CHARLES AMM BR CUTTER: NINETEENTH-CENTURY SYSTEMATIZER OF LIBRARIES
VOLUME I

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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I finished this dissertation thirty-four years ago, and though I had considered attempting to put it into formal publishable form more than once, I have never gotten around to doing so. Two reasons come to mind for my failure to follow through with the task, besides, that is, procrastination in the face of the sheer amount of work involved. First, the dissertation actually attempts to account for two different things, one, a biography of Cutter, the other a description of his principal innovations in library cataloging and classification. My original, perhaps naïve, hope for the dissertation was that I would be able to interweave the two one unified work. Unfortunately, they never really quite meshed as well as I had hoped. The narrative of Charles Cutter’s life and work essentially occupies chapters I to IV and VIII and IX, and the description of his library cataloging and classification innovations occupies chapters V to VII, each of these two parts containing at least some information pertinent to the other. Early on I concluded that to rewrite the whole would necessitate writing two different works, for it seemed to me that keeping these two approaches separate was important, not simply because of their basic differences, but also because the second part needed to be changed from mere description to substantive analysis of Cutter’s innovations.

Second, new information related to American social reform history (an important aspect of the beginning of the modern library movement) and the Scottish philosophy that had been an essential part of Cutter’s education and intellectual milieu began coming to
my attention and increasingly to occupy my thinking beginning almost immediately after
completing the dissertation. These new sources eventually made it obvious to me that
rewriting each of the two parts would require more than simply editing them. They both
merited being recast conceptually.

I eventually published much of my new findings, but not by reformulating the
dissertation. I included the new themes in American social reform history in a
comparatively brief biographical sketch of Cutter (along with a updated bibliography of
his writings) that I placed in my edited collection of a selection of his works entitled
conclusions on the place of Scottish philosophy in Cutter’s work in *The Subject in the
Dictionary Catalog from Cutter to the Present* (1983). The latter is focused on subject
cataloging as it attained maturity over a century and, thus, Cutter is not the only person
discussed in it. But, nearly the entire first half of it is devoted to him and goes well
beyond what I had written on the topic in chapter 4 of the dissertation (“The Boston
Athenaeum Catalog and Subject Cataloging”). To put the matter in a nutshell, I ended up
surpassing what I had originally written in the dissertation in such a thoroughgoing way
that to try to rewrite the dissertation would have been to recreate it, not simply to edit it in
a superficial way for publication.

Having said the foregoing, I hasten to add that the dissertation still has much value
particularly in providing what amounts to a detailed narrative of his professional life.
This is important because as I mentioned in my original preface to the dissertation,
previous work on Cutter was not only brief but had passed over all critical issues and
conflicts in his life, and I attempted to include such matters in what I wrote. I also
conclude forthrightly that certain important matters related to his life and his major innovations merit much more attention than I have given them. The dissertation, while long and filled with the kind of detail that only Ph.D. students consider important, stands in effect not as the final word on Cutter, but rather only as a beginning point.

Some of the matters needing substantial work are as follows. With respect to the narrative of Cutter’s life, a modest number of few new sources have come to light that should be incorporated into the whole, including autobiographical comments he made about his early experiences of libraries and of the Harvard College Library and a limited amount of previously unknown correspondence. But what have always been missing have been sources that would help to vivify the man himself. The biographical part of my work focused on his professional work and outside of his early life has almost nothing of his personal life. In the professional arena he was the ultimate scholarly gentleman who worked among America’s educated elite for much of his career. Though he engaged in critical thinking about a great many things and wrote strong critical reviews of scholarly works of others, he rarely raised a personal complaint about anything, at least not in print or in the correspondence that I uncovered. He was generous towards others nearly to a fault even when he was treated poorly by them. He energetically worked at his professional tasks throughout his career, and he expended enormous amounts of time and effort to his special innovations in cataloging and classification, but one can find only a very rare hint that any of his activities were done in anything approaching a competitive spirit. In some respects, he was too good to be true.

The reason that this picture of him is all that I was able to present is in many respects a function of the sources I had available. As I mentioned in the 1974 original preface,
Charles Cutter’s grandson, the Honorable Richard Ammi Cutter of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, related to me that in his memory his grandfather’s personal papers were thrown out in the 1930s shortly after the death of Sarah Fayerweather (Appleton) Cutter, Charles Cutter’s wife. Moreover, Judge Cutter discounted their importance to my work anyway because he thought it best for me to limit my work to his grandfather’s professional career and not be concerned about his personal life. While I have found it hard to believe that all such personal materials would have disappeared, given Judge Cutter’s pronouncement on the matter and his role for me as a gateway to the family, I did not feel comfortable probing further. With the passing of Judge Cutter in 1993, however, perhaps new pathways could be opened and more information could be found on aspects of Cutter’s personality and life that would enlighten us at least about his reflections on and his passions for his own work. Of special importance would be personal letters that may have passed between Cutter and his wife and family, if any are extant. Also of importance might be letters that may have passed between Cutter’s wife, Sarah, and members of her own family (she was an Appleton), and especially those that might have survived between her and her brother Charles who spent most of his life in France, eventually becoming a member of the Law faculty at the University of Lyon. It strikes me that Cutter’s wife may have discussed with her family and with her brother with whom she was apparently close at least once in a while some of the key crises in the Cutter’s life together, for example, when Cutter struggled early on in his relationship with Melvil Dewey, when he eventually resigned from the Boston Athenaeum, and when he saw his efforts to help found the Rudolph Indexer Company fail because of machinations of the Library Bureau and Melvil Dewey.
Work also remains to be done on basic features and ideas related to Cutter’s major innovations in cataloging and classification. No one has yet conducted a critical investigation of his classification systems. He created two such systems, one for the Boston Athenaeum between the late 1870s and late 1880s, and a second during the 1890s, his better known system called the Expansive Classification which remained incomplete at his death in 1903. Chapter VII in the dissertation describes those two systems, but when I wrote it I had at best only a very minimal understanding of what classification really entailed. It remains a useful introduction to those systems, but at best only that.

To properly deal with Charles Cutter’s classificatory thought would require more than simply a description of them. It would require showing not only how his work related to the larger realm of library classification as it had developed up to that point (including the cast of various classifiers who attempted to make useful universal classification systems), but also how it intersected with other important movements that affected the organization of knowledge—for example, the rise of indexing, the rise of documentation, the creation of a new technique for classification schemes called faceting, and perhaps most important the rise of interest in providing access to scientific literature. Putting Cutter’s work in a critical classificatory context might also necessitate attempting to answer one intriguing question that has yet to be broached in any serious way for library classification systems—for whom were such systems created? During the 20th century most people who have written about the value of such systems (apart from classified catalogs) focus on how they enable library users to browse a library’s collections physically in a systematic way. But, when Cutter and others first devised such systems, libraries did not have open shelving arrangements, and if that was the case, the rationale for such systems
could not have been their physical browsing value to library users. If this was the case, however, for whom were they creating such systems, and why?

Likewise, no one has done a thorough investigation of Cutter’s work on library cataloging, including the general idea of a catalog, the art of cataloging and, especially, descriptive cataloging, and how it relates to library cataloging that followed it. It has long been assumed that there is an unhindered direct connection between his work and what succeeded him, but my own work has demonstrated at least in the realm of subject cataloging that this is simply not the case. His work stands at the beginning of similar work that succeeded him, but also for various reasons stands notably apart from later work.

Some of the more critical issues that could be examined with great benefit include 1) What was the effect and significance (if any) of Cutter approaching the dictionary catalog not as a single structure of different kinds of entries, but rather the merging of four separate kinds of catalogs, each with their own needs and objectives? 2) How was his conception of the catalog affected by his use of a principal rather than a unit record entry system? 3) How did his approach to descriptive cataloging fit into what over his own lifetime as well as since has been a persistent evolution of ideals as to how one could appropriately represent and make documents accessible? 4) How did Cutter’s approach to the matter of the page display of data (a parallel to the modern idea of interface design) affect his conceptualization of a catalog? 5) How did Cutter’s view of users actually intersect with his approach to document representation and catalog objectives? The latter is particularly important because of the strong habit of modern writers to refer to Cutter’s views about users chiefly in terms of only one or two sentences regarding users found in
his subject cataloging rules and in terms of a perfunctory reciting of his catalog “objects.”

Any careful reading of the corpus of his works will reveal, however, that his views of users went far beyond those two passages and in many respects appears not only to have been strongly influenced by his understanding of human faculty psychology as formulated in Scottish common sense realism, but also by his personal interest in helping library users of all kinds.

I have pointed out various directions that further work could go chiefly because it will take a new generation of scholars to do so. I not only encourage others to consider such investigations, but am strongly convinced that it remains important to do so. Charles A. Cutter remains perhaps the most original of all of the pioneers of the modern library movement. He participated in all of the various activities of that movement for all of his adult life, but he went beyond such activities to propound library catalog and classification systems of notable thoughtfulness and complexity. It might seem that he lived too long ago to merit close attention, but in reality his work still affects the library realm. He expressed late 19th century concerns consummately in his work, but he also affected the next century of work to follow, and in this sense further investigation of his accomplishments is more than merited.

F. Miksa (January 2008)
This study of the contributions of Charles Ammi Cutter to librarianship arose out of the observation that very little of a substantial nature had been written about him. A long memorial sketch by William E. Foster, based on information from Cutter's widow, has provided the primary outline of his various activities and particularly of his early years. A short biography published in 1931 by his nephew, William Parker Cutter, supplemented Foster's work, but treated Cutter too briefly to adequately encompass his wide-ranging interests. It also left undeveloped several points concerning Cutter's personal involvements with other members of the American Library Association. Three Master's theses have also been written, but all of these lacked original manuscript materials. Various

1William E. Foster, "Charles Ammi Cutter; a Memorial Sketch," LJ, XXVIII (October, 1903), 697-703.

2William P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, American Library Pioneers, no. 3 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1931).

studies in cataloging and classification have referred to Cutter's ideas in these areas, notably, the work of E. J. Coates, S. Lubetzky, and P. Dunkin. Studies of other library leaders, especially those by Holley and Williamson, have made passing mention of Cutter as he happened to affect the lives of their subjects. The characterization of Cutter that one finds in the latter studies suggests that Cutter was a shy, inward man whose primary contribution towards library development was solely in intellectual matters and most specifically in cataloging. In all of the works noted, the importance of Cutter's position in professional library organization, the fact of his wide experience, and the pervasive influence of his personal character have been only hinted at, and have suffered from a lack of detail. A natural question, therefore, is, what is the nature of Cutter's life and work and was it as pervasive as the hints have suggested?


The effort to find materials that would provide greater detail for a study of Cutter's life and work brought both pleasure and disappointment. The results of that search have dictated the nature of the result. The extent of Cutter's writing is much broader than appears on the surface. Many of Cutter's contributions to the Nation and to the Library Journal were anonymous. A great number of these have been identified. Even more pleasing has been the great number of comments recorded in the meetings of the American Library Association and many short editorial notes in the Library Journal that allow one to sense the breadth of his interests. Added to these are the manuscript reports he wrote as librarian of the Boston Athenaeum.

Disappointment was encountered, on the other hand, in searching for manuscript letters and other communications that might have revealed much of the inner emotional character of the man. Soon after beginning the search, R. Ammi Cutter of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cutter's grandson, revealed that in his recollection, the personal papers of his grandfather had been destroyed at the death of Cutter's wife in 1933. As a result, the search was aimed at finding any manuscript letters and communications that might have been preserved among the papers of Cutter's correspondents. Fortunately, enough of these were found, especially among the papers of Melvil Dewey at Columbia University, to fill in important details of his activity.
and thought and to suggest a way to interpret Cutter, the man. But their nature is for the most part strictly about library business and only lend themselves to a revelation of Cutter's inner self by dwelling on the circumstances of various trying occasions. It may be, of course, that few such personal letters ever existed, given the propensity of nineteenth century persons such as Cutter to keep personal matters to themselves. Whatever the case, the resulting study can not be considered a biography in the true sense of the word. Until such materials are located, Cutter, the man, will remain only partially revealed. The study has, therefore, had to content itself with recounting Cutter's activities, especially where these have not previously been known, and to surveying his thinking on those areas of librarianship that seemed to be most important to him. An attempt has been made to picture the conditions of his early life and schooling, the library positions he held, and the dimensions of his professional career. In order to tie the picture together, attention has centered on two consuming themes that moulded his library service and his intellectual contributions. The first concerns Cutter's desire to systematize library organization in a library movement where there was as yet little systematization. The second concerns Cutter's training at Harvard College and his exposure to a Boston-Cambridge intellectual milieu, and how that background shaped the purpose for which his systematizing efforts were made. The two themes
have also provided a framework for understanding his relationships and activities in the American Library Association. Finally, in order to round out the study, special attention has been given to a more detailed analysis of his work on classification and cataloging.

It is hoped that the final result will be found to be a viable interpretation of Cutter's work and thought. Admittedly, in the absence of the kinds of biographical materials that would have been more helpful, the interpretations of attitudes and intentions on the part of Cutter and others must be considered tentative to the extent that supporting materials only hint at them. The author, therefore, wishes to claim full responsibility for them, hoping that perhaps at a future time, further materials might be found that would either substantiate them more fully, or show them to need revision.

The materials for this study have come from a wide range of sources and have involved some technical difficulties necessary to an understanding of the resources used. Spelling reform interests were rife during the early years of the American Library Association, especially as a result of Melvil Dewey's efforts. Spelling reform was not consistently followed by its adherents, however, and sometimes variant forms of words occur even within single documents. Consequently, the spelling contained in original materials has been retained. The spelling of one word, catalog/catalogue, merits particular attention.
Cutter made a conscious attempt beginning in 1879 to use the shortened form of the word in his A.L.A. writing. In other places, notably in the Nation and in the publications and reports of the Boston Athenaeum, Cutter retained the old spelling. Consequently, both forms occur in quotations. Outside of quotations, the short form is used.

Another problem that has arisen concerns the anonymity of Cutter's published writings. Almost all of his Nation items as well as many of his Library Journal items not only have no author noted, but often have no official titles. To conserve space, citations involving such writings are given without brackets around Cutter's name. A discussion of Cutter's authorship responsibility for those various items is given preceding the bibliography of his writings.

Many depositories were consulted in the search for materials. The following list gives the institutions and the collections used.

District of Columbia

Illinois
  Chicago Public Library. Librarians' Letter Copybooks (William F. Poole).
  Newberry Library (Chicago)
    William F. Poole Papers
    William S. Merrill/Charles A. Cutter Correspondence.
  University of Chicago. Special Collections. President W. R. Harper's Papers.
  University of Illinois.
    Archives.
      Katharine L. Sharp Papers.
      University of Illinois School of Library Science. Directors' Letterbooks.
University of Illinois.
Rare Book Department. Charles Evans Papers.

Massachusetts
American Antiquarian Society (Worcester).
George Watson Cole Papers.
Librarians' Correspondence.
Boston Athenaeum. Records of the Officers and other miscellaneous materials.
Boston Public Library.
Proceedings of the Board of Trustees.
Harvard University.
Archives.
Springfield City Library. Librarians' Correspondence (John C. Dana).
Worcester Public Library. Letter Copy-books of Samuel S. Green.

Missouri

New York
Columbia University.
Special Collections Department.
Melvil Dewey Papers.
Mabel Winchell Correspondence.
School of Library Service. Library.
Correspondence between W. R. Cutter and the Rudolph Indexer Company.
New York Public Library. Manuscript Division.
Richard R. Bowker Papers.
Charles A. Nelson Papers.

The author wishes to acknowledge the help and encouragement of several persons without whom the study would not have been possible. First among these has been Howard W. Winger who has given abundantly of both his time and patience in his role as doctoral advisor. Ruth F. Carnovsky, Professor Emeritus, Ralph W. Franklin, and Lester Asheim, members of the faculty of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, and Arthur
Mann, Sterling Morton Distinguished Service Professor of American History in the University of Chicago, have also offered criticism of both content and methodology and have offered their encouragement when the spirit lagged.

Special acknowledgement is also due to a large number of persons associated with libraries and other institutions for help in the use of their resources. Among these are Walter M. Whitehill and the staff of the Boston Athenaeum, the staffs of the Columbia University Library, Department of Special Collections, the Forbes Library, Northampton, Massachusetts, and the Harvard University Archives. Last, the author wishes to express his indebtedness to The Honorable Richard Ammi Cutter of Cambridge, Massachusetts for various materials, for encouragement to investigate the essential intellectual contributions of his grandfather, and especially for his thoughtful and kind criticism of the manuscript.
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<tr>
<td>A.L.A.</td>
<td>American Library Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Boston Athenaeum</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPL</td>
<td>Boston Public Library</td>
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<td>CUL</td>
<td>Columbia University Library</td>
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<td>HHL</td>
<td>Harvard University, Houghton Library</td>
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<td>HUA</td>
<td>Harvard University, Archives</td>
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<td>LJ</td>
<td>Library Journal</td>
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<td>NYPL</td>
<td>New York Public Library</td>
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<td>United States National Archives</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study of the life and work of Charles Ammi Cutter (1837-1903) began with the assumption that Cutter was a commanding figure in nineteenth century American librarianship. The assumption was itself based on a common assessment both of his contemporaries and of persons since his time. Details of his achievements have been lacking, however, for knowledge of his life has been limited and his biographers have for the most part dwelled only briefly on his accomplishments.

The sources for this study have provided a more complete picture of his life and a more detailed investigation of his major ideas. These sources are in both manuscript and published form. Among the manuscripts are the records preserved at Harvard University that have provided insight into his early life and his years at the Harvard College Library (1860-1868). Reports from the Boston Athenaeum, especially several annual reports of Cutter's, have given insight into the development of his administration there and into the conflict that brought about his resignation in 1893. They have also provided the background for his production of the Boston Athenaeum printed catalog and his cataloging rules.
Correspondence between Cutter and others has been found in a variety of depositories, most notably those containing the papers of Melvil Dewey and R. R. Bowker. These letters have provided a major source for understanding Cutter's role among his contemporaries.

Cutter's published writings have provided an even richer storehouse of his ideas in librarianship. He wrote continuously, although for the most part anonymously, for the Nation from 1868 to 1903. He contributed numerous articles, comments, and bibliographical columns to the Library Journal from its beginning in 1876, and served as its editor from 1881 to 1893.

The results of the investigation of the above sources have been striking. Cutter was greatly influenced by his early education in the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community. He incorporated the moral and philosophical views of that training into his philosophy of librarianship and into his idea of the purpose of the library. His ideas showed some evolution in his last decade, however, as he developed his concept of library service at the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts. His early training also influenced the way he conceived the purpose of the professional library organization. He was instrumental in the formulation of the American Library Association. He served as both participant and mediator in the struggles for leadership during the 1880's. The struggle also, however, led to his withdrawal by 1893 from an active
role in the leadership of the organization. Afterwards, he participated mainly in only local library organizations.

Cutter's greatest accomplishments were in the realm of systematizing libraries and the tools of access to recorded knowledge. His work illustrates his concepts and innovations in library management. The printed catalog that he produced and his Rules for a Dictionary Catalog provided the modern dictionary catalog concept. The Rules, especially, provided the impetus for the discussion of cataloging principles in the library world in his own day. Most notably, Cutter produced the first systematic subject catalog system, although upon close examination, one can also see the practices and ambiguities that he included in it that undercut its own goals.

Cutter's work in shelf classification was also notable. Inspired by Dewey's Amherst scheme, he developed a much more detailed system for the Athenaeum which he also offered to the library world at large. When criticism mounted about his notation for the scheme, he began again and produced his Expansive Classification.

The picture of Cutter that has resulted in this study shows a remarkably productive and erudite scholar with broad-ranging interests. His achievements have never been fully appreciated nor has his grasp of librarianship been fully portrayed. The following study attempts to do both.
CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE AND HARVARD STUDENT YEARS

Early Years

Charles Ammi Cutter was a member of a nineteenth century family that can be described as, "solid New England stock." The members had a pride in ancestry "not so much because their forbears were prominent in the social, political, or financial world, but because they were hard-working, plain-living, clear-thinking, and devout people, with high ideals."¹ The Cutter family had its start in America with the arrival in Massachusetts from Newcastle-on-Tyne in England of the widow, Elizabeth Cutter, and her two sons about 1640. Through her son, Richard, she became the progenitress of descendants who, each in his own way, helped to civilize the colonial wilderness and who played a part in bringing the young nation through its revolutionary birth pains.²

The Cutters were primarily farmers and merchants but included among their ranks clergymen, physicians, and later, 

¹ W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 3.
soldiers. For example, Ammi Ruhama Cutter (1735-1810) served as a physician during the second capture of Louisburg during the French and Indian War.\(^1\) He later distinguished himself as Physician General of the Eastern Department of the Continental Army. Many Cutters fought against the British Army around Menotomy and Lexington during the Revolutionary War. Charles Cutter's great-grandfather, Ammi (1755-1830), had been mustered in as a private during that period and took part in several battles.\(^2\) His father, also named Ammi (1733-1795), too old to go, was himself involved in a surprise capture of a British convoy by the "old men" of West Cambridge on April 19, 1775.\(^3\)

By the end of the eighteenth century, members of the Cutter family were settled mainly in the towns now known as Woburn, Winchester, Arlington, Charlestown, and Cambridge and participated regularly in the local government and church life of their respective communities. The first Ammi Cutter (1733-1795) fathered twenty-one children and numbered among his descendants Benjamin Cutter, a physician, and his son, William Richard Cutter, a contemporary of Charles Ammi Cutter, and both a librarian in Woburn, Massachusetts and a local historian. Others of the family were businessmen.

\(^{1}\)A brief genealogical chart of Cutter family members referred to in this study is given in the Appendix.

\(^{2}\)Benjamin Cutter and William R. Cutter, History of the Town of Arlington, Massachusetts ... (Boston: David Clapp and Son, 1880), pp. 58, 83. Other sources are also listed in this work. (Hereinafter cited as Arlington)

\(^{3}\)Ibid., pp. 61-63.
One such businessman, the third Ammi Cutter, was born on September 17, 1777 in West Cambridge. At that time the town was the second precinct of Cambridge, but it successfully gained its own charter in 1807, sixty-eight years after the formal establishment of the second precinct's own parish church. In 1867 after several changes of boundaries the town changed its name to Arlington. West Cambridge was a picturesque little village immediately to the north and west of Boston. Noted, in the words of Charles Sumner, for its placid beauty and its seclusion, it supplied, like other surrounding communities, farmer-businessmen who found Boston a convenient market for their goods. The second Ammi Cutter had himself been "among the first who carried milk for sale in Boston." The third Ammi left his parental home perhaps in the last decade of the eighteenth century and went into business as an oil merchant on T-wharf in Boston. His partner and intimate friend in business was Caleb Champney. Such was their friendship that Ammi named his first son after him. Upon his first wife's death, Ammi remarried, this time to the sister of his partner's wife. Tragedy struck again shortly thereafter, however, when both his wife and Champney died. Subsequently Ammi married Hannah, Caleb Champney's

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1Ibid., pp. 114, 161; Charles S. Parker, Town of Arlington, Past and Present (Arlington: C. S. Parker & Son, 1907), pp. 59, 123.


widow. Of the several children that survived him, three
maiden daughters, Catharine, Charlotte, and Cordelia subse-
quently played an important part in the life of his grandson,
Charles Ammi.¹

For a time Ammi Cutter's business prospered and he
was able to establish himself in a building on Portland
Street in Boston, not far from his Charter Street residence.
It is said, however, that at a later time he met with losses
that eventually reduced his success.² Also at a later time,
perhaps in the 1820's, Ammi Cutter returned to become a
permanent resident of the older part of Charlestown and West
Cambridge, making the trip between there and Boston in his
old-fashioned chaise.³

Ammi Cutter's eldest son, Caleb Champney Cutter, most
likely learned the fish-oil business from his father, al-
though he did not apparently fall heir to his father's busi-
ness. He became, in later years, an inspector of fish oils
in Boston. In 1821 Caleb married Hannah Biglow and together
they had four children, one of them Charles Ammi. Upon the
death of his wife he remarried and subsequently fathered
three more children. Of these siblings of Charles Ammi,
Clarence Henry and Francis Edward both served in the Union
Army during the Civil War, the former having engaged in

¹Ibid., pp. 124-25. See also the information on the
Lombard family, p. 327.

²Ibid., p. 124.

³Parker, Town of Arlington, p. 76.
extensive action with the 95th Regiment of the New York Volunteers. After the war Clarence settled in Washington, D. C. His son, William Parker Cutter, entered library work and subsequently became closely associated with his uncle.¹

Charles Ammi Cutter, the fourth child of Caleb and Hannah Cutter, was born on March 14, 1837 in Boston. Boston at that time still retained much of its pre-Revolutionary War appearance and was a city that later writers would look back upon with nostalgia. It was only then beginning an era of industrial and urban expansion that would change it drastically during the next forty years. The Cutter residence on Charter Street was situated on Copp's Hill at the North End in an area that had become populated after the Revolutionary War by industrious Yankee mechanics, artisans and lesser merchants. Their livelihood was related to Boston's growing maritime and commercial importance and for the most part they had achieved a comfortable and secure existence.²

¹B. Cutter, A History of the Cutter Family, p. 124. In addition it is likely that Francis Edward Cutter emigrated to the West sometime after the above volume by Benjamin Cutter was written. Cf. "City Suffers a Great Loss," Daily Hampshire Gazette, September 8, 1903, p. 1.

²A full description of the Boston of Cutter's birth is not germane to a picture of his early life because of his move to West Cambridge described in the next paragraph. Nevertheless, an appreciation of that community does amplify the sense of Cutter's solid commercial class roots and for that purpose the most helpful sources have been: David Ward, "Nineteenth Century Boston, A Study in the Role of Antecedent and Adjacent Conditions in the Spatial Aspects of Urban Growth," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1963), chs. 2 and 3; Samuel Eliot Morison, The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1941), pp. 225-52; and Walter
Charles was not destined to grow up in the everyday life of that Boston, however. A little more than a month after he was born his mother died. In the following year Caleb Cutter remarried. His new wife, Frances Clark of Milton, Massachusetts, bore him a son, Francis Edward, in December 1839. About the same time Charles Ammi was sent to live with his grandfather, Ammi, in West Cambridge. It proved to be a change in course that greatly determined his future.¹

Ammi Cutter had with others who worked in Boston built his house on Pleasant Street in West Cambridge. His was opposite the south end of the old burying ground and near the West Cambridge town center.² There the young boy led a placid existence where he could enjoy the adventures of boating on Spy Pond immediately to the southeast or

¹The two best sources for Cutter's early life are W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, and Foster, "Charles Ammi Cutter: A Memorial Sketch." Both authors were supplied with information on Cutter's early life by his widow, Sarah Fayerweather Cutter. The chronology of the early period has never been accurately established, however. An indication of when Charles went to live with his grandfather is only implied in the 1840 U. S. Census records. While Ammi Cutter's location in West Cambridge or Charlestown has not been found in the records, Caleb Cutter's home in Boston is, nevertheless listed. The individual names of children are not given, but in Caleb's household only one child under five is listed (probably Francis Edward, born December 2, 1839), suggesting that Charles had already by the time of the census been moved. See U. S. National Archives, "Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the United States, 1840," Boston, Ward 1, sheet 30.

²Parker, Town of Arlington, p. 76.
exploring Devil's Den in what later became Menotomy Rocks Park. He might also find himself at the Russell Store watching the traffic passing through from Vermont and New Hampshire or listening to reminiscences of the fateful events of April 19, 1775. It was perhaps even at the store's dancing school that young Charles was first introduced to the minuets and reels that he so enjoyed at American Library Association meetings later in life.¹

Charles' home training was supervised by his cultured and devout maiden aunts and early included exposure to books and study.² The town was fortunate too in having one of the earliest free public libraries. In 1835 Dr. Ebenezer Learned of Hopkinton, New Hampshire left a legacy of $100 for the establishment in West Cambridge of a juvenile library. The sum was to be used by the town leaders to purchase "such books as in their opinion will best promote useful knowledge and the Christian virtues among the inhabitants of said town, who are scholars, or by usage have the right to attend as scholars in their primary schools."³

Books were purchased immediately and the fund was increased by a gift of sixty dollars the next year from the

¹Ibid., pp. 88, 90, 106, 292-94. Charles Cutter's spirited dancing is mentioned in almost all of the biographical vignettes that include the social side of the annual American Library Association meetings.

²Cf. W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, pp. 4-5.

West Cambridge Sewing Circle. In 1837 the town officers voted an annual appropriation of thirty dollars and opened the previously restricted privileges to all members of the town. By 1844 the size of the library exceeded 1,000 volumes. Young Charles frequented the library after his tenth year and, significantly, Charlotte Cutter served as librarian from 1849 to 1851.\(^1\)

Although Charles Cutter enjoyed hiking and boating all of his life he was never very robust. His physical weakness, extreme nearsightedness and a natural tendency to study probably early led him towards a life of scholarship. Another factor, however, was the religious atmosphere of his adoptive home. His grandfather and his aunts had regularly participated in the activities of the West Cambridge First Congregational Parish Church. During the latter years of the forty-one year ministry of the Rev. Thaddeus Fiske, an orthodox Calvinist, the congregation had increasingly followed the growing liberal movement. In 1829 the coming of Frederic Henry Hedge, later a Unitarian leader of note and a transcendentalist professor at the Harvard Divinity School, signaled the obvious move of the church into the Unitarian camp. From 1835 to 1854 the parish came under the leadership of David Damon, William Ware (a son of Henry

\(^1\)Parker, *Town of Arlington*, p. 267. In 1872 the library became the Arlington Public Library and in 1892, as a result of a bequest from Maria C. Robbins, the Robbins Library. William E. Foster notes the age of Cutter's "first taste" of libraries in a letter to Mrs. Mary S. Cutler Fairchild, October 22, 1903, CUL, Dewey Papers.
Ware, Sr., and a brother of Henry Ware, Jr., both distinguished Harvard professors), and James Francis Brown, likewise Unitarians. They no doubt influenced the direction of the young boy for in his subsequent enrollment sometime during the 1840's in the Hopkins Classical School, Cutter was set on a path that would eventually lead him to Harvard and to preparation for the Unitarian ministry.

Edward Hopkins, a governor of Connecticut in the seventeenth century, had created in his will a trust to be used for "the breeding up of scholars in the study of Divinity." Contested at first by those who thought the proceeds rightfully belonged to a Connecticut institution, a legislative decree in 1712 stipulated that the funds be used both to support selected young men at the Cambridge grammar school in their preparation for entering Harvard College and to send others to Harvard itself. Funds were first applied to the institutions in 1726 and one of the first to benefit


was Ammi Ruhamah Cutter, who became first a minister and afterwards a physician.¹ From 1803 to 1837 the grammar school had enjoyed an only moderate success because of the uneven qualifications of its teachers. In 1837 its fitness to receive the funds was questioned. Not only had the quality of the instruction become suspect, but the issue of whether or not it was adequately emphasizing the classics in its preparation of the selected recipients for Harvard was also raised. As a result, in April 1839 the funds were withdrawn and a separate school established. By an act of the Legislature the trustees were authorized to form the Hopkins Classical School in Cambridge with the visitation "vested in the President and Fellows of Harvard College, the minister of the First Church in Cambridge, and the Chairman of the Selectmen and of the School Committee of Cambridge."² Though successful for a few years, the arrangement did not ultimately work out and in 1854 the school was discontinued. The funds were given at that time to the Cambridge High School to be used for its classical department. Trustees of the Hopkins Charity included many of the most eminent men in the Cambridge-Boston community. Those elected during the period of the Classical School included Convers Francis (elected 1838), Henry Ware, Jr. (1838), Ezra Stiles Gannett (1839), Nathaniel I. Bowditch (1838), Edward Everett (1846), Jared Sparks (1849).

¹Bowditch, An Account, p. 76. This Ammi Ruhamah Cutter was the father of the one of the same name mentioned on p. 2 above.

²Ibid., pp. 32-33.
and Edward Wigglesworth (1851). Later they would also include Charles Eliot Norton and Francis Parkman.¹

The school was opened in a building on the grounds of Harvard College near the future site of Boylston Hall. In 1841 it was moved to a building on Main Street on Dana Hill. Its main purpose was, of course, to train the several students allowed free instruction each year. Though there were a total of four masters over the fifteen year period of its existence, one of these, Edmund B. Whitman, served the longest in that capacity, from 1841 to 1853. Under his direction the scope of the school was expanded to that approaching an academy. It came to include both elementary and secondary departments. As early as 1843 the school committee appealed to the townspeople for students; that those "who desire their sons to be prepared either for college or for active business, and who may find the Public Schools too crowded for their purpose, or for other reasons may prefer the instructions of a select school, will avail themselves of this valuable privilege."² Whitman himself advertised regularly in the Cambridge Chronicle touting the excellence of the school.

The object of this School is not only to prepare boys for college, but for the Counting Room and the Mechanics Shop; in fact, no efforts or expense will be spared to give to those pupils who will labor for

¹Ibid., pp. 67-71.
themselves, a thorough preparation for any department of life. The motto of the school is strict discipline and hard labor.¹

Students were admitted to the school under the same standards as those of the Boston Latin School and remained in the course for periods ranging from four to seven years, advancing as rapidly as their attainments would allow. Whitman was praised for his "rare qualities as an instructor."² The thoroughness of his work with Cutter can perhaps be surmised from the regular awards that the latter received after entering Harvard.

Thus young Cutter finished out his stay in West Cambridge making the daily trips to Cambridge by omnibus coach or perhaps by the West Cambridge Branch Railroad begun in August 1846.³ The pleasantness of the situation was broken in March 1850, however, when grandfather Cutter died. Young Cutter had planned to enter Harvard in the fall of 1850 but was thought too young, being then only thirteen years old. As a result, he spent the year of 1850-51 "chiefly in reading novels and reviews--till just before examination."⁴ He had been appointed a Hopkins Trust fellow in the summer

¹Advertisement, Cambridge Chronicle, April 29, 1847.
²Cambridge, Massachusetts, Report of the School Committee for 1843, p. 10; [Hildreth], City of Cambridge: A Brief Account, p. 9; Advertisement, Cambridge Almanac, 1852, p. [184].
⁴"Harvard College Class Book, Class of 1855," p. 173, MS, HUA.
of 1850 and that decision was reaffirmed in January 1851.\textsuperscript{1}
The three aunts and the young boy subsequently moved to Cambridge sometime during the interim year. Cutter was provisionally admitted to the Freshman class in July 1851 subject to his passing an examination in mathematics, and by the fall a new chapter had begun in his life.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Harvard College Years}

The Harvard College that Charles Cutter entered was in many respects a relic of an already antiquated educational philosophy. Although it had experienced considerable reform and expansion under President Kirkland earlier in the century, the acceleration of that movement had been allowed to slow down under the administrator, Josiah Quincy, in favor of measured, albeit solid, progress. Under Kirkland, George Ticknor had introduced the ideal of German literary scholarship and had advanced the ideal in the establishment of the department of modern languages and literature. With the appointment of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in Ticknor’s place in 1836 during Quincy’s regime, the department received a special emphasis on Old World culture and beauty. Some progress was made with the introduction of elective courses in the 1840’s and the library, long neglected, was given increased

\textsuperscript{1}Harvard College, College Papers, 2d Series, XVIII, 1, January 3, 1851, MS, HUA.
attention both in building its collections and in opening its new home, Gore Hall, in 1841. But the deadening recitation method and its scale of merit remained, not to be wholly discontinued until the administration of Charles W. Eliot. ¹

Quincy's five short-termed successors are noted by Morison as superintending the school through an age of transition. He writes succinctly that, "With the passing of Quincy, the presidency fell into a rut, from which it was only rescued when the genius of Eliot transformed a respectable university into a great one." ² Of course, there were occasional flashes of fortune such as the establishment of the Lawrence Scientific Institute under President Edward Everett in 1847 and with it the arrival of Louis Agassiz as professor of zoology and geology. But under Jared Sparks and James Walker the school reached its lowest ebb.

