rule includes too such cases as parish registers, which are entered under the name of the town or village to which they belong.

**PORTUGAL.** [Law and other Public Documents.] *Portugaliae monumenta historica a saeculo octavo post Christum usque ad quantum decimum 1550 Academiae scientiarum Olisiponensis edita. Olisipo 1856 [-97] 2 vols. Fol.*

**SOUTHAMPTON.** The charters of the borough of Southampton. Edited . . . by H. W. Gidden. [Southampton Record Society] *Albion pt. 1*, 1909-10. 2 vols. 8vo.

**BOLNEY, SUSSEX.** The parish registers of Bolney, Sussex. 1541-1812. Edited by Edward Huth. [Sussex Record Society, 15.] (London, 1912.) 8vo.

Under the name of any of the greater countries, or of a large city, there will naturally be a large assemblage of entries. It becomes necessary in such cases to provide minute subdivisions to render the heading easier to consult. It may be useful to give the main divisions for the heading England in the author catalogue. This serves as a model for all the other countries, with such variations as may be found necessary. It should be added that there are numerous subdivisions to each of the divisions here given. The division Appendix is reserved for collections of works and anonymous books which are not of an official character. For the arrangement of the heading England it is only fitting that our indebtedness to the catalogue of the British Museum should be acknowledged.

Laws and Statutes.

Year Books.

Proclamations.

Treaties and Negotiations with Foreign Powers.

Solemn League and Covenant, 1643.

Miscellaneous Public Documents.

Parliament.

Departments of State and Official Bodies.

Churches and Religious Bodies.

Miscellaneous Subheadings.

Appendix.

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Numerous treatises of the greatest importance have never appeared in separate volumes ; they are only to be found in some great collection where they will lie unknown and inaccessible unless their existence is revealed through the agency of the catalogue by means of analytical entries. The extent to which the practice of analysis is carried out may well form the test of the quality of a catalogue. It may be accepted as a general principle that all works of the nature of a Thesaurus require such treatment ; similarly, all volumes composed of a number of papers, essays, etc., will need to be analysed. Analysis will be found in author and subject catalogue alike. Such a set of volumes as the "*Bibliotheca veterum patrum antiquorumque scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*" of Gallandius will not be of much use to the ordinary reader who may want a treatise of some ecclesiastical writer until separate slips have been made and inserted in the catalogue for each author whose work appears in the collection. Likewise, in the subject catalogue the composite volumes of an essayist such as M. Maeterlinck will need entries under each separate topic if readers are not to miss many valuable articles through the failure of the catalogue to divulge their existence.

We give below two examples of analytical entries (*a*) from the author catalogue, (*b*) from the subject catalogue.

(*a*) SCALA (Rudolf von).

The Greeks after Alexander the Great.—*See* Helmolt (H. F.).  
The world's history : a survey of man's record. Edited by . . .  
H. F. Helmolt. . . . With plates and maps. Vol. 5, pp.  
1-119. 1907. *London*, 1901-07. 8 vols. 8vo.

(*b*) PALÆOGRAPHY ; Treatises ; English.

Shakespeare (W.) [Appendix.—Particular Topics. Times of Shakespeare.] Shakespeare's England. An account of the life & manners of his age. [Vol. 1, pp. 284-310. Handwriting. By Sir E. M. Thompson. . . .] [With plates and illustrations.]  
*Oxford*, 1916 2 vols. 8vo.

The problems of the subject portion of the catalogue are entirely distinct in character from those of the author part. The latter deals with biographical and bibliographical questions—authorship, title, format, editions, etc. The subject index is concerned with the literary contents of a book and its intrinsic qualities. The headings of the author catalogue are decided to a great extent by the title of a work. Anyone

who should attempt to rely merely on the titles of books in constructing the subject index would simply be misleading readers at every turn.

The headings of the subject index are arranged like those of the author catalogue in alphabetical sequence. In many cases they represent the result of prolonged and careful consideration. Alternative forms of heading have been duly examined, and the one which seemed the most correct, or the most inclusive, as the case may seem to require, has at length been selected. In all such instances cross references are provided from the forms which have been rejected to the one eventually chosen, as in analogous cases occurring in the author catalogue.

In some catalogues the rule of specific entry is followed, that is to say, the term of smallest denomination is selected on principle as the heading. In this library no such rule has been adopted. Where it has seemed advisable, there has been no hesitation in admitting class entry. In the subject catalogue utility outweighs all other considerations, but a knowledge of what constitutes utility is only gained by experience based on a wide knowledge of the character of the literature in any given subject. One or two examples will help to illustrate this point more clearly : -

- (a) Architecture : Particular Topics : Towers.
- (b) Dead, Disposal of : Sepulchral Monuments and Inscriptions :  
Brasses.
- (c) Orders and Ordination : Episcopacy.
- (d) Psychology : Particular Topics : Laughter.

Some headings, such as Philosophy and (General) Theology, which are of great size on account of the number of entries under them, do not readily admit of division, except chronologically. This form of arrangement, although it partakes necessarily of the arbitrariness of all historical divisions, has been found to answer very satisfactorily in such cases, and may be defended on the grounds that each age has its own methods of stating problems which it solves in its own way.

Many other points will naturally suggest themselves arising out of the foregoing remarks to which no reference has been made. This article does not profess to treat exhaustively any of the questions which have been raised, much less to provide the semblance of a code of rules. The writer, however, will be well content if it should prove helpful to readers desirous of understanding a little better the methods and structure of the catalogue in the John Rylands Library.