

RAPHAEL TRICHET.



NO doubt as the result of the fashion set by the king, the later seventeenth century witnessed many advances in bibliography and catalogue making in France. Louis XIV augmented the Bibliothèque du Roi to an extent undreamed of by his predecessors, although some of those had bestowed numbers of priceless manuscripts, and, since the introduction of the press, many printed volumes upon it. The Royal Library, now known, after its many vicissitudes of fortune, as the Bibliothèque Nationale, was increased during this reign by many large and valuable collections, some purchased and others acquired by less costly but more questionable means. Amongst them was that of Raphael Trichet, better known as Dufresne. He appears to have been completely forgotten in the two and a half centuries that have elapsed since his death; nevertheless, and in spite of the calumnies to which he laid himself open, his services to bibliography were considerable.

He was the son of an 'avocat au parlement,' and was born in the April of 1611, in the troublous times that preceded the illustrious reign of the 'Grand Monarch.' Fortunately his father early perceived the capacities of the young Raphael, and after a careful training at home, sent him, in a lucky

hour, to Paris, where, in the society of savants and artists, he quickly acquired an extensive, and, as it afterwards proved, a very valuable knowledge of books and coins and medals.

It was not long before he was brought to the notice of Gaston d'Orleans; and the Duc attached him to his own service. In this capacity he was sent to all parts of the world in search of antiquities, curios, and the objects of art so dear to the heart of the connoisseur, to increase the collection of his noble patron. This was the favourite method with the 'fashionables' of the time, to augment a collection of any kind, and was still more largely followed by Colbert, with whom Raphael came later in contact.

Trichet was not long content with this, however; and at the age of twenty-nine we find him 'correcteur' of the royal press, under the direction of Sublet-Desnoyers. He does not appear to have been greatly in love with the work; and when, by the death of Naudé, the opening occurred, he embraced the opportunity of a return to his old work, and became 'bibliothécaire' to Christine, Queen of Sweden. The position seems to have combined the duties of librarian with those of general adviser in literature and art. It is unfortunate that while in the Queen's service he should have been accused of betraying the confidence she reposed in him. But the evidence appears to be far from conclusive, and at this late date it seems scarcely worth while to rake up discreditable rumours for the possible pleasure of disproving them. The employment was certainly more to his taste than his connection with

the King's press could have been. While in Christine's company he visited Rome and the chief cities of Italy for the first time; always on the outlook for curios of every description. He came back with many books 'rares et curieux.' In fact, there is rather more than a suspicion that he was more at home among his books than among 'objets d'art,' with perhaps the exception of medals and coins. Death surprised him at an unfinished labour of love. His 'Histoire de l'île de Crete, illustrée par les medailles,' was perhaps the largest and most important work he had undertaken: and in spite of the time and trouble expended upon it, he left it unfinished.

The catalogue he has left of his own personal library is sufficient to give him a place in a history of bibliography. The last years of his life were devoted to study, and it is to this same period that we owe the catalogue, although it does not appear to have been printed till after his death.

He was by no means unknown to his contemporaries as an author. His works embraced various topics, though most of them were on the kindred subjects of art and antiquities. One of the earliest of his efforts was a life of Leonard de Vinci, which, with a somewhat similar 'Vie de L. B. Alberti,' was included in the 'Trattato della Pittura.' Like many other *littérateurs* before him he translated Æsop and the other favourite fabulists; but unlike many of the others, Trichet's edition was remarkable for its illustrations. It was reprinted as late as 1743; but this issue was inferior to the *editio princeps* in its most important point. This by no

means completes the list of his works. A brief mention of some of the remainder will show the breadth of his taste: 'Epistola ad Petrum Sequinum,' reprinted in 1665; a work on Greek antiquities; and another, 'De rerum italicarum scriptoribus,' detached portions only of which were published.

Trichet died on the 14th of June, 1661, at the age of fifty years, and in the following year his library, consisting of about 10,000 works of the most diverse character, the result of the life-time search of a man of liberal mind, was acquired by Colbert for the rapidly increasing library of the King.

Although Trichet's was not by any means the first classified catalogue, it was so much an improvement on many previous attempts of private individuals that it deserves careful attention; at all events, such appears to have been the general impression produced by its publication. Many features that have been introduced as new in modern catalogues were foreshadowed in it; and it is, as an authority of much later date states, 'curieux et mérite d'être conservé.' This critic, who wrote with the experience of another century, declares that the classes are badly arranged, and the number of printer's errors very large. But much of this criticism may be credited to the improved and more enlightened methods of classification of that date; and some of this increased enlightenment may even be the outcome of Trichet's own experiments. There is no question about the typographical errors. They are astounding, when the author's connection with the *imprimerie royale* is remembered. The only way in which the phenomenon can be explained,

is by supposing that the catalogue was not prepared for the press before Trichet died.

The first catalogue of the Bibliothèque du Roi, the 'star of fashion,' of any note, was completed in 1622, and contained entries of some 6,000 volumes, many of which were manuscript. Some twenty years after the publication of the catalogue of Trichet, when the King's library numbered some 70,000 volumes, Clement produced a catalogue that has remained the base-model ever since. Shortly afterwards great improvements took place in the catalogues of less important collections, a striking example being that of the 'Bibliothecae Bentesianae.' The arrangement of Dufresne's catalogue, which in point of time came between the earlier and later catalogues of the King's library, shows something of the inexperience of the amateur, and the numberless errors of the press militate against its usefulness and historic value. Roughly there are ten classes with a clumsy attempt to introduce numerous sub-divisions. In addition, there appears to have been a vague idea of arranging some of the books according to size on the shelves; but without knowing the exigencies of the space it is impossible to say how far this was successful.

The first class may be described as 'Theology.' There is no system of lettering, but as a matter of convenience it may be designated 'A.' 'B' is Greek and Roman history. 'C' is Philosophy, including Natural History. Bibliography, Essays and Portraits are all included in 'D.' 'E' embraces Triumphs and Funeral Orations, etc. 'F' is described as *Rerum Gallicarum*, etc. 'G' as His-

panicarum scriptores. Then follow other classes on India and Italy, and one on Mathematics, with a copious appendix.

It will be seen at once that the classification is a scheme devised for a particular collection of books, and is not in any way a system of classification of knowledge or of literature in general. But it is of considerable interest as the embodiment of a practical man's idea of a practical catalogue in the year 1660.

A. J. PHILIP.