At the time of Charles Cutter's entrance the school had just been rocked by two deeply disturbing events. The first was the sensational trial during 1850 of Dr. John White Webster of the Harvard Medical School. He was accused of the murder in November 1849 of Dr. George Parkman, a financier and benefactor of the school. Webster was found guilty and publicly hanged on August 30, 1850. ³ The second


²Ibid., p. 275.

³Ibid., pp. 282-86. Cf. also Robert Sullivan, The Disappearance of Dr. Parkman (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), in which an examination of the legal
event was the rejection by the Board of Overseers in January 1851 of Francis Bowen as McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History. Bowen who had been tutor in philosophy after his graduation in 1833 and more recently the editor of the North American Review had been tentatively appointed to his professorial post on May 25, 1850 and had begun teaching that fall. His outspoken opinions in support of Daniel Webster on the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Law as well as against the popular sentiment for Kossuth and the Hungarian cause in a strongly Democratic and Free-Soil climate brought about the rejection of the appointment. As a result formal instruction in history ceased until 1853 when Henry W. Torrey received the appointment. Bowen himself was at that latter date appointed to the Alford Professorship of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity, but only after the heated emotions of the previous contest had died down.

In actuality, however, his rejection had been the result of a more complicated political situation involving the reorganization of the Board of Overseers. Morison comments that "it seems likely that the sacrifice of Bowen was the price that the University paid to oust the Council and State Senate from its senior Governing Board." 1 The more solitary lesson for the school was that in order to preserve proceedings and of recently discovered evidence raises serious doubts about the verdict.

academic freedom, Harvard found it necessary to separate her government from political elements, accepting at the same time the concomitant removal of government financial subsidy. For these and other reasons the period was a depressing one in Harvard's history and had its effect on the students passing through. For example, Justin Winsor, having entered in 1849, dropped out by 1851 and opted for study in Europe. He received his A.B. honoris causa in 1868. Others stayed on, however, and though eyewitness accounts relate the low spirit, it is remarkable to note the many well-known names. Charles W. Eliot (A.B. 1853), Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1854), Phillips Brooks (1855) and Henry Adams (1856), as well as Horatio Alger (1852), are just a few among them.¹

Charles Cutter had moved with his aunts to within easy walking distance of the College. Consequently he did not experience the spirited activities of dormitory life.²

By his own admission he was shy and studious.

Coming to college with the wish but hardly the hope of being in the first half of the class I naturally fell into habits of study which combined with shyness

¹For the date of Winsor's degree, see Harvard University, Historical Register of Harvard University, 1636-1936 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), p. 469. Morrison relates a friendly dispute between Charles W. Eliot and Phillips Brooks years later concerning when the College reached its lowest ebb. "Eliot said, 'I think the college struck bottom in 1853.' 'No,' said Brooks, 'in 1855.' These were the dates when they respectively graduated." Three Centuries of Harvard, p. 294.

²They lived on Dunster Street according to W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 5.
prevented my forming intimacies with my classmates. I regret this but I hope I may be able after graduation to activate those friendships which have not been formed before.¹

He most likely benefited, however, from the one redeeming factor in the recitation method of instruction—that of having considerable free time for independent study. That factor in addition to the tutors who were the actual instructors at the college provided a student's real education. The list of special professorships during the period is also impressive. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow held the Smith chair of modern languages and literature until 1854 and was followed by James Russell Lowell. George Martin Lane, who had received his Ph.D. at Göttingen, became the University Professor of Latin in 1851. In the same year Francis Child, also a product of Göttingen, succeeded Edward Tyrrel Channing as Boylston Professor of Rhetoric. And Cornelius C. Felton, afterward president (1860-62), was Eliot Professor of Greek. Other names include Evangelinus A. Sophocles, Asa Gray, Jeffries Wyman, Benjamin Peirce, Louis Agassiz and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The young Charles applied himself assiduously from the start. In the beginning of his sophomore year he was awarded a copy of Southey's poetical works for a detur. A detur was a book prize given each year to exemplary students.²

¹"Harvard College Class Book, Class of 1855," p. 173, MS, HUA.

²"Harvard College, Faculty Records, XIV, 178, November 15, 1852, MS, HUA. The funds for the prize came from the Hopkins Trust. See Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard,
By the end of that year he was already showing what would prove to be a life-long interest in French culture by signing a petition with sixty-eight other students requesting that instruction in the French language be made an elective for juniors and seniors. Though it is unlikely that the petition was successful, in the fall of 1853 at the beginning of his next term, he was listed in a report by Emile Arnault, instructor in that language, as one of those who had shown marked improvement during the previous spring.\(^1\)

Cutter's earlier training in classical languages was also borne out, for in the student exhibition of the same term he presented a Latin version of a dialogue found in the orations of Demosthenes.\(^2\) By the following fall the caliber of his work was such that he was recommended for one of the new Shattuck scholarships.\(^3\) He subsequently presented an English

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\(^{1}\)Harvard College, College Papers, 2d Series, XIX, 419, MS, HUA. The petition was dated May 30, 1853. See also Harvard College, Overseers Reports, IX, 446, MS, HUA, for Arnault's report of October 17, 1853.

\(^{2}\)"A Latin Version. From an Oration of Demosthenes Against Aristogiton," No. 15 in the program entitled, "Order of Performances for Exhibition, Tuesday, October 18, 1853, HUA. The exhibitions were important events and carefully planned. The permission form, signed by President Walker, allowed eight minutes for Cutter and another student. Rehearsal was held two weeks before the event and a "fair copy" of the exercise was to be delivered to the President one week before. In addition, no entertainment was to be given by participants on Exhibition day except with the express consent of the President. See MS in the possession of the author.

\(^{3}\)Harvard College, Corporation Record, IX, 322, August 30, 1854, MS, HUA. See also Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, p. 296, on the Shattuck fund established in 1854.
composition at the October 17, 1854 Exhibition entitled "The Great Prince of Orange." At the end of his senior year in the summer of 1855 he won first place in the Bowdoin Latin competition with a translation of Bryant's "Thanatopsis." He was awarded his Bachelor of Arts degree on July 18, 1855. Ranked third in his class, he delivered a commencement oration on "The Character of the Satire of Thackeray."¹

When he graduated, Cutter was undecided as to what course to follow. Only eighteen years old, he had at least a partial commitment to the Unitarian ministry, having entered Harvard on a Hopkins scholarship.² In the fall of 1855, however, he remained at the University and entered the Lawrence Scientific School as a special student in mathematics.³ In the Scientific School mathematics was used as a tool of engineering rather than as a theoretical subject taught in the

¹Harvard College, Faculty Records, XIV, 424, June 11, 1855; p. 427, June 21, 1855, MS, HUA; "Bryant's Thanatopsis," MS no. 277 in Bowdoin Prize Dissertations, Vol. XIII, HUA; "Character of the Satire of Thackeray," Performance No. 38 in "Order of Exercises for Commencement, xviii July, MDCCCLV," HUA. The rank in the graduating class along with a notice of Cutter's election to Phi Beta Kappa are noted in W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 6.

²While it was not unusual for young men to enter Harvard at age fourteen, it was still considered young. During the nineteenth century the median age of entering freshmen had reached a low of fifteen and a half around 1810 but had risen to seventeen by 1845. Later, under President Eliot, the average age rose to nineteen. Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, pp. 183-84, 370.

³"Harvard College Class Book, Class of 1855," p. 173, MS, HUA. A short paragraph noting that he had been a special student in mathematics was added after 1860 by the class secretary, Edwin H. Abbot. See also Alumni Record Card, HUA.
obscure manner of Benjamin R. Peirce in the College. It is most likely that his teacher was Professor Henry L. Eustis and the predominantly tutorial method that was used would have covered such engineering related studies as descriptive geometry and surveying.\(^1\) While no other records reveal an interest on Cutter's part in applied science, it is possible that the presence of Charles W. Eliot (A.B. 1853) and James Mills Peirce (A.B. 1853) was of some influence. Both were appointed College tutors in mathematics in 1854 and Eliot was interested in teaching trigonometry with at least some field work and practical applications.\(^2\)

Had Cutter continued work at the School and taken the examination, he might then have received the Bachelor of Science degree. But the examinations were usually taken after a residence of between eighteen to thirty months and apparently that procedure did not interest him.\(^3\) Instead he registered during the second term of the year as a resident graduate. Upon payment of a fee, he was to be allowed to attend any lectures of his choosing in a leisurely and scholarly manner. He apparently intended simply to remain listed in the College.


\(^2\)Charles W. Eliot, *Harvard Memories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), p. 86. Of course, it must be remembered that Peirce formally tutored the freshmen and Eliot the sophomores. Cutter was at that point a senior.

catalog for he made a special request to be exempted from
the fee explaining that he did not intend "to use the library,
or to have any communion with the College, in any way." His
request was turned down by President Walker who felt "that
in my opinion the payment of the fee is an essential condition
of being a Resident Graduate."\cite{CutterandWalker} Cutter subsequently busied
himself with the preparation of two pupils for the College.
In September 1856 he reverted to his ministerial leanings
and entered the Harvard Divinity School.\cite{CutterandWalker856}

**Harvard Divinity School**

During the eighteenth century, the normal pattern for
Harvard College graduates wishing to enter the ministry had
been to study divinity with a prominent local minister or with
the President or Hollis Professor at the College. However,
during and after the Revolutionary War period, fewer and fewer
college graduates were choosing the Congregational ministry
because of its restrictive Calvinism. Harvard College was
captured by the emerging Unitarian movement through the
appointment of Henry Ware, Sr. to the Hollis Chair of Sacred
Theology in 1804. By the time William Ellery Channing gave

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\footnote{Both Cutter's words and Walker's reply are found in
and on a letter to President Walker from W. G. Stearns, March
28, 1856, Harvard College, College Papers, 2d Series, XXIII,
129, MS, HUA. Morison comments briefly on resident graduates
enrollments can be found on his Alumni Record Card, HUA.}

\footnote{"Harvard College Class Book, Class of 1855," p. 173,
MS, HUA.}
his noted Baltimore address in 1819, the Unitarian movement
had gained a self-awareness that prompted the establishment
of the Harvard Divinity School specifically for training
ministers for the Unitarian parish ministry.¹

By the late 1830's the Unitarian movement's apolo-
etical stance against orthodox Calvinism had given way to
internecine quarrels. Many Unitarian leaders found them-
selves defending the original rationalistic Unitarian the-
ology against the aggressive transcendental and anti-institu-
tional views of George Ripley, Theodore Parker, and Ralph
Waldo Emerson. Emerson responded in 1837 by characterizing
the more rationalistic segment of the movement as "corpse-
cold" Unitarianism.²

The School, controlled by the more traditional seg-
ment, went through its lowest period during the next two
decades. An endemic conflict over the separation of church
and state, and consequently over the governance of both the
College and the Divinity School, hindered the development of

¹Three dates are variously given for the beginning
of the school: 1811, 1816, and 1819. Morison prefers the
latter in Three Centuries of Harvard, p. 243. The survey
of the ante-bellum history of the school given here is
taken primarily from Conrad Wright, "The Early Period (1811-
40)," and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Middle Period (1840-80),"
in The Harvard Divinity School; Its Place in Harvard Univer-
sity and in American Culture, ed. by George Huntson Williams
(Boston: Beacon Press, 1954). Additional material on
student life can be found in chapter three of the same volume
by Willard L. Sperry entitled, "A Beautiful Enmity: The
Student History in the Nineteenth Century."

²Ahlstrom discusses Emerson's 1837 address in, "The
Middle Years (1840-80)," pp. 70-77.
both. The number and quality of the faculty diminished. Only two of the established chairs were filled from the late 1840's to 1857 and these with men who were not given to grappling with newer theological currents. They taught all the subjects in the curriculum and were assisted in their work only occasionally by others, including local ministers, the president of the College, and by the Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy and Civil Polity in the College (James Walker, 1839-53 and Francis Bowen, 1853-89). The situation began to change only in 1857 with the appointment of two permanent but non-resident professors. Frederic Henry Hedge, pastor of the First Church in Brookline and son of Levi Hedge who was from 1822 to 1839 the Alford Professor in the College, occupied the Alford Chair in the Divinity School and brought with him the first more systematic introduction of idealistic philosophy. George E. Ellis, pastor of the Harvard Church in Charlestown, instructed in systematic theology.

The general tone of the course of study during this period served as a reinforcement for more traditional and rationalistic Unitarian views. Belief in the Scriptures and


in the Christ based on rationalistic explanations of the miracles, and belief in the inherent sinfulness of man were the unquestioned basics of the educational program. The curriculum was correspondingly practical. It stressed pastoral duties based on those beliefs rather than theoretical issues based on current theological debate. It apparently also lacked stimulation. Enrollments fell and again students sought to enter other professions. The yearly average number of students during Cutter's years there was only about twenty-three. Outside of occasional disturbances, such as the suspension of a student in the spring of 1857 for participation in a medium, the school schedule seems to have been uneventful. One historian of the School has described the routine for the whole period in the following words:

Student life went on much the same as before. Lectures were spaced throughout the day; student conferences and debates were held alternately on Wednesday evenings; students of the two upper classes preached in turn at Friday evening chapel services. The annual Christmas service—for which the chapel was decorated and at which a specially honored student preached—seems to have become the best remembered event except for visitation day at the end of the school year.

During the period that Charles Cutter attended the School, the first year's course of study covered systematic and natural theology and Christian ethics. The latter two were taught by assigning the main topics of each subject

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1 Ahlstrom, "The Middle Years (1840-80)," pp. 116-20.
2 Ibid., pp. 91-92. 3 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
to students who in turn presented them for class discussion. During the next lecture Professor Francis would likewise discourse on the same subject. Other exercises included a close study of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* as an example of heathen thought contemporary with the rise of Christianity, and an introduction to Russell's *Pulpit Eloquence*. During the remaining two years preaching, pastoral care and the preparation of sermons were emphasized. During the 1857-58 year the courses in Ecclesiastical History, previously taught by Francis, were transferred to the new professor, Frederic Henry Hedge. Seniors spent most of their time on preaching both by analyzing historic sermons and by practice in the art. The latter task included the presentation of a course of sermons in a local Cambridge church. Extra-curricular activities included a weekly evening debate, a weekly evening religious conversation decidedly scriptural and practical and regularly attended by Professor Francis, and morning and evening prayers usually officiated by middle and senior students. The course had an obviously heavy pastoral emphasis and may have seemed stultifying, a conclusion perhaps supported by the low enrollment of seniors in 1857-58. They numbered only two of a total of seventeen students. The seniors had previously numbered nine but several had, in the noncommittal words of Professor Francis, "left the school at different times for various reasons."¹

¹This description of the curriculum and the attendant quotation is taken from a report by Convers Francis to the Overseers Committee on the Divinity School, in Harvard
Cutter applied himself from the start. He received in April 1857, with James K. Hosmer, Charles Noyes, and three others, a scholarship from the Hopkins Trust. In the succeeding two years he received lesser amounts from the Jackson fund.\footnote{Cutter received $215 from the Hopkins Trust. Considering that tuition and room-rent amounted to $75 for one year, the award was significant, for Cutter most certainly lived at home. Harvard College, College Papers, 2d Series, XIV, 132, April 10, 1857, MS, HUA. The recommendation was made by G. R. Noyes and C. Francis. The Corporation affirmed the award on April 18, 1857. In the succeeding two years, Cutter received a total of $115 from the Jackson Fund. Harvard College, Corporation Record, X, 62, April 24, 1858; p. 121, March 26, 1859, MS, HUA.} During his junior year he submitted a dissertation to the Bowdoin Prize committee, which consisted of Charles Francis Adams, Dr. Frothingham, and the Reverend Rufus Ellis, all of Boston. His winning effort, entitled, "Persecution for Religion's Sake During the Colonial Period of New England," consisted of fifty-six finely handwritten pages of a defense of the persecutors in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during the 17th century. He was careful to note that he could not justify their actions and excesses. He took issue, however, with those who felt the Puritans to be ogres and who wrote without any apparent sense of the whole context of the persecutions.

In presenting his argument Cutter indicated a more telling conflict. He began with a strong Miltonic statement on censorship of opinion. "A persecutor, therefore, may or
may not be blameworthy, but will always be in error since he takes upon himself an office which does not belong to him, the office of controlling men's opinions.\(^1\) His feeling that no one could rightly control men's opinions by civil coercion was a principle on which he based his later opinions on book censorship.

He also attempted, however, to portray sympathetically his own Puritan forbears who had violated that standard. His inability to be too severe on the Puritan leaders suggests that he was attempting to be true to his own theological heritage, especially as it reflected the filiopietistic spirit of Palfrey and others then writing about the same matters.\(^2\) By rationalizing the actions of the Puritan leaders, Cutter revealed a struggle between his more traditional Unitarian Harvard education and a view of society that was critical of that background.

Charles Cutter's most significant achievement during his student days occurred in the library of the school. It

\(^1\)"Persecution for Religion's Sake During the Colonial Period of New England, by J. S. Dasley, Graduate," [sic], MS No. 290, in Bowdoin Prize Dissertations, Vol. XIV, HUA. The use of a pseudonym is unaccountable.

had been traditional to use the services of a student as librarian of the Divinity School's collections. In exchange for a small remuneration that in Cutter's time amounted to $50.00 per school year, the student librarian labored at such tasks as circulation, entering newly accessioned books in the old 1840 manuscript catalog, and keeping the books in order on the shelves. Even though there was little reading room area and the library was generally open only two hours a day for public use, keeping order was probably no light task. In particular, with the book call numbers based on permanent shelf locations, the 1840 catalog shows a considerable accretion of changed location symbols as the books were constantly shifted.

Cutter served as the student librarian from 1857 to 1859 and brought acumen and energy to the job. He worked at least part of the time under the advice and direction of Ezra Abbot, assistant librarian in the College, and he served during a time of significant expansion in the size of the collections. Although the Divinity School itself was in a period of general decline, the library was an exception to that trend. The most significant increase occurred in 1856 when the approximately 4,000 volume collection of Professor Friedrich Lücke of Göttingen was purchased through a gift of

\[1\] Cutter was paid $50.00 a year in addition to his Jackson fund scholarships. Harvard College, Corporation Records, X, 62, April 24, 1858, and p. 122, March 26, 1859, MS, HUA. For library regulations and conditions, see Ahlstrom, "The Middle Years (1840-80)," pp. 89-90.
$1,200.00 given by Colonel Benjamin Loring. The later acquisition of the 2,000 volume library of Converse Francis and 800 volumes from the library of President Walker, in addition to regular accessions brought the size of the total collection to more than 16,000 volumes by 1870. In comparison to other theological libraries of the time, the Harvard Divinity School Library rated itself as one of the best.¹

The acquisition of the Lücke library added much needed depth to the library. Before the purchase the collection was made up primarily of English language books and older Latin commentaries. The Lücke collection was strong in European theological material especially representative of the rising German critical scholarship. It also brought to the School an extensive collection of German theological periodicals.²

The purchase of the Lücke library also presented a more technical problem having to do with the catalog of the

¹Ibid., p. 90. Ahlstrom quotes Edward Everett Hale in an 1869 article for the self-assessment, an opinion that was probably not without some prejudice. Although the library reported 16,000 volumes in 1870, it had increased by only 1,000 additional volumes by 1876. By comparative descriptions of the funds available and by the sizes of other theological collections in 1876, one would surmise that the Harvard Divinity School Library was not as well off as its supporters supposed. Of course, it also had the collections of the University at its disposal. See U. S. Bureau of Education, Public Libraries in the United States of America; Their History, Condition and Management. Special Report, Part I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), 142-60. (Hereinafter cited as 1876 Special Report)

²Based upon a comparison of the 1840 catalog with the catalog of the Lücke collection, both preserved at the Harvard Divinity School Library.
collection. The existing catalog had been started in 1840. It consisted of two folio manuscript volumes of all the books held at that time and of two folio manuscript volumes listing pamphlets and tracts. In each the entries, consisting of author, title, size, city and date, had been alphabetically arranged and judiciously spaced in order to allow for the interlineation of later acquisitions. The layers of additions are obvious and by 1858 the catalog was suffering from what all such catalogs eventually face, a severe lack of order. New entries eventually had lost their strictly alphabetical locations. The disorder in the crowded pages was so great that a patron examining the catalog would have found it necessary to search almost all of any one letter of the alphabet to be sure that he had not missed the entry for which he was looking. To have added the Lücke collection to the existing catalog would have only aggravated the problem. In addition the regular accessions were also sizable. During Cutter's two years as librarian more than 1,000 volumes were purchased or received as gifts. The solution to the problem entailed both rearranging the collection physically and making a new catalog. With Charles Noyes, a classmate, as his assistant, Cutter proceeded with the re-arrangement of the books on

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the shelves during the 1857-58 school year, placing the books in broad subject categories.¹

Afterwards during the same year they attempted to change the 1840 manuscript catalog to show the new locations of the older volumes and to add the Lücke collection to it. But the new additions were too much for pages already crowded. Accordingly, during the winter vacation of the 1858-59 school year the two students prepared a new catalog. Unlike the older four folio volumes, its two volumes contained a single alphabetical author list of both books and pamphlets. The information on the then approximately 12,000 books was taken down on slips, arranged in correct order and entered in the folio volumes. It is perhaps significant that although the two students worked together in taking down the information from the books, it was Cutter who arranged the slips.² By doing so he faced for the first time the need for cataloging principles. By graduation time in July 1859 the catalog was

¹Librarian's Report, in "Report on the Library of the Theological School," Report of the Overseers of Harvard College Appointed to Visit the Library [1857-58] (Boston: George C. Rand, 1859), p. 27; "Report of the Librarian [of the Divinity School] for the Year Ending July 15th, 1859," Harvard College, Librarians Series, MS, HUA. In the first of these two reports, William Jenks, a member of the Overseers' Committee wrote, "The visit was productive of much satisfaction from the order now introduced into the library--the books being arranged according to their subjects, respectively. Last year, this arrangement existed only as relates to the volumes belonging formerly to the late Professor Lücke. It now includes the whole collection and the catalogue is contained in four MS volumes, two of which exhibit the bound books, and two the pamphlets."

²Samuel Barrett Steward, "Necrology of the Divinity School for the Academic Year 1903-04," Folder on Charles Ammi Cutter, HUA. Stewart, a graduate of the Divinity School in
complete and Cutter could proudly relate in his end of the year report that the whole collection had become integrated, both on the shelves and in the catalog.\(^1\)

Cutter faced other matters besides making a catalog. He was exposed to the problem of shelving in its most troublesome form—the need to rearrange a whole collection because of a sizable increase in accessions, and the consequent need to change all the shelf marks in the catalog. He was also exposed to the administrative problems of inadequate facilities and the need to keep accurate records. His two annual reports of library statistics are significant for their order. They anticipate his later concern with accurate and concise library reports. Exposed to the basic problems facing a librarian, he attempted to bring order to the confusion that he found. Perhaps most important in his work, he was exposed to the expert example of Ezra Abbot, a man who would later play so decisive a role in the further development of Cutter's own library goals and ideals.

1862, relates a statement from Charles Noyes: "He and I catalogued the school library then containing some 15,000 [sic] volumes and pamphlets numberless. It was the old style catalogue. We took off together the titles of the books on slips. He attended to the arrangement of the slips, and I entered them on the two massive folios now to be found in the library. Cutter had the experience which opened the way for his future work." Unfortunately, the two-volume catalog made by the two men could not be located at the time of this study.

Future Work

After having compiled an excellent record of scholarship and library work, Cutter graduated in July 1859. At the commencement ceremonies he delivered an oration entitled, "Faith and Criticism." While little is known of Cutter's activities during the coming months, it may be surmised that it was a time of decision and perhaps some struggle for him, then twenty-two years old. He preached during the months after graduation in various churches in the Cambridge area. He also once again registered as a resident graduate at the College during the fall term of 1859. His home situation had remained relatively stable during his college years, but in 1858 Catharine Cutter died, and sometime during the decade the Cutters had combined their living with the Bradbury family at their Cambridge residence.

Cutter's natural proclivity was toward scholarship in some form. His training was for a religious vocation and

1 Harvard University, "Order of Exercises at the Forty-Third Annual Visitation of the Divinity School, Tuesday, July 19, 1859," (Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow and Company, 1859). Fellow graduates included Charles Noyes, Charles Carroll Everett, afterwards Bussey Professor of Theology (1869-1900) and Dean of the Divinity School (1878-1900), James Kendall Hosmer, later to distinguish himself as a writer and librarian, and James Mills Peirce.

2 W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 8; Harvard College, Alumni Record Card, HUA.

3 For Catharine Lombard Cutter's death, see Probate Records, County of Middlesex, Massachusetts, Case 30176, 1858. Harriet and John Bradbury are both listed as witnesses to the will. See also, U. S. National Archives, "Population Schedules of the 8th Census of the United States, 1860," Cambridge, Dwelling 589.
more particularly for the Unitarian parish ministry. In the end he chose to pursue librarianship, a choice that by itself was not unusual considering his experience in library work, his love for books and scholarship and his friendship with Ezra Abbot. His choice reflects, however, a development in the intellectual and cultural milieu in which he lived that helps to better understand the development of his own career in later years.

There was no lack of need for men to pursue the ministry or of a call to pursue it. In fact, at Cutter's graduation Henry Whitney Bellows gave just such an impassioned call to the new alumni of the School. His address, entitled, "The Suspense of Faith," is said to have rivaled Emerson's address of 1837 in its contemporary significance. Bellows described the apathy, coldness, and lack of missionary zeal among Unitarians. He attributed these symptoms to a suspension of faith in a crassly uncultured and unreligious age. The nation as a whole lacked any certain means for obtaining spiritual renewal and with it, renewed order. Although he agreed with Emerson's "corpse-cold" verdict, he did not agree with a transcendentalist solution to the problem. More anti-institutionalism, more individualism, and more naturalism seemed to him of little value in building a spiritual

1Henry Whitney Bellows, The Suspense of Faith; An Address to the Alumni of the Divinity School of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. given July 19, 1859 (New York: C. S. Francis & Company, 1859). Ahlstrom, "The Middle Years (1840-80)," p. 120, considers it "one of the most significant [addresses] in Unitarian history."
underpinning for the age. Instead he proposed a recapturing of the zeal of earlier days by a more rigorous attention to the institution of the historic church. He called for a new "Catholic Church" to make known the Gospel.

No lecture room can do this; no preaching-men can do this; no thin, ghostly individualism or meager congregationalism can do this. It calls for the organic, instituted, ritualized, impersonal, steady, patient work of the Church.¹

The new alumni certainly felt the truth of Bellows' analysis of the uncultured spirit of the age and they most likely agreed with his stress on traditional values and institutions. But the idea that the Unitarian pastorate was the place to accomplish the task of renewal certainly must have gained much less sympathy. As it was noted previously, an increasing number of the graduates of the Divinity School in those days were entering fields other than the ministry. Charles Cutter was no exception to the trend. Furthermore, Cutter's pursuit of librarianship strongly suggests that he fulfilled Bellows' imperative anyway, for Cutter was to later speak of his chosen profession with the same emphases that Bellows had stressed. Librarianship was to be the expression of a missionary zeal to bring culture and order to the nation. Libraries would be the "parish churches of literature and education."² Indeed, Cutter, in a striking parallel, eventually helped to organize and professionalize the library

¹Bellows, The Suspense of Faith, p. 45.
movement in Bellows' own terms: "organic, instituted, ritualized, impersonal, steady, patient"--for the spiritual good of the nation.¹

The parallel between Bellows' address (although not cited by Cutter) and his later statements and attitudes about librarianship suggests that Cutter transferred his motivations to the new field, even though at this point the transference would have been only incipient. The transference is even more understandable when the broader context of the parallel is considered.

Cutter's formal education came when American perplexity over the national identity was increasing. Industrialization, immigration and other population shifts, rampant individualism, and the anti-institutionalism of the Jacksonian era had created a nation of seemingly boundless proportions. The openness of the age had, however, brought the nation closer and closer to a point of crisis, especially over the problem of social ills. There was a disastrous loss of cohesion and an erosion of institutional authority. Furthermore, the solutions of many of the social reformers, radical by any comparison with earlier social ideals, seemed too perfectionist in their aim at a total eradication of evil, too sentimental in their philanthropic goals, and too individualistic and anti-institutional as a way out.

The reactions of intellectuals to the crisis of the times and to the radical solutions offered were varied. But

¹Bellows, The Suspense of Faith, p. 45.
by the 1850's they indicate that a gradual shift in what was thought to be required for the national identity and well-being was already occurring. Social commentators began to turn from the acceptance of the diffusion, but seeming chaos, of earlier social goals to expressions of the need for stability and control. In place of boundlessness, they groped for a sense of consolidation.¹

The Bellows speech, only one statement among many, was especially indicative of a more conservative approach that found much support in New England and especially within the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community. Patrician² in its bearing, this community combined adherence to traditional

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² It should be understood that the term "patrician" is used here with the specific connotation of an identifiable and cohesive intellectual community that saw itself as possessing with the highest intentions a firm grasp for and motivation to pursue a national social ideal. It is chosen in preference over the term "Brahmin." The reason for making this distinction is that the two terms (and especially the latter) as applied to 19th century Boston are often used with
societal values with a genteel expression of individual character as an encompassing ideal for the national character. The spokesmen began to express the hope that the ideal was obtainable through the direct and rigorous efforts of a generation of young cultured gentlemen who would lead the nation to a new sense of order. This corps of leaders would work through institutional structures, some traditional, some only then being developed. In their discipline and dedication they would bring the needed control and order. Their ultimate goal was to raise the cultural level of the nation as a whole in order to produce an enlightened democracy. 1

1 Of several treatments of the ideology of the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community, the most adequate is Daniel Walker Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), especially the summary introduction on pp. 1-23. Howe's treatment is specifically concerned with the professors of moral philosophy at Harvard College and Divinity School, extending from Henry Ware, Sr. (1764-1845) to Francis Bowen (1811-1890). His topical treatment covers all major aspects of their thought and relates it to the contemporary cultural scene. Also helpful is David B. Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), especially pp. 173-83, for his extended definition of the intellectual concerns of the community. Among his sources, one unusually provocative treatment can be found in Paul Goodman, "Ethics and Enterprise, The Values of a Boston Elite, 1800-1860," American Quarterly, XVIII (Fall, 1966), 437-51. One must be careful, however, to weigh the problems in terminology alluded to in the previous footnote. Fredrickson in The Inner Civil War also provides a thorough discussion of the views of that community, but within the more specific framework of the crisis of the Civil War.
Cutter received during his formative years a thorough exposure to the Boston-Cambridge intellectual and cultural milieu and to the thinking described above. From an early age he had come into contact with prominent Unitarian spokesmen who expressed those ideals in their moral and philosophical teaching. Furthermore, his residency in the Boston-Cambridge area for years afterward saw not only the number of those associations increase, but also his own role in the community itself take on the intimate position of respected librarian and intellectual co-worker. Although he in no one place made an extended exposition of the social ideals that were basic for him, that he accepted as his own the approach to social goals of the intellectual community of his youth is certain, for those goals appear as necessary antecedents to his later views on a great many issues. Furthermore, in his early college prize papers, concern over the same kinds of issues that occupied the spokesmen of that community was already evident. For example, he showed a great admiration for Federalist personal ideals in his use of the heroic figure of George Washington as a measure for the life of the Prince of Orange. In other papers he demonstrated a high appreciation for the finer points of Unitarian moral philosophy, especially its faculty psychology. In his Bowdoin prize essay he grappled with the community's concern to justify the colonial beginnings of its own religious heritage.¹

¹For a fuller discussion of the Bowdoin prize essay, see above, pp. 26-27. See also Cutter's papers, "The Great
In short, by the time of his graduation from the Divinity School, Cutter had not only developed a mature intellectual capacity, but also a basic intellectual framework for the future. Whether he also envisioned himself as one of a corps of young cultured men who could shape an emerging profession for the good of the fledgling nation is not directly known. But in succeeding years he would apply both his abilities and that intellectual orientation to defining the purpose of the library profession itself. That this was the case will be seen in the developing picture of his life.

For nine months following his graduation, Cutter studied, preached, and perhaps tutored students. On May 11, 1860 he began work as an assistant to Ezra Abbot who himself was the assistant librarian of the Harvard College Library. Three developments made the way clear for his appointment. The first was his earlier association with Abbot at the Divinity School Library. The second was the condition of Abbot's health in conjunction with a rapidly increasing college library program. Never of great physical strength, Abbot had to face increased work that taxed his frail health to the limit.1 And third, increased gifts to the library called for an increase in the staff as well as

Prince of Orange," and "The Character of the Satire of Thackeray," MSS, HUA.

1John L. Sibley, "Private Journal," May 7 and 11, 1860, MS, HUA.
for a lightening of Abbot's own load. On May 16, 1860 the Board of Overseers affirmed Cutter's appointment. The report from the library committee that accompanied Cutter's appointment so well describes the conditions it is worth publishing in full.

To the president and Fellows of Harvard College. The Library Committee beg leave to represent to the Corporation

1. That the work in Mr. Ezra Abbot's department in the college library is more than one man can possibly perform.

2. That Mr. Abbot alone is charged with all the classifying and cataloguing of books received, and with the preparation of the lists of books to be ordered; that moreover almost all the labor (whether mainly mechanical or not) to be done upon books in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Greek falls upon him, as the only person in the library sufficiently familiar with those languages.

3. That the Library Committee can neither order six-thousand ($6000.00) worth of books, which should be done in order to fulfil the intentions of Mr. William Gray and other donors of money for the purchase of books, nor can they receive, catalogue and place upon the shelves that number of books yearly with the present force employed in the Library.

4. That no progress whatever has been or can be made in the preparation of the much needed classed index or catalogue of books in the Library.

To meet these difficulties the Library needs the services, not of a mere clerk, but of an educated man, who can read Latin, Greek, German and French, and can be instructed in the whole work of Mr. Abbot's department.

The Committee respectfully suggest to the Corporation the immediate appointment of an assistant who shall work in the Library during Library hours whose whole attention shall be devoted to Mr. Abbot's department and they
recommend Charles A. Cutter, a graduate of the Class of 1855, as a person in every respect suitable for the place.

