

## A Danish Charging System.

FOR libraries, in which an indicator is not in use, it is of great importance to have an easy method of finding the book which a borrower has, or the borrower who has a distinct book. The following method is in use in the public library in Helsingfors, Finland, from which the annual loans are more than 60,000. It has been devised by V. Vasenius, in his pamphlet *Råd rörande folkbibliotek I.: Vården af folkbibliotek*. I have varied the method a little for the use of Horsens Public Library, where the loans are fewer. Perhaps this method may also be of interest to English librarians.

The method used in Helsingfors is as follows:—

Every borrower has a ticket, on which is written the borrower's number. Before the borrower receives a book, the number of the book and of the borrower are written on a little card (a square inch or more in size), the first number on the left, the other on the right side, and then the borrower may go, after having left his ticket. By this method, as many persons as you like can give out books. When the loan time is over the date of the day is written or stamped on every card. Afterwards the cards are arranged according to the number of the books, and the loans are in this order entered in a register, the numbers of the books on the left, the numbers of the borrowers on the right side. On the right side of every page is left an open margin. Here, afterwards, the date of the return of the book is entered. From day to day the cards are inserted among the cards already received in the numerical order of the books. The cards are kept in a little paper, or tin, box. Between every hundred cards a card a little higher is placed, and on this card (or guide) the number of the hundred (100, 200, &c.) is written. The borrowers' tickets are arranged in the same way. When the book is returned, the corresponding card is taken out and placed in another box. On the card the number of the borrower's ticket is seen, and it is removed and returned to the borrower, who again can have another book. When the loan time is over the cards taken out are arranged according to the date, and the cards on which

the same date is stamped are arranged according to the book numbers, and then are noted in the register the books which are returned.

For the use of Horsens Public Library I have varied the method as follows :—

Every borrower has a numbered ticket. In the register the borrower receives his place according to his ticket number. The first left hand page of the register contains the numbers 0 — 4. the corresponding right-hand page the numbers 5—9; these two pages together are numbered page 1, &c. In the borrowers' place in the register are immediately entered the number of the book and the date of the loan. On the pasteboard card are noted, at the top, the number of the book; below, the number of the borrower. The cards are arranged according to the order of the book-number, and the cards of every day's issues are kept separately (the library is but open twice a week). The borrower retains his ticket.

These cards give an excellent means of obtaining a statistical account of the loans. When the cards are arranged according to the book-numbers, we can see how often every book has been given out; when arranged according to the number of the borrowers, how many books every borrower has taken out. Especially the first knowledge is of great interest for the purchase of new books.

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[Mr. Steenberg, in a letter accompanying this interesting note, expresses the fear that his description may be so lacking in novelty as to suggest the Danish proverb, which, in such cases, has it that "The egg will teach the hen," but we can assure him the method will be new to many English librarians. Its general resemblance to the card systems of England and the United States is well marked, though the preparation of a fresh card for every book issued is more like some of the American plans than any which have yet obtained favour in England.—ED.]

