

system of the printed catalogue of 1835. It was in the actual execution of this work—*res sane magni momenti multique sudoris*—that the accompanying classification was wrought out; and as a bibliographical system, to be of value, must be the fruit of experience rather than an effort of genius, it has occurred to me that my fellow-members of the American Library Association might possibly find in it some useful suggestions.

The classification is intended to be permanent only so far as the six main classes A E I O U and Y, and their sub-classes a, b, c, d, e, etc., are concerned. In its details it is open to modification to suit the needs of libraries devoted mainly to the collection of one or a few classes of books. As the volumes multiply on the shelves, it is obvious that the divisions 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., can be added to indefinitely,—by each librarian for himself—without deranging the system. Moreover, the divisions can themselves be subdivided by supplying arbitrary marks. For example, under Zoology (I16), I have made but one subdivision, that of Birds (I16+), whereas an Academy of Natural Sciences might well find it expedient to distribute their works on the animal kingdom in accordance with the elaborate plan set forth in Agassiz's *Essay on Classification*. On the other hand, a small library may content itself with the classes and sub-classes marked by letters only, or even with the classes A E I O U Y alone. It is to be remarked in passing that, by this arrangement, whatever improvements may be made from time to time in the details of the system, the books have always a relative, and not a fixed location on the shelves, so that they may be moved from shelf to shelf, from case to case, and from building to building, without altering the shelf marks.

The system is available, not only for the arrangement of books on the shelves, but also for their classification in a subject catalogue. Indeed, the shelf lists themselves form—when properly made—a subject catalogue, which may be sent off to the printer as soon as there is money enough to pay for setting them up in type. It is true that most of the ends of a subject catalogue may be gained by the modern dictionary catalogue—combining authors and subjects in one alphabet—which it is to the credit of Mr. Poole to have invented, and of Messrs. Cutter, Noyes, and others to have developed; but, nevertheless, to my mind, the ideal printed catalogue is a classified one, with a copious alphabetical index. Suppose that the British Museum had such a printed catalogue to-day, how much would the usefulness of that great Institution be enhanced!

It is only too obvious that the librarian who adopts this, or indeed any plan for the classification of books, must sometimes be at a loss to decide exactly under what subdivision to place a particular book, the problem, in difficult cases, being quite the highest proposed to a bibliographer. The rule is to place each book under its most specific class, but nevertheless two successive librarians—or indeed the same one at different times—might, without impropriety, classify the same book under different heads. To secure uniformity, therefore, and to make the work of cataloguing and classifying books arranged on this plan more easy, the accompanying Synopsis and Classification are followed by an alphabetical Index. In its preparation, I have made use of the subject Index of my ingenious friend Mr. Melvil Dui, in his excellent *Classification of a Library* (Amherst, 1876). By his kind permission, it is