Committee--C. C. Felton
F. J. Child
Henry W. Torrey
Charles W. Eliot

16 May 1860

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1 Harvard College, College Records, 2d Series, XXVIII, 115-16, May 16, 1860, MS, HUA.
CHAPTER II

APPRENTICE LIBRARIAN

If Charles Cutter's library work as a student served in part as his recruitment to librarianship, his subsequent experience at Harvard was his apprenticeship. The decade of the 1860's was a fortunate time for him to be at the Harvard College Library because the library was undergoing far-reaching and very basic changes. The experience that Cutter gained from that library situation would come to be reflected in his later library work time and again. It was also a fortunate time in that he came under the tutelage of Ezra Abbot, a man that Cutter later described as having patiently introduced him to cataloging, classification and bibliography, and without whom he would have amounted to "nothing in the library world."\(^1\) Finally, Cutter did not just soak up instruction passively. He was aggressive in expanding his own

\(^1\)Editorial, LJ, IX (April, 1884), 60; ALA Conference Discussion, LJ, XXVII (July, 1902), C190. Cutter also at other times would mention when an idea of his or of some other person could in actuality be traced to Abbot. Cf. Editorial Notes, LJ, XVI (August, 1891), 23; XIV (January-February, 1889), 54. The latter is a note appended to a notice of M. Dewey's Rules for Author and Classed Catalogs. At least two other librarians of note also had contact with Abbot. Stephen B. Noyes worked under Abbot's direction as a cataloger from August 1854 to July 1855 at the Boston Athenaeum. Charles Alexander Nelson reiterated Cutter's above comment at the 1902 Conference, and at the 1895 Conference mentioned that Abbot's Cambridge High School catalog "was probably the book that made me a librarian." LJ, XX (December, 1895), C76.
professional capabilities. He involved himself in the work of the College library to an extent far beyond what was required of him. He read widely. He participated in a variety of bibliographical ventures beyond the immediate environment of Gore Hall. And by the end of the decade he was making his first literary contributions to the professional library world.

Harvard College Library

Although the library of Harvard College began with the bequest of John Harvard in 1638, it remained relatively small until the nineteenth century. It was not until the administrations of presidents John Kirkland (1810-1828) and Josiah Quincy (1829-1845) that the idea of the library as an indispensable arm of a university began to receive its first hearing. That came as a result of the influence of a younger generation of scholars, most notably Joseph G. Cogswell, George Bancroft, George Ticknor and Edward Everett, who had

studied in Europe. Special purchases increased the size of the collection during the 1820's and the 1830's and the plan of the impressive University of Göttingen library was adopted for arranging the books on the shelves. A new catalog was printed in 1830 and a supplement in 1833. Finally a new building, made possible by an unrestricted bequest by Massachusetts Governor Christopher Gore, was erected in 1841.

Although the increases in the size of the collection were substantial, the growth of the library was at best unsystematic, especially since there were only very limited funds allocated for regular book purchases. The more rigorous expansion of the library began only after the appointment of John Langdon Sibley in 1841. Sibley, who served as assistant librarian from 1841 to 1855 and as librarian from 1856 to 1878, was preeminently a zealous, perhaps even fanatical collector of library materials. His activities in that regard finally confronted the issue of regular purchasing funds for the library. One of his biographers has written,

To Sibley it was the sacred duty of the librarian to preserve a copy of every printed item for the use of posterity. No one else in his generation did more to spread the idea of the importance of ephemeral material for history.2

Partly, therefore, as a result of his conscious efforts, the

Notes, III (March, 1939), 205-90.

1Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, pp. 226-27, 265-66. For Ticknor's experience in Germany and his subsequent effort to transplant that ideal at Harvard College, see Tyack, George Ticknor, chs. 2 and 3.

library increased from about 50,000 volumes in 1841 to nearly 70,000 volumes in 1856 when Sibley himself became the chief administrator. A large part of that increase came from donations that he had personally sought out. By 1861 the total had risen to nearly 96,000 volumes and by 1868 to 118,000.1

His ideal of a comprehensive collection, while not supported by substantial allocations of funds for regular purchasing until the 1870's, brought to the library in 1858 a gift from William C. Gray of $5,000 a year for each of five years for the purchase of current materials. The effect was felt during the period 1859/60 to 1863/64 when annual accessions amounted to more than 5,000 volumes a year, more than half of which were purchased.

The great increase in the size of the collection produced other problems as well. The most immediate effect was the need for a larger staff. When Sibley assumed the librarianship in 1856 he added Ezra Abbot in the assistant librarian's position. But it soon became evident that two men could not by themselves handle the great increase in accessions.

1"Librarian's Report," [1859/60], in Harvard University. Overseers Committee on the Library, Report of the Committee of the Overseers of Harvard College Appointed to Visit the Library for the Year 1860 (Boston: George C. Rand & Avery, 1861), p 23; Shipton, "John Langdon Sibley," p 165. Library statistics are taken from the annual reports of the librarian. For the years 1858/59 to 1862/63 these are included in the printed reports of the Overseers Committee on the Library as given above. They will be cited hereinafter only as "Librarian's Report" with the academic year of the report in brackets. Sibley issued his 1863/64 report separately at his own expense. See above, p. 44, footnote 1. His reports for 1864/65 to 1867/68 are in manuscript form only and are cited accordingly. Other material taken from the Overseers reports are cited as Report . . . for the Year . . . .
By April of 1859 Sibley had begun experimenting with the use of female clerical help in book processing. He also had the occasional assistance of undergraduates and of the President's secretary. By 1862 the force had reached eleven, Abbot himself having two assistants, one of whom was Charles Cutter, and during the decade the staff grew steadily in size.¹

In this environment an administrative conflict arose between demands to provide adequately for the public and the needs of the internal operations of the library. A considerable part of the conflict was fostered by the physical inadequacies of Gore Hall itself, a fact that Sibley constantly reiterated. It was a Gothic building totally unfit for an expanding library. Yet, because of its architecture and the fact that it was a gift to the College, few were willing to advocate any substantial changes in its features. Built between 1838 and 1841 it had originally been intended to house Harvard's library collections for a century. With the indefatigable energy of Sibley its capacity was reached by 1860.²

¹"Librarian's Report," [1858/59], p. 21; [1859/60], p. 27; [1860/61], p. 33. In 1876 John Fiske reported that besides himself there were twenty assistants. "A Librarian's Work," Atlantic Monthly, XXXVIII (October, 1876), 480.

Gore Hall was basically one large room with many large alcoves. It had little reading room and no staff accommodations. Library workers had to do their work in five selected alcoves, disturbed alike by the demands of patrons for service and by the building's facility for conducting noise. Patrons sometimes got into newly arrived shipments of books before they could be checked off the invoices. In addition Sibley complained personally that there was no private office for his own work or for conferences, and patrons and workers alike disturbed his confidential work.

If the facilities available in Gore Hall made administration of the library difficult, they posed even greater difficulties for the housing and use of the collection. The light was poor, the air drafty, and the walls being of only a single thickness allowed heavy moisture on the books. In 1859 a deep drain was installed near the building to keep the annual spring thaw from inundating the basement, but that only resulted in preventing the accumulation of water. It did not eliminate the moisture. Thereafter a green mould formed on the inside of the basement walls within two weeks.


2Sibley complained at various times of not having the time or place to work on correspondence and accounts. The large amount of official correspondence, numbering "447 acknowledgements" and "1000 official letters" as early as 1858/59, caused him much consternation. "Librarian's Report," [1858/59], p. 21; [1864/65], in Sibley, "Library Journal," pp. 260-61; Sibley, The Annual Report of the Librarian . . . [1863/64], pp. 20, 28.
of the furnaces being shut off in the spring, heavily dam-
aging newspapers and books stored there.

The extensive accessions had made it necessary by
1858 to devise a plan for dividing the alcoves into double
sections and to install adjustable shelves. The following
year extensive dividing and rearranging became the first in
a series of moves that put the collection in a constant
state of reshuffling. By 1865 all available alcoves had been
divided and more than 4,500 feet of adjustable shelving in-
stalled. But the growth of the collections made the effort
one of constant frustration. By 1865 Sibley reported that
all wall space had been used up.¹ In addition there were
book shelves in various niches, on the tops of map and
drawer cases and in vacant spots in the garret and in the
basement. In addition the open area in the center of the
building was filled with the necessary library furniture.
Double rows of books were found to be necessary and Sibley
suggested that for every one hundred new books put into the
collection, extensive calculations and rearrangements had
to be made.²

What made the problem even more acute, however, was
the fixed classification system. Each alcove contained

¹In 1859/60 five of the alcoves were divided. The
following year four more were divided and eighteen were re-
arranged. "Librarian's Report," [1859/60], p. 21; [1860/61],
258-59.

²"Librarian's Report," [1864/65], in Sibley, "Li-
cohesive classes of books arranged in categories of varying degrees of minuteness. For both day-to-day use and the annual examination there was a manuscript shelf list. As new books were added, the titles were interlineated in the shelf lists. In alcoves that received extensive additions, a closer classification would often be made, requiring, of course, a totally new shelf list. As alcoves became too confining for their classes, parts of the classification would be moved to other locations in the library. Alcove rearrangements occurred every year from 1859 to 1868. The most extensive changes occurred during the year 1860/61 when eighteen alcoves were rearranged (not counting those into which overflow books were moved) entailing the movement of more than 15,000 volumes. Moving the books, of course, was only part of the job. Not only were new shelf lists required, but location symbols in the librarian's master author list on cards and in the printed catalogs also had to be changed.¹

Catalog access was also inadequate. The alcoves were classified minutely when possible because there was no systematic subject index to the collection. The 1830 printed catalog contained a subject index for the older part of the collection, but the 1833 supplement had none. A supplement to the printed catalog, written on long narrow cards, was begun in 1833, as well as a slip catalog (folio sheets with slips pasted in) for pamphlets, but these were author lists only. In 1850 the slip catalog was discontinued and new

pamphlet entries were incorporated after that date into the long card supplementary catalog. One had to consult all four catalogs, therefore, in order to ascertain whether any particular item was held by the library.

Sibley's own solution to the various problems was to vigorously campaign for a new building. There were others, however, who were quite willing to lay the blame for the library's problems on Sibley's mania for collecting. The conflict was resolved in 1867 by an administrative reorganization and the establishment of an administrative council. The imposition of authority by the Council was so severe that Sibley at first showed considerable hostility to it. The Council subsequently "formed the habit of consulting with Abbot on library matters and using him as its agent." 1

It is obvious that the situation at the Harvard College Library during the 1860's included on the one hand an alive and growing collection and on the other hand, gross inefficiencies. The individual problems highlighted above are important for understanding Cutter's own development because they provided for him a context of basic issues in librarianship. He was an attentive learner and in many respects his own work in the field thereafter was devoted to solving those same issues. Yet, it is necessary to remember that the state of the library art was not too much advanced

elsewhere. The day of uniformity and cooperative effort was still in the future. The 1853 Librarian's Convention had yielded no permanent results, despite the promulgation of Charles Jewett's ideas for cooperative cataloging. Afterwards Jewett himself became the superintendent of the Boston Public Library. With William F. Poole at the Athenæum and the Harvard College Library nearby in Cambridge, Boston became the most impressive library center in the nation. That was the situation when Charles Ammi Cutter began his library career at Harvard College on May 11, 1860.

Ezra Abbot

The immediate reason for Charles Cutter to begin his duties was Ezra Abbot's illness. With so much depending on Abbot's labors in a department whose work could only be described by Sibley as "oppressively great," the library could not afford a work stoppage. Abbot had been working on purchasing lists of foreign books in order to use the William C. Gray money. Cutter's appointment was confirmed by the Corporation on May 16th at the rate of $500.00 per annum. The Library Committee met on May 21st and, apparently satisfied with Cutter's qualifications, requested that the young man spend all of his time working on the same purchasing lists. The work entailed classifying the titles on each foreign book agent's order according to departments of the

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college, checking each title against the author catalog to guard against ordering duplicates, and determining the probable cost of each.\(^1\)

It has already been mentioned that Cutter himself expressed a debt to Ezra Abbot for his professional development. William Parker Cutter has suggested that the influence of Abbot on Cutter lay at least in part in directing him into librarianship while still a divinity student. But W. P. Cutter also points to the similarity that Cutter's own tastes and working methods had with those of the older man. It is probably fair to assume that Abbot also provided Charles Cutter with a working model of the ideal industrious librarian.\(^2\)

Abbot was an example of the self-made man and librarian.\(^3\) From an unpretentious beginning on a Maine farm, the precocious young Abbot was sent by relatives through Phillips Exeter Academy and later Bowdoin College. A growing personal friendship with the theologian, Andrews Norton, was sparked by Abbot's correspondence with Norton over the excellence of the latter's early work entitled *A Statement*.

\(^1\)"Librarian's Report," [1860/61], p. 32.


\(^3\)Biographical material about Ezra Abbot (1819-1884) is from Benjamin W. Bacon, "Ezra Abbot," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribners, 1930), I, 10-11, and from the commemorative volume, *Ezra Abbot* (Cambridge: For the Alumni of the Harvard Divinity School, 1884), which contains addresses by Joseph Henry Thayer, Charles Carroll Everett, and others.
of Reasons For Not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians.

Norton's heavy emphasis on textual analysis strongly impressed the budding textual critic and philologist. In a labor of friendship, Abbot indexed the work for the older man and when Norton invited Abbot to visit Cambridge in 1847, he helped Abbot to gain a teaching position in the Cambridge High School. Abbot also began from that point a collaboration with Norton as the latter's literary editor. When Andrews Norton died in 1853, Abbot and Charles Eliot Norton completed together the final editing of the elder Norton's works.

Meanwhile, Abbot's work as a high school teacher did not entirely satisfy. He became interested in the school's library and in 1853 published a catalog of its holdings.¹ The High School library was begun in 1850 under the provisions of the 1843 Massachusetts school-district libraries resolution. In the following months book donations and purchases swelled the collection to about 1,600 volumes. Facing the need for a catalog to the library, Abbot decided that a classed arrangement would be the best. An alphabetical author catalog, he argued in the preface, was satisfactory only if the user brought to the library extensive knowledge of his subject of interest. But a high school student was

more likely to be a novice in intellectual endeavors. His chief bibliographical needs would be to find a chart of the subject of his excitement that would encourage him to investigate the subject as fully as possible and to think for himself. By following the guide provided he would be building the good habit of ascertaining the interrelatedness of all knowledge, an essential component in the pursuit of truth. A good classification, not unnatural and artibrary, would provide a training ground for a scholarly approach to life and would also prepare him for later use of larger collections.

Having given the rationale for the classed arrangement, Abbot next gave an explanation of the format. Though many volumes had multiple listings, the full entry was given only at one primary location. Cross-references between subjects were supplied (in both the classification guide and the listing itself) in order to "aid the student who wishes to find what the library contains on a particular subject."1 An alphabetical list of authors with short titles and of titles was appended to show if the library had any particular work.

Following this Abbot gave a lengthy explanation of the rules he used for the choice and form of entry in any particular subject section, citing Panizzi and Jewett as

1Ibid., p. vi.
his sources. In addition, he explained his extensive analysis (listing the individual parts of works) of composite works, collections and series, an inclusion that he felt made the final work much more useful.

In a day when the printed catalog was only just becoming a work of scientific technique, and when the dictionary format pioneered by Jewett and Poole had not yet triumphed, this subject catalog won for Abbot immediate recognition and opened the door for a new career. The trustees of the Boston Athenaeum had been concerned about the need for a new catalog at their library and were aware of Abbot's work in Cambridge. In February 1852 they had already determined that Abbot would be willing to make a similar catalog for them as a special project. It was not until 1854, however, that any further action was taken. At that time Abbot was hired as assistant librarian. But uncertainty over the staff and available funds continued and in 1856, when Charles Folsom resigned, the project had not yet gotten underway.

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Sir Anthony Panizzi (1797-1879) was the Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum from 1837 to 1857 and the principal librarian, 1856 to 1866. The code of rules often attributed to him but in actuality a product of a committee of the British Museum are contained in the opening pages of British Museum, Department of Printed Books, Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum, Vol. I (London: 1841), v-ix. Only the first volume of that projected work was completed. Charles Coffin Jewett (1816-1868) was the librarian of the Smithsonian Institution from 1850 to 1855. His code of rules is contained in, On the Construction of Catalogues of Libraries, and of a General Catalogue; and their Publication by Means of Separate, Stereotyped Titles, with Rules and Examples (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1852).
Abbot also left the Athenaeum at that time to become the chief assistant to John Langdon Sibley at Harvard.¹

As a cataloger, Abbot brought a new kind of energy and expertise to the College library. He handled Sibley's increased acquisitions with an energy and a dedication that allowed him at first to keep up with the work. He also added his expert skill in many languages and an obvious proficiency in bibliography. Within a year and a half he was an expert sought out for library consultation. In that connection he met and advised Cutter in the latter's efforts to reclassify and recatalog the Harvard Divinity School's library.

Even while Abbot was pursuing a career as a librarian, he was also continuing his work in New Testament Biblical studies. It was perhaps his first love. He had become a member of the American Oriental Society in 1852 and its recording secretary the following year. In 1861 he became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. During the next two decades he edited several works and authored many articles. Of special note was his work with H. B. Hackett on the American edition of Smith's Dictionary of the Bible to which he contributed on his own part over 400 extra articles.²

¹Boston Athenaeum, Records of the Trustees, February 9, 1852 to April 15, 1856, passim, BA.

In 1871 much to the loss of the library profession, he accepted under President Charles W. Eliot the newly created Bussey Lectureship on New Testament Textual Criticism at Harvard College, and the following year the Bussey Professorship in the Harvard Divinity School. His advocacy of the Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel was in the words of one scholar "a model of scientific argument" and his work as a textual critic brought again to Harvard Divinity School a reputation in that field not achieved since the years of Andrews Norton. During his last years he helped to edit with his renowned student, Casper Renè Gregory, the prologomena to Tischendorf's last critical edition of the Greek New Testament, and primarily through his efforts the American Revised Version of the New Testament came into being.

His qualities as a scholar and as a librarian evoked lofty expressions of praise from his contemporaries. When he died in 1884, Joseph Henry Thayer said in a eulogy that Abbot's intellectual prowess included an exceptional ability to examine ideas. His conclusions were based on thorough and accurate research, good judgment, and conspicuous candor. Charles C. Everett said at the same memorial service that Abbot's qualities as a librarian included patience, industry, rapidity of work, a power of classification and arrangement, and a tenacity of memory. And although he was

\[1\] Ahlstrom, "The Middle Years (1840-80)," pp. 115-16; Bacon, "Ezra Abbot," p. 11.
a retiring person, he liked games and the beauties of nature and provided good companionship. The overall list of qualities forms, significantly, a conspicuous enumeration of Cutter's own life-long characteristics.

**Abbot's Alphabetico-Classed Catalog**

During his first year in the College library, Cutter compiled book lists and helped in the major rearrangement of the shelves that occurred in the 1860/61 school year. At the same time he engaged in conversations with Abbot on the form a badly needed new catalog should take. The four catalogs containing the collections were difficult and frustrating to use. Besides, only the printed author catalog and its supplement were available for use by the public. The long card author catalog begun in 1833 as a supplement was restricted in use to the librarian and his staff. It served as an official record that included such items as cost, donor, fund charged, shelf mark (constantly changing), and a physical description of the book including at times its color. The information recorded there was also kept in a regular accessions list maintained in order by date of reception.

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2. Abbot mentions their collaboration in a letter on Cutter's behalf to President Cornelius Felton, August 6, 1861, in Harvard College, Corporation Papers, HUA.

The most serious problem with the catalogs, however, was their inadequate subject access. Only the 1830 printed catalog had a subject index. Beyond that there was nothing except the alcove shelf lists, and those were limited to staff use or to those persons who had special privileges to enter the alcove area. The alcove lists were not always closely classed. Consequently, the complaint about access, especially from students, concerned not only physical access hampered by short opening hours, but also bibliographical access unsupplied by deficient catalogs. In 1858 in response to student complaints about the inaccessibility of the library, a special Faculty committee was formed to consider student proposals and to see how the library could be made more useful in meeting the needs they set forth. The subsequent committee report, approved by the Faculty as a whole, suggested longer hours and a general open shelf policy. Sibley argued against the latter. In that opinion he was supported by Charles Folsom of the Overseers Committee on the Library and it was not adopted. But the Overseers did approve longer hours and directed Sibley and Abbot to draw up plans for preparing a new public manuscript catalog.¹

Plans for the catalog, a child of Abbot's genius, took shape during the 1860/61 school year and actual entries

¹K. C. Elkins, "Foreshadowings of Lamont," pp. 46-51; Shipton, "John Langdon Sibley," pp. 175-78, 180-83. Shipton notes that one of Sibley's responses was to place 200 periodicals, previously kept locked up, on open shelves and to give somewhat freer access to the alcoves.
began in late October 1861. The importance of the catalog in Cutter's own development cannot be overestimated. Not only did he help Abbot to plan it, but he was Abbot's chief aid in its actual construction, apparently having for a while the whole supervision of the work. ¹ After working on it for a year and a half Abbot made a full report of the project to the Board of Overseers. ²

Format and Function

The catalog contained two basic indexes to the collection. The first was an alphabetical author section. The second was a subject section. The first index was designed primarily to answer the question of whether the library contained any particular work and if so where it was located. The second index was designed primarily to answer the question of what the library contained on any one subject and to give criteria for choosing items that met the patrons needs. Consequently, the author index contained full author names, established and made uniform by using the best reference authorities, while at the same time it contained book descriptions long enough only to briefly identify the work in question. The subject index on the contrary contained an elaborate subject heading apparatus with full descriptions of the books, but only abbreviated or shortened author entries.

¹ Letter, C. A. Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA.
² Ezra Abbot, "Mr. Abbot's Statement Respecting the New Catalogues of the College Library," in Harvard University,
Abbot very consciously segregated the catalog as a finding list for a specific work whose author was known from the catalog as a subject classification. In addition he combined the choosing or evaluating function of a catalog with the subject classification rather than with the author list. His purpose in dividing the functions of the catalog in that manner resided in his theory that choosing a work by means of its description was primarily an aid in investigating a subject, not in looking for a work of which the author was already known. Furthermore, the scope of the total catalog was broadened to include full analytical entries for individual articles contained in volumes of collected works and in selected periodicals.

Abbot thought this arrangement to be new, particularly in making the more complete entry in the subject section, and that it was the first instance he knew in which the subject index was made on cards. In actuality, the appearance of a full catalog on cards was rather unique.

Overseers Committee on the Library, Report . . . for the Year 1863 [1862/63], pp. 35-76.

1 Ibid., pp. 37-38, 45.

2 Cutter later stated that the analysis of periodicals included periodicals of major importance and other articles on subjects of popular interest that the catalogers had run across. The four chief British quarterlies were frequently, but not continuously indexed. In addition Abbot indexed several German theological publications and Cutter, the Revue des Deux Mondes. ALA Conference Discussion, LJ, I (October, 1876), 115.

3 "Mr. Abbot's Statement," p. 44.
But that the subject section had fuller entries than the author section was in actuality a reversion to an older practice.

In the late eighteenth century the generally accepted format for library catalogs was a single-entry broadly-classed arrangement. But with the growth of the concept of the catalog as a more complete index to the collection, the idea of multiple entries gained acceptance. It was at first accomplished by an alphabetical author index to the broadly classed subject section. It became evident, however, that making the primary arrangement the alphabetical author list was less expensive. As a consequence the latter format came to be preferred by leading librarians, but only by the third decade of the nineteenth century. The chief example occurred in 1830 when Benjamin Peirce (1778-1831) made a three volume catalog of the Harvard College Library. It consisted of two volumes of an alphabetical author sequence and a third volume of subject references to the author sequence. Peirce's subject arrangement also heralded the first introduction of Burnet's classification into a major American library.¹

Using that catalog as a guide, O. A. Taylor produced a similar catalog for the library of the Andover Theological Seminary in 1838 and his student, Charles C. Jewett, produced one for the Brown University Library in 1843. Jewett included a subject reference index to the author list that subsequently became normative in style for subject entry. For the most part Jewett took the subject names from the titles of the works themselves. From there it was only a short step to the later work of William F. Poole and to Jewett's own Boston Public Library catalogs in which authors, titles, and subject catchwords arranged in one alphabetical sequence became the precursor of the modern dictionary catalog. 

Although the emphasis on the primacy of author entry was established by 1860, in an earlier day, the primacy of subject entry had occupied a similar position. Thus Abbot's appreciation of his emphasis on full subject entries may not have been quite correct. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the subject section itself in both its card format and in its more disciplined approach to subject headings may have been his greatest contribution.

As far as the function of the catalog as a whole is concerned, though Abbot mentioned only three objects, in actuality he covered more. Charles Cutter later distinguished eight such "objects" for a catalog. These included finding a particular work if its author, title or subject was known;
finding what the library contained by an author, on a subject or in a form of literature; and being able to choose a work by virtue of a description that pointed out both its bibliographical details and its character. Abbot's combined catalog covered all but the function of choosing a work by virtue of a description of its character, and the function of finding a work if its title was known. He had no separate title cards except under the form divisions of drama and fiction, and they were confined to the subject index.

Author Section

For Abbot the author index presented the fewest problems. He felt that there was enough agreement on the rules for entering authors that the matter need not be discussed. His main concern was that an author's name be fully and accurately established. To allay fears, however, of the difficulty of consulting cards rather than scanning a printed page of entries, he minutely described the actual arrangement and construction of the catalog apparatus. The cards

\[1\] C. A. Cutter, Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue, Part II of U. S. Bureau of Education, 1876 Special Report, p. 10. (Hereinafter cited as Rules with, when appropriate, the edition and date)

\[2\] Fiske, "A Librarian's Work," p. 484. Fiske argued that for the most part the subject section would serve "those who remember the title of a work but have forgotten the author." In the light of Abbot's insistence that subject words reflect the true nature of the book and not simply be limited to a choice from the title, this sounds like strange reasoning indeed. Abbot, himself, makes no reference in his report to the absence of title cards.
measured two inches by five inches and were contained in
double rows in specially constructed catalog drawers.
Beveled blocks of wood before and after them allowed them
to be viewed without falling over, and one-eighth inch thick
labeled guide boards indicated the alphabetic sequence
throughout.¹

Although Abbot did not feel the need to discuss the
details of the author index, there were, nevertheless,
special problems to be faced, especially with anonymous and
pseudonymous works, periodicals, and works of corporate
authorship. In an article in the North American Review
published just after he had left the College library for the
Boston Athenaeum, Cutter himself outlined two main principles
used in the author catalog for determining the correct author
entry.

First, that books shall be catalogued under the name
of the author, or (in the case of collections) the editor,
or the body responsible for their publication; second,
that, if this is not known, the first word in the title
not an article or a preposition shall be taken for the
heading.

He also hastened to add, "The application of these principles,
however, may still often puzzle the cataloguer."²

¹"Mr. Abbot's Statement," pp. 37-43. His reasoning
may have come as a result of having already outlined those
procedures in his Cambridge High School catalog. More im-
portant, however, was the existence of the Panizzi and Jewett
codes. The two together would seem to have said as much on
the subject of author and title entry as could be said and
a local cataloger needed only to pick and choose as his own
situation and proclivities required.

²C. A. Cutter, "The New Catalogue of the Harvard Col-
lege Library," North American Review, CVIII (January, 1869),
100.
One exception to the principles was to place entries for the Bible under a uniform title, "Bible," thus avoiding all questions of correct personal authorship. Periodicals were entered under titles for the simple reason that editorship or corporate responsibility was too difficult to ascertain. The problem of changing titles could be resolved by the use of cross-references. The author catalog also admitted no groups of entries under such terms as 'Ephemerides' (e.g., entries for almanacs), or 'Academies' (e.g., entries for learned societies), the practice of the British Museum. Abbot thought such entries represented intrusions of a classed catalog into the author sequence. With regard to corporate entries, the resolution was to enter them under the name of the location of the organization only when the place occurred in the title of the body (following Edward Edwards). The problems of exceptions was so great, however, that Cutter advised "Safety is to be found only in numerous cross-references." For pseudonymous entries for which a real name could not be determined, the decision was to enter under the assumed name, rather than under the title. But even admitting these problem areas, Cutter too was willing to join with Abbot in discounting any overwhelming difficulty, preferring to assume a general unanimity of practice in author entry.

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1 Ibid., pp. 101-03.  
2 Ibid., p. 104.  
3 Ibid., pp. 100, 103-04. The argument for unanimity was probably a way to dispense with getting into the nettles of author entry. The real issue for this catalog was to justify its sophisticated subject index.
Subject Section

The subject index section, on the contrary, presented a much different picture and Abbot went to great lengths to describe and justify it. His basic goal was to provide better subject access to the holdings of the library, even though the increasing size of the Harvard collection seemed to militate against its cost, especially if the catalog was to be printed. Perhaps Abbot felt that without the need for printing, the added work of a subject index could be justified. He certainly felt confident of its value, both as a time-saver to the scholar and as an educational device for the novice where the various connections of a subject could be displayed. But to make such a catalog he had to decide on its format and that constituted no small problem.

Abbot's 1853 catalog of the Cambridge High School library had been systematically classed. It followed the subject index of Benjamin Peirce's 1830 Harvard catalog and employed Peirce's adaptation of Brunet's classification. But in the intervening years, the dictionary arrangement had become better represented in the work of Poole and Jewett, and Abbot seems to have taken their advances seriously. In discussing possible alternative arrangements, he discounted the earlier model of a broadly classed arrangement without subdivision as useless for a large collection. He also agreed with the critics of a minutely classified list (such as his own 1853 catalog) that no matter how valuable such a systematic enumeration of subjects might be, it was too
difficult for the untrained or unlearned person to use, especially in a large public library. The pressure from those who advocated alphabetic arrangement for the whole catalog was based on the idea that even those of minimal intelligence could make use of it.

But Abbot was not entirely convinced by the advocates of the dictionary arrangement. Though he agreed with the argument about its ease of use, he also saw major problems with it. A dictionary arrangement scattered related subjects over the whole catalog and consequently gave no help to the person who was in a position to use the catalog as a systematic instructor of the interconnectedness of various subjects. In addition, the prevailing style of dictionary catalogs included no serious effort to discipline its choices of subject headings. It often separated like subjects under synonymous words because of the use of title catchwords. In effect, prevailing dictionary catalogs failed to give adequate subject indexing for the necessary goals that Abbot envisioned. 1

Consequently, Abbot decided upon an alternative arrangement for the subject section. Its name, the "alphabetico-classed" arrangement, became the name applied to his catalog as a whole. In it he arranged a long series of general classes in alphabetical order. He subdivided each of

1"Mr. Abbot's Statement," pp. 47-50. The argument about synonymous terms, of course, today sounds like striking at a straw man. But in Abbot's day there were few standards in use. It was left for Cutter himself to later adopt more rigid standards for the dictionary arrangement.
the general classes into its various parts but arrayed the subdivisions in alphabetical order. Further sub-subsections were also alphabetically arrayed except where they sometimes entailed a chronological sequence. And finally individual works were arranged under any one topic alphabetically by author. The arrangement was an attempt to gain at least some of the assumed alphabetical ease that dictionary catalog proponents claimed while at the same time preserving the gathering of subjects in a systematic arrangement.

Just what classes were given the status of general classes is not known. In his 1853 Cambridge High School library catalog Abbot had used an arrangement based ultimately on Brunet. That his general classes in this catalog were much more numerous is obvious from the examples given in his report. Ranz suggests that the basic weakness of the alphabetico-classed catalog occurred at this point. That is, how does one decide which classes shall be accorded general status and which ones shall be subsumed under a more general class? In that respect it foreshadowed the problem of specific entry in any subject arrangement that departs from a formal classification scheme.

Abbot was, of course, very aware of that problem. He suggested that it could be resolved, where any particular class was involved, by "a careful weighing of many considerations, unless one prefers to decide at random, or to be governed by his first impression."¹ He used the example of

¹Ibid., p. 55.
the subject Tobacco to demonstrate that it was possible to
treat any subject in five different ways. 1) The entries
could all be arrayed under other suitable general classes.
2) The general works could be gathered as a class, but spe-
cific treatises arrayed as in number one. 3) The general
works and some specific topics could be gathered while the
remainder were distributed elsewhere. 4) All the titles
could be gathered under that subject without subdivision.
5) All the titles could be gathered under that subject, but
with subdivision. The key to whatever method was used, how-
ever, lay in the use of cross-references.

The choice between these methods is a matter for the
exercise of judgment, in view of all the circumstances
of each case. If the decision of the cataloguer should
not happen to be the wisest, suitable references may
render the error of little practical importance.¹

This conscious use of extensive cross-references be-
came the greatest single advance in Abbot's catalog design.
Not only would problem subjects be related by such references,
but all specific subjects arrayed under a particular general
class would have references within the general alphabetical
order showing what class they belonged to. And within the
general class itself, specific subjects would have additional
cross-references relating them to other relevant subjects
found both inside and outside the general class to which
they belonged. For example, the subject Future Life had a
reference in the general class order showing that it was
arrayed under the class Theology-Dogmatic. At that location

¹Ibid., p. 59.
the patron would also find a See Also reference card suggesting other relevant subjects within the same section of Theology-Dogmatic. Because the other relevant subjects were arrayed in the same section and were noted for the most part by divider blocks, Abbot considered this feature to be a time saver for the user. It would be unnecessary to go from drawer to drawer as in a full dictionary catalog searching out the other references. Of course, for subjects like Tobacco that might have been consciously dispersed, the problem of the regular dictionary catalog dispersion would result. But Abbot thought that the instances of convenient gathering far outnumbered the instances of dispersion. In comparison to the dictionary catalog where all subjects were dispersed, this seemed to him a decided advantage.

The format of the catalog cards showed considerable ingenuity in adapting to the needs of the classed arrangement, as shown in the following example, taken from page fifty-one of his report:

(Actual size)

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<th>(4)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hadley, James. A Greek Grammar for</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schools and Colleges. NY 1860. 12°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Printed lines formed blocked-out spaces for various types of classification terms and for the entry itself. The area within brackets contained the body of the entry, with a brief author designation and a full title. Other features of the work, including, for example, edition or translator statement, would also be added in order to help the patron to form a basis for choice. The shelf location was entered opposite the author entry in position (5). The first two lines were devoted to subject classification terms. These included the general class in position (1); its "branch," if any, in position (2); a possible "section" in position (3); and a possible "group" in position (4). The filing order for entries under the various terms was as follows:

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<td>Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Section</td>
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<td>Section</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The kinds of terms included in the various subdivisions varied with the general class, although for the most part a "group" was usually restricted to literature forms (e.g., dictionary, periodical, etc.). In Chemistry, branches included analysis (both quantitative and qualitative), organic, inorganic, medical, physiological, etc. But they also included the subdivisions history and biography.

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1Ibid., pp. 69-76. Summarized from a representative list of entries.
Sections included specific chemical compounds. Groups were usually, but not always, restricted to literature forms. The filing order brought these works to the beginning of their respective sections, branches, or classes.

In History and Geography, branches included major continental areas; sections included specific countries, cities, or geographical place-names; and groups included literature forms or the period that the book covered. In Language, branches included the specific languages; sections included a philological subdivision; and groups included either a literature form or a further philological subdivision. In Zoology when taxonomic structure was emphasized, branches included the 'class' (e.g., Insects) and sections, the 'order' (e.g., Butterflies). When, however, geographical subdivision was emphasized as in natural history, the branch had the term Geographical; sections included the specific country or location (e.g., Great Britain); and groups included the most specific taxonomic element that the work in question was about (e.g., the 'order,' Butterflies).

