Some Pitfalls in Cataloguing.¹

THE subject at the head of this paper is of importance to all inexperienced cataloguers, consequently, to all young librarians. "Learn by doing" is not a maxim for the school only, but equally is it of importance in the cataloguing room; and that formula is almost synonymous with "Learn by failures." Happily, however, one may learn a good deal by the failures of others as well as by one's own, and with the hope of saving some from the humiliation of personal failures the following remarks are put together. The subject is treated under the headings: Author Entry, Subject Entry, Title Entry, Miscellanea.

THE AUTHOR ENTRY.

A pitfall to the tyro is that of entering under one and the same name the works of different authors. Recently, in revising the copy for a catalogue, I found the books of two Thomas Baines's run together; but with the assistance of Allibone's *Dictionary of English and American Authors* the confused identity was quickly unravelled. The author of *Lancashire and Cheshire, Past and Present*, 1866-70, was not to be confounded with him of the *Explorations in South-Western Africa*, much less with Edward Baines, the author of the *History of Lancashire*, published in 1836. When two authors have the same name a distinctive epithet ought to be applied to each, but this is not always easy to find, and in such instances the dates of birth and death, or the place of nativity or long residence should be added. The dash should never be made to do duty for a second author of the same name. Even if a difference of identity is only suspected, the name should be repeated before the title part of the second or subsequent division of a group of author entries

¹ Read before the Librarians of the Mersey District and the North Midland Library Association.

belonging to a single name. The following is an instance of distinctive epithets applied to three George Smiths:—

Smith (George), *Biographer*.

Smith (George), *Assyriologist*.

Smith (George), *Philanthropist*.

A second pitfall is on the other side the way from that already mentioned, viz., the entering the one author's books under two or more names. The uninstructed and ill-read assistant may put the *Recreations of Christopher North* under North (C.), and the *Isle of Palms, and other Poems*, under Wilson (Professor John) quite unsuspecting of the fact of the identity of authorship in both cases. Want of care, especially with recent books, may easily lead one to place novels and other works partly under the assumed and partly under the real name, e.g., Cobbleigh (Tom) assumed, and Raymond (Walter) real name; or under maiden and married names, as Marryat (Florence) and Lean (Mrs.). It is obvious that no cross reference can atone for such a sin against the canons of cataloguing.

A third pitfall for beginners is the mistaking of the genitive or possessive form of a foreign author's name for that of the author's proper name. The assistant should early recognise the disgrace that will befall him if he be not able to recognise Terence in the guise of "Publi Terentii Afri," and Catullus under the genitive form of itself and its fellow names of "C. Valerie Catulli." Horapollinis *Hieroglyphica*, for instance, must be entered under the nominative form Horapollo, and a preposition indicating an agent must not be mistaken for the particle of nobility or the representative of a territorial prefix to a name. The inscription of "von Mehren" on a German translation of Byron's works, for instance, must not be mistaken for a surname beginning with V. Here comes in the importance of a knowledge of foreign languages, of which the librarian cannot know too much or too many. With human limitations, he has often to be content with soliciting the aid of a friend, or, if that resource be not at hand, with a dip into a good grammar of the particular tongue which bothers him, and a careful reading of the parts concerning the inflexions of proper names, and the use of prepositions prefixed to the names of agents.

Omission of the commencing article from the title part in an author entry is a fault of frequent occurrence, owing no doubt to the cataloguer's way of clipping the article from title entries.

The fault ceases, perhaps, to be a fault when two or more titles follow a particular author's name; for then alphabetical order may be deemed a paramount consideration.

There is yet another serious pitfall in the way of attaining a correct author entry. I will illustrate by an early blunder of my own. There is a well-known book in French on *Herculaneum and Pompeii*. The letterpress is by L. Barré, and the illustrations are by H. Roux the elder, but the title is so printed that Roux appears to be a forename to Ainé. This work was, unfortunately, catalogued under Ainé, which was mistaken for a French equivalent of the English surname, Elder or Senior: Beware of the pitfall of the descriptive epithet.

THE SUBJECT ENTRY.

Under the names of subjects, inexperienced cataloguers go most astray. The words of a title are no safe guide; yet, how often they are treated as if they were! Here is a medley produced by following the word "light" on the title-pages of several books on widely different subjects, taken from the catalogue of a northern town library.

Light and Air: text-book for Architects and Surveyors. By Fletcher.

Light and Heat. By Lees.

Light and Photography, Chemistry of. By Vogel.

Light and Shade: a tale. By Drury.

Light Continent, Through the. By Saunders.

Light, its influence on Life and Health. By Winslow.

Light of Nature pursued. By Tucker.

Light of the World: Temporal advantages of the Sabbath. By Younger.

These books belong to as many subjects as there are titles, viz., Building Construction, Physics, Chemistry, Fiction, United States, Hygiene, Deism, Sabbatarianism. One is prepared to find in the same catalogue, under the heading Physics, only those works in which the word "physics" occurs on the title-page. In another catalogue—which is, in most respects, a model one—the Duke of Argyll's *Reign of Law* is entered under Jurisprudence, a mistake copied in the catalogue of a sister institution in the same town. This mistake is really worse than that of putting the title under Law, which would at least have the excuse that the word occurs on the title-page. Such mistakes

can only occur from ignorance (for which, in special cases, there is excuse for even the best of us ; for who can know all things ?), or from idleness. The latter is the true cause for the existence of so many sorry failures as cataloguers ; and the work of such men is the fruitful source of contemptuous criticism of the Dictionary Catalogue.

