A Great Catalogue, being an Appreciation of the
Catalogue of the Library of the Peabody In-
stitute, Baltimore.¹

DURING the last eight or nine years I have observed with great interest, with sincere admiration, and, I must confess, with a little envy, the progress of the catalogue of the Peabody Library at Baltimore. It chanced that the completing volume reached my hands just after I had received from Mr. MacAlister a letter urging me, as librarian of a Scottish library, to make some contribution to the proceedings of this meeting. My own work, though sufficiently engrossing, had not developed anything specially novel or notable, and as I was reluctant to return a negative to our Secretary's request I thought I might without impropriety engage the attention of the association for a few minutes in an appreciation of what may be truly called a great catalogue. I do not make any comparison or contrast between this and other important works of the same class; and my purpose being appreciation in the conventional sense, and not criticism, I do not refer to features in the catalogue which personally one would have preferred to see differently treated. Happily, it is quite possible, while reserving judgment on this or that characteristic of a catalogue, to render a tribute of respectful admiration to the work as a whole.

The establishment of the Peabody Institute at Baltimore is but one, and not the most impressive, of the great acts of benevolence which caused the name of its founder, before his death, to become famous throughout the Old World and the New, as suggestive of a liberality of the freest and largest kind, guided by a sound and discriminating judgment.

The library was designed as one for scholars, for serious study and research, and consequently contains little of what is merely popular. It is important from the large proportion of works of permanent value and great cost which it contains. One does not care to assess the position of a library by the number of pounds or of dollars expended upon it, but in this case the high average character of the books is roughly shown by their cost,

¹ Communicated to the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Library Association, Aberdeen, September, 1893.

which is at the rate of about thirteen shillings a volume. It may be mentioned in passing that the popular element in library work has been more recently supplied in Baltimore by the establishment of the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries. Happy the city which has had two such benefactors.

The preparation of the catalogue was commenced in 1869. When the first volume was issued in 1883 the library contained 80,000 volumes. By the time the last was issued in 1892 that number had been increased to more than 100,000, an addition during the printing of the catalogue of more than 30,000 volumes. As all entries of new books were inserted in the part of the alphabet not reached at the date of their acquirement, it follows that the later volumes contain entries of many works which do not appear in their places in the earlier parts of the alphabet. These entries, together with those of new books still being added, will form a series of supplementary volumes on the same excellent lines, but, as one of the staff promises, with improvements.

As now completed, the catalogue consists of five volumes in imperial octavo, containing together more than 5,000 pages, each in two columns. A rough calculation shows that on an average one of these large and closely-printed pages is devoted to the cataloguing of every twenty volumes. This fact alone is testimony to the very thorough way in which the contents of collective or miscellaneous volumes have been brought into view. The total number of references is 357,429, or about three and a half references to each volume.

The general arrangement is alphabetical, all kinds of entries—author, subject, or title—being, as is usual, thrown into one alphabet. The entries under authors are full, and where necessary the contents are freely detailed; under the titles there are abundant references, and at the various subject headings throughout the catalogue there will be found cited in many cases an array of authorities not often paralleled elsewhere.

The principal periodicals are not set out; that is to say, there is not under the title any list of the contents. But each article is indexed and inserted in its proper place in the general alphabet, under the appropriate subject word, and under the author's name where that is known. The entry includes a fairly full title of the article, the name of the periodical, the volume number and date of the appearance of the article, the page in the volume at which it occurs, and the number of pages it covers.

Volumes of essays or miscellaneous collections are described, set out, and indexed, each article in like manner appearing under the name of its subject in the general alphabet. The publications of academies and learned societies (except those dealing with science) are analysed and indexed in a similar manner.

But the feature of this catalogue which most distinguishes it from others is the treatment of large collections of the highest importance, such as the editions of Greek and Latin fathers issued under the name of the Abbé Migne, the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica* of Pertz, the French historical collections of Bouquet, the Italian collections of Muratori, and the great *Thesauri Antiquitatum* of Grævius, Gronovius, and others. In the treatment of each of these extensive and difficult works, there is first an elaborate setting out of the contents in an alphabetical sequence under the most important word, and secondly each item is referred to its proper place in the general catalogue, under both author and subject, and this not less with short pieces, sometimes not exceeding a page, than in the case of lengthy treatises. To convey an idea of the labour involved in this process, Dr. Morison, the late Provost, who signed the prefatory notes to the first four volumes, mentions that the treatment of the several series entered under the name of Migne alone, upon which several persons were engaged at different times, is equivalent to the continuous work of one person for two years. The table of contents of these series occupies 25 pages, 50 columns of solid nonpareil, and the author and subject references dispersed throughout the catalogue number many thousands. Dr. Morison adds: "It is believed that none of these great collections has ever before been analysed, and the contents, under appropriate heads, made accessible to scholars." May it not be added that the service is not to scholars in Baltimore alone, but that by the dispersion of the catalogue scholars all over the world will reap advantage from the labours of the staff of the Peabody Library? Other libraries which possess any of these important collections may with great advantage refer in their catalogues to the analysis which is here provided.

As a result and reward of the laborious processes adopted, the catalogue abounds in articles of great value to scholars and students. Of these I select two for particular mention; that under the word "Inscriptions," and that under the word "Drama."

The word "Inscriptions" occupies twenty pages, four columns, and the larger part of it is closely set in small type. After a page and a half relating to inscriptions generally, the entries are arranged under the specific language in which the inscriptions recorded appear in alphabetical order: Anglo-Saxon, Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, and so on. Cuneiform inscriptions occupy three columns, Greek nine columns, Latin ten columns, Phœnician two columns, Sanskrit two columns. It may be doubted if the student of inscriptions will find in any other catalogue existing, so full and satisfactory a guide to the literature of his subject.

The word "Drama" occupies seventy-six pages, and includes a systematic arrangement of works and of articles on each branch of dramatic literature and art. The writings of all authors in this line of literature are duly entered or referred. The most remarkable feature of the article, however, is a list of plays of all periods, and in many languages, arranged in alphabetical order of the title. The list extends to more than 100 columns of small type, and contains a good many thousand titles; and the necessary references are provided to show the reader where each edition of each play may be found.

It seems something in the nature of an anti-climax to say that the typography of the work is excellent. By the judicious use of various kinds of type the eye is greatly assisted, and after a little use of the volumes picks out the required item almost without effort. It is hardly necessary to state that the catalogue is extremely accurately printed, and that errors of the press are "conspicuous by their absence."

It remains to make some reference to those by whom this work has been accomplished.

The first Provost of the Peabody Institute, Dr. Nathaniel H. Morison, was responsible for preparing the plan of the catalogue, and for its general control and supervision. Its execution was under the immediate charge of Dr. Philip R. Uhler, to whose suggestion many of its most characteristic and valuable features are due. Other members of the staff who are honourably mentioned are Mr. Troeger, and Mr. Parker. Dr. Morison signed the prefatory notes to the first four volumes, but did not live to witness the completion of the fifth. He was succeeded in his office of Provost by Dr. Uhler, who, in the preface to the fifth volume, after fitting reference to his predecessor's death, states briefly the course and object of the work,

and concludes: "The Catalogue as it now stands is but a first step in that progress which aims to satisfy the researches of students, in accordance with the expressed wish of Mr. Peabody. It is now submitted to the consideration of scholars, by whose decision it will take such rank as it merits, in the domain of library literature."

We may admire Dr. Uhler's courage in speaking of such a work as a first step, and respectfully assure him that its place is secure, high among the greatest of its kind.

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