Other features of the subject section included what might be termed idiosyncracies based on experience. As it has been noted above, the practice of placing elements of the classed catalog in the author section was disparaged. All entries with the uniform title Bible were, therefore, entered in the subject section only. And because of the

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1 By taxonomic structure is meant phylum, class, order, etc. For example, Insect is a 'class'; Butterflies, an 'order.'
difficulty of establishing name forms, all ancient Greek and Latin authors including the Church Fathers were also likewise gathered in the subject section (under the headings Greek Authors, Latin Authors, and Fathers) and were not entered in the author catalog at all. Form subdivisions, such as Poetry, Biography, etc., were often entered as branches of major classes, but the classifiers also entered them as headings in their own right, leading to lengthy sections under each. The rationale behind these entries was that not only would they facilitate searching for the student, but they would be an indispensable aid in checking purchasing lists and in filling gaps in the collection. The resulting subject catalog was, of course, laced with references and multiple entries for individual works; although for authors whose works included various editions of the same work, only a single reference from the initial representation of that work in the subject catalog to the full listing in the author section was made.

Abbot argued strongly for the effectiveness of his hybrid arrangement in the face of criticisms both from those who thought it too time-consuming a project and from those who thought it too difficult to use. The first argument was continued for many years and resulted in a public debate in 1877. John Fiske, successor to Ezra Abbot in 1872, published an article in the October 1876 Atlantic Monthly entitled, "A Librarian's Work," in which he described the cataloging procedures then in use at the College library.
Though the work was very involved and, in Fiske's words, subject cataloging problems were so difficult and required so much "scientific and literary training" that "great libraries rarely attempt to make subject catalogues," still he lauded the results and especially the ingenuity of Abbot in having devised it. ¹

Dr. Herman A. Hagen, a Harvard professor, criticized the cataloging process in the pages of the Nation, claiming that the expense was too much to accept, that it was really not that helpful, and that the subject headings were useless. What was needed was an author catalog only and numerous subject bibliographies. Cutter, by that time firmly entrenched at the Boston Athenaeum and already the author of Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue, as well as the editor of the first two volumes of the monumental Boston Athenaeum catalog, replied to the arguments in both the Library Journal and the Nation. ² With regard to the matter of costliness based on its time-consuming nature, he used the argument not to support the discontinuance of subject cataloging, but on the contrary, for the absolute necessity of cooperative cataloging.

² Herman A. Hagen, "The Librarian's Work," Nation, XXII (January 18, 1877), 40-41; C. A. Cutter, "Dr. Hagen's Letter on Cataloguing," LJ, I (February, 1877), 216-20; "The Cataloguer's Work," Nation, XXII (February 8, 1877), 86-88. Dr. Hagen was at that time a professor of entomology at Harvard. See Harvard University, Historical Register of Harvard University, p. 238.
With regard to its usefulness, Cutter replied very incisively. Contrary to those who felt that the expense of making a subject catalog was a cost incurred for only a minority of the users and that the great majority of users knew how to find what they wanted without it, Cutter estimated that, discounting desultory readers, "half the people who go to libraries have no author or book in their minds, they have a question to look up and the library is useless to them unless they can find out in some way who has written on that question."¹ Furthermore, even experienced professors had limitations to their memories. Without a subject index they needed to rely on bibliographies which were at best incomplete and out of date. When those failed they had to consult attendants. The latter solution was also expensive and not nearly as useful. The subject catalog, Cutter claimed with a touch of wit, "is cheaper than men and women intelligent and learned enough to be its substitutes, and it does not die or get married as men and women do; it is never tired or forgetful; it requires no vacations, and is never sick."²

His coup de grâce, however, was that the attendants themselves needed the subject catalog in order to help the reader.

The following summer, Cutter, Justin Winsor (then at the Boston Public Library) and Charles C. Smith, were appointed a subcommittee of the Overseers Committee on the Library to investigate the catalog and to make recommendations.

²Ibid.
The committee reiterated Cutter's arguments and suggested that in the absence of a subject arrangement, ultimately "the librarian will gradually begin to make a private subject-catalogue, which, however incomplete and unsatisfactory it may be he will find in a few months will save him much more time than he spent in making it."\(^1\) Beyond the issue of an ultimate savings in cost, the committee further claimed that the subject catalog had not yet obtained a fair trial. Consequently, they recommended additional helps for it including improved labels and guide cards, a printed guide, and most important, an alphabetical index of subjects. If, after these improvements were made, the catalog did not prove adequate, it could be easily rearranged in standard dictionary format.\(^2\)

The criticisms remained, however. Winsor himself, after succeeding Sibley as Harvard's librarian, eventually became disenchanted with the catalog and considered it a nuisance. As early as 1862, William F. Poole, writing as the secretary of the Overseers Committee on the Library,

\(^1\)"Report of the Sub-committee on the Administration of the Library," in Harvard University, Overseers Committee on the Library, *Report . . . for the Year 1877* [1876/77], p. 10.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 12. The request for a printed guide is unclear. Abbot and Cutter together had produced such a guide in 1867, but perhaps it was not what the committee had in mind. [Ezra Abbot and C. A. Cutter], *A Brief Description of the Catalogues of the Library of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Printed at the Library, 1867). The authorship of the pamphlet is anonymous, but Sibley, in his "Library Journal," pp. 282-83, in an entry for May 29, 1867, attributes it to the two men.
suggested that Abbot was too optimistic about it. In reality it was too complicated for the typical user and should be converted to the more conventional dictionary format. Abbot's 1863 report, prompted by Poole's criticism, stressed the basic values of the system and put forth the argument that while it gave some concession to alphabetical convenience, it still retained the attempt to systematize knowledge. In doing so it was attempting to perform the educational function of displaying the relationships of specific subjects to the universe of knowledge. That such a function had already fallen upon disfavor from leading librarians was evident in the pressure to adopt the uncritical dictionary format advocated by Poole and Jewett.

Beyond questions of ease of use, Abbot's greatest achievement lay in his conception of the discipline of subject headings. Subject headings arranged in chains of relationships with appropriate cross-references abounded in his system. A dictionary catalog could also have cross-references, but their use was more limited. In Abbot's catalog a patron finding a specific subject in an array of co-ordinate subjects subsumed under a general class would have specific-to-specific, specific-to-general, and general-to-specific relationships displayed, even though subarranged alphabetically. If he also found a reference to a specific

1W. F. Poole in Harvard University, Overseers Committee on the Library, Report . . . for the Year 1862 [1861/62], pp. 8-11. Winsor's attitude is noted in Ranz, The Printed Book Catalogue, p. 72.
subject in another general class, he would find there not only that particular subject, but its specific-to-specific, specific-to-general, and general-to-specific relationships as well. The same process was repeated throughout one's bibliographical search. By consciously relating subject headings in chain relationships, Abbot was able systematically to tie the catalog together in a much more thorough manner than had previously been achieved by anyone.¹ There is some question, of course, whether the conscious control of the subject chains and the cross-references actually worked out as well in practice. It is likely that it was not as ideal as Abbot claimed, not only in light of the problem of how to determine which subjects would be subsumed, but also because of the difficulty of choosing terminology for the subject headings themselves. For example, Cutter, in his 1869 article on the Harvard catalog, spoke of the problem

¹In terms of one twentieth century discussion of the problem of specificity in contemporary alphabetical subject catalogs, it might be said that Abbot was trying to provide both limited and broad inclusion at the same time. He was providing for both generic and specific entry, as if he sensed E. Svenonius' comment, that "it is not clear why access through broad or specific terms should be thought to exclude each other. It seems natural to ask why not have both: why not let the indexer choose all possible terms which seem applicable, broad as well as specific, and let the user have the option of choosing the generic level at which he wishes to enter the system." "The Effect of Indexing Specificity on Retrieval Performance" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 18-19. Abbot was, in effect providing for double entry--on the one hand by the reference system between specific entries, and on the other hand by the structure of the general classes. Indeed there is a sense in which his catalog in comparison to his contemporaries was like the possibility of computer-aided indexing in the present day. He wanted to provide a much wider range of access points than was previously thought possible on either
of choosing between adjectival or prepositional phrases (e.g., Italian Art, or, Art in Italy).\(^1\) Fiske suggested even more cogently the basic problem of consistency in choice of terms. He stated that consistent choices of terms depended upon the need for a single superintendent who knew the idiosyncracies of the catalog. Even with such a person and with a heavy dependence on precedents of usage, inconsistencies had arisen that impaired the catalog's usefulness.\(^2\)

The situation suggests that as the catalog grew, more and more instances of random or first impression decisions were involved, contrary to Abbot's ideals.

The question remains as to how Abbot's work bore an influence on cataloging practice after him. Eventually his alphabetico-classed catalog passed out of existence in favor of the dictionary arrangement. The importance of its existence in the 1860's remains, however, in its influence on Charles Cutter's own development of the standard dictionary catalog format. In particular, in its more disciplined approach to subject headings and to subject chains of relationships, it enabled Cutter to incorporate into the dictionary catalog the syndetic goal, changing the prevailing concept of the dictionary arrangement of subjects from that of a "mob" into some sort of systematic structure. The description theoretical or economic grounds.


of that development will take place in the succeeding discussion.

Work on the Catalog

The procedures involved in producing the catalog began in the fall of 1861. After a book was checked in on the invoice and collated, it was sent to a cataloger who made one or more cards for it for use in Sibley's long card supplementary catalog to the 1830 printed catalog. At that point problems of author entry were resolved and the work was revised by the principal assistant. At the same time the principal assistant penciled in on the long card the appropriate subject headings. The book was then processed and the long card was used to write cards for Abbot's catalog. Afterwards, the long card was used for producing the accession catalog entry and then filed in the librarian's official catalog.1

Cutter was Abbot's principal assistant from the start. He in fact superintended the whole cataloging process, and he probably had more to do with the actual construction of the alphabetico-classed catalog than Abbot himself. An indication of this is implied in Fiske's statement that in 1869 work on Abbot's catalog "came nearly to a standstill, but was resumed in 1874."2 The work stoppage occurred most

1Ibid., p. 488.
2Ibid., p. 483.
likely because Cutter left for the Athenaeum in January 1869.

The immediate objective of the catalog in 1861 was to include in it all volumes accessioned after September 1, 1861 (besides the more important pamphlets), as well as to enter, when possible, previously cataloged items. By the summer of 1862 Sibley was able to announce that 13,225 cards had been entered as well as 2,000 references for the biography section. By the following summer 35,762 new cards had been added including 27,256 titles of separate works, 4,741 titles in collections and 3,865 cross-references. The cards represented 16,943 volumes, 4,923 separate pamphlets, and 327 pamphlets in collections. By the end of the school year of 1863/64, 32,000 volumes and 8,500 pamphlets had been entered in the new catalog making a total of about 81,000 cards. By 1867/68, the last full year that Cutter worked there, 58,000 volumes and 19,000 pamphlets had been entered in the catalog, out of a total collection of 118,000 volumes and more than 100,000 pamphlets. The work was prodigious when one considers the regular growth of accessions, housing problems, and the working conditions for the library.

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1Cf., Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA. Not only had Cutter left Harvard, but Abbot accepted his professorial appointment in 1872. Fiske took Abbot's place in May 1872. Even then the work never apparently resumed its original pace, especially when Fiske's resumption date of 1874 is considered. The reason may well have been that Fiske was not nearly as enthusiastic about cataloging as his predecessors. For an evaluation of his Harvard library work, see Milton Berman, John Fiske, the Evolution of a Popularizer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), passim., especially pp. 120-22.
staff, as well as the fact that the cards for the catalog were all handwritten.¹

**Cutter's Other Activities**

Cataloging was not the only activity that Cutter engaged in. Other areas of work to which he was exposed in his eight years of apprenticeship were afterwards reflected in the wide variety of his library concerns. What had begun as an alternative to the ministry in an age needful of young leaders to influence the nation in crisis became for him an avenue for his full intellectual and personal development.

Administrative responsibility came from the very beginning, first in Abbot's initial absence due to illness, and afterwards as the principal assistant for the cataloging department. He learned from Sibley's book collecting the problem of the ever-increasing rate of publishing and the need for some sort of bibliographic control over it. In his early *Library Journal* articles a decade and a half later, as well as in his collection-building at the Boston Athenaeum, his coming to terms with this problem prompted him to make various proposals for cooperative storage and cataloging. His experience with the annual examination by the Overseers Committee on the Library and with Sibley's efforts to lessen its disruptive effect was later reflected in his own development of circulation procedures that made the annual

examination at the Athenaeum a thing of the past. His interest in bibliography, like Abbot's and Sibley's, became such that he too would be described as constantly on the move with book dealers sale catalogs in his pockets. He early came to an appreciation of his own role as a donor of books and from his first year at the Harvard College Library became a regular donor to that collection. By the time he left in December 1868, he was credited with donating books to Harvard regularly, on the first day of each month.\(^1\) And in the light of the grossly inadequate facilities of Harvard's Gore Hall for both the housing of the collections and for staff accommodations, one can hear loudly and clearly in his later comments on the adequate library building echoes of those trying days.

Cutter proved his value to the Library almost immediately. He was hired at a modest $500.00 annual salary in May 1860. The following summer he received an offer of a position as tutor at the Unitarian Meadville Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania at a salary of $900.00. Abbot wrote to President Felton on Cutter's behalf,

Though extremely interested in the work of the Library, to which he has devoted himself, not only with fidelity, but enthusiasm, giving to it a great amount of extra time, and the principal part of his vacations, and though the situation is in other respects altogether congenial to his tastes and habits, he will feel obliged to leave, unless his present salary, which, for the past year has

\(^1\)"Librarian's Report," [1868/69], in Harvard College Overseers Reports, Librarians Series, p. 484, MS, HUA. Without mentioning his own name, Cutter also referred to this fact in his "Harvard College Library," p. 580.
been only $500, can be considerably increased. Though I am not authorized to speak in his behalf, he would be contented to remain, I think, for a salary somewhat less than that offered him at Meadville, especially if there were a prospect of its increase hereafter, in better times. He has now become thoroughly acquainted with the principles of cataloguing, and with our system of classification—indeed with every part of the business of the Library; and has shown a capacity for the rapid and at the same time careful and thorough execution of the work in this department, which has far surpassed my most sanguine anticipations. I can hardly express in sufficiently strong terms my sense of his admirable fitness for the place which he has held, and of the great loss which the Library and College would sustain, if he should feel constrained to relinquish his present situation. I can think of no individual who could be found to take his place at anything like the salary he has received, whose services I should regard as one-half so valuable. ¹

Abbot, of course, faced more than the loss of a good assistant. He also faced the prospect of not being able to put into operation his plan for the construction of his alphabetico-classed catalog. It was a plan that he and Cutter had "freely conversed" about and with which Cutter fully agreed. ² As a happy consequence, Cutter's salary was raised by the Corporation to $800.00. ³ Subsequent increases raised that total to $1,200.00 by 1868.

Work in the College library was not Cutter's only source of interest and remuneration. In bibliographical endeavors he helped Abbot in the latter's compilation of a bibliography of the afterlife that was appended to the 1864

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¹ Letter, Ezra Abbot to President Felton, August 6, 1861, in Harvard College, Corporation Papers, HUA.

² Ibid.

³ Harvard College, Corporation Record, X, 243, MS, HUA. The action was taken at the regular meeting of August 31, 1861.

Cutter also began his own compilation of a bibliography on demonology and witchcraft, a work that he afterward hoped to publish but which he was never able to complete.\footnote{Cutter mentioned this endeavor in his letter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA. He also claimed that it was nearly ready for publication but that coming to the Athenaeum would delay it. Ten years later it still remained nearly ready. See the note in, *LJ*, IV (January, 1879), 25.}

He also assisted Joseph Sabin in the compilation of the latter's *Dictionary of Books Relating to America*. It was a labor of love which Cutter felt was threatened by his move to the greater responsibilities of the Athenaeum. He regretted the possibility of having to discontinue that work. He surmised, however,

> that I can get certain persons to do the main portion of the work, retaining for myself merely the supervision and the investigation of the more difficult questions which occasionally come up. After my new assistants get some training I may be able to leave the matter entirely in their hands. Certain portions of the ground which I have been accustomed to explore for him he will probably have to leave untouched in the future parts of his bibliography.\footnote{Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA.}
It may also have been in connection with the relationship with Sabin that Cutter published his first independent work, a translation of a section of Brunet's *Manuel du libraire*. Entitled *A Bibliographical Description of the Collection of "Grands Voyages,"* it consisted of sixty-one beautifully printed pages of bibliographical description and was issued from New York in a privately printed edition of only twenty-five copies.¹

In addition to such bibliographical ventures, Cutter also worked at book indexing and at the preparation of special catalogs. He indexed President Felton's *Lectures on Greece*, Well's *Life of Samuel Adams*, and in September 1867 negotiated through Abbot and Charles Eliot Norton to do the same for a manuscript of Professor E. C. Mitchell of Shurtleff College.² In 1864 he helped to write the one volume manuscript catalog of the Convers Francis collection bequeathed to the Divinity School Library. In that work he

¹Jacques Charles Brunet, *A Bibliographical Description of the Collection of "Grands voyages,"* translated from Brunet's "*Manuel du Libraire*" by Charles Cutter (New York: Privately printed, 1869). The relationship of this work to Sabin is only surmised. Sabin's work on early Americana, the similarity of this work to Sabin's own special printing, and a note in a letter to Charles E. Norton that he was "obliged to go to New York at two days notice" are the only clues. Letter, Cutter to C. E. Norton, May 28, 1868, HHL, C. E. Norton Papers.

²Letter, Ezra Abbot to C. E. Norton, September 18, 1867, HHL, C. E. Norton Papers. Cutter received $100 for the two volume Felton work. Abbot, who had promised to do the Mitchell manuscript but found himself too hard-pressed, found Cutter willing to do the project for 75¢ an hour or $50, whichever amount was less. Since the manuscript was then in Norton's hands, he was asking the latter's opinion on the matter.
cooperated with his co-worker of Divinity School years, Charles Noyes. In terms of choice of entry that catalog shows considerable advance over the catalogs he worked on while at the school. It revealed much more rigor in establishing names and in referring from variant forms, doubtless the influence of his Harvard College Library work.¹

In 1865 Cutter began another project that issued not only in the compilation of a special catalog but brought him into contact with Charles Coffin Jewett. Frederic Vinton, an assistant at the Boston Public Library since 1857, left that post in 1865 to become assistant librarian under A. K. Spofford at the Library of Congress. While at the Boston Public Library, he was one of the principal workers on Jewett's various catalogs of that growing collection. In January 1865 Cutter took over Vinton's work as a special assistant to work during his vacations and at other hours. His duties included "temporary charge of the location and cataloguing of the books."² By his own admission Cutter worked


²Boston Public Library, "Proceedings of the Board of Trustees," II, 968, January 20, 1865, MS, BPL; [Edwin H. Abbot], The Report of the Secretary of the Class of 1855, of Harvard College, July 1855 to July 1865 (Boston: Printed by Alfred Mudge and Son, 1865). Cutter was hired at 62½¢ an hour. In March 1865 he asked for an increase but his request was turned down. In 1867, however, he was apparently receiving 75¢ an hour for that was the wage scale comparison that he used for the Mitchell indexing project. Letter, Ezra Abbot to C. E. Norton, September 18, 1867, HHL, C. E. Norton Papers.
there for twenty months. At the end of his term he not only had done work on the regular catalog but had worked on the Prince Collection. At the time of Jewett's death in 1868, the card catalog of that special collection had been completed and Cutter had made a final revision for the press. The volume was not issued, however, until 1870. Of a more speculative nature is the question of the effect on Cutter of cataloging at the Boston Public Library under Jewett. In the light of Cutter's subsequent support of the dictionary catalog (even though with modifications), a format that Jewett favored, one can perhaps assume that there was some influence, however impossible to establish it directly.

Last of all, Cutter also furthered his career in the area of professional writing. By January 1869 he had already contributed two book reviews and two lengthy articles to the North American Review. In a thoroughly critical review of Howard Malcom's Theological Index, a bibliography, he showed the pithiness and exacting attention to details that characterized thereafter a long series of reviews and short articles on library matters. Concerning Malcom's grasp of the art of bibliography, Cutter wrote, "Dr. Malcom is no bibliographer. His Preface shows that he does not understand the

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1 Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA. It is not certain, however whether or not the twenty months were consecutive.

principles of the art; and his whole book, that he has not been trained to its practice."

He went on to take the author to task for his severe abridgment of the entries. Malcom consistently omitted bibliographical information necessary to adequately judge the characteristics of a book. The items excluded were date, imprint, and some mention of a book's outstanding features. What remained of a reference often contained significant errors. Cutter's judgment was, "Of course it would have cost Dr. Malcom much trouble to ascertain such particulars, but readers are not ready to forgive an author who causes them trouble by shirking it himself." Other defects included a failure to distinguish between the language of the title and text where language categories were employed, serious blunders in dividing controversial works into pro and con categories, careless proofreading, and failure to distinguish different titles of the same work. The latter problem resulted in Malcom often citing titles by the same author as different works.

After listing particular examples in great numbers, Cutter closed his review with a bit of sardonic humor.

Dr. Malcom seems perfectly satisfied with what he has done, and, in a rather amusing strain, warns critics not to find fault with his plan or its execution. We think

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1C. A. Cutter, Review of Theological Index, by Howard Malcom, in the North American Review, CVII (July, 1868), p. 282. The full title and imprint for the Malcom work are, Theological Index; References to the Principal Works in Every Department of Religious Literature, Embracing Nearly Seventy Thousand Citations, Alphabetically Arranged Under Two Thousand Heads (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1868).

2Cutter, Review of Theological Index, p. 284.
we have shown sufficient reason for complaining of both. It would have been easy to increase the list of blunders. They can be counted by hundreds. . . . It is extremely difficult, we know, to make a work of this kind correct, requiring an amount of patient labor of which few persons have any conception. Perhaps we ought to be grateful to a man who has done anything in a branch of literature which so few find attractive; and if our author were a poor booksellers' hack, working against time for a living, much might be pardoned; but a work which he describes as having grown by daily additions for over forty years, without any sensible deduction of time from his proper pursuits, and as affording in its completion pleasant occupation since his retirement from professional life, can claim no such indulgence. For the honor of American scholarship, if for no other reason, he ought to have made a better book.  

The review was exceptionally harsh, amounting to a condemnation. It was not as if Cutter was unaware of his severity or lacked any feelings in the matter. He wrote to Charles E. Norton, the editor,

Dr. Malcom's presumption and ignorance and carelessness have made as bad a bibliography as ever was written. He has received whatever praise is his due from other reviews and the newspapers, but as far as I have observed his short-comings have been either ignored or treated very gently. Mr. Abbot thinks I have not been severe enough. For my part I am aghast at the hard things I have said, but I assure you they are all deserved and his faults not a bit exaggerated.

William E. Foster, a close friend in later years, characterized Cutter's intellectual prowess in such matters as a function of his desire for accuracy.

That Mr. Cutter was a man of exceptionally accurate scholarship could hardly fail to result from his wide knowledge, already noted above, from his insatiable desire for truth, from his systematic mind, and, particularly, from his rigidly critical method. To the five

1Ibid., p. 289.

senses common to men in general, he seemed almost to add a sixth sense— that of accuracy. Naturally, the contact of such a mind with inaccuracies of any kind was a source of annoyance, and almost of pain; and the critical reviews which he occasionally contributed very plainly reproduced this attitude of mind.¹

At about the same time as the above review, Cutter also began what became thirty-five years of continuous contributions to the Nation, which was founded in 1865 by Edwin L. Godkin. A brilliant emigree from Ireland, Godkin had been raised in an atmosphere of political agitation for democratic reform. Through his wide travels and his subsequent involvement in American political life he developed great optimism for the possibilities of an enlightened democracy in the American experiment. European critics, especially those who saw American democratic strivings through the eyes of de Toqueville, expressed the conviction that cultural leveling and failure were endemic to the nature of democracy itself. In a curious foreshadowing of Turner's frontier thesis, Godkin expressed the idea that the movement of population into a frontier experience caused the crude excesses of democracy. But the excesses were not endemic to the nature of the system. What was needed by American leaders was patience and a willingness to participate in the natural "polishing process" that would follow the initial conquering of the land. It was in this "polishing process" that Godkin found the raison d'être for his life-long work. "Believing

¹Foster, "Charles Ammi Cutter," p. 702.
implicitly in both democracy and culture, he sought the help of kindred spirits, to bring about their fusion. ¹

In his optimism, Godkin joined with that stream of activity aimed at cultural consolidation and renewal. The Nation under his leadership became an agent of the enculturating process. Charles Cutter became one of Godkin's "eminent specialists" in the field of library development. By the time that he had accepted the Boston Athenaeum post, he could already report that "four or five 'literary notes'" had been published in its pages. ² One of these, a review of Edward Edwards' Free Town Libraries, appeared in the fall of 1869 and demonstrated how well Cutter fit into Godkin's overall approach to his task. The book did not escape Cutter's critical mind. He pointed out what he felt were its obvious deficiencies, including a less than satisfactory treatment of American libraries and not nearly enough practical information. But Cutter also revealed his own Ticknor-like views of public library development as he praised Edwards' highlighting of the positive aspects of libraries. He only wished that Edwards had been able to provide further information.

What, after all, is the good accomplished by the circulation of these three millions of volumes? It cannot have been without effect. Has it merely amused, or


² Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA.
has it, as is claimed, educated, refined, civilized the readers? Is not mere amusement, if innocent, a good in itself which there is more danger of our underestimating than overestimating? Is the effect in any proportion to the trouble, and cost, and blowing of trumpets? How much have these books stimulated the nascent ability of future writers or artists? How much have they helped the artisan in his work? How much political—and domestic—economy have they taught? How much contentment have they fostered? How much pleasure and relief from weariness or anxiety have they given? How many empty hours have they filled that would have been worse occupied, preventing visits to low resorts by supplying better and cheaper amusement? These results we cannot tabulate; we cannot even ascertain them accurately. Sociologists should attempt to find answers; statisticians could make little of them.¹

Subsequent contributions to the Nation, characterized by assistant editor, W. P. Garrison, as "very varied and always pithy," covered a variety of educational and literary subjects and, most regularly, professional library development.²

While Charles Cutter was experiencing the blossoming of his professional career, events in his personal life were happening that would also affect the shape of his future. Having grown up in the environs of West Cambridge and its pleasant and scenic situation, he showed his penchant for the out-of-doors with a walking tour to the White Mountains


of New Hampshire in July and August of 1861. His love for hiking and mountaineering and other activities such as rowing, canoeing and bicycling, gave him opportunity to express a deep appreciation for nature. Later in life he joined the Appalachian Mountain Club and regularly spent his summers in the White Mountains and in the Laurentian region of Canada.

Although frail in health, he, like many others who adopted the patrician ideal of a quiet but strenuous life, expressed in such ways his deepest desire to impose a conquering order on life. Among the librarian companions who occasionally accompanied him on such trips, Richard Bliss, later closely associated with Cutter in developing the Expansive Classification, wrote,

He was a capital mountain climber, and loved the exercise thoroughly. Climbing seemed no exertion to him, and, the more dangerous the climb, the better he liked it—not necessarily on account of danger as danger, but to conquer the apparently unconquerable. I think the love of conquest (in its highest sense) was a strong trait in his nature.

1[LE. H. Abbot], The Report of the Secretary of the Class of 1855, p. 25.


Other important happenings occurred in Cutter's changing home life. Sometime in the 1850's, Charles Cutter and his aunts had included in their household four brothers and sisters of the Bradbury family from Cambridge. These included Harriet, the oldest and thirteen years Charles' senior; John, a merchant in Boston; Charles, a clerk; and Walter, three years younger than Charles. Though the events of the national crisis that occurred in 1861 caused two of Charles Cutter's brothers to volunteer for service in the Union cause, Charles himself, probably due to his extreme nearsightedness, did not himself follow the same course. Subsequently, a fortuitous event occurred on May 31, 1862 when John Langdon Sibley hired Louisa Appleton as a clerk at the Harvard Library. A year later Charles married Louisa's sister, Sarah. And a year after that, Charles Bradbury married Louisa herself, the latter couple remaining in the Charles Cutter household for the remainder of their lives.

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2 Sibley, "Library Journal," p. 187, in an entry for May 31, 1862. He stated, "She and her sister were highly educated at Portsmouth, N. H." Of course, the fact that Louisa began working there does not at all preclude the possibility that the Cutters, Bradburys, and Appletons were previously acquainted, and in fact, that Sarah did not herself precede both her sister and Cutter at the Harvard library. Many years later a student who had heard Cutter lecture at Melvil Dewey's library school claimed that Cutter himself stated that Sarah had been the first woman to be employed in the catalog department at Harvard. If that is so, it supplements Sibley's record and places the time of their acquaintanceship perhaps as early as 1859. See, "As it Was
The Appletons were, like the Cutters, another solid New England family. Descended from Samuel Appleton of Little Waldingfield, England, they included a number of Harvard graduates who were exemplary participants in colonial life. In 1680 John Appleton (b. 1652) married Elizabeth Rogers, the daughter of Harvard President, John Rogers. Their sixth child, Nathaniel (1693-1784), distinguished himself as the much beloved minister of the Cambridge First Parish Church for sixty-six years (1717-1783). His ministry, built around his strong but genial Puritan nature, is recorded as having been "long and peaceful . . . but not marked by any extraordinary circumstances," except perhaps his adamant refusal to allow George Whitefield to occupy the First Church pulpit during his preaching tours in 1745.

Leading his congregation through national birth pangs of the Revolutionary era, he numbered among his worshippers, George Washington, John Hancock, and countless other prominent colonial leaders.

One of his grandchildren, John Appleton (b. 1758), who served as U. S. Consul in France and in Calais, and his wife, Sarah Fayerweather, had two sons, John James

in the Beginning," Public Libraries, XXIX (May, 1924), 238. See also above, p. 47.

1 Appleton genealogical history is taken from William Sumner Appleton, A Genealogy of the Appleton Family (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin and Son, 1874). A brief genealogical chart of Appleton family members referred to in this study is given in the Appendix.

2 Lucius R. Paige, History of Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1630-1877, with a Genealogical Register (Boston: H. O.
(b. 1792) and Charles John (b. 1795). The elder son afterwards settled in France as did his children. His son, Charles (b. 1846), later became a professor of law at the University of Lyons. ¹ Charles John Appleton returned to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and married Sophia Haven of that city in 1835. His children were Sophia Louisa (b. 1836), Sarah Fayerweather (b. March 9, 1839), and Augusta Isabella (b. 1841). Because the family's roots were so firmly in Cambridge, it is likely that there were frequent visits between there and Portsmouth. In fact, of the three daughters, Sarah was born in Cambridge. Sometime after the death of Charles John Appleton in 1843, his daughters apparently settled permanently in the Harvard community—leading at some point to their acquaintance with the Cutter/Bradbury household. Charles and Sarah Fayerweather Appleton were married on May 21, 1863. Charles Bradbury married Sophia Louisa on June 4, 1864. With a branch of the Appleton family in France, in later years the Cutters would come to spend part of their trips to Europe visiting with her relatives.

In due course, the Cutter family expanded, first with the arrival of Louis Fayerweather on June 6, 1864. Phillip Champney was born on November 3, 1866, and Roland Norcross on July 29, 1868. The increase in the size of the

household doubtless placed a strain on the family resources. Charles Cutter, industrious by nature, pursued his various professional interests with diligence, in order to supplement his college salary. By means of occasional stipends for his extra vacation work, through his indexing and literary pursuits, and by his employment as a special cataloger for the Boston Public Library, he was able almost to double his $1,200.00 annual Harvard salary. Still it must have been with extreme satisfaction that he received in November 1868 the news of his impending election to the Boston Athenaeum librarianship, at a salary of $2,500.00 per year.¹

For that position he was contacted by Charles Deane, previously a regular member of the Harvard Overseers Committee on the Library, who had been elected a trustee of the Athenaeum in 1866. On November 21, 1868, Charles Cutter visited with Deane and in a firm but gracious manner informed Deane of his thoughts on his candidacy. The statement that he made shows how well the young man had served his apprenticeship under Abbot and Sibley.²

¹ He with Sibley and Abbot received special grants in 1864 and in 1867. Harvard College, Corporation Record, X, 365; XI, 53, MSS, HUA. His having almost doubled his College salary was a fact mentioned in his letter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA.

² When meeting with Deane, he read a statement which he afterwards sent to Deane in the form of a letter of acceptance, November 21, 1868, BA. The letter, consisting of two and a half fully written and folded leaves, has already been referred to many times because of its richness of detail concerning his life during the previous eight years. The quotations that follow comprise a substantial portion of its text.
Cutter expressed his thanks for the salary offered, especially since such a fixed income would be certain and not precarious as his previous extra income had been. With a family to support, "to be relieved from anxiety is to take a new lease on life." But he also admitted some hesitation. His enthusiasm for the work that Abbot had begun was all-encompassing. Besides, he admitted in a word of candor,

The position at the College Library is absolutely secure and certain to improve. No advance is possible at the Athenaeum, and my stay even is dependent upon my pleasing the trustees for the time being. Moreover, the work seems to me to be of a lower grade, less intellectual, more mechanical, easier to be sure, but more tedious than I have been performing.

He went on to apologize for his boldness.

But it must not be supposed, because I do not accept with exultation, that I shall go with half a heart, or enter upon my new duties without interest. I shall go with the desire to identify myself, as far as may be, with the library, to make it my main object in life, as long as I remain there, and to give up everything that would in any way interfere with it.

Cutter then expressed his own requirements for the position. First, he would have to be allowed to continue his literary endeavors. Second, he outlined what he felt were the professional aspects of the librarian's position. These included, in modern terminology, administrative freedom and the time to devote serious attention to collection building, especially in the light of the time usually spent in reference service or in helping on the proposed catalog for the Athenaeum. His own words speak to the point succinctly:

I should prefer, of course, in any library of which I took charge, to have the entire direction and parcelling
out of the work. At the College Library in one of our departments (cataloguing), Mr. Abbot has left this almost entirely to me; and not having it during the twenty months that I was employed at the Boston Public Library was a great annoyance and stood much in the way of the work there being properly and quickly done. But I understand that the trustees have settled the matter at the Athenaeum and fixed the employments of each person. In doing this they have assigned to the librarian some work—cataloguing accessions on the cards and in the accessions' book—which I think is incompatible with the proper performance of higher duties. I have very little personal knowledge of the Athenaeum, but those with whom I have talked about it speak of the good work which could be done by a librarian who should be on the watch for all the best new publications, who should try to ascertain the deficiencies of the library in each department and by his suggestions assist in making it symmetrical, performing what has always been the recognized duty of the superintendent of the Boston Public Library. To do this the librarian should regularly examine all bibliographical periodicals, American and foreign, and should glance through the chief critical journals. This of course is a work of time. Still more stress has been laid upon the need of some person to assist inquirers in their researches. The importance of such assistance is sufficiently shown by the frequent recourse, which I am informed, is had to Mr. Lowell: in fact there is no way in which the usefulness of a library can be more effectually promoted. But this too requires time. I have constantly, at the College Library, to spend a quarter of an hour, half an hour, not unfrequently an hour in giving such assistance, and I think my time is never better spent; yet here inquirers can also go, and do go even more than to me, to Mr. Abbot, Mr. Sibley, and to the janitor. Moreover, whether Mr. Lowell's catalogue be printed or copied on cards, a very considerable amount of revision and direction would be thrown upon me which my predecessor did not have, and which could not be entrusted to an assistant who might be perfectly competent to copy titles into an accessions book or a shelf-catalogue.