The choice of proper subject-headings needs the greatest care and discrimination, but to make subject-headings fit the procrustean bed of a "Dewey" or other shelf classification scheme is absurd. The catalogue should reveal what access to the shelves cannot show ; and many individual titles ought to go under several distinct headings. The kind of question which confronts one in revising catalogue copy is this :—Here are four books under Moral Science and six under Ethics—good subject titles each of them, and chosen after examination of the books when the slips were written—are they all to go under Ethics, or under Moral Science ? One might be disposed to say, because the names are parallel it does not matter. My judgment would select Moral Science for a popular library catalogue ; Ethics for that of a library for educated gentlemen. Always for a popular library choose the simpler, though, perhaps, less exact name : Insects rather than Entomology ; Birds rather than Ornithology ; Mind or Mental Science rather than Psychology. Cross references will make the rest clear. The relation of subject-headings to each other which cannot escape notice in a classed catalogue ought not in a dictionary catalogue. For example, works on Philosophy in general should go under Philosophy ; works special to Psychology, Æsthetics, Ethics, and Logic should go under these names, or their synonyms in popular speech, with cross references from the more inclusive to the less inclusive heading, and from the less to the more inclusive. Take another instance, certain titles go under European History, others under English History, Indian History, and Irish History ; to avoid repeating under Irish History much of what has already gone under English, a cross reference should be made. The same remark concerns Indian History, and contrary cross references are needed in each case. Also for continental relations of England, a reference to European History must be given, and so, by a system of collateral, super-ordinate and sub-ordinate references, the whole field of subject matter is covered.

Another pitfall into which many tumble is the confusion of subject entry with form entry. Under Poetry, printed as

a subject heading, one often finds the works of the poets, collections of poetry, and works of literary criticism. A poet's works belong to the author entry only; collections come under the form heading, and only books *about* poetry under the subject heading. Form and subject headings should be in different type.

TITLE ENTRY.

The most common pitfall for the unwary is that of entering the title of an anonymous book without an attempt to discover the name of the author. With the aid of the dictionary of Halkett and Laing, the works of Cushing, the British Museum Catalogue, and the revelations of anonyms in the weekly literary press and monthly library journals, quite a number of authors may be discovered at the expense of a little trouble, and any such a mistake as that of separating an early edition of Lockhart's *Life of Napoleon*, published anonymously, from the other works of that distinguished author be avoided.

In the catalogue of a library where economy must be considered, the entering of works under title, as well as under author and subject names, may in great part be dispensed with, but certain books should always have a title entry. Thus, title entry should take the place of subject entry in the case of all works of fiction, poetry (other than collected poetry of individual poets), and in partial collections of essays, as well as in a few cases where the title is likely to be remembered rather than the author's name, *e.g.*, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. To enter all books under title entries is, for most, to drop into a pitfall of extravagance.

A more serious pitfall is that of inartistic, not to say clumsy and slovenly, inversion of words. Take a few examples :—

Cevennes. Travels of a donkey in the, R. L. Stevenson.

Great Britain and Ireland. Handbook to, by R. Allbutt.

Jubal, Legend of, and other Poems, by G. Eliot.

Why were not these ugly inversions avoided? Thus :—

CEVENNES (as a heading).

Travels of a donkey. R. L. Stevenson.

UNITED KINGDOM.

Handbook to Great Britain and Ireland. R. Allbutt.

Legend of Jubal, and other Poems. "George Eliot."

If preferred, the author's name may be placed before the title under each heading. Even the article in parenthesis following

the second word of a title, gives a shudder to sensitive souls. Here are examples :—

Triumph (The) of Benevolence.
True (A) Account and declaration.
Twelve (The) nights.

There is, of course, something to be said on the score of scientific accuracy for this last instanced arrangement, especially in a catalogue like Halkett and Laing's dictionary, consisting of title entries alone. Where author entries are given, in most cases the article or preposition in the title entry is superfluous, for a reference to the author entry will supply the missing particle.

Title entries, however abbreviated, ought to adhere to the actual words of the title-page, and to their actual sequence. In high-class cataloguing omissions must be indicated by . . . but for lending library work this is a needless refinement in most cases. But whether in lending or in reference library work all departures from the title should be shown by inclusion of interpolated words in square brackets. Often a work is said to be by a certain person, "assisted by," or "with the assistance of," another. In such cases short titles may allowably substitute [and], care always being taken to put in the brackets. Many other ways of avoiding a pitfall of error in abbreviating titles will suggest themselves in the course of one's work.

MISCELLANEA.

Readers often confuse the date of publication with that of the library number for the book. This is a pitfall for others of the librarian's making. In most cases the date may be abbreviated by the use of the apostrophe and the last two figures—and these are seldom if ever mistaken for the number of a book.

The use made of the dash, in many catalogues, is very irritating. Note these warning examples :—

Jews. Early History of the, See Duncker's History of
Antiquity.
— — — — — See Edersheim's World be-
fore the Flood.

Journal of a Cavalry Officer.
— — — Home Life.
— — — March from Delhi.

The dash substitute for a word ought not to go beyond the first word in a title.

Long sets of periodicals sometimes have the first only of a long sequence of call numbers indicated, so that to ascertain the number of say the twenty-first volume of a set (beginning perhaps at the tenth), a little sum in addition (and subtraction) has to be performed by the borrower with sundry risks of error. This pitfall is so obvious that one must be asleep to walk into it.

Finally, the pitfall of sending off any copy to the printer before the whole catalogue copy has been submitted to a searching revision, is to be sedulously avoided. Inconsistencies are sure to occur when the copy is not completed before the printing is begun, and probably much trouble with the printer, and heavy charges for alterations besides. Better delay a few weeks than seek to hurry matters in this fashion. One personal word, in conclusion :—The writer's latest catalogue shows that he has not escaped pitfalls—but is that any reason why he should not warn off others from the pit ?

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