I insist upon this point not because I wish to avoid labor, but because I wish to be able to devote myself to that sort of labor which will be most for the interest of the library. It seems to me preposterous to hire a man at a salary of $2500 to do work that can just as well be done by a girl at a salary of $400, when there is other work which the man only can do, and which he cannot do if his time is fully occupied by the inferior work. Why do not you ask the librarian to get, charge, and put away the books, to make the fires, and sweep
out the rooms? I should not object to doing any of these things on a pinch, but I should decidedly object to having them made my regular duties.

On the one hand the desire that Cutter showed to make sure that the administrative outlines of his new position would be understood from the beginning certainly reflects the first hand knowledge he had of Sibley's entanglements with the Library Committee at Harvard. On the other hand, he was probably not as unenlightened about conditions at the Athenaeum as he expressed. He certainly must have known of the labor expended in preparing what would prove to be a monumental printed catalog for that library. Furthermore, Abbot himself had been employed to critically evaluate the work done on the catalog through the fall of 1867. In his report to the trustees of the Athenaeum, dated January 4, 1868, he took special pains to stress the need for a more disciplined approach to the subject headings in the work. Abbot concluded his report with a carefully worded statement that in passing raised the question of whether or not the catalog should be printed at all. He could not have failed to discuss such features with his close associate.

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1Ezra Abbot, "To the Trustees of the Boston Athenaeum, January 4, 1868, MS, BA. He had already been employed as a consultant the previous summer, "to make a careful examination of the manuscript Catalogue of the Athenaeum Library, and to present a written report concerning its condition, with reference to the question of printing." Letter, Ezra Abbot to C. E. Norton, August 4, 1867, HHL, C. E. Norton Papers.

2Abbot and Cutter were very close in their work, and one might surmise, at least occasionally in the social realm as well. In a letter to Norton, Abbot suggests that second kind of a relationship. "Tomorrow Mr. Cutter and I propose
letter of acceptance indicates that he was aware of the extra labor that would be required to bring the proposed catalog up to his own standards and of the administrative conflict that might ensue because of those needs.

Whether or not the trustees heard Cutter's whole statement is not known. In a covering letter he had appended to it, Cutter advised Deane,

You can use it as you please, but I must say that I would not have written so unreservedly about my affairs and my feelings if I had not been addressing a friend, and I cannot tell whether it is proper that all parts of the note should be read to gentlemen who are at present strangers to me. Of this you must judge, and I leave the matter entirely in your hands.¹

On December 12th, Deane reported to the trustees on his conference with Charles Cutter. The report was accepted and Cutter was elected to the post with the Library Committee appointed to make the final arrangements.²

¹Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868 (Covering letter), BA.

²Boston Athenaeum, Records of the Trustees, December 12, 1868, BA. The minutes of the meeting state that Deane reported his meeting with Cutter, not that he read Cutter's letter.
CHAPTER III
THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM: 1869-1880

Boston and the Athenaeum

When Charles Cutter left Boston as an infant to live with his grandfather, the Hub, as it was called, still had the likeness of a large pleasant town. When he returned in order to take up his duties at the Boston Athenaeum in 1869, extensive changes had already occurred. The population had swelled from 93,000 in 1840 to 250,000 in 1870. Immigration, especially of the Irish, was the major factor. While only two-sevenths of the total population were foreign-born in 1840, by 1850 that proportion had increased to almost one-half, settling down thereafter to about one-third for the remainder of the century.¹

Increased vitality in sea commerce before the Civil War brought extensive warehouse construction in the wharf areas. Between 1845 and 1847 nine such structures were built in Pearl Street alone. The combination of warehouse construction and the need for new housing brought about major changes in residential housing patterns. As the older sections

became less desirable to the wealthy and to the established middle-class, they sold their properties for profitable commercial ventures or for low income housing to newer arrivals. Slums developed especially in the Ann Street and Fort Hill sectors. The narrow neck of land south of the business district was continually expanded and became a first resort for those moving out of the more congested older sections. But by the 1860's the South End was disregarded in favor of new land-fill locations in the Back Bay area south and west of the Common, an area where the most well-to-do could build palatial homes. The new Back Bay or the older and greatly dignified Beacon Hill could be pointed at with pride as the fair face of the growing metropolis.  

Population changes in the city were only one part of the picture, however. As new markets opened up in the nation, a shift from port-supply industry to manufacturing industries occurred in the whole Boston area. The suburbs, too, many containing manufacturing centers, experienced the growth of immigrant population after 1850. Cambridge, for example, increased in population from 8,400 in 1840 to almost 40,000 by 1870. However, with many wealthy and middle-class residents also moving to the suburbs, the growth of commuter transportation tied the whole urban area together.  

\[1\] Ward, "Nineteenth Century Boston," pp. 47-54; Whitehill, Boston, A Topographical History, chs. V-VII.  

find it not inconvenient to commute to his new place of business, although he mentioned in his letter of acceptance that the need to do so would among other things make the larger Athenaeum salary not so attractive as it might have seemed to the trustees. He apparently rented a room just over Beacon Hill for a while during 1870, perhaps to dispense at least in part with the problem of the daily ride.  

Though the city changed drastically, in the years through the 1870's, the Athenaeum changed little in its general mood, aside from growth. It had been founded early in the century for the express purpose of literary advancement among gentlemen of learning. In 1803 Phineas Adams, a Harvard graduate of 1801, started the publication, The Monthly Anthology, or Magazine of Polite Literature. The periodical was one among various early efforts to promote a distinctly American literature although with all due recognition of British superiority in the literary field. But it was taken over by the Rev. William Emerson shortly after its inception. He enlisted many Boston area associates to do the writing, and changed its name to The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review. In 1805 these gentlemen organized their group formally as the Anthology Society and shortly afterward engaged in two projects that resulted in the Boston Athenaeum.

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1 The Boston Directory, LXVII (1870-71). He boarded at 7 Derne Street.

2 Unless otherwise noted, material for the early history of the Athenaeum is taken from Josiah Quincy, The History of the Boston Athenaeum, with Biographical Notices of its Deceased Founders (Cambridge: Metcalf and Company, 1851).
library. They collected a library of donated periodicals, and they sponsored a public reading room. The May 1806 prospectus for the proposed reading room stated,

The Editors of the Anthology in presenting the following proposal for the establishment of a Public Reading-room in this town, by subscription, to be called The Anthology Reading-room, flatter themselves, that a project which may be made so auxiliary to literature, and so useful to the public, will receive ample patronage from the liberal gentlemen of Boston. The projected Plan will not only afford the subscribers an agreeable place of resort, but opportunities of literary intercourse, and the pleasure of perusing the principal European and American periodical publications, at an expense not exceeding that of a single daily paper.\(^1\)

In late 1806, with a large amount of money collected from subscriptions, it was voted to incorporate the reading room and library together. This action resulted in the formal establishment of the Boston Athenaeum in 1807, the actual example and name having come from the Liverpool Athenaeum in England. The founders considered the new institution a public institution and accordingly appealed for the patronage of the gentlemen of Boston:

It is a subject of high congratulation to record the establishment of an institution in the metropolis of New England, which will be useful to various classes of our citizens; which will assist and facilitate the researches of the learned, attract and gratify the ingenuous curiosity of strangers. Let men of leisure and opulence patronize the arts and sciences among us; let us all love them, as intellectual men; let us encourage them, as good citizens. In proportion as we increase in wealth, our obligations increase to guard against the pernicious effects of luxury, by stimulating to a taste for intellectual enjoyment; the more we ought to perceive and urge the importance of maintaining the laws by manners, manners by opinion, and opinion by works in which genius and taste unite to embellish the truth.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 7. \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 9-10.
The first home of the new library was in Scollay's Buildings between Tremont and Court streets, but it was only temporary. The Corporation finally settled on the purchase of a house in Tremont Street. The library was moved to the new location in 1809 and remained there until 1822.

The goal in collecting books accorded with the stated purposes of the institution. Those purposes, broadly including the advancement of scholarship as a condition for the growth of the national character and identity, necessitated gathering books in all important fields. The connection was well expressed in the "Memoir of the Boston Athenaeum" sent in the summer of 1807 to every likely subscriber:

The value of learning, whatever incidental evils it may produce, is admitted by all who are qualified to judge upon the subject. Besides the dignity and satisfaction associated with the cultivation of letters and arts, and which constitute their worth to the individual, they have unlimited uses in respect to the community. Speculative and practical philosophy, history, polite literature, and the arts, bear an important relation to all the conveniences and elegancies of life, to all the good institutions of society, and to all the great interests of man, viewed as a rational and social, a moral and religious being. Not only, however, should those deep investigations of science and exquisite refinements of taste, which are necessarily confined to a few, be held in respect, as connected with the general welfare; but that love of intellectual improvement and pleasure and that propensity to reading and inquiry, which are capable of being diffused through considerable portions of the community, should be regarded with interest and promoted with zeal among a civilized and flourishing people. They belong to the regular progress of society. 1

1 Ibid., p. 30.
Accordingly, the library attempted to provide contemporary periodicals, both foreign and domestic, the literature of commerce, government and politics, and to assemble a strong collection of American historical materials. That such collecting was successful came about through the indefatigable efforts of William Smith Shaw, the librarian from 1807 to 1823.

After a slow period of growth the institution expanded rapidly under new leadership in the 1820's. Several special collections were added. James Perkins gave his mansion in Pearl Street to the institution as its third home, and it remained there from 1822 to 1849. A building housing a lecture hall and art exhibit gallery was constructed on the same property in 1826 and the first loan art exhibit was held in May 1827. The Athenaeum subsequently became the city's foremost patron of the fine arts, actively engaged over the years in both the purchase and exhibition of paintings and sculpture. Eventually, out of its efforts, the Museum of Fine Arts was established in 1870.¹

The library was opened to limited circulation in 1826. An author catalog was printed in 1827 followed by

supplements in 1830 and 1833 and a cumulative supplement in 1840. A manuscript catalog of 1,181 volumes of bound pamphlets was completed in 1831, providing for them both author and "scientific" (i.e., subject) access. By the end of 1843 the collections had increased to more than 32,000 volumes besides pamphlets, and the total value of the properties to more than $144,000.

In 1839 in the face of the encroachment of warehouses in the Pearl Street area, a proposal was made that the Athenaeum move to a more suitable section of the city. No action was taken, however, and by 1843 the situation had become even more severe. In terms of its own self-image, Josiah Quincy summarized,

In 1842, the population of the city had greatly increased, and Pearl Street had become almost entirely occupied by warehouses. The position of the Athenaeum of consequence became incompatible with the main design of that institution, ready and easy access to a great public library being in a manner essential to its usefulness. A general desire began to be expressed for its removal. It was obvious, also, from the annual reports of the state of the several departments, that, while the books and the collection of the Fine Arts were increasing annually, the productive property of the institution was gradually diminishing, and the diminution in the proceeds of the exhibitions of paintings was, unquestionably, in a degree attributable to the local situation of the Athenaeum.2

Accordingly, new shares were issued as part of a plan to finance a new building. The property finally acquired was at the now familiar 10½ Beacon Street location up against

1Quincy, History of the Boston Athenaeum, p. 129.
2Ibid., p. 156.
the Old Granary Burial Ground. Actual construction got underway in 1847 and in the summer of 1849 the collections were moved to the new location. Difficulties in the disposition of the Pearl Street property and a greatly inaccurate estimate of the cost of construction, however, prevented the completion of the building by the time of the move. By June 1848 the exterior of the Paterson plainstone structure had already exceeded the whole of the original $70,000 estimate. Rejecting a move on the part of some to become a public institution in exchange for public funds, the proprietors resolved the difficulty temporarily by completing only the main second floor library hall, connecting it to the entrance vestibule by means of an iron staircase. The remainder of the building was completed in the following five years.

William L. Williamson, using contemporary descriptions, has summarized the final result.

Located almost in the shadow of the State House, the three-story structure extended 114 feet along Beacon Street. Set back ten feet from the street, the building was constructed of Paterson freestone in a modified Palladian style. A large entrance opened into a spacious lobby on the left of which was a room occupied by the Library of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Directly ahead from the lobby was the entrance to the Sculpture Gallery and, off to the right, the door to the periodical reading room. On the right of the lobby was the famous Sumner staircase which, though admired by visitors, was of such proportions that it took up almost one-fourth of the whole building. Mounting these stairs and entering through double doors from the second-floor landing, the visitor came into the main library quarters. This handsome room with its high, ornately decorated ceiling, extended the full length of the building. Being at the rear, its windows looked down from the heights of Beacon Hill over the old Granary Burying Ground and, beyond it, to the business center of the city. The entrance from the stairway opened into the smaller west section
of the Library--the so-called Oval Room--where, on shelves lining the walls, were housed the encyclopedias, bound periodicals, and other sets. Here, a charging desk was so placed that the attendant faced the entrance and also, by looking to his right, commanded a view through an archway down the main axis of the Library into the east end of the room. This larger compartment was divided into thirteen alcoves on each of two levels, housing the main book collection. An iron gallery, reached by five spiral staircases, made the book shelves accessible even though they extended almost to the ceiling. Long tables for readers were ranged down the open center of the room. Opening off to the left were doorways to two rooms in the front of the building overlooking Beacon Street. One was set aside as the Librarian's workroom and the other, often called the North Room, was used to house miscellaneous collections. None of these library rooms would normally have been seen by the casual visitor. He would have been more likely to proceed up the Sumner Staircase to the skylighted third floor where the Fine Arts Committee housed its popular exhibitions of paintings, including the Athenaeum's prized Gilbert Stuart portraits of George and Martha Washington.1

The total cost of the building was more than $190,000. A series of short term notes not only did not solve the problem of financing but caused considerable discord among the proprietors. Finally, in 1855 a new series of shares was issued, bringing the needed capital to free the institution from debt. That series also brought the total number of shares to 1,049, the number maintained for the remainder of the century.

Meanwhile, the issue of whether or not the Athenaeum should go public was resolved in 1853 just as the building was being completed. A renewed effort in that direction was led by the city Fathers and by George Ticknor along with

seventy-three other Athenaeum proprietors. Ticknor's appeal centered on the financial condition of the Athenaeum, the inappropriateness of having two separate libraries in such close proximity, and his estimate that four-fifths of the proprietors considered the rationale of the Athenaeum to be that of a public library in the first place. A highly impassioned plea by Josiah Quincy, Sr., however, called the proprietors to their original purposes and the merger idea was soundly defeated.¹

Quincy explicitly appealed to the proprietors to retain the trust of the funds and goals bequeathed to them by the original incorporation. He decried the political nature that control of the institution would develop under a public administration. Such control would effectively subvert the high ideals of their institution. He also implicitly called forth the justifiable pride of the proprietors in the intellectual and cultural tradition out of which the Athenaeum had sprung.

The tradition itself was a mixture of social relationship, wealth, manners and scholarship. Early nineteenth century commercial wealth, conservative and Federalist in its origin, had combined with an advancing Unitarian moral philosophy to produce an elite community that saw itself as a resource of progress and improvement for the reordering of

the nation. One writer has summarized the community's spirit as the formulation of "a set of beliefs that constituted a personal ethic and also defined its role in society as a republican aristocracy which stabilized as it transformed."\(^1\) Wealth was not sought for its own sake. A gentleman pursued the search in conjunction with his personal development of character. Ideally a balanced character included honor and integrity, responsibility and trust, a genteel manner, and an enlightened sense of social responsibility. The collective need for these virtues gave him his rationale for the support of culture and the patronage of cultural institutions such as the Athenaeum.\(^2\)

The accomplishments of the Athenaeum were by 1853 considerable. In 1845 John Bromfield gave the institution an outright gift of $25,000, three-fourths of the income of which was to be used for book purchasing. As a result, the collections increased rapidly in size, numbering by the time of the move in 1849 more than 50,000 volumes. The Athenaeum had also developed a fine arts program. In a day when American artists were struggling for some sort of collective identity, the Athenaeum along with other like institutions of the genteel became a patron of the growing native art movement.\(^3\)

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2. Ibid., pp. 440-46.
3. Harris, The Artist in American Society, pp. 94-104, passim.
In the realm of genteel literature and patrician history, the Athenaeum also had its revered memories both before 1853 and afterward. Barrett Wendell, whom Cleveland Amory has described as the Brahmin of Brahmins, inspected the circulation records of the Athenaeum and from them drew a sentimental vignette of the prominent users of the Athenaeum during the course of the nineteenth century. The list is impressive. Beginning with Nathaniel Hawthorne he goes on to mention Rufus Choate, George Barrell Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Everett, George Ticknor, Samuel Gridley Howe, Josiah Quincy, William Hicking Prescott, Richard Hildreth, George Bancroft, John Gorham Palfrey, Jared Sparks, and Dr. Alexander Young. Francis Parkman, who held a share from 1853 until his death in 1894, was active as a trustee, serving on the library committee for most of those years. Bronson Alcott, William Ellery Channing, and James Freeman Clarke frequented its halls, as well as George Hilliard and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Then too there were the Nortons, the Lodges, the Lowells, the Cabots, and many more.¹

The Athenaeum patrons were active in other Boston area efforts at cultural or humanitarian uplift. Harvard University, the Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and even the lesser known Hopkins Trust had many

of the same members on their boards of directors. By their interrelationships, they forged a strong intellectual community of humane interest, with the Boston Athenaeum as one of the focal points.

The intellectual and social tradition out of which the Athenaeum emerged formed one aspect of the general ethos of the institution. The work of the librarians formed still another aspect. Their roles grew as the library grew and they both affected it and were affected by it. William Smith Shaw, the first librarian, served from 1807 to 1826 and was primarily a bibliophile. The Athenaeum was his whole life; so much in fact, that he came to bear the nickname "Athenaeum Shaw." He carried the institution through its dark early years and collected donations widely, including large numbers of valuable pamphlets. But his zeal in collecting was not matched by his grasp of organization. By the time of his death in 1826, the records of what he had collected for the Athenaeum and what he had collected for himself had become so confused that a special committee was appointed in order amicably to settle the problem with the executor of his estate.¹

Little is recorded of the second librarian, Dr. Seth Bass. He served from 1826 to 1846 as librarian, and from 1846 to 1847 as assistant librarian. During his term the

¹Quincy, History of the Boston Athenaeum, p. 109. See also the separately paged memoir of Shaw in the same work, especially p. 42.
only early printed catalogs and supplements of the collections were made, but he did not possess the confidence of the trustees. Upon the receipt of the Bromfield gift and in the light of a proposed new building they desired to make a change. Quincy related,

The increase of the capital of the institution, and the prospective annual enlargement of the Library under the operation of the Bromfield fund, as well as the new arrangement of its several departments and the improvement in the administration which would be requisite on a removal to the projected building, made it obvious to the Trustees that some person, specially suited by learning, taste, and judgement, ought to be invited to take the place of Librarian; and Charles Folsom, formerly Librarian of Harvard University, being considered to possess these qualifications, as well as great interest in and acquaintance with such labors, was unanimously chosen, Dr. Bass being now made Assistant Librarian.

Charles Folsom thus succeeded Dr. Bass as librarian in 1846 and served until 1856. His philosophy of librarianship was more thought out and advanced. In a letter to Samuel Atkins Eliot, a close friend and also a proprietor, he described what he thought to be the best approach for a librarian to take towards the Athenaeum.

He began with his understanding of the "public" nature of the library; that is, its openness to enquiring scholars. Together with Harvard, the Athenaeum made Boston into an Athens of intellectual resources. The librarian was to be the custodian of the intellectual treasures. He must

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1 Ibid., p. 170.

2 The letter, dated October 27, 1845, is contained in Theophilus Parsons, "Memoir of Charles Folsom," in Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, XIII (April, 1873), 28-34.
have an appreciation of books as oracles and as works of art, the latter especially with regard to binding and lettering. And he must understand that the library provided a "sanctum" for the perusal of the books. Consequently, the librarian must intelligently frame and courteously enforce the rules for the library's use. This aspect of the Athenaeanum's librarianship, he claimed, had already been adequately accomplished in the past.¹

A second aspect of the librarianship needed to be developed, however. If the library was indeed public, then the librarian must be also a dispenser of its knowledge. By dispenser, Folsom did not mean simply one who found particular volumes or checked them out to the patrons. Rather, the librarian must have "an ability to 'bring forth, out of the treasure' committed to him, 'things new and old'." He must know the general contents of the books themselves "so as to be able readily to follow out subjects, and to put inquirers upon the right track."² He must abridge the labor of the inquirers, both the novices and those of superior mind. He must, in short, be a human index to the collection, a reference librarian in a more disciplined sense than had previously been required. In this way the "public" nature of the library could best be served.

There is a sense, therefore, that with Folsom the Athenaeanum stepped out in a new direction, that of being a

¹Ibid., pp. 29-30. ²Ibid., p. 30.
workable and accessible research collection for a wider audience of scholars than simply those among the proprietors. It was not as if other scholars had not already made use of it. Now, however, such a goal became a conscious part of its program, and more important, a stated aspect of the duties of the librarian. Folsom's views seem to have been accepted as the rationale for a new choice of librarian, and in fact may have been the reason for his candidacy. His views also seem to have informed the general rhetoric of the Athenaeum's renewed emphasis on its "public" self-image of the 1840's, although the concept of "public" was limited to a narrower community of scholarship than the public in general.

Under Folsom's leadership the library grew rapidly in size so that by the time of his retirement in 1856 its collections numbered about 60,000 volumes. His exacting standards in collection-building aimed at purchasing the best scholarly works in a systematic and well-considered manner. When later writers spoke of the golden age of the Athenaeum, that is, the years of its greatest influence in the literary and intellectual community, they especially referred to the mid-nineteenth century years. During his term a special subscription fund was raised to purchase a portion of General Washington's library. An attempt was also made to begin a new catalog of the collection. As early as 1852, the trustees approached Ezra Abbot, then at work on his Cambridge High School library catalog, to make
a catalog for the Athenaeum. In 1854 Abbot was hired as Folsom's assistant, but for unexplained reasons, the project was never accomplished, and perhaps never begun. In 1856 when Folsom resigned, Abbot also resigned, to accept the assistant librarian's post at Harvard College.

William F. Poole became the fourth librarian in 1856. His experience had come in the bustling circulating libraries at Yale and in the Boston Mercantile Library Association where dispensing had included, especially in the latter, a large number of popular novels. Of course, Poole was an accomplished bibliographer and his compilation of an index to periodical literature and of a usable and quickly made printed catalog seemed to be the skills that the Athenaeum needed greatly at that time.

Poole's biographer, William L. Williamson, writes that during Poole's years at the Athenaeum (1856-1868), both the library and the librarian had obvious effects on each other. On the one hand, the Athenaeum tempered Poole's youthful zest for the larger circulation and activity of a general public library by subjecting him to its slower pace and more reserved scholarly atmosphere. It doubtless encouraged his own scholarly bent, an interest that flowered in a series of historiographical writings. On the other hand, Poole, while accepting the change of pace, introduced to the Athenaeum a greater degree of organization than it

1For a concise sketch of Poole's work at the Athenaeum, see Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 24-44.
had previously known. In comparison with Folsom, who was
more concerned with the librarian's scholarly reference
role, Poole was equally concerned with the library's internal
operations. He made a new shelf arrangement almost immedi-
ately. He helped to plan a new much-needed catalog of the
collections. He oversaw building alterations. He increased
the staff and began the use of female personnel, the latter
strongly objected to by Folsom. He helped in the growth of
the collections so that by 1868 another 20,000 volumes had
been added. And he played a major role in gathering Southern
documents during the Civil War years, making the Athenaeum's
collection of Civil War material one of the best, if not the
best, in the nation.

One aspect of Poole's work, the catalog project, was
a failure. Poole outlined the plan for the catalog shortly
after he arrived on the scene, but Charles Russell Lowell,
Jr., a brother of the poet, James Russell Lowell, was engaged
to do the actual work on the project. But the work was not
completed during Poole's term of office, although for one
brief point in 1861 and again in 1866 it seemed ready. Wil-
liamson suggests that the failure to produce the catalog was
caused by several factors, the most important of which was
"the confused and ill-defined administrative organization of
the institution." That is, despite the better organization
that Poole brought, the administrative lines between the

\[1\text{Ibid.}, \\text{p. 33.}\]
librarian and the trustees had not been adequately clarified and that fact had its most immediate effect on completing the catalog. Administratively, the trustees had enough of a voice in the actual operations so that the librarian was not always in control of the situation. It was just that situation that Charles Cutter specified as having to be corrected. In his view the librarian was to have the sole responsibility for assigning work and for operating the library as a single unit. In short, the administrative lines of authority would have to be clarified.¹ Poole resigned early in 1868, although he stayed on during the remainder of the year.

In January 1869 Cutter brought a still different approach to the librarian's post. He had an intense concern for the internal operations of the library with a decided emphasis on scientific principles. That did not mean, however, that Cutter gave any ground in the librarian's reference function. He had already established his credentials as a scholar and bibliographer. His academic work at Harvard College and Divinity School was of a very high quality. He had been active as an indexer, a writer, a translator, and a bibliographical expert, the latter both with George Sabin and in his own book reviewing. Finally, he was accepted in the intellectual and social community through his

¹Letter, Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868, BA.
acquaintance with some of its leading members and his close association with Ezra Abbot.

He had also, however, established his credentials in the area of librarianship. He had been a maker of catalogs and had gained a reputation as an expert in cataloging by his involvement in Abbot's Harvard catalog project. He had gained considerable administrative ability while at Harvard and had had the opportunity to observe the administrative needs of a major library. And he brought with himself exacting standards of accuracy and a growing penchant for professionalizing the work of the librarian. In short, he came as a strong administrator and as an accomplished bibliographer with a strong desire to organize a library in such a complete manner as to achieve its fullest potential.

1869-1873

Charles Cutter's first five years at the Athenaeum were a time of administrative transition for the institution. When the Beacon Street building had been opened in 1849 it was thought to contain enough space for decades of growth. But the Bromfield fund for acquisitions, supplemented with a like amount from the estate of Samuel Appleton in 1853 as well as with other smaller gifts, caused that hope to be short-lived. New book purchases were seriously crowding the shelves within two decades. The overcrowding also put pressure on the Fine Arts Committee for the use of its first floor sculpture display area and the third floor exhibition galleries.
The beginning of a solution was suggested in January 1866 in the report of the Fine Arts Committee. It called for the erection of a separate exhibition building. A year later the Library Committee reiterated the idea, suggesting the use of the Athenaeum's Tremont Place property. The trustees approved the course of action, and in anticipation of it, during 1868 had the sculpture hall fitted with book shelves.¹

The final solution of the space problem took a slightly different course. In November 1869 the Athenaeum received a bequest from the estate of Colonel Timothy Bigelow Lawrence (1826-1869) of an extensive collection of armor and weapons. Lawrence's widow promised to help with the expense of fitting out a display room for them. In response, the trustees voted to form a special committee to pursue the founding of a museum of fine arts. Similar interest shown by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, holder of a collection of architectural casts; by Harvard, whose library had an undisplayed collection of prints bequeathed by Francis Calley Gray (1790-1856); and by the American Social Science Association, interested in the public educational use of sculpture reproductions, converged at the same time. The Museum of Fine Arts was incorporated the following February. By May 1870 land was awarded to the new

¹Whitehill, Museum of Fine Arts, pp. 5-6.
institution by the City of Boston, in the new Back Bay area facing what would eventually become Copley Square.\(^1\)

Although the building did not open to the public until the centennial date of July 4, 1876, its anticipated existence relieved the pressure on the Athenaeum library and caused other changes to take place. Exhibitions held at the Athenaeum during the intervening years were done in the interest of and under the auspices of the new museum. In late 1872 after the destruction of the Lawrence arms collection in the great Boston fire of November 9th (they had been stored in a warehouse in Pearl Street), precautions were taken to protect the Athenaeum against fire hazards. These included placing additional fire extinguishers in the building and running a water line to the top floor.\(^2\) The existence of the Museum also further emphasized the narrowing scope of the Athenaeum's collections. Although the Fine Arts Committee received other gifts of paintings and artifacts to expand their permanent loan collection to the Museum, they turned more explicitly to collecting books on the fine arts and to securing photographs of great works of art. In 1873

\(1\) Ibid., pp. 6-10.

\(2\) Boston Athenaeum, Report of the Standing Committee at the Annual Meeting, January 14, 1873, Records of the Proprietors, MS, BA. Unless otherwise noted the annual reports of the various committees of the trustees of the Athenaeum are contained in the Records of the Proprietors and are in manuscript form. They will be cited hereafter only by title and date. Material taken from the manuscript records of the regular meetings of the Trustees, the Fine Arts Committee, and the Library Committee will be cited as Records of the Trustees, Records of the Library Committee, etc., with the appropriate date of the meetings.
the first mention is made of the purchase of such photographs, an activity that would actively involve Charles Cutter in many of the succeeding years.¹

If, however, the emergence of the Museum of Fine Arts caused changes in the Athenaeum itself, even more so did the new style of leadership that Cutter brought. Whereas Poole had administered the library with something less than close supervision of the employees, Cutter preferred a more tightly knit operation. He sought to establish very quickly his control over the situation. Having a penchant for details and an overwhelming desire for accuracy, he watched his employees closely, requiring of them his own no-nonsense attitude. His method, however, in keeping with his more reserved nature, tended to be less in verbal confrontation than in the indirect writing of orders or in the mien of authority that he presented when he would turn up unexpectedly in a staff situation. A later reminiscence of his manner stated,

Never idle himself, he seemed to sense it when his assistants were not using their time to the best advantage. He did not take them verbally to task about their derelictions, but would leave sharp little notes at their desks, calling attention to the point to be noted. For example, one girl was stamping plates in an illustrated volume. The intervals between the stampings gave evidence of too careful scanning of the plates themselves, so the note which she found at her desk read: "It is not necessary critically to examine each plate before stamping."²

¹Annual Report of the Fine Arts Committee, January 12, 1874.
²"As it Was in the Beginning," p. 238.
Mary Abbie Bean, who had been employed by Poole, left the Athenæum in the summer of 1869 to work at other libraries. Both she and Poole wrote to Charles Evans to obtain for their use samples of Athenæum supplies. But Evans, quite willing to oblige his friends, got into trouble with the new librarian. Perhaps irritated by the resulting depletions, Cutter apparently soon had the employees signing for various items, including door keys.\(^1\) It was perhaps the appearance of sternness that caused the Reverend Frederic H. Kent to remark after Cutter's death that few persons got to know him intimately, an acquaintance with him being difficult to establish. Kent added to his own statement, however, that the appearance was deceiving. Though possessed of a quiet reserve, those who did know him well would agree that not his reserve but his unfailing, gentle courtesy, was the better sign of the warm heart within. His rare refinement of mind and purity of heart, with a delicate sense of humor and quick sympathy, made him a delightful and stimulating companion. . . . He was a man who gave rather than sought sympathy, never esteeming his own cares or pleasures of interest to others. They are not a few who can tell of his discovery of some hidden need, and proffer of service so full of tact and of a delicate friendliness, that it disarmed pride, and made obligation to him a joy. He was, said one of his assistants to me, a man whom it was a pleasure to work with and for; his directions were given with unfailing considerateness, and his appreciation of faithful work was discriminating and generous. . . . His was the deeper spirit of brotherhood which does not dissipate itself in superficial geniality, but gathers intensity and effectiveness through wise conservation for the moment of specific opportunity.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Holley, Charles Evans, p. 24.

\(^{2}\) Frederic Houston Kent, He Served His Own Generation; A Sermon in Memory of Charles Ammi Cutter . . . [Northampton, Massachusetts, 1903?]}
Others spoke of both his quiet but reserved helpfulness and his intense desire to get to the essential matters of the moment. Charles K. Bolton later noted that an account of the Athenaeum during Cutter's administration commended the institution for its "courteous treatment of visitors, the absence of red-tape, and freedom from surveillance." ¹

Although the public and those employees who came to revere Cutter felt comfortable with his reserved and business-like style, those who had worked for William F. Poole understandably felt a tension as the new administrator took over. Mary Bean became piqued by Cutter's ideas and methods. In her letters to Evans she referred to Cutter as "his majesty" and warned her younger friend not to use the Athenaeum's stamps or he would get into trouble. She also asked Evans to defend her and Harriet Ames from what may have been by Cutter a low estimate of their work. ² Evans himself must have gotten along only fairly satisfactorily. With regard to the requirement to sign for items, he wrote to Bean that Cutter was "the king of the goats." ³ His attitude may also have further spurred Poole's own personal feeling of competition with Cutter and the Boston librarians. In attempting to persuade Evans to come to Indianapolis, Poole boasted that his own influence there was "worth 40 Cutters." He warned that to remain in library work in

¹Charles K. Bolton, "The First One Hundred Years of Athenaeum History," in The Athenaeum Centenary, pp. 48-49.
²Holley, Charles Evans, p. 24. ³Ibid.
Massachusetts, Evans,

would be under the shadow of Winsor, Cutter & Abbot, and must do everything as they do it, or you don't understand your business. (I don't do my business in that way. I wish you could see some letters I am writing to Winsor.) Nobody can make a mark in a library in the vicinity of Boston. Fletcher is just far enough away to be independent and to be a man, as he is.¹

Regardless of the reactions to the man and his methods, Cutter himself seems not to have been personally troubled by such ruffles. He always remained very cordial to those who disagreed with him. Under Cutter, Evans continued to receive annual increases in salary, and when Evans finally resigned from the Athenæum to move to the Indianapolis librarianship, the proprietors took up a collection and presented him with a gold watch and chain as a token of esteem for his courteous and faithful service. Many years later Cutter warmly referred to that incident in estimating Evans' worth, in a letter to Poole.² Nevertheless, the style of the new administrator took its toll. My mid-1870 only Evans and William Price, the janitor, remained of the older staff.³

¹Letter, W. F. Poole to Charles Evans, August 4, 1872, University of Illinois Library, Rare Book Room, Evans Papers. William I. Fletcher had worked at the Athenæum from 1861 to 1866 under Poole and was at the time of this letter at the Watkinson Library in Hartford, Connecticut.

²Letter, Cutter to W. F. Poole, May 25, 1892, Newberry Library, Poole Papers.

³In addition to those that left by 1870, Charles R. Lowell, Jr. died suddenly in June 1870. Charles Evans eventually left in 1872 and Price in 1876.
In replacing those who left Cutter assembled a new corps of workers, some of whom, like those under Poole, became librarians in their own right, and many of whom stayed with him for many years. Mary Jane Regan, affectionately known as Minnie, came to the Athenaeum in 1869 and remained in its service until 1916. She soon took over the work of the circulation desk. A contemporary spoke of her and the Athenaeum as closely identified.

I think Miss Regan became part of the Athenaeum as the Athenaeum became part of Miss Regan. But it was a Nineteenth Century Athenaeum, when people had leisure and no art galleries. Many women as well as men came regularly, looking over new books, talked to friends as well as to Miss Regan; it was like a club, a club with order and discipline maintained by Miss Minnie Regan; and very well she did it.  

Emma Leonore Clarke also came in 1869 and continued until 1890, afterwards becoming the librarian of the Framingham Town Library. Sarah Peters Bowker joined the staff in 1872 for four years and later returned for another period in the 1880's. She married Richard Bliss in 1888, the librarian of the Newport, Rhode Island Redwood Library and a close associate of Cutter in the development of the Expansive Classification. As under Poole, it was not unusual to hire close relatives. Augusta Isabella Appleton, Sarah Cutter's sister and a member of the Cutter household, joined the staff in 1872, remaining until 1889. During the same period she did

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bibliographical work for Richard Bowker, compiling the *American Catalogue* volumes that covered the years 1876-1890.\(^1\)

Of course, not everything changed overnight with Cutter's coming. Traditional procedures held sway in some areas, as might be expected. The building of the book collection continued with the same purposiveness and thoroughness that had been established under the administrations of Folsom and Poole. The overall book budget was slightly lower than that of the heyday of the mid-1860's when almost $7,000 a year was being spent apart from binding. During Cutter's first year that total had been reduced to $5,709 and in 1870 it was further lowered to $5,271. But by 1873 expenditures had again passed the $6,000 mark.\(^2\) Even with reduced means, however, Cutter was a part of a very privileged situation. Only the wealthiest of libraries could claim any substantial regular book budget and few could boast of a sum so munificent.

The number of volumes added during the same period varied slightly according to the number of donations.

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\(^1\)Information on Athenaeum staff members is taken from *The Athenaeum Centenary*, pp. 218-21. For Sarah Bowker's marriage to Richard Bliss, see *LJ*, XIII (November, 1888), 353. The work done by Augusta Appleton on the *American Catalogue*, besides being mentioned in the works themselves, was a cause of occasional comments in the correspondence between Cutter and Richard Bowker. In the playful humor that sometimes appeared in his personal letters, Cutter at one time wrote, "If you kill my sister-in-law, I shall sue you for damages." His comment concerned Bowker's overworking her. Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, May 12, 1884, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

\(^2\)Information on expenditures is taken from the *Annual Reports of the Library Committee* for the relevant years.
Donations, however, were not very significant in the total program of a library that could afford to buy what it needed. The library often had copies of the volumes given. As a result, Cutter carried on a significant exchange program with other institutions. In late 1869 he was in communication with Addison Van Name of the Yale University Library concerning 132 volumes of English state papers which he desired to sell or exchange. An 1872 series of letters to Van Name reveals the usual methodology employed. The librarians would exchange duplicates lists and wants lists and send cartons of books to each other on the basis of the lists. Cutter included in his duplicates references to other volumes of special series and inquired of Van Name if he should acquire them for Yale if he happened to run across them. The institutions kept running accounts with each other, keeping value totals of the books exchanged. They rarely settled accounts with money payments. Rather they simply supplied each other with other needed volumes.

Cutter was authorized by the Library Committee to buy books at many of the book auctions taking place during the period. The usual procedure was for a member of the committee to check the sale catalog himself, or to recheck Cutter's own marking of it. The desired items were then checked against the Athenaeum's catalogs to be sure that

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1 Letter, Cutter to Addison Van Name, October 12, 1869, and four letters written August and September, 1872, Yale University Library, Librarians' Correspondence.
they were not already held by the library. Subsequently, either a member of the committee or the librarian would go to the auction to do the bidding. At first the auctions authorized for Cutter seem to have been mainly at the firm of John Leonard then located in Boston in Bromfield Street. On May 9, 1871 Cutter participated in the sale of the noted library of Henry B. Humphrey. Beginning in January 1872 the authorizations to bid at auctions increased dramatically, many of them taking place in New York City at the firms of Bangs & Co. and George A. Leavitt. It would seem to have been a particular delight for Cutter to be able to make an occasional trip to New York, for there he would have had the opportunity to see George Sabin. Sabin had used Cutter's services on the Dictionary of Books Relating to America while Cutter was still at Harvard. During the 1870's Sabin was busy making sale catalogs for the above two firms and occasionally served as the auctioneer at the sales themselves.

There were difficulties in this procedure for buying books, however. There was, of course, an unavoidable control of the procedure by the Library Committee. It was typical of libraries to hold such close reins over their librarians because of the trustees' desire to control the purse strings.

1 Authorizations for Cutter to purchase at book auctions are recorded in the Records of the Library Committee beginning with the entry for November 7, 1870. For a description of the thriving book auction business of that era, see Clarence S. Brigham, "History of Book Auctions in America," in George L. McKay, American Book Auction Catalogues, 1713-1934, A Union List (New York: The New York Public Library, 1937), and especially pp. 12-16, passim, for Sabin's work.
In the case of the Athenaeum it was also because some of the members of the Library Committee were accomplished bibliographers in their own right. Charles Deane, one such member, was an officer of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Another member of the committee, Francis Parkman, was a noted historian. It was not until later years that Cutter gained more freedom to purchase without restriction and at his own discretion. It was as if he had to earn his wings in the matter.

Another difficulty centered in the problem of the library's existing catalogs. There were three such alphabetical sequences to go through, the main slip catalog being compiled by Charles Lowell, Poole's 1866-68 card supplement catalog, and the pamphlet catalog. Cutter used the existence of multiple alphabetical sequences as an argument against any catalog that would require supplements. His reference to that work is descriptive of the procedures involved.

You [the Library Committee] lately put into my hands an auction catalogue--that of W. E. Woodward,--to mark (under Mr. Parkman's supervision) for purchase. It contains a very full collection of town histories, (682 no's.) and it seemed to me desirable to procure everything of that sort which we have not. Now it took two of our young ladies--both quick workers--3 days and a half in all to compare these 682 lots with our catalogues in order to ascertain whether we had or had not the books. And the reason was, that they had to look not only on Mr. Lowell's catalogue, but also on Mr. Poole's supplement and the tract catalogue. In other words two days ($2.66) were wasted simply because our catalogue is not in one alphabet, as every catalogue ought to be. Nor is this by any means a solitary case, though it is an extreme one. The catalogue of A. G. Greene's library, which Mr. Deane marked, gave almost as
much trouble. Since I have been here I have looked over on an average at least one catalogue a week and marked more or less on each.\(^1\)

Other library operations were also carried on with little change. The annual examination and recall of books, necessitating the closing of the library for a period of time during June, was carried on as usual. And the growth of the collections made necessary a constant shifting of the shelves as it had under Poole. In fact, within four months of his arrival, Cutter found it necessary to rearrange eleven alcoves before the annual examination, "the present confusion being unendurable."\(^2\)

With the rearrangements came new shelf lists for each and the need to change the shelf marks in the catalogs, a problem he had been all too familiar with at Harvard. He suggested that leaving open space for new acquisitions was no more than a guessing game. "I left in arranging the alcoves [of the new gallery] nearly half of each shelf vacant. And yet twice within four weeks after they were arranged I was obliged to rearrange shelves which has [sic] been filled up by accessions."\(^3\)

In keeping with Cutter's intense desire to get the situation under his control, however, there were other procedures that he changed. For 1869 the Library Committee

\(^{1}\)C. A. Cutter, "Librarian's Report on the Best Method of Copying Mr. Lowell's Catalogue," April 12, 1869, MS, BA.

\(^{2}\)Ibid. \(^{3}\)Ibid.
could report that, "The Library has continued this year its steady growth in usefulness; indeed it has advanced with uncommon rapidity."\(^1\) Perhaps part of the statement could be attributed to the increased detail by which the statistics were presented, a method introduced by Cutter and continued over the years. Cutter simply began to count more accurately and on a wider scale than had been done before. Circulation increased because of an increase in the number of proprietors using the library and because Cutter had challenged the existing loan period rules. In 1860 under Poole the trustees had authorized that all new books most in demand have their circulation period cut from two weeks to one in order that more people could borrow them. The likelihood that the new rule was not always helpful is suggested by later admonitions that patrons could not reserve the seven day books in advance, and that once such a book was returned it could not be checked out by the same person on the same or the next day. The basic problem was the inflexibility of the rule. Some books could not be conveniently read in a seven day period. And it is likely that it was all too easy to put all new books in that category rather than to show some discrimination on the basis of those that were most likely to be the more heavily used items. Cutter's protest of the "procrustean seven-day rule" was successful and varying loan periods of seven, fourteen, and thirty

\(^1\)Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1870.
days were affixed to different new books.\textsuperscript{1} The new policy resulted in the proprietors checking more books out than previously.

In 1870 Cutter continued his promotion of more open policies. The Library Committee reported,

\begin{quote}
On the representation of the Librarian that a little more could be conceded to the borrowers, the Committee have altered the rules which restricted to one volume the number of "new books" that could be taken out at once, so that a new work in any foreign language may be taken out at the same time with an English new book, and so that two volumes of the same work (and three if it is a novel) may be taken out at once.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

In 1871 Cutter successfully argued the case for a second new English language book being allowed to the same person upon the payment of an extra $4.00 annual subscription rate. The action was tried and continued. Apparently the proprietors approved the changes. The use of the library increased. The number of shares used rose by 16 per cent during Cutter's first year and continued to rise, going from 501 shares in use in 1870 to 683 during 1873. The increase in annual subscription income that resulted was used to buy multiple copies of the heaviest used items.

Increased circulation caused concomitant problems, however. Circulation records had traditionally been kept in a large folio volume, one page to a patron's name. Because there was only one access route to those records, it was not

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1]Ibid. See also Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 7, 1861.
\end{footnotes}
always possible to ascertain whether any particular book was checked out or simply lost. That was one of the reasons that the annual recall of books for examination was made. In 1866 Charles Jewett had introduced at the Boston Public Library the slip system of circulation in which a record of circulation was kept by individual works. In May 1868 Charles Deane reported on that system to the Library Committee, but no action on beginning it at the Athenæum is recorded and it is not known exactly when it was instituted. By 1873, however, Melvil Dewey reported that both the ledger system and the slip system was being used there.¹ To keep a double entry of course entailed more work. The Athenæum did not use accession numbers and each time a book was checked out a new slip had to be made for it including full author and title. But the resultant savings in time during the annual examination began to be felt soon afterward.

Perhaps the most significant change that occurred in the administration of the library was the assumption of the direction of the catalog project by Cutter himself. Four months after beginning his duties Cutter was asked to give a report on how best to get the catalog finished. The record of disappointment on the project stretched back to 1851. In the intervening years the catalog had twice almost been printed, once in 1861 and again in 1866. But there always

¹Melvil Dewey, [Diary], Bk. III, pp. 49-51, February 15, 1873, MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
seemed to be an impediment: either the lack of funds or a lack of assurance on the part of Charles Lowell that the catalog was ready to go to press. Cutter's April 1869 report was entitled, "Librarian's Report on the Best Method of Copying Mr. Lowell's Catalogue," and gave cost estimates for printing, making a slip catalog, or making a card catalog. His own preference was for the latter, but the trustees desired printing, no matter what the cost. The matter was allowed to rest for another year whereupon Cutter gave another report, this time on the necessary steps preliminary to printing the catalog.\(^1\) Cutter was apparently given complete control of the project at that time. The Library Committee minutes stress that Cutter,

expressed himself confident of being able to bring the Catalogue into a state fit to be printed with the force now employed, by the 1st of March 1872. It was understood that the Librarian is to change the employees now engaged upon that work, in case any change shall seem to be desirable.\(^2\)

Whether or not such a course came as a disappointment to Charles Lowell is not known, for Lowell died suddenly in June 1870. With regard to the catalog, Cutter had complete freedom to do with it what he wanted. He was not able, however, to stay within the limits of the "force now employed"

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\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, "Report of the Librarian on Printing the Catalogue," MS, BA. This document is undated, but the projected time schedule included in its pages, as well as the entries in the Records of the Library Committee, establish that it was presented in March 1870.

\(^2\) Records of the Library Committee, March 14, 1870.
and during the next two years the staff increased considerably as Cutter put all of his effort into the work. The overall library budget subsequently began to rise and Cutter began to personally spend more and more extra time on the project.

Despite the heavy demands that the catalog made on his extra time, Cutter still found time for other outside bibliographical work. He continued his indexing work, doing the indexes for one or two individual volumes of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. By 1872 he had completed an even more ambitious project, making a ten-year index of the entire fifth series of the Collections. For that work he received almost $600.¹ The trustees of the Athenaeum were mindful of his outside ventures. They early expressed complete confidence in his work and in 1870 raised his salary to $3,000. In March 1873 they rewarded his diligence in the catalog project with an extra stipend of $500 to be paid yearly.²

1873-1880

With the administration of the library firmly in hand, the next eight years at the Athenaeum were the most significant for Cutter with regard to his own expanding ideals of the way a library should function. His goal was

¹ Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, XII (1871-73), 221.
² Records of the Trustees, January 17, 1870, and March 18, 1873.
to operate the library in such a way that all the various facets fit together in a system based on well-defined principles. Librarianship for him was the disciplined effort to discover and apply those principles; in effect, a profession.

Cutter was not alone in his professional striving. It was a time of far-reaching activity in the field of librarianship as a whole. He participated in the making of the 1876 Special Report, itself produced under the hand of the Commissioner of Education, John Eaton. He participated in the activity that led to the founding of the American Library Association at the national centennial celebration in Philadelphia in 1876. And during the late 1870's he became active in the leadership of the new organization and edited the professional bibliography sections of the Library Journal in its early years.

Indicative of the common front he established and perhaps most significant of all of his professional relationships in the growing library movement was his early friendship with Melvil Dewey. While a student at Amherst College, Dewey developed an interest in library matters. In February 1873 he made a tour of the Harvard College Library, the Boston Public Library, and the Boston Athenaeum. Dewey recorded in his diary that he went to the "beautiful building of the Boston Athenaeum and looked over its library with Mr. C. A. Cutter, the gentlemanly librarian."¹ Cutter, interested in

¹Dewey, [Diary], Bk. III, p. 49 (February 15, 1873).
those who showed interest in how a library operated, explained to Dewey his catalog project and gave the young man a printed sheet from it. Dewey recorded his impressions noting that it was a simplification of Abbot's Harvard card catalog in which, for example, horse, as a subject, was entered under its own name, and not under zoology, the inclusive class.

Other matters also caught Dewey's eye. He noted mechanical features of the card catalog, the beautiful aspects of the reading room, and the exceptional feature of open stack access to the books by the patrons. He described in detail the "charging system" (circulation records) noting with satisfaction that in addition to the older ledger system, Cutter had begun to employ the Boston Public Library's idea of keeping records also by the location number of the book. A drawback of the innovation, however, was that the Athenaeum, unlike the Public Library, did not use an accession number. Such a number, uniquely identifying at least each individual work, would have saved the labor of writing out fully the author, title and imprint information on each location number slip. It was a flaw that Dewey considered "crippling" to the system.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 49-51. Three and a half years later, Cutter and Dewey together examined a new shelf listing system worked out by Miss Annie Godfrey (later, Mrs. Dewey). In his reply to her, Cutter explicitly referred to the great possibilities in using an accession number as a unique identification device. He warmly cautioned her, however, that she ought to consider its ramifications for all parts of the library as a system before adopting it; but, having done so, to forge ahead with its use. Letter, Cutter to Annie
The result of the visit was a personal and professional friendship that was to last for many years. In 1876 Dewey recorded many visits to the older man, obtaining advice on his then novel classification system and working with Cutter as well as with others on the organization of the 1876 conference and on the founding of the *Library Journal*. Even more significant was the relationship of the two men in the organization of a library business. Soon after the beginning of the American Library Association, Dewey desired to set up a company that would supply materials to libraries. He succeeded in founding a business of that nature, at first informally, but finally as a corporation, in 1879. His delay was probably due to his deep involvement in the American Library Association. He had apparently been thinking about it for some time and occasionally recorded observations that spoke of his sense of business markets. For example, as early as his 1873 visit to the Boston libraries, he had noted perceptively that all three of the major libraries had been in the habit of getting their catalog cards "of Amaziah Stowe, 93 Devonshire St."¹ In March 1879 he joined Frederick Jackson in incorporating the Readers and Writers Economy Company, bringing Cutter into it almost at the same time as a member of the board of directors. Accordingly, Cutter used the new company as a library supply company for the Athenaeum. Dewey's account

Godfrey, September 22, 1876, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

¹Dewey, [Diary], Bk. III, p. 50, February 15, 1873.
book is replete with monthly entries for supplies to him. In another way the Athenaeum played an even more significant role. To market such supplies, Dewey needed a place to experiment and an advertisement of use. The Athenaeum provided both. Dewey could refer to the fact that Cutter was using this or that item at the Athenaeum, and Cutter himself was not unwilling to try various products to see how efficient they really were.¹

Cutter's work in the profession and his relationship to Melvil Dewey form the backdrop for this period of his work at the Athenaeum. In the library, however, it was business as usual and perhaps business even more than usual. Funds expended for books and periodicals, after reaching a high of $8,294 for 1874 began a three-year decline, reaching a low of only $3,625 in 1877. The decline was caused directly by increasing expenses for cataloging and library services to patrons, and indirectly by the financial state of the nation following the panic of 1873. Funds went back up to over $6,000 by 1880 and 1881, but not before the decrease had brought about expressions of concern on the part of various proprietors.

Book purchasing itself went on largely as it had in Cutter's first four years. The Library Committee attempted

¹Several untitled documents give the details of the progress of the company, among which the most useful is a summary of the formation of the company with minutes of the directors' meetings. The Athenaeum's dealings with the company are recorded in M. Dewey's manuscript "Account Book," no. 2. All of these documents are in CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
to keep up with current publishing and at the end of 1875
could even claim that all good English books had been pur-
chased promptly, as well as a sizable quantity of French
literature. But that was when expenditures were still
hovering just above $7,000. As the years passed and funds
were spent for other things, the pinch in book purchasing
was felt.  

Careful attention was also paid to sale catalogs
and their auctions. More than fifty authorizations by the
library committee are recorded in the period. While some
of the catalogs were marked by Francis Parkman or others,
Cutter was occasionally directed to buy at his own discre-
tion. Sometimes the sales were of major private collections.
Whether or not Cutter went to all of these is not known, but
he continued to make occasional trips to the auction houses
themselves. The sales he frequented were limited to the
auction houses of Boston and New York City. One exception
occurred when he was authorized to spend £100 for books in
London during the First International Library Conference in
1877.  

1The statistics are gathered from the Annual Reports
of the Library Committee. It is also significant to note
that when special additional funds were received in 1879,
the first suggestion for their use by Cutter was for pur-
chasing more current literature. See his "Report of the
Librarian for 1879," MS, BA, for an extended discussion of
the matter.

2The first recorded instance of Cutter being auth-
orized to buy on his own occurs in Records of the Library
Committee, April 22, 1878. The authorization for the London
purchases was made on August 27, 1877, and may have provided
for the committee substantial confidence in his judgment.
Cutter carried out a constant exchange of duplicates business with other libraries. His correspondence with Samuel Haven and E. M. Barton of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts consisted of a mass of notes regarding lists of books to be exchanged, books wanted, and books for which each librarian was to be on the lookout. They had agreements to buy such desired items and then to exchange them. Cutter's attitude concerning duplicates was concise and businesslike, but not without an occasional hint of its being a necessary evil. After noting the value of a transaction with Van Name of Yale, he concluded, "Please send all and we will send you another list. Send your supplementary list. Let each library get rid of all that it can. Duplicates are dirt,—matter out of place."¹

He was also not without an occasional bit of humor. In a note to E. M. Barton in 1886, he indulged in a doggerel rhyme:

I send Gleason Ballou
For 1852
And as 'tis for you
I'd like to ask 2
But shall have to say 3
Because, don't you see
I paid that to Libbie
As I live
C: A. C.²

¹Letter, Cutter to Addison Van Name, April 19, 1879, Yale University Library, Librarians' Correspondence.

²Letter, Cutter to E. M. Barton, May 26, 1886, American Antiquarian Society, Librarians' Correspondence.
With the Fine Arts Committee of the Athenaeum turning over the major parts of its art collections to the Museum of Fine Arts by 1877, the character of art materials in the library began to change. The Fine Arts Committee began to pay more specific attention to purchasing art reproductions and works on the subject of art. Consequently, the Fine Arts book collection became a busier department, so much so that the Library Committee could report that for 1878 that department, "owing to present interest in art matters," was used more than any other department of the library except perhaps those containing fiction and biography.¹

The Museum of Fine Arts had opened its doors on July 4, 1876. In a sense it was just in time, for regardless of the fluctuations in the expenditures on books, the collections continued to outgrow the shelving available for them. The need for space was a constant frustration to the librarian of any fast-growing library. It necessitated double and triple rows of books in the overcrowded sections. If the books were spread out over a wider area, the changed locations required that the alcove shelf lists be redone. Moving books also required the laborious changing of the shelf location marks in the various catalogs. Nevertheless, occasional decisions were made to provide more shelf space. In May 1873 the Library Committee authorized the removal of some of the Athenaeum's plaster casts in order to provide

¹ Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 13, 1879. See also the Annual Reports of the Fine Arts Committee, 1877-79.
room for additional shelving. A year later they authorized Cutter's proposal of shelving against the columns in the sculpture gallery. But these were only temporary solutions for a collection that was growing on the average of almost 3,000 volumes a year besides pamphlets, engravings, maps, and other materials.

In September 1876, soon after the third floor picture gallery had been emptied of its holdings, Cutter proposed a plan for additional shelving that would have held off any immediate use of the third floor. He thought it inexpedient to make any permanent changes until the success of the addition being built for the Harvard College Library could be seen. The Harvard addition was the first American library to employ an iron stack. Cutter's plan for the Athenaeum was to enclose the north alcoves of the second floor reading room with an iron grating and to construct shelving within the fenced-off area for 30,000 additional volumes. The committee objected, however, that such a plan would deprive the readers of too much space in the reading room and would look very unsightly. In January 1877 the committee presented an alternate plan that called for alcove shelving for the south side of the vacated

1Records of the Library Committee, May 12, 1873, May 11 and 18, 1874.

2Records of the Library Committee, September 18, 1876. See also the Records of the Trustees, February 21, 1876, where it is noted that a communication from the librarian concerning the same problem was read. Unfortunately, the contents of the communication are not known.
third floor. The new shelving was to hold the acquisitions of the next fifteen years. Afterwards, the north side of the floor would be shelved in the same manner for the acquisitions of still another fifteen years. The capacity of the floor based on an annual increase of 3,000 volumes, was estimated to be 104,000 volumes. In March the trustees authorized the changes to be made. By the following October they had been completed at a cost of just under $6,000.

It was an understandable move on the part of the trustees but it was inadequate for two reasons. First, they had no idea that the acquisition of books would dramatically increase after 1881. Second, they had not yet felt the full force of Cutter's own desire for a systematic shelf classification for the total collection. Perhaps Cutter himself did not realize the involvements that such a classification would bring. As early as 1876 he had been toying with the idea of the need for a scientific, general shelf classification system. It came about in conversations with Melvil Dewey in the spring of the year over the latter's new system at Amherst. At the Philadelphia American

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1 Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 8, 1877.

2 Records of the Trustees, October 15, 1877; Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 14, 1878.

3 Dewey, [Diary], Bk. V, various entries for April, 1876. See also, Letter, Cutter to Annie Godfrey, June 28, 1876, in which he states, "If I would [be?] starting a library I should use this system [i.e., Dewey's]; and I intend to try it in our projected extension, designed to hold
Library Association conference in October, he expressed publicly his belief that although a subject catalog was helpful, the books themselves needed to be systematically arranged on the shelves as an additional access route to their subject matter.¹

While the changes were being made on the third floor of the building during 1877, he apparently convinced the Library Committee to hold off any expansion of already crowded shelves into the new area once it was finished, for they reported an action in July in favor of not shifting books but to put only new books in the new location for the present time.² At the London conference in late 1877, Cutter again reiterated his previous stand for the need of a shelf classification in addition to the subject catalog.³ Finally during 1878 he began work on a new system of arranging the Athenaeum's collections. He described some of the features of the notation in the Library Journal in September of that year. The next summer he spelled out the main classes, the general procedures for further subdividing, and the full structure of the notation.⁴

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, I (October, 1876), 105.
²Records of the Library Committee, July 2, 1877.
³London Library Conference Discussion, LJ, II (January/February, 1878), 270

125,000 volumes." CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
of 1879 he further subdivided all the main classes with the exception of Law. He also did a pilot project at the Winchester, Massachusetts Town Library, arranging all of its small collection under the new system in order to determine its workability. ¹

The Library Committee was apparently won over by his logic, for it allowed him to begin some rearranging of the books in the new system as early as 1879. The Committee also allowed him to print at the Athenaeum copies of the new system--probably his 1879 Library Journal article in which he explained the system--for his own use. ² It was a bold new plan which even in its display of the main classes was much advanced over the rudimentary Dewey system so recently introduced. The stir that it brought to the library profession must have given the Athenaeum's leaders a sense of pride that their librarian was becoming so noted for his fundamental work in the field.

The new plan entailed hidden costs, however. It required that classification numbers be put on the spines of

the Boston Athenaeum," LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 234-43. (Hereafter cited as "Classification on the Shelves," (1879)) See also C. A. Cutter, "Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879," MS, BA.

¹Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879."

²Records of the Library Committee, April 1 and June 17, 1879. The fact that he began putting books in the new classification as early as 1879 is implied in statistics he presented in 1884. The article mentioned is "Classification on the Shelves," (1879).
the books. To that end Cutter made extensive use of book labels produced by the Van Everen Company and distributed by the Readers and Writers Economy Company. Even more important, the new system made very obvious the requirement for the use of more shelf space. The older system of shelf marks for fixed locations eventually required more and more space for new acquisitions, but it tended to put off such requirements to future days. The new system required the space from the beginning, but with the benefit of not having to change the call numbers in the catalog when books were shifted. By 1881, however, it became apparent to Cutter that the space allowed in the refurbishing of the third floor would not be enough for the coming years.

Despite the lag in acquisitions during the mid-1870s, the total cost of operating the library rose during the period from 1873 to 1880. The increase came from work on the printed catalog and from a great increase in library services. Both factors led to a substantial increase in the staff. When Poole had left the institution at the end of 1868, the work force had numbered eight and had been at seven or eight for almost all of his thirteen years there. By the beginning of 1872 the work force under Cutter had already risen above ten and by the end of the decade it was

up to almost twenty. It eventually stabilized at approximately twenty persons besides himself during the 1880's.¹

Work on the catalog had been going on seriously since 1857 when Charles Lowell had been hired. From 1860 to 1868 the cost of catalogers had amounted to $15,844. The greater part of that amount had gone to Lowell who was paid at least $1,200 a year after 1864. That was rather expensive cataloging judging from what was paid to Cutter in the same period at Harvard. Of course, Lowell's work was not confined strictly to cataloging. He also performed reference services. When he died suddenly in June 1870 the memorial to him from the trustees stated that he was greatly appreciated for that aspect of his work.²

From 1869 to 1872 the cost of catalogers amounted to $8,518, part of which was paid to Lowell before his death. For those four years, though, the average annual expense of $2,129 was more than $400 higher than the average annual expense of the previous nine years. And for the period 1873

¹"Members of the Staff," in The Athenaeum Centenary, pp. 218-21.

²The memorial described Lowell as "a faithful and devoted friend, who, by his liberal culture, his general information, his knowledge of books, and by his special bibliographical tastes, has been enabled to render important service in the department in which he has been so long employed;--while by his courteous manner, and by his readiness to assist all who approached him seeking information he has largely contributed to render available this increasing library; .. ." Records of the Trustees, November 21, 1870. The information on salary expenses is taken from the list of current expenditures included annually in the Records of the Proprietors.
to 1881 the total cost of catalogers rose to $27,180, or an annual average of more than $3,000. It was not a constant increase. From a high of $3,519 in 1874, the annual cost fell to only $1,802 in the difficult year of 1877. But in 1880 and 1881 in an effort to push the catalog to completion, Cutter hired extra help and the costs for catalogers during those two years alone were $8,617. Even with these high amounts the total cost was considerably less than it would have been if Lowell had lived, for Cutter had been able to hire more persons at lower annual salaries.

The total cost of the printed catalog included more than the cost of catalogers. The amount of time spent by Cutter himself in supervision and in actual cataloging could not in any way be calculated. He was paid an annual salary of $3,000 for all but the year 1869. In addition he was paid an extra annual stipend of $500 for the years 1873 through 1876. In February of 1877 that stipend was withdrawn to cut expenses, but at least a portion of it was re-instated for 1880 and 1881 when Cutter was allowed to work on the catalog at home.¹

Cutter's extra stipend was not calculated in the cost of catalogers. Instead it was included in the printing expenses of the catalog. In 1872 the decision was made to print the catalog in the building and accordingly equipment

¹Records of the Trustees, February 17, 1873; Records of the Library Committee, January 22, 1877, February 16, 1880.
was purchased and a compositor was hired. Cutter's extra work undoubtedly had to do with revisions of the proofs and with a general supervision of the printing, a job he had already had some experience with in his extra work on catalogs while at Harvard. The initial expense for a press and type elevated the cost of printing to $4,620 for the first year. For the next nine years the average annual cost hovered around $2,400, bringing the total for the actual printing to $26,492. In addition, binding expenses, which were not calculated separately from the total binding budget, added even more to the total inasmuch as many copies of the catalog were either given away or sold for half price. The cost of printing the catalog was not all above the normal operation of the library, of course. Even if the catalog had not been printed it would have been necessary to hire catalogers. But the decision by the trustees to print was firm and the institution attempted to bear the cost of it within the income available during the years of its completion. It is therefore understandable why, after four years of the project, the trustees were feeling the pinch for lack of funds.

The second factor in the rise of the cost of operations for the same period lay in Cutter's expansion of services. This entailed changes in circulation rules, changes in the method of keeping circulation records, building

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1 Records of the Library Committee, January 22, 1872. The information on printing expenses is taken from the Records of the Proprietors. It includes $212 for the year 1882.
alterations made to accommodate the circulation changes and
the production of a new style accessions list. Cutter's
overall goal for the library was to increase its service and
its use as much as possible. He claimed after ten years that
the Athenaeum was doing "twice as much for the proprietors
as it was when I first took charge of it."¹ When the Li-
brary Committee was not praising the catalog for the atten-
tion that it was bringing to the Athenaeum, or when it was
not noticing the promptness and good selection of books that
were being made available by the librarian, it took time to
note with some approval that the library was more in use
than ever before.

By Cutter's own calculations, he had increased an-
nual circulation during his first decade by 30,000 volumes.
Considering that the circulation for 1878 was 46,006, that
would put circulation in Poole's last year at only 16,000
or so.² The increases had come in part by changes in the
loan periods made as early as 1869. But Cutter's campaign
for more liberal loan provisions was felt throughout the
decade. He succeeded in getting the variable loan period
extended for all old books as well as for the new ones. He
succeeded in getting the French and German novels which had
been coming into the library in large numbers to be treated

¹Cutter, "Decennial Report of the Librarian, Jan-
uary, 1879."

²Ibid.
like English novels in the assignment of loan periods. He supported the attempt to provide a home delivery service, a device that he admitted would increase circulation but would decrease the actual use of the library building. He succeeded in having fines charged on the basis of individual books rather than on the proprietors' basic privileges. That is, books were to accrue fines at 5¢ per volume per day, rather than, for instance, a flat fee of one dollar at annual examination time if any books were kept out. Eventually this fines structure was extended to all books, and when books were lost the proprietor was charged only enough to replace the volume.

The change in the fines structure probably recommended itself for another reason. With increased circulation it resulted in a greater income from that source. In one instance, however, an innovation for direct extension of

1 Records of the Library Committee, April 1, 1879, April 20, 1880.

2 Records of the Library Committee, June 10, 1879; C. A. Cutter, [Library Delivery Company], Nation, XXIX (July 24, 1879), 60; C. A. Cutter, "A New Plan for Library Delivery," LJ, IV (September/October, 1879), 375-76. The latter includes a circular from the delivery company. It is signed, "C: A. Cutter, Librarian; Neff and Denninger, Proprietors." The delivery company was the work of Oswald J. Neff who had to be bonded for the purpose. It also included the Boston Public Library in its circuit. Actually, Cutter may have felt some misgivings about his concern with circulation statistics. He knew that the loan period had a lot to do with increases. He also reported to the Association, "But we care little for circulation and much for the convenience of our readers." C. A. Cutter, "Communication," LJ, III (April, 1878), 79.

3 Records of the Library Committee, April 28, 1873, February 25, 1874; C. A. Cutter, "Registration and Collection
of privileges that increased revenue was vetoed by the Library Committee. In 1871 Cutter had championed the action that on the payment of an extra assessment of four dollars above the regular assessment of five dollars for the year, a proprietor could check out one additional new book at a time. This practice was followed until December 1873 when the Library Committee abolished it. When a special committee of the proprietors proposed in February 1874 that the regular annual assessment be doubled to ten dollars in order to raise money for printing the catalog, the idea never got out of the Library Committee.¹

Cutter's measure of the use of the library did not reside wholly in circulation figures. He was also concerned about the number of proprietors' shares that were actually being used. The total number of shares in the Athenaeum was 1,049. Theoretically that suggested that there could be 1,049 assessments paid annually and at least 1,049 people using the library on a regular basis, besides members of a proprietor's family, up to two extra friends per share, and others with special privileges. The Library Committee reported for 1869 that shares in use had increased 16 per cent to a total of 501, a substantial increase over one year's time. But that was less than half the total

¹Records of the Library Committee, December 22, 1873, February 25, 1874.
The increased number of shares used did not mean that there was a corresponding increase in proprietors' use. Before Cutter became the librarian it was not unusual for an occasional proprietor to assign the use of his share to someone who was not a proprietor. The non-proprietor would simply pay the annual assessment. Part of the increase in shares used during the early 1870's was really an increase in proprietors' shares assigned to outsiders. By 1875 the Library Committee began to list each category in their annual report. For that year the surprising totals were 674 shares being used, but of those, 175 were non-proprietors. Cutter's own goals were based on the assumption that since there were 1,049 shares in existence, a maximum of 1,049 shares could be in use. Therefore, it would be acceptable to assign them to others if the proprietors were not using them. He also knew that not only did some proprietors not use their shares, but there were a full 200 whose addresses were not even known. In February 1875 Cutter petitioned that those 200 shares be made accessible for him to assign to non-proprietors, but the Library Committee rejected the

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1 Annual Reports of the Library Committee, January 10, 1870, January 12, 1874. The percentages for 1869 are included in the report for the first time and would seem to have originated out of Cutter's concern for such matters.

2 Cutter cautiously hinted at his goal of maximum use several times, but stated it more explicitly in his "Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879."
proposal. In addition, at the end of 1875 the trustees raised the assessment for non-proprietors to ten dollars, reasoning that since these people did not own shares, they were really obtaining privileges at only a small part of what a shareholder had invested. They also raised it for another reason. Whether or not the proprietors liked the idea of so many non-proprietors using the library, they could not deny that increased usage brought in more assessment income. In 1869 that income amounted to $2,585, an increase of 14 per cent over 1868. By 1873 the income had risen to $3,457 and by 1875 to almost $4,000. The annual report of the Library Committee for 1876 states that the increase in assessment income was "an addition which the continued expense of printing the catalogue made very welcome." By 1877 the Committee was listing total shares used and not used in their annual report and in 1878, the high water mark for this approach, the total of shares used for both classes of patrons reached 895.

But the Library Committee continued to resist outright acceptance of the idea of maximum use. In December 1875 Samuel Eliot, a member of the committee, proposed as Cutter had done earlier in the year, that the Library

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1Records of the Library Committee, February 2, 1875; Records of the Trustees, December 20, 1875. See also Records of the Proprietors, January 10, 1876, where the increase was discussed at the annual meeting.

2Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1877. The statistics are also taken from the annual reports of the committee.
Committee formally release the 200 dormant shares for use by non-proprietors. The proposal was again rejected even though the annual report of the Committee a year later—with income up because of raising the assessment rate for non-proprietors—stated, "there are more persons desiring to borrow shares than there are shares to be lent." The reason was most certainly the desire on the part of the trustees and the regular proprietors to preserve the quiet dignity for which the library was known. Even the liberality afforded to the proprietors had been achieved only after many years of tight restrictions. Earlier, upon consideration of a proprietor's request that the annual assessment be abolished and that a larger number of books be allowed to circulate at one time, the trustees expressed the opinion that the Athenaeum was not intended to be a public library of general circulation. Rather, they could state, of their special clientele,

They [the trustees] know of no large library which is thrown open with greater liberality, or which offers greater attractions to the student, the man of letters, or the man of leisure. After careful consideration they do not see that facilities afforded to proprietors can be increased, and they can only hope that the literary treasures in their keeping will be availed of by the proprietors, as liberally as they are afforded by the Athenaeum.²

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¹Records of the Library Committee, December 27, 1875; Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1877.

²Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 4, 1864. The original request is recorded in the Records of the Trustees, January 12, 1863.
That was 1863. The changes subsequently introduced by Cutter met with the approval of the trustees. Yet to open the doors to non-proprietors on the scale that Cutter envisioned would allow a wider class of persons to use the library, many of whom would not have the same affections and commitments for the institution that the proprietors had. The trustees balked at the idea.

With an increase in the use of the reading room came complaints about the regulation of the library. The presence of altogether unauthorized readers became noticeable and suggested that regulation had been lax. In November 1877 Cutter was directed to admit to the Periodical Reading Room only those with tickets furnished by the library and only those with users privileges. Surveillance remained a problem, however.1 Two months later the Library Committee reported,

In the autumn another kind of appropriation of alien property was detected. For some time past various notices have been posted on the door of the Reading Room to the effect that it was "not a public reading room." But it was plain that the notice was disregarded by certain persons. Without any warning a keeper was put at the door; and on the first day 24 persons were stopped in their attempt to intrude into what was in effect a private room which they had been warned not to enter. For several following days five or six per diem were caught, but after all the trespassers had found what was going on the intrusion ceased.2

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1 Records of the Library Committee, November 12, 1877.

After the keeper was withdrawn for a while the 'intruders' began coming in again. In addition someone broke the latch on the door for easier ventilation. It was repaired, broken again, repaired again and broken a third time. The Library Committee could only say in a kind of dignified disgust that "it is unnecessary for them to characterize this act."\(^1\) In Cutter's decennial report he stated hopefully that the abuse had been curbed. But apparently it had not been, and in December 1879 the trustees appointed Henry Cabot Lodge, newly elected that year, a committee of one to draw up new rules for the regulation of the reading room.\(^2\) In January 1880 the trustees recorded,

> that new rules had been drawn for its government, an attendant stationed in the room to enforce their observance and prevent the use of the room by outsiders, that the behaviour of those using the room had improved and that efforts were being now made to improve the lighting.\(^3\) 

Even with the troubles that a busier library brought about, and with the restrictions placed on the use of proprietors' shares by non-proprietors, it is apparent that Cutter continued to do everything possible to maximize the library's use.

> Increased use of the library made it necessary to hire more attendants for the library processes involved. Increased use also prompted Cutter to revise, in the interest

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\(^1\)Ibid.  
\(^2\)Records of the Trustees, December 22, 1879.  
\(^3\)Records of the Trustees, January 19, 1880.
of efficiency, the processes themselves. One of those procedures was the method of charging out books and its record-keeping needs. As early as 1870 he had advised that there was a more efficient way to keep circulation records that would improve their accuracy and make the annual examination easier. By 1873 he had instituted a double entry system using both the traditional ledger to record books on loan, arranged by the patron's name, and slips that were arranged by the shelf number of the book. The shelf number record was useful, of course, for determining if a certain book listed in the alcove shelf list was checked out and for checking the shelves during the annual examination. But the system as it stood in 1873 had inconveniences. One was the necessity to write a new slip for each book each time it was checked out, for when the book was returned the slips were destroyed. A second was the call number itself. The books were located by alcove and shelf, but within a shelf, were not subarranged. Occasionally more specific shelf marks were used, but the practice was not consistent. When books were rearranged the new shelf location had to be recorded in both the alcove shelf list and in the public catalog and shorter marks made that task easier. With so much rewriting, however, it was inevitable that often the shelf lists, and consequently, the circulation slips were written illegibly or inaccurately.¹

¹Dewey, [Diary], Bk. III, February 15, 1873. Cutter referred to the problem of illegibility as having come from slips "scribbled hastily while several borrowers [were]
In December 1878 the Library Committee authorized Cutter's plan for a new approach to the problem. Its first phase was put into operation in early 1879 at the same time that he was beginning to work out his new shelf classification system. He saw the two innovations as integrally related. He first did away with the ledger and began keeping both files on cards. The attendants made out the cards and the patrons were required to sign their names on each of them. He kept the book cards charged to each proprietor behind thin zinc plates labeled with the individual's name and address. By requiring the patrons to sign cards for their books, however, he ruffled a few feathers. Some patrons, who for years had had their books checked out by attendants objected to signing for the same items, as if it were an affront to their dignity. But the Library Committee upheld Cutter in his innovation and perhaps did so because of his compelling argument, that, "The plan introduces for the first time precision into our knowledge of the library." He now knew the location of every book that was waiting to be served." "Report of the Librarian for 1879."

1Records of the Library Committee, December 24, 1878.


3"Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879." See also, Letter, Mary E. Holmes to the Library Committee, January 11, 1879, BA. The letter was written on behalf of several female proprietors and complained that the new regulation would not increase security because "books lost from the Athenaeum are wilfully stolen, not by Proprietors, or Subscribers, but by strangers, who can without restriction, enter the Library and abstract them, with perfect ease, at
either checked out, on the reading table, or in the bindery. If not on the shelf or so recorded, it was lost. He was also able to avoid the problem of people who occasionally claimed no responsibility for certain books that were entered on their ledger sheets. He also considered keeping a file record of books on the shelves. In that way he could have at his fingertips a record of where every book was at any one time. A file record of books on the shelves remained, however, only in his thoughts.¹

The second phase of the new charging system was instituted a year later. He was allowed to put into the backs of the books a pocket with two prepared cards, each ready to be signed by the patrons. During that year he purchased and had inserted more than 100,000 pockets and 200,000 cards.² The effect was startling in its efficiency. No longer was it necessary to close the library for the annual examination. The examiners let attendants show them the records and were able to go through the library in almost no time at all.³

The Committee on the Examination of the Library reported in January 1879 their pleasure with the lessened amount of any hour of the day, if such is their desire." She also added that the regulation was irritating because it caused a longer wait for the books. She closed the letter by expressing the hope that the ladies would "soon be relieved from the operation of this very unpopular measure."

¹Cutter, "Mr. Cutter's Charging System," p. 446.
²C. A. Cutter, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1880]," MS, BA.
³An interesting vignette of the annual examination is contained in Regan, Echoes From the Past, pp. 85-86.
labor. They found that "no diminution of security has attended the change made thus far, and they have no doubt that the proposed improvement will also be of unmixed advantage." They were also pleased at the possibility of keeping better control over books annually "unaccounted for." ¹

Though an innovation such as Cutter's new charging plan might seem unexceptional to the present library world, in a day when the systematic treatment of library problems was in its infancy, it received a good deal of attention in the library world. He reported on it in the Library Journal and three years later when the new approach had become more widely accepted and its origins obscured, Klas Linderfelt could report at the Cincinnati American Library Association meeting,

As regards the origin of my system of charging and recording books, I may say that I am indebted for the groundwork of it to our esteemed colleague, Mr. W. E. Foster, of Providence, although I have lately heard that it really originates, like so many other good things in library work, with Mr. C. A. Cutter.²

Another area of increased costs related to library service in this period was building changes made to accommodate the different approach to the circulation system.

In January 1880 Cutter mentioned that he had been discussing

¹Report of the Committee on Examination for 1878, January 13, 1879.

a plan with various proprietors that would involve moving the delivery room (i.e., the main circulation desk center) downstairs to the main floor.¹ In April 1880 Samuel Eliot, again representing Cutter's innovations, presented the plan to the trustees. The move involved making a circulation center in the periodical reading room located on the west end of the first floor of the building. At that location all registration of books would take place. It was convenient because the room opened into the vestibule and proprietors would not have to climb the enormous Sumner staircase to get the books they wanted, especially the new acquisitions. A book lift and a message lift to the second floor would facilitate the paging of books. The change would also make the main reading room on the second floor quieter and more comfortable and would allow attendants to work later in the winter because gas lighting could be used on the lower floor. Its disadvantages were two, that new books would be away from the main reading room, and that the Periodical Reading Room, used for the annual meeting of the proprietors, would be displaced. The second objection was cared for by moving the annual meeting to the rooms of the American Academy of Science. The first objection was apparently only minor, for the trustees liked the plan and authorized the

¹Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879."
changes immediately. They were made during the following summer at a cost of $1,000.¹

A final factor in increased costs for library service had to do with Cutter's beginning of a new recent acquisitions series. During Poole's administration and through 1871, a list of books recently acquired had been printed regularly. It may have been started in order to provide the proprietors with some sort of list in the wake of the failure to get the catalog printed. The context of Cutter's new series was different. During the early part of 1878 a public controversy raged over the acquisitions policy of the Boston Public Library. The controversy had to do with what sort of fiction, if any, should be placed in that public facility. After Justin Winsor had left the institution in late 1877, increasing pressure had been brought to bear in order to restrict both the purchase and circulation of sensational fiction.²

Cutter entered the fray not only by reporting the arguments in the Library Journal, but by contributing an article to the Boston Daily Advertiser. He wrote that although some of the fiction was not very good for patrons in need of education, still it,

¹Records of the Trustees, March 15 and April 19, 1880; Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1881. Cutter later reported the details of a message lift in "Lift for Call Slips," LJ, XIV (August, 1889), 359. A separate message lift might have been an afterthought. It was not authorized in the original plan.

²Whitehill, Boston Public Library, p. 120.
gives them pleasure; does them at least no harm; and being suited to them, brings them a certain amount of intellectual profit and a kind of moral instruction, and finally, that attracts them to the library, where there is a chance that something better may get hold of them.¹

In stating this 'ladder theory' of moral uplift, Cutter was only reflecting the general attitude of the library profession with respect to the mission of the library. To varying degrees, different libraries attempted to put feet on that attitude by making lists of best books for their patrons. In that spirit Cutter attempted to make a new style accessions list for the patrons of the Athenaeum, not because they so badly needed protection from "mulligan-type"² fiction, but as an opportunity to affect reading habits to an even greater degree. The Library Committee itself supported the list. They reported,

A new bulletin of additions was commenced by the Librarian last September of a kind hitherto unknown in library economy, but promising to be of great assistance to you, because by means of brief notes, partly original, but generally selected from the best critical journals, it calls attention to books, and to some of the more important articles in periodicals which you might otherwise have passed by, gives sufficient indication of the character of many works to enable you to make a selection without coming to the Library when that would be inconvenient, and records when desirable, interesting facts in regard to the authorship or composition or origin or contents of the works mentioned. In


²"Mulligan-type" fiction refers to dime novels and sensational literature. See Whitehill, Boston Public Library, p. 120.
fact it forms, in a small way, a catalogue raisonné of new books and an anthology of contemporary criticism.¹

Cutter had taken a lesson from the earlier acquisitions lists. He considered them barren and uninteresting. With extensive annotations his aim was to be entertaining, "in the hope of making the list attractive and therefore of use."² He was also aware of the example that it provided for the library profession. In the same month that the list began, he laid out examination copies during the International Library Conference in London and explained that the list functioned as a book selection and book reviewing vehicle for other librarians, as an aid to librarians in reference work with patrons, and as a help to the patrons themselves in making up their minds about what books to choose. For the future he had hopes that the list would become an accumulation of best reading.³ In addition, the list got even wider attention when Cutter began to publish it

²"Annual Report of the Librarian for 1881," MS, BA.
³London Library Conference Discussion, LJ, II (January/February, 1878), 278; Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879." The reference function was commended strongly in William E. Foster, "On Aimless Reading and Its Correction," LJ, IV (March, 1879), 79. In an anonymous communication entitled, "Mr. Cutter's Bulletins and the Coming Catalog," LJ, III (September, 1878), 260-61, the contributor stated, "I feel a confidence in ordering books from this Bulletin not equalled in selecting from any other list." Since Melvil Dewey had already authored the widely discussed article, "The Coming Catalogue," and was at that time the editor of the Library Journal, it might be assumed that he was the author of this puff, although it is simply signed, "F".
jointly with the Worcester Public Library in November 1878. In order to do so the Library Committee authorized Cutter to use the Athenaeum's type for both lists as long as the Athenaeum itself would incur no extra expense.¹

Cutter was elated at the success of the venture. He could claim in his decennial report that over one-half of the Athenaeum's borrowers purchased the list at a subscription price of 25¢ per year and that he had received approval of the idea from over one hundred libraries and persons.² He defended it in print when the London Academy magazine, using a single example, suggested that, "some of the annotations are perhaps more piquant than helpful." Cutter replied, "The criticism may be just, but the instance is ill chosen to prove it. It surely is 'helpful' to inform a reader that the book he is going to read is not wholly to be depended upon, because the author's opinions were determined by personal feelings."³ Cutter also made it available to those who requested it, having on hand more than enough copies for wide distribution.

¹Records of the Library Committee, September 23, 1878; "Notes and Queries," LJ, III (July, 1878), 200-01; (November, 1878), 346, where notice is given of the first number of the Worcester list with an explanation of the terms of the cooperative arrangement. In addition, Cutter explained in his "Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879," that he had offered the same arrangement to the Boston Public Library, but they turned him down.

²"Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879."

³[Editorial note on the Academy's criticism of the Boston Athenaeum's List of Additions], LJ, III (April, 1878), 74-75. The Academy's note appeared in its February 16, 1878 issue.
In perhaps only one area did Cutter use the List of Additions apart from its primary purpose. During the spring and summer of 1879 he championed in it the spelling reform measures advocated by Melvil Dewey and the Spelling Reform Association. The latter had been formed as a result of the international convention for the amendment of English orthography held at the centennial celebration in Philadelphia in 1876. Its first president was Francis A. March and the first secretary, Melvil Dewey, who set up its offices in Boston along with those of the Metric Bureau and in 1879 the Readers and Writers Economy Company. Dewey later wrote,

Its membership included those who wished to spell scientifically by using new letters, those who would use digraphs or diacritics to supplement our incomplete alphabet, and those who would omit useless letters and simplify as far as practical without new letters, digraphs, or diacritics; but all were agreed as to the evil and saw the need of a remedy. A campaign of education was carried on in America, England, and in the English speaking countries of the British Empire. The result was to stimulate the natural tendencies to sluff off absurd and illogical letters.\(^1\)

Cutter's interest in the movement most likely came when the Athenaeum, perhaps through Dewey, acquired the first seven bulletins of the Spelling Reform Association in 1879.\(^2\)

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\(^2\)They are listed in, Boston Athenaeum, List of Additions, Second series (No. 24, April 1, 1879), 96. Their having been acquired at that time is consonant with Cutter's
In the April 22, 1879 issue of the *List*, he explained that due to a misunderstanding the printer had substituted the digraph ɲ for the consonants ng. He went on,

I had thought of using it, but not so soon. As the type occurs very frequently, and it would be troublesome to make the many alterations needed to restore ng, I have decided to let it stand, in this number. Readers will find it somewhat disagreeable, no doubt; but some may overlook the strangeness of the character in the interest of the experiment. The type cannot fail to be pleasing to all who care for accuracy of phonic representation.¹

In the next number of the *List* he withdrew the use of the digraph but in succeeding numbers he called for and received letters pro and con on the idea of spelling reform. The Library Committee did not, however, agree with this foray into such a controversial area and in June 1879 ruled that henceforth the *List* was to be done "according to the usual rules of orthography."² Although Cutter had to curtail spelling reform in the *List of Additions*, he did not lose interest in the movement. He reported to Dewey on another occasion that he would attempt to get signatures for one of the latter's spelling reform petitions, but that discouragingly, "Boston is a rocky soil, especially this part of it."³ Later on he could say that school children spent a short involvement in Dewey's commercial ventures.


²Records of the Library Committee, June 10, 1879.

³Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 24, [1883?], CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The letter has no year indicated but is likely from 1883 after Dewey had moved to New York City.
school life "learning the vagaries of an irrational, inconsistent orthography"; and his opinion of spelling reformers led him to say, "May their tribe increase." His own use of simplified spelling was more noticeable in his personal letters than in his publications, but he almost always applied the change in orthography to such words as "catalog" and "alfabet."  

In a sense this period was a time of great triumph for Cutter. His decennial report, written in January 1879, was not only well received by the officers of the Athenaeum, but was recommended for publication by vote of the proprietors. In it Cutter confidently reviewed the changes that had occurred at the institution in the previous ten years. He covered circulation privileges, the charging system, the beginnings of his classification system, and progress on the catalog. He then closed the report with an enthusiastic and predictive peroration:

So much for the past: as to the future, in the next ten years we may expect to see the printing of our catalogue finished, our supplement revised, our list of additions become large enough to be a "manual of best

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1 C. A. Cutter, "Common Sense in Libraries," LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 148; [Note on Linderfelt and Spelling Reform], LJ, VII (May, 1882), 93.

2 Cutter led the way in changing the word, catalog. See Melvil Dewey's comments in "Notes and Queries," LJ, IV (March, 1879), 100, and in Editorial, LJ, IV (May, 1879), 153. In a letter to Dewey concerning the 1883 A.L.A. Condensed Rules for Author and Title Catalog, he added a postscript: "I had noted and altered several things you speak of, but queerly enuf, had left all the catalogues." Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 22, 1883, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Cutter did not, however, use any amended spelling in his Boston Athenaeum reports or in his writing for the Nation.
reading," our stock of book increased by 40,000 well selected volumes, all the books rearranged in a more thorough system of classification and renumbered on a much more convenient plan, every improvement of management introduced which the inventive genius of American librarians discovers, provided it be applicable to our circumstances, our tables constantly surrounded by readers, and, possibly, all our shares used.

The public library has long since surpassed us in the number of volumes. It contains nearly all that we have and much more, and yet in the face of this our rooms are more and more frequented. This is enough to show that we have our place in the literary and educational system of Boston, and that we satisfy a want which no public library can satisfy.1

Cutter was making a strongly self-confident boast. He had good reason for it and the proprietors themselves were becoming aware that their librarian was one of the leaders in the growing library profession. At the same annual meeting the Committee on Examination, after praising his new charging system, continued with their own praise of Cutter's overall work:

The examiners unite in attesting the admirable system and efficiency with which the Library is conducted. While they would accord due credit to the assiduous and worthy corps of assistants, they congratulate the Proprietors on having as their chief agent one so able and devoted to their service, and trust they will join the Committee in the earnest wish that his ten years of

1Cutter, "Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879." Interestingly, three days after the annual meeting, Cutter's report appeared in full in the Boston Daily Advertiser, January 16, 1879, under the title, "Boston Athenaeum; A Review of the Past Decade." Four days after that at the regular meeting of the trustees, the decision was recorded, "It appearing to the board that the report of the Librarian had been printed in full by the daily papers it was thought unnecessary to take steps to print the same in conformity with the vote of the Proprietors." Records of the Trustees, January 20, 1879. Perhaps Cutter was carried away by his enthusiasm. It seems likely that the printing intended by the trustees was to have been more elaborate.
labor and faithfulness for the interests of the Institution may be far extended.¹

The feeling on Cutter's part could only have been heightened when in mid-1879 two sizable bequests were received by the Athenaeum which seemed to open the windows of possibility with regard to what could further be done there. In May 1879 the trustees announced that George Bemis, a proprietor, had left to the Athenaeum a fund of $20,000, the income of which was to be used for the purchase of books, especially in the subject area of international law, and for the equipment and maintenance of the reading room.² It may have been the immediate application of those funds that brought about the realization that the reading room not only needed new equipment, but also a more thorough regulation in order to bring it to the ideal that the fund suggested. Within six months of the receipt of the bequest, a review of reading room policies was made.

The second bequest was received only one month after the first. In June 1879 the will of William Burley Howes, another proprietor and a resident of Beverly, Massachusetts, named the Athenaeum the beneficiary of $150,000 to be used in an unrestricted manner, "for library purposes."³ The

¹Report of the Committee on Examination, January 13, 1879.

²Records of the Trustees, May 19, 1879.

³"Permanent Funds of the Boston Athenaeum, January 1, 1907," in The Athenaeum Centenary, p. 71. The amount of the bequest is listed there as $160,050, a slightly higher total than first was indicated. Perhaps the larger amount came as a result of the final execution of the will.
sum was staggering in its amount and brought to the Athenaeum a heightened recognition of its privileged position. It also brought to Cutter even more acclaim. An unsigned note in the Library Journal read,

Mr. Cutter is to be congratulated on such practical acknowledgement of successful administration as these last bequests, and so wide is the influence of his library as a center of library progress that these benefactions are really of national importance.¹

If he heard Richard Bowker's comment to Melvil Dewey a year later, that "if the government is run as well as the Athenaeum library, I'm afraid there'll be no more occupation for scratchers," he might have been even more pleased for Bowker and Dewey occupied the inner circle of his friendship.²

What to do with the income from the Howes fund occupied the minds of the Library Committee from the start. But it occupied Cutter's mind even more pervasively, and in January 1880 he wrote a second major report that was also presented to the proprietors at the annual meeting. In it he outlined what the seven to seven thousand five hundred dollars of additional annual income might best be used for.

He began the report with a preliminary discussion of the problem of binding. He expressed the opinion that re-binding required because of the heavy use of the books was

¹ LJ, IV (June, 1879), 210.
² Letter, R. R. Bowker to M. Dewey, [undated], CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The letter was most certainly written about the beginning of August 1880, for Bowker mentions having been in London for a month (he went there early in July), and refers to the birth of Cutter's fourth child. Cutter himself wrote to Bowker of that event on July 7, 1880.
an inevitable expense of operating a library. To the extent that it signified active use of the library, this expense was even "to be earnestly desired." However, binding expense caused by the inadequate control of the air in the library was "an unmixed evil." The hot air furnace circulated air that was much too dry and that drew the moisture out of everything in the library, and especially from the book bindings. He related three partial remedies that he had already tried; that is, placing evaporating pans around the library; using buckram as a substitute for leather bindings; and treating deteriorated leather bindings with a mixture of glue and glycerine. He explained that he had learned of the latter remedy at the International Library Conference in London in 1877. In an aside he commended the support of the professional library association and of its publication, the Library Journal. The Journal was at that time going through severe financial difficulties and Cutter felt confident enough of his position at the Athenaeum to state aphoristically that it would be better to buy two subscriptions to the periodical than to allow it to cease.

Referring to the recent bequests, he outlined an extensive program of improvements. He called first for the purchase of more current literature including multiple copies of books if they were warranted by demand. Second, he

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1"Report of the Librarian for 1879." This report was also published as, "The Boston Athenaeum; Its Present Condition . . . ," Boston Daily Advertiser, January 24, 1880. Parts of it were excerpted in "Progress at the Boston Athenaeum," LJ, V (February, 1880), 46-47.
suggested the systematic filling in of gaps in the literary and historical sections of the library's collections. In order to do so, Cutter suggested asking users and subject specialists alike as to what areas were weak and what individual books should be purchased. More important, he suggested that no comprehensive plan of purchasing should be attempted by the Athenæum alone. Rather, all of the special libraries in the area should cooperate in purchasing expensive works, because, he argued, "Our resources . . . are not yet large enough to release us from the necessity of choosing among many desirable works." Furthermore, cooperation should take into account the specialized nature of the individual libraries. He suggested particularly that further involvement in a cooperative purchasing plan already agreed upon in principle at a meeting of the librarians of Boston and vicinity should be pursued. The Athenæum's special areas would be works in the fine arts and travel and scientific works relating to Africa.

In actuality, cooperation between the Athenæum and other libraries and library projects was not new. Besides the issuing of the List of Additions in cooperation with the Worcester Public Library, the Athenæum had already contributed $100 towards Poole's Index to Periodical Literature. And the Athenæum had cooperated in making a union list of serial holdings that included the Harvard College Library,

1 Ibid.
2 Records of the Library Committee, April 1, 1878.
the Boston Public Library, and sixteen other local institutions. ¹ Despite the promise that such cooperation in book purchasing seemed to offer, however, Cutter did not wish to put more faith in the proposal than it deserved. Book selection would still be difficult, and in cooperative book purchasing arrangements, especially for basic works, "each case must be decided on its own merits." ² To show the complexity of the factors involved, he made a formula of the problem:

Expressed mathematically the formula would be,

\[
\frac{a \times b}{c} = x
\]

in which \( a \) = the intrinsic value of the book, \( b \) = the number of persons likely to use it, \( c \) = the cost; or sometimes,

\[
(a \times b) - d = x
\]

in which \( d \) is a function of the other works which we wish to procure. ³

A third area for future expenditures in Cutter's thinking had to do with supplying the library with adequate equipment and promoting efficient administrative procedures. In this category he suggested several improvements in the arrangement and type of equipment and argued for hiring even more assistants so that attention could be paid to more than just arrearages in the regular work. First among his priorities in that respect was the need to press even harder for the completion of the printed catalog.

¹Records of the Library Committee, May 20, 1878. See also the notice of its publication, in LJ, III (December, 1878), 376.

²Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879."

³Ibid.
Cutter argued his administrative philosophy most extensively as the basis for efficient administrative procedures. He conceived of a library as a smoothly working system of arrangements. He was aware, however, that insisting on an extreme version of a systematic approach might arouse anxieties among the proprietors. Therefore, he framed his argument by playing down any insistence on the extreme. First, he fully described his ideal.

The advantages of a complete systematic organization, thoroughly carried out, with all the checks and balances of a nicely adjusted machine, in which all the necessary records can be kept and all the necessary questions answered with the least labor, in which much of the action shall be automatic and in which as many ends as possible shall be accomplished by a single means, need not be insisted on.¹

Next, he related that in the past the Athenaeum had come short of even basic systematic arrangements, but not to its detriment, for it had been a small library and not much used, and did not have much money to do so even if it had wanted to. "Consequently this has never been an ideal library; but by doing what was most important it has been made a very useful institution, even if it was not, regarded as a machine, anything to be proud of."² He continued with his own strong statement of the present need.

But a large library, and especially one largely resorted to, neglects exact system at its peril. Arrangements which work perfectly well when there is plenty of time, break down utterly when there is hurry and pressure... I have therefore from time to time introduced modifications in detail in various departments, but nothing so radical and all pervading a nature, and nothing

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
that will have so extensive an influence in every part of the library work, as the last three reforms, namely the new method of charging, the new notation, and the new classification, the whole intended to work in combination.\footnote{Ibid.}

Cutter then described the progress that had already taken place in those three areas. His rationale for presenting the reforms in this manner was to appeal for some of the Howes legacy to be applied to the further development of each.

Finally, a fourth use that Cutter suggested for the income of the Howes legacy was to give special attention to the housing needs of the collection. He forecast that with increased acquisitions, the available book space would be used up in eight years, rather than fifteen. He suggested that a more efficient solution than the alcove arrangement presently occupying one-half of the third floor would be shelving patterned after Harvard's stack system. Incorporating that idea, he proposed two plans. The first entailed building an iron stack on the north side of the third floor of the present building. The second entailed constructing an entirely new building, built with a central stack, on the Athenaeum's Tremont Street property.

The success of the period was assured for Cutter as the officers of the Athenaeum authorized almost all of his recommendations except the building program. As it was shown earlier, both the second part of the charging system and the relocation of the delivery room were authorized
during the coming months. The classification needed more work, however, and it was not until 1881 that extensive rearrangement of books in the new system got underway. Perhaps most encouraging was the special allocation of $3,500 made for the completion of the catalog. It allowed Cutter to finish the project by the beginning of 1882.1

Activities in Cutter's life apart from the library also reflect the success of the period. His professional activity greatly increased with his intimate involvement in the leadership of the American Library Association. He attended and played a prominent role in the various annual library conferences and in 1877 traveled to the London International Library Conference. His involvement in such activities was apparently looked upon with favor by the trustees for they did not fail to give the leaves of absence necessary for attendance. He was also allowed to travel in May 1878 to the Rush Library of Philadelphia in order to consult with Lloyd P. Smith and others on the needs for a shelf classification there. By mid-1880 he was advising Frederic Leypoldt concerning the near demise of the Library Journal, an involvement that led to his assumption of the full editorship in 1881. He had already been editing its bibliography feature since its inception in 1876, a task for which he received regular remuneration.2

1The results of the authorizations were briefly reported in his, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]," presented in February, 1882.

2Leaves of absence are regularly recorded in the
Cutter also participated in various amateur theatricals that his wife directed in the local town of Winchester, and he pursued his love of French culture and literature by holding an occasional French reading class in his home. In July 1880 his wife bore him yet another son, of whom he could jokingly say to his friend, Richard Bowker, "It's a boy,--a ten-pounder; and now as I can control four votes, I'm going to lay the pipes to run for governor or president." He also added, "Mrs. C. will be running her theatre next fall, and will cast you if you will return." 

Records of the Library Committee. For the London and New York conferences of 1877 he was granted six weeks. Winsor reported at New York that some of the Boston Athenaeum's directors were pleased that Cutter should attend both conferences. Winsor continued, "I think that class of people in Boston is heartily interested in the work of our Association." A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, II (September, 1877), 36. Cf. also a bon voyage note quoted from the Boston Traveller in LJ, II (October, 1877), 83. The authorization for the Philadelphia trip is recorded in, Records of the Library Committee, May 13, 1878, and reported in "Bibliography," LJ, III (August, 1878), 233, with a notice of the resulting report. Remuneration for Cutter's work on the Library Journal came from Leypoldt through Dewey, the editor, and is recorded in Dewey's "Account Book," No. 2. See also, Letter, F. Leypoldt to R. R. Bowker, August 11, 1880, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

1Cutter moved his household to Winchester sometime during the 1870's but the date is uncertain. The fact that he acted in amateur theatricals was noted in "General Notes," LJ, I (March, 1877), 270, and III (March, 1878), 32. He made those performances as a member of the Good Will Club. In April 1879 he portrayed the character, Rodomont Rollingstone, in a performance of "Nine Points of the Law" presented by the Back Log Club. See Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, September 22, [1880?], in which an old program is included. For the French reading class, see Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, April 18, 1878, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

2Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, July 7, 1880, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
In perhaps only one area was there reason for disappointment and that had to do with the Readers and Writers Economy Company. The company had been incorporated in March 1879 by Frederick Jackson and Melvil Dewey. Jackson, who had supplied the working capital, moved to St. Paul, Minnesota for reasons of health during the following summer. Dewey signed a note payable to Jackson the following year. To have sufficient working capital, Dewey issued some of his own shares to others for cash on demand, but in so doing had to institute corporation meetings. At the first meeting of the stockholders on December 10, 1879, Dewey was elected both president and treasurer. On January 28, 1880, a special meeting of the board of directors voted to establish a special office of associate director. They elected four members for the office, one of whom was "Vice-president Cutter." During the remainder of the winter and the spring the directors met regularly carrying on the business of the company, including decisions to establish a factory, branch offices, and stock subscriptions in order to finance the expansions. Cutter's own part in the company eventually rose from twenty shares to one hundred shares, a total investment on his part of $1,150.

1 [Untitled Documents Relating to the Readers and Writers Economy Company], MSS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. These include legal papers, the minutes of the director's meetings, and materials in Dewey's handwriting relating to the formation of the company and the legal dispute that developed.

2 Ibid.
In May 1880, however, some agitation arose over Dewey's dual role as both president and treasurer, and also over what some of the stockholders felt were his obscure accounting practices. Dewey resigned as treasurer, but the seeds of discontent remained. By the fall a move on the part of the stockholders, Edward Wigglesworth and Herbert Coolidge, led to a special meeting in which it was voted to submit all of the company's records to an attorney in order to bring Dewey to court on charges of mismanagement. The move seemed designed to wrest control of the company away from Dewey. For some unknown reason, Cutter was persuaded to sign his name to the summons that brought Dewey to court. But Cutter, perhaps dissatisfied with the machinations of the whole affair, resigned his vice-presidential position on October 12, 1880, the day after the judicial summons was served.¹

The matter was settled out of court early in 1881 in terms not wholly unfavorable to Dewey. Nevertheless, he felt himself to have been robbed of a company worth $50,000 in business and good will. The situation had caused him intense personal anxiety and hurt. He stated, in a letter to Bowker before the settlement had been made,

This thing turned out 10 times as bad as I feared when I wrote you. There was a deliberate conspiracy whose success depended on making me out a thief;

¹Ibid. Dewey noted in his reply to the summons that Cutter had been "induced to sign the bill at the last moment without knowing anything about it." That is, he signed without knowing the intentions of the other two plaintiffs.
embezzler., and the work of defamation was most artfully done. Cutter had no hand in this but you can judge what men I have been dealing with that would circulate such stories when they had every book and paper in their own hands to prove them utterly false.

Six months later he expressed his concern over Cutter's personal loss in the debacle.

The toughest thing about the Ec. co. is that they will swindle poor Cutter, who is as nice as he can be, and innocent of all the rascality that had been and is going on. They got him to pay in $1,250 more making $2,500 in all and I fear will make it a dead loss to him.

I did all I could to save him but he says good naturedly, let it go, and we avoid the subject carefully when we meet, lunch, etc. Nothing is ever said to indicate that there was an Ec. co. 2

Cutter's loss was in actuality more than financial.

One of the projected ventures of the company was to have been the publication of his new classification for the Boston Athenaeum. Dewey himself apparently received from the settlement a portion of the library supply part of the business. 3

Almost immediately he established himself in a new business a few doors down Hawley Street from the old address. His decision to do so, however, brought a strong word from Cutter.

1 Letter, M. Dewey to R. R. Bowker, January 1, 1881, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

2 Letter, M. Dewey to R. R. Bowker, June 6, 1881, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

3 A hand-drawn title-page of the projected publication reads, "Melvil Dewey's 35 Character Notation applied to Book Classification, by C. A. Cutter, with an enlarged edition of Dewey Index. Boston: Economy Company, 1879." MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. A notice of the possibility of the publication was given in "Bibliography," LJ, IV (March, 1879), 98. It is not certain whether Cutter's financial loss occurred in the settlement or in the subsequent demise of the original company.
Dear Dewey,

Having relected upon the question which you asked me yesterday, but not having seen or heard from any member of the E. Co., I have come to a decided opinion and I now tell it to you, as you requested, frankly. I think that establishing yourself in Hawley St. is both inexpedient for you and unfair towards the Company;--inexpedient for you because it strengthens a suspicion of intended rivalry to the Company which the past has done too much to arouse and which you should desire to lessen;--unfair towards the Company because it must inevitably tend to the rebuilding in your hands of part of a business which you sold entire to the Company in the settlement.\(^1\)

Regardless of Cutter's admonitions, Dewey went ahead and set up his rival company, organized under the name of the Library Bureau. In January 1882 he succeeded in buying all of the remaining goods of the Economy Company, the latter becoming defunct.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 25, [1881], CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Although the year is not given in the date, it is established by the events in question and a postscript about the Washington American Library Association conference which was held February 9-12, 1881.

\(^2\)"Specialties of the Former Readers & Writers Economy Company," [Pamphlet], CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
CHAPTER IV

THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM: 1881-1893

While the first half of Cutter's term at the Athenaeum had been an almost total personal and professional triumph, the second half had conflicting themes. On the one hand there was a continuation for at least a portion of this period of those objectives and measures that had highlighted his success. On the other hand his administrative measures came into conflict with the Athenaeum's leadership and led to his decision to leave the institution in 1893.

Continued Progress

The most immediate effect of the Howes legacy was the completion of the printed catalog ahead of its plodding schedule. The Library Committee argued that increased funding would allow the catalog to be completed in two and a half years instead of the projected five and would be less expensive given a steady inflation in costs. The trustees authorized the increased expenditures including the addition of extra members to the work force and the allowance that Cutter would do a portion of the work at home. They also approved the Library Committee's appointment of Francis Parkman and Howard Stockton of the committee to oversee the expenditure of the extra funds. The result was to print
twice as much per year of the catalog as had been done in the previous eight years (that is, between fifty and sixty quarto sheets per year for 1880 and 1881) and to finish all work on the catalog by January 1882.  

The largest expansion of the Athenaeum's program during the 1880's was in building the collection. The Howes legacy made possible the purchase of more current literature. It also enabled the library to begin filling gaps in the collection as recommended by Cutter in his 1879 annual report. The total number of books rose from 121,136 volumes at the end of 1880 to 177,228 volumes at the end of 1892, an increase of more than 56,000 volumes. The average number of volumes per year (4,674) does not give a true picture of the acquisition pattern. The years of heaviest purchases were from 1882 to the end of 1887 when nearly 6,000 volumes a year were added. For 1881 and from 1888 to 1892 the average was held to the more normal 3,382 volumes a year. By the end of 1881 it was noted by the Library Committee that an unusually high number of new volumes was being bought and during 1882 the total volumes added for the year reached 6,400.  

The Library Committee was strongly committed to expanding the collections. In January 1881, after the catalog had been cared for and the delivery room relocated, the

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1 Records of the Trustees, February 16, 1880, December 20, 1880, and December 19, 1881.

2 Statistics are taken from the annual reports of the Library Committee.
trustees authorized increased expenditures for acquisitions. ¹ In using the increased funds, the Committee gave Cutter unusual freedom. He was authorized to negotiate with both foreign and domestic booksellers to supply current literature regularly, even weekly. In March 1882 the Library Committee authorized him to buy New England town histories without restriction, "using the word in a very broad sense."² One month later the directive on town histories was extended to cover American history generally. At the end of the year the Committee reported that though a considerable number of the books added in that area were of little literary value, their addition to the collection filled in gaps and consequently provided the Athenaeum with a valuable basic reference collection. In January 1884 the Committee reported that for 1883 over one thousand volumes had been added in history alone, especially in Americana, noting that such purchases were not in the rare books category.³

Literature was also collected. Almost all worthwhile English language fiction was purchased and a special effort was made to purchase fiction in other languages,


²Records of the Library Committee, March 21, 1882. See also the entry for January 3, 1882, for Cutter's arrangements with Clarke, the bookseller.

³Records of the Library Committee, April 4, 1882; Annual Reports of the Library Committee, February 13, 1882 and February 11, 1884.
notably French and German. Saintsbury's *History of French Literature* was used as a guide and everything listed in it was sought out. Recognizing that not all literature was of the best taste, the Committee made some restrictions, especially in the French language materials. For other materials Cutter was authorized to sell or exchange books that he would consider "unworthy to put into our Library." In January 1884 Cutter was authorized to buy all editions of New England authors such as Bryant, Emerson, Holmes, Longfellow, and others, in an effort to have complete collections of their works. By 1907 these volumes had become of such importance to merit them being considered a special collection.

Books were not the only type of material vigorously pursued. Newspapers were also included in the expansion. Working on a solid base built by previous librarians, by 1886 the Library Committee reported that only the Library of Congress had a better or more complete collection. The Fine Arts Committee also pursued a vigorous program of purchases, although funded separately and not connected directly to the Howes funds. Following their earlier decision to collect

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1 Records of the Library Committee, November 22, 1886. For general directives on literature, see Annual Report of the Library Committee, February 12, 1883 and February 11, 1884.


3 Annual Report of the Library Committee, February 8, 1886. Cf. also the one of February 11, 1884.
photographs of famous paintings, the collection was expanded to include photographs of all kinds of works of art. Ordering mainly through the Adolph Braun company in Europe, they purchased between 1885 and 1889 alone over 3,800 separate photographs costing more than $7,600. More often than not, the sets of views were ordered as the collections of particular famous European galleries. In addition the Fine Arts Committee made a special effort to collect extensively works on art and on art teaching. In all of the purchasing Cutter was involved in carrying out the negotiations.¹

The unusual freedom given Cutter to purchase at book auctions expedited the acquisition of books. During the earlier period the Library Committee had gradually allowed the librarian to buy at his own discretion. With the general book selection directives given in history and literature, he was allowed almost complete freedom. Often directed to buy at his own discretion, beginning in September 1882 he was given the authorization to buy at several sales without limit.² In fact, the notes in the Library Committee minutes in this period are in some places occupied with nothing but this sort of authorization and suggest that the need to make individual authorizations had become a pro forma matter. In

¹See the Annual Reports of the Fine Arts Committee for the years mentioned. See also Records of the Fine Arts Committee and various items of correspondence between Cutter and the Adolph Braun Company for the same period, BA.

²Records of the Library Committee, September 19, October 3, and November 21, 1882.
March 1883 the minutes stated, "The librarian was authorized to make purchases at several auctions, and his course in sending bids on a catalogue received too late to be submitted to the committee at the last meeting was approved of, and the same action authorized in similar cases."1

Occasionally, of course, he went to the auctions themselves. With regard to the sizable Murphy sale of Americana at Leavitts on March 3, 1884, Cutter wrote to Melvil Dewey, then in New York City,

I shall be in N Y Monday morning, and will see you at the library [i.e., Columbia University]. The sale is afternoon and evg. so that I shall have mornings to talk A.L.A. catalog, if (as is possible) you have any words at command and (this is more doubtful), any time. If you buy at the Murphy sale let me take your bids.2

Upon apparently receiving Dewey's invitation to stay with him, Cutter wrote again,

On reflection I think I'll go to my usual gite, the Ewing House, I believe. It is so near the auction room, it will be some advantage as the sessions will last till 10. I should not like to keep you up waiting for me. Otherwise I would accept your kind invitation.3

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1Records of the Library Committee, March 6, 1883.

2Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 27, 1884, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The 434 page catalog of 3,227 lots of the Henry Cruse Murphy library is listed in McKay, American Book Auction Catalogues, p. 177. The Athenæum's Library Committee authorized $2,000 to be spent at the discretion of Charles Deane and Francis Parkman, but apparently it was Cutter who went to the sale. Cf. [Murphy Book Sale], Nation, XXXVIII (January 31, 1884), 99-100, for a survey of the sale catalog. The article was most likely written by Cutter.

In addition to the extensive purchasing at auctions, Cutter also continued his heavy exchange program, especially with the American Antiquarian Society. The Library Committee's approval was manifest. In their 1884 annual report they noted that the exchange of duplicates was being "vigorously pushed." With the great increase in acquisitions the Library Committee was inundated with work. In order to pursue their usual procedure of approval of purchases they resorted to having Cutter read to them at the next regular meeting the lists of books he had bought during the interim. ¹

In other areas of the library's administration, Cutter kept equally busy. He saw to it that the regular processing of books was cared for. After being cataloged and classified, new books were put in a special non-circulating display section in the delivery room for a week. Next they were stamped with circulation periods individually determined and put in the new book section for six months. Only afterwards were they sent to the regular shelves. The catalog cards were printed on the Athenaeum's own press and were filed daily. One copy was set aside for the List of Additions which was published every third week. For the list Cutter used one assistant for its general oversight and another to index it. The index to the list came out annually in the last yearly number. It is probable that he

himself did the major part of selecting or at least of approving the annotations. In addition to the above procedures, the Athenaeum carried on a special program of reserving and notifying patrons of new books purchased.\textsuperscript{1} Whether or not, however, the book delivery service was continued is not known. No specific mention is made of it beyond the notice of its inception in 1879.

The multiple copies of current periodicals were put in temporary coverings and were circulated on three-day loans, one at a time. Fines constituted somewhat of a problem. Because so many members sent for the books they wanted from the List of Additions and did not come into the library themselves, fines were accumulated. Once a year they were assessed with the threat that library privileges would be suspended if they were not paid. The same threat was imposed upon those who did not pay their annual subscription fee promptly. Rare books and specially illustrated books were kept in a special room and were to be used only in the library. Like newspapers they were used under the surveillance of a library attendant, probably one of the few cases of superintendence.\textsuperscript{2} A map collection was organized. The maps were placed in portfolios and arranged geographically

\textsuperscript{1}C. A. Cutter, "How we Treat New Books . . . Boston Athenaeum," LJ, XIV (July, 1889), 305; Kate Sanborn and Emma L. Clarke, "How we Reserve Books . . . Boston Athenaeum," LJ, XIV (October, 1889), 402-03; C. A. Cutter, [Listing of the Work Force, February 21, 1883], MS, BA.

according to the geographical list of the regular library shelf classification. Each map was given a classification number, a place number, a "Cutter" number, a date, and sometimes an author designation. A special card index was also developed for the photographs, engravings, and other non-print materials.¹

Pamphlets also received special treatment. When Cutter came to the Athenaeum he inherited a large collection of pamphlets bound by size. For instance, quarto sized pamphlets were kept in series "A", volumes 1, 2, 3, etc., octavos in series "B" and so on. Because they did not fit into the regular classification they were kept in a special location and access to them was gained only in the catalog and, before Cutter included them in the printed catalog, only by author and title. By the end of 1875 the bound pamphlets alone amounted to 34,320 individual items within the bound series. But bound pamphlets were the small part of the pamphlet collection. At the same time it was estimated that the library contained 50,000 others that were unbound, and each year more were added. From 1876 to the end of 1880 the annual reports of the Library Committee

¹ C. A. Cutter, "How we Keep Unbound Maps . . . Boston Athenaeum," LJ, XVI (March, 1891), 72. The index was kept in six catalog drawers and by 1889 included references to between five and ten thousand separate items. See C. A. Cutter in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XIII (September/October, 1888), 313-14; R. R. Bowker, "Report on Index to Portraits, etc.," LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 175.
indicate that 5,955 pamphlets were added apart from duplicates. From 1881 to 1892 the total number of pamphlets added was 18,662.  

As early as 1876 in his first paper before the American Library Association, Cutter described the collecting of pamphlets as involving both a problem of bulk and a problem of preservation. Pamphlets were often a part of the historically significant materials that libraries should collect. Reflecting the sentiments of John Langdon Sibley, Cutter concluded that they could not be neglected because the librarian was a collector of the literature of a people, and pamphlets, among other things, would be most certainly needed for research. But, they included much of an ephemeral nature; they were difficult to store—they would not stand up by themselves, open pamphlet boxes collected dust, and closed boxes took a lot of time to work with—and no one really had the time to catalog them anyway. Yet, the libraries of the nation could not rightly neglect them. His solution for the overall problem of their enormous number was for all libraries to collect them systematically dividing the labor. The rules for collecting would be, 

Like to like: local pamphlets to local libraries, professional or scientific pamphlets to special libraries, miscellaneous and all sorts of pamphlets to the larger libraries.

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1 Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1876; A.I.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, 1 (October, 1876), 103.


3 Ibid., p. 53.
And for the whole problem of an increasing explosion of print,

I would therefore have our library system composed, first, of a collection of books in every town, small perhaps, but exceedingly active in circulation because chosen for that express end . . ., and secondly, of libraries in our cities or at colleges, well endowed, capable of doing all that the others can do in a greater degree, and serving as safe depositories where the entire literature of this generation can be carried on to the next.¹

For the problem of their actual preservation in any one library, Cutter also had definite ideas. In the discussion occasioned by his above quoted paper, William F. Poole described the practice of binding by size done by him at the Athenaeum during earlier years. Cutter, already having declined to describe the practice, spoke up in disagreement. Too many subjects were included in any one volume and, because the pamphlets were not in an ordered subject sequence, they had to be kept in a section by themselves. It seems obvious that Cutter was troubled not so much by grouping the pamphlets by size, but rather by the lack of subject access, taking into account what indexing had been available. He had consequently begun a new series "E", classed by subjects and inserted in the regular sequence of books. He would collect pamphlets at various locations in boxes until enough accumulated for classification and binding.²

By the mid-1880's the swollen number of pamphlets caused him to seek a compromise plan. He already had the

¹Ibid., p. 54.
²A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, 1 October, 1876), 103-04.
bound series. He also kept up with the practice of collecting pamphlets in various locations in the regular classification, binding them together when enough accumulated. But he limited such collecting and binding to "newer" pamphlets. For other unbound but older pamphlets he instituted a third series. These he arranged by subject in a mini-classification that paralleled the regular classification. In addition, for those pamphlets that he kept in holders in the regular stacks, he reported that he was devising a new kind of pamphlet box that would operate like a cabinet. His compromise for the third series seemed justifiable to him inasmuch as the mini-classification was based on the 'scientific' classification that he had so recently introduced into the library.¹

In countless other areas Cutter tried new technical approaches to the problems of a large and rapidly growing library. He experimented with such things as book supports, color-coded book cards and helpful techniques for the card catalog, the latter including varnishing the metal card dividers for their preservation.² He expedited the binding


needs of the library by renting a room in the building to a commercial binder. It was an advantage to the binder because the rent was cheap, the insurance rate low, and he had at least one sizable account for regular work. It was an advantage to the Athenaeum because by agreement its own binding needs came first, regular books on a one month schedule and special rushes to be treated in three days.¹

Cutter also championed and won his case for the introduction of the electric light into the building. As early as the original meeting of the American Library Association in 1876 he brought up in discussion the problem of disintegrating bindings due to "hot, impure air collecting in the upper part of an ill-ventilated room."² He surmised that if gas lighting contributed to the problem, perhaps electric lighting would lessen it. As a source for his comment he referred to a recent issue of the Scientific American that described the invention.

American librarians were apparently slow to accept the challenge. An article in the April 1879 Library Journal reported that the British Museum had recently introduced electric lighting in their reading room and was now staying open at night. It was not until 1882, however, that even Cutter began to pursue the idea in earnest. He editorialized on the subject in the Library Journal. Reporting on

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVI (Conference No., 1891), C83-84.

²A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, I (October, 1876), 124.
improvements in the device since it was first spoken of
"at our convention in Philadelphia," and also on the prom-
ises of Edison and the panic of the gas companies, he com-
pared electric lights with gas lights and found the electric
lights far superior. He went on to advise, "It behooves
library committees to be on the lookout and to prepare
themselves to make their choice before long."  

At the same time he was not silent before his own
library committee. In his annual report for 1881 delivered
in February 1882 he reported at length:

The electrical light is rapidly attaining such ex-
cellence that we may bear it in mind as a possible sub-
itute for our dim, flickering, heating, and expensive
gas. A light which requires no appreciable quantity of
oxigen and does not raise the temperature of a reading
room, which therefore does not boil the brains and starve
the lungs of those who use it;--such a light librarians
and those who frequent evening reading-rooms have always
wished for and now see some prospect of obtaining. It
is true there are some drawbacks. The arc lights are
still unsteady, but the flickering has been wonderfully
reduced by late improvements, till it is less than that
of gas. The incandescent lights are neither flickering
nor dazzling. There is also the danger of fire and the
danger of death. But both of these can be entirely
prevented by proper precautions and by care. One would
think from the tone in which these perils are sometimes
urged that there had never been any gas explosions.2

In a summary of his Athenaeum annual report in the Library
Journal in April 1882, Cutter simply condensed his essay
into one concise sentence: "The librarian recommends the use
of incandescent electric lights in the reading-room."3

1Editorial, LJ, VII (March, 1882), 43. It was Cutter,
of course, who had brought the subject up in 1876.
2Cutter, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]."
3[Summary of "Annual Report of the Librarian (of the
Boston Athenaeum) for 1881"], LJ, VII (April, 1882), 64.
The trustees did not immediately take his overtures on the subject to heart. It was not until November 1885 that the need for additional lighting was mentioned. But in 1886 after considerable discussion the lights were ordered along with a "Johnson heat regulator." Cutter reported the success of the venture the following year and unapologetically noted the thirty-two per cent increase in the total gas and lighting bill. It was allowable inasmuch as the lighting was much better, more area was lit up, and the building's inconsistent heating was at last under control.¹

In another area Cutter also continued the pattern of his success from the previous period. He continued and even expanded his program of interlibrary cooperation. At the beginning of the period such cooperation took the form of a continuation of the support of indexing arrangements. When the Library Committee voted to support the cooperative work on Poole's Index to Periodical Literature, they put the administration of the special funds in Cutter's hands. He used at least part of the money to hire "Mrs. Dui" (that is, Annie Godfrey Dewey) to index thirty-three volumes of the Monthly Review for the cooperative work. He also used some of his own staff for the effort which amounted to a total of 166 volumes in five periodicals. After the Index was finally completed in December 1881, the Library Committee noted in a satisfied way that the Athenaeum had cooperated.

¹Records of the Trustees, November 16, 1885 and March 15, 1886; C. A. Cutter, "Practical Notes," LJ, XII (May, 1887), 206.
with fifty other libraries in the project and that it would become more useful than any other item in the library except its own catalog. It was an ongoing project, however, and the Library Committee approved of Cutter's continued participation, although with no further special appropriations.

Cutter also cooperated in a project sponsored by the English Index Society. In 1880 that society had proposed a universal index and Cutter promised to help with it. The following February Cutter reported at the Washington, D.C. American Library Association conference for the Cooperation Committee that plans for a union list of obituaries were formulated and Cutter himself would be responsible for indexing the Proceedings of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, and "odds and ends."


2Records of the Library Committee, January 9, 1883; Poole, Index to Periodical Literature, The First Supplement from Jan. 1, 1882 to Jan. 1, 1887, pp. vi-ix, and The Second Supplement from Jan. 1, 1887 to Jan. 1, 1892, pp. vi-ix, where Cutter is listed as having been responsible for 33 and 46 volumes, respectively. See also C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, VIII (March/April, 1883), 47, where Cutter is listed as one of seventeen indexers for the first supplement.

Other projects were also approved by the Athenaeum's officers. In December 1882 the Library Committee appropriated up to fifteen dollars for a new edition of the union list of periodicals first issued in 1878. They also voted to subscribe to the American Library Association's Publishing Section in 1887. And the library carried on an active interlibrary loan program that at one point had books out to forty-one different libraries, the furthest being in Poughkeepsie.¹

Two other projects were perhaps even more significant. The List of Additions had begun in 1878 and in 1879 the Worcester Public Library had joined the Athenaeum in a joint operation. In 1880 the Buffalo Young Men's Association reported that it too had joined.

By a co-operative arrangement between the Athenaeum, the public library of Worcester, Mass., and ourselves, these lists have, since that time, been made up in common by the three libraries, so far as practicable, using the same notes and the same type, to the extent that the purchases coincide. The lists are printed at the Athenaeum, which employs its own compositors, and something is saved by the co-operation in money as well as in labor. The notes are generally selected from the best reviews, and they certainly lend important aid to readers in their selection of books.²

By 1883 the List had become a syndicate including the above libraries, the Milwaukee Public Library and others.³

¹Records of the Library Committee, December 5, 1882 and January 17, 1887; [Editorial notes], LJ, XII (April, 1887), 171, and XIII (January, 1888), 5. In the latter, Cutter claimed, "In twenty years no book has been lost."


Cutter apparently promoted the cause vigorously by sending samples of the List to librarians that wrote to him. For example, when F. J. Soldan of the Peoria, Illinois, Public Library wrote in 1889 concerning how to make such a list and for recommendations of examples to follow, Cutter listed several other contemporary lists and then added,

Probably you could make a saving by joining our bulletin-syndicate, tho that may depend on the price of printing at Peoria. I find that the average cost of 11 lists (4 pp. each) to Worcester P. L. was $12.78 a list. But you are so far off that there would be some delay in the issue. We print a list for Worcester as soon as material enough is accumulated to fill four pages. But after it is all printed it would be two or three days getting to you by express and there would be the same delay from sending the copy to us. However I should like to have you join us.1

The other significant cooperative venture involved the ordering of foreign books. During the 1883 Buffalo conference of the American Library Association, F. J. Soldan suggested a plan for forming a cooperative book-purchasing union. The idea itself was not new for the Cooperation Committee had had it under consideration. But nothing came as a result.2 During the 1888 conference held in the Catskills, Josephus Larned of the Buffalo Public Library brought the matter up again and asked President Cutter to provide information on the subject, especially with regard to purchasing

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1 Letter, Cutter to F. J. Soldan, October 17, 1889, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The reason for the letter having been sent on to Dewey is not clear.

2 A. L. A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VIII (September/ October, 1883), 296; American Library Association, Cooperation Committee, [Report], LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 263-64.
foreign books. Cutter declined, claiming that he was too busy.¹ Within a year, however, he must have pursued the matter further, for not only did the trustees newly authorize him to accept shipments at the Boston Custom House, but Samuel S. Green of the Worcester Public Library reported in the *Library Journal* that in buying foreign books he had joined several other libraries and the Athenaeum in a book-purchasing union. The orders were collected by Cutter who compiled them and ordered them directly with the advantages of quantity discounts and lower freight charges. They were able to deal for English, French, German, and Swedish books. Once a month the books would come in and were "despatched by express to the Libraries to which they belong, under the supervision of Mr. C. A. Cutter, . . . Mr. Cutter keeps an account of money paid out for freight, and notifies the different libraries, from time to time, of the amount owed by them as determined by the proportion of the money value of their purchases."²


²Samuel S. Green, "How We Choose and Buy New Books," *LJ*, XIV (August, 1889), 336-37. An authorization for Cutter to receive goods for the Athenaeum at the Custom House is recorded in the Records of the Trustees, November 21, 1887, but a revised authorization is recorded on May 27, 1889. The latter also included the secretary and the treasurer of the trustees. The date when Cutter began the practice is uncertain. But his editorial in the same issue that held the proceedings of the 1888 conference suggests that perhaps he was already doing it informally at that time. See C. A. Cutter, Editorial, *LJ*, XIII (September/October), 275.
Cutter was doubtless a very busy librarian with these various tasks. But the activity that perhaps gave him the most satisfaction was the completion of his classification for the Athenaeum's collections. It formed the basis for his systematizing of the library's internal processes. He did not complete it all at once however. His staff spent at least twelve years of steady effort to convert to the new system. He began the use of the new system in 1879 by applying the classification to recently acquired books. By 1881 when he began the systematic reclassification of older books he had already placed over 12,500 volumes in the new plan. By the end of 1883 that total, including both old and new books, amounted to 41,073 volumes. At that point when asked by the trustees to give an accounting as to how much longer it would take, he gave two estimates. At 15,000 volumes a year, 5,000 of which would be new books, the total job would take an additional ten years. But discounting the immediate conversion of newspapers, periodicals, and public documents which together totaled 30,000 volumes, he suggested that it would take not quite seven years. The number of new books purchased by the Athenaeum for the succeeding four years averaged about 6,000 a year rather than 5,000, but despite the increased acquisitions he was able to keep his schedule. The reclassification seems to have been for the most part completed by late 1890.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Information on the progress of the reclassification is taken from [Account of Books Transferred from Fixed Location to Cutter System, 1881-1890], MS, BA, and from Letter,
Reclassifying the collection under his new system engendered related problems. By himself Cutter was not able to elaborate the subdivisions in all parts of the system. Accordingly he was aided by specialists who advised him in various subject areas, the most active being Richard Bliss, a former assistant of Louis Agassiz at Harvard. Bliss wrote the schedules for the natural sciences and at least in the beginning was given a stipend for his efforts by the Library Committee.1 Cutter also found it necessary to set up very explicit procedures for his staff to follow in the work. To that end he arranged for a corps of two classifiers, two assistants, two markers and two letterers.2

Another problem involved the proprietors' acceptance of the new system. Like the charging system, it represented

Cutter to Howard Stockton, February 14, 1884, in Records of the Trustees, February 18, 1884. The first document begins in October 1881 and ends in October 1890, giving monthly totals until the end of 1883, and yearly totals thereafter. The second document pictures reclassification activity from its beginning in 1879. The uncertainty as to when the reclassification was completed arises from the fact that when the totals from the two documents are added to new book totals for the same period, the sum is only about 122,000 out of the Athenæum's total collections in 1890 of about 171,000 volumes. The difference may lie in the decision not to reclassify such things as periodicals, state documents, etc. and also in a certain percentage of error in the total count.

1Records of the Library Committee, July 21, 1879. The stipend was $50. Bliss served as an assistant in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology from 1871 to 1873, and again during 1876-77 when he was in charge of the Ichthyology Department. See Harvard University, Historical Register of Harvard University, 1636-1936, p. 126.

2Letter, Cutter to Howard Stockton, February 14, 1884, in Records of the Trustees, February 18, 1884.
a change from old established patterns. A later reminiscence of the Athenaeum stated,

The old arrangement of the library pleased me better than the new. An alcove with its own windows and table and light with books grouped by subject seemed a cozy little place, with a bit of privacy.¹

In his annual report for 1881 Cutter outlined what he thought might help. First he thought it best to have a large visual guide to the classification posted at various places in the building. Since the classification was still in progress, however, he posted an in-progress list of the classes and their locations above the card catalog. More important, he saw the need to have some sort of guides in the individual alcoves that would inform the user how the classification proceeded at that point. He explained,

During the last two years I have devised half a dozen unsatisfactory contrivances to meet this want, but only lately have hit upon something which promises to be effectual. It takes little room, each "guide" being merely a strip of pasteboard inserted between the books; it is easily read at a distance, and yet it is not glaringly conspicuous. It marks unmistakably where each class or subclass begins and ends; and, in the large divisions in which there are many books arranged alphabetically, it shows similarly where each letter of the alphabet begins and ends. When these guides are provided for every sub-class, when at the entrance of each alcove a large card shows what class is there, and when in some uniform part of the alcove there may be found a list of the whole arrangement of the library, showing in what part of the building each class is, and also an index of subjects showing in what class any particular topic is, the library will be easier to consult than any which I have ever seen.²

¹Mrs. James F. Thomas, "Reminiscences of the Boston Athenaeum," November, 1928, MS, BA.

²Cutter, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]."
Considering that such obvious needs (to us, at least) were in that day as yet unthought of, the simplicity of the plan found a ready audience especially in the library profession. Cutter wrote up his various experiments for a wider hearing.  

A final way that he made the new system more acceptable to the proprietors came by writing an explanatory booklet. He entitled it, *Boston Athenaeum: How to Get Books, with an Explanation of the New Way of Marking Books*. The Library Committee authorized its printing in May 1882 and directed that a copy be sent to each proprietor and be given to other users of the library. In the booklet Cutter began by giving a short justification for the change to the new system. First he demonstrated the need for a system that gave a relative location for a book rather than affixing a number that indicated only the physical location of the alcove and shelf. Given the need to shift books and therefore to constantly change the location numbers in the catalogues, he stated,

> It is therefore plainly expedient to abandon the antiquated system which makes this decennial change of shelf marks necessary, and to adopt a method which will allow the books to be moved hereafter, when necessary without any change of the marks on the catalogues. This can be effected by making the book-numbers indicate not

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a given alcove and shelf, but a given class and subclass; so that a book-number once correctly assigned will remain unchanged forever, although the place of the book be changed a hundred times; and, consequently, the cost and loss of time and liability to mistakes inherent in the other plan, will be done away with at once.

The old method may be compared to the line in the directory which states that a man lives at 129 Grace Street; the method proposed may be compared to the army register, which says that he is captain of Company C, 5th Regiment, M.V.M. Let the regiment be marched all over the country, yet the soldier is easily found by his position in it. If the citizen moves to a new street, a new directory is needed, but the army register does not have to be altered whenever the regiment is quartered in a different town. Similarly, books may be found by their position in a certain class, though the class itself be transferred from one alcove to another, or from one building to another.

Second, having demonstrated the need for relative location, Cutter argued for the usefulness of a specific author number.

In the old system books are marked merely to alcove and shelf, an insufficient practice, to be found in hardly any other library of importance in the country. When one had reached the right shelf, one was far from having found one's book. It was still necessary to hunt it up, by its title, among the often badly lettered volumes, on the often ill-lighted shelf. In the new system, every book has a definite place in its section, and the mark which determines that place is legibly stamped on the back.

A contemporary newspaper account described the changes by using the above military analogy and then continued,

So the books in Captain Cutter's regiments have got to move down the road of time in solid phalanx, the only changes permitted in the interior organization being the admission of new members. But does your book regiment permit this? Yes, it is elastic in structure. Captain Cutter has hit upon the idea of using a table of decimal fractions in his marking, so as to admit of intercalculations ad infinitum. How these modern librarians are

1How to Get Books, pp. 6-7.  2Ibid., p. 7.
If past ages produced great literatures, this age can say that it has rendered them known and made them accessible to the most indolent and simple minds.¹

Having justified the principle of the new notation, Cutter next proceeded to outline the thirty-five class symbols and what subjects they represented. He demonstrated the use of the geographical tables, the special symbols to denote sizes of books, how the author numbers and work letters functioned, and the special symbols for special collections. He elaborated several different classes as examples. He also cautioned the patron about the limitations of any shelf system. Books with multiple subjects could only be put in one location. Therefore, one would need to use the catalog and to be aware of special collections. The notation was new and complicated but by using it, one would begin to learn the arrangement of various classes. In conclusion Cutter gave due credit to several persons responsible for various of the principles of the notation, notably, Melvil Dewey, Jacob Schwartz, and John Edmands.

In the printing of the booklet one other aspect of Cutter's work at the Athenaeum is revealed. That is, he used the Athenaeum's printing equipment to produce a wide variety of pamphlets and other materials for the library profession. In the absence of any consistently successful Association effort at printing, before the re-establishment

of the Library Bureau, such materials were often hard to obtain. As early as 1880 Melvil Dewey had mentioned in the 
*Library Journal* that there was not enough use by smaller 
libraries of the printed materials that only the larger li-
braries could afford to produce. He mentioned as examples, 
the Boston Public Library's handbook for readers, and 
Cutter's *List of Additions*.

I believe there is not one of those named that would 
not feel gratified rather than annoyed, at the largest 
possible use of their material. Today it is only pos­
sible to reprint, or get a few extra copies, except with 
Mr. Cutter's bulletin.\(^1\)

Cutter felt strongly about the lack of materials 
and sought to provide as much as he could from his own 
facilities at the Athenaeum. In response to a proposal from 
Dewey about taking a different library position, he wrote in 
1892,

> The publication part especially draws me. I have 
become a little "Publication Section," all alone by 
myself . . . , and as editor of the Library Journal 
I have known of many bibliographical works that were 
crying out for publication or would be undertaken if 
there was any chance of issue, but that perished for 
want of a publisher.\(^2\)

Most of his publishing was understandably of his own 
 writings. He advertised their availability and he often 
gave them away. A typical note in the *Library Journal* 
reads,

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\(^1\)M. Dewey, in "Notes and Queries," *LJ*, V (March, 
1880), 89.

\(^2\)Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, June 3, 1892, CUL, 
M. Dewey Papers.
Mr. C. A. Cutter's "Author-notation for Greek and Latin Writers," his "Arrangement of the States of the United States in a Classed Catalog," and the "Condensed Rules for Cataloging," will be forwarded by him to any person asking for them and sending the postage (one cent each).1

He also distributed his pamphlet on the Athenaeum's classification widely. His most ambitious personal project was the printing of his Expansive Classification. Between the years 1891 and 1893 he was able to get through the press the first six expansions. Not all of his work was his own, however. Besides the above mentioned 1883 A.L.A. Condensed Rules for Cataloging, he was able to produce Klas Linderfelt's Eclectic Rules, a book of 104 pages that in effect compared all of the major cataloging codes of the day, although it was mainly based on Carl Dziatzko's then recently published German code.2

In most of his publishing one curious characteristic stands out. Cutter believed that the widest possible use should be made of different type sizes and styles. He insisted upon it in his printing of the Boston Athenaeum's catalog and he noted in his reviews when other catalog makers failed to use the resource. He also used it in his printing of cataloging codes and in his classification. It became, however, a cause of grief for both himself and others because of the need to be very careful in typesetting and proofreading, and consequently because it slowed significantly

1LJ, XI (December, 1886), 494.
2Klas A. Linderfelt, Eclectic Card Catalog Rules, Author and Title Entries (Boston: Charles A. Cutter, 1890).
the printing process. For example, typesetting began on Linderfelt's Rules in mid-1889, but the finished product did not appear until almost a year later. When the notice of the publication appeared in the Publisher's Weekly prematurely in July 1890, Linderfelt apologized for the mistake to his friends and, although Cutter was publishing the volume at his own risk, could only ruefully complain that the printing had been "unpardonably slow." The same problems afterward plagued the completion of the seventh expansion of Cutter's Expansive Classification.

In other areas of his professional and private life Cutter experienced both joy and sorrow. He continued his active involvement in the American Library Association serving as its president for the years 1887 to 1889. He attended all of the annual meetings of the Association and took special pleasure in the post-conference excursions that were held after many of them. A typical occasion was the excursion to the Saguenay River in Quebec after the 1887 Thousand Islands meeting at which he was elected president. On this particular trip he took his son Roland with him. It was

1 Letter, K. Linderfelt to W. F. Poole, July 30, 1890, Newberry Library, Poole Papers; letter, A. Linderfelt to G. W. Cole, July 31, 1890, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers; Linderfelt, Eclectic Card Catalog Rules, p. vi; C. A. Cutter, A.I.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XV (Conference No., 1890), C101. After relating how he tried to get a sponsor for Linderfelt's work, Cutter went on to say at the 1890 conference, "Being unwilling that so much good work should be lost, I am printing it myself. I am sure that it is not the foolish affection of a foster-father that makes me believe the book to be of the very highest importance to all catalogers."
during such trips that he became even more a devotee of the pleasures of the outdoors. In 1888 he joined the Appalachian Mountain Club and found a favorite summer retreat in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.¹

Cutter received a steady stream of visitors, both American and foreign, at the Athenaeum, who were interested in his work there. When Dewey began the School of Library Economy at Columbia University in 1887, Cutter was one of the first special lecturers to be invited, a task that he continued until his death even though the school moved to Albany in 1889. His earlier lectures were more or less uniform, beginning with his own reminiscences of his life in librarianship, and covering, of course, cataloging and classification.² In April 1890 a group of fifteen students and members of the School staff traveled to Boston. They visited with the Library Bureau staff, spent time at both the Harvard College Library and the Athenaeum, and after a social time at Justin Winsor's home on Friday afternoon, April 18th, some of the visitors went to Winchester for the

¹"Attendance Register," LJ, XII (September/October, 1887), 461. The trip is described by G. B. Keen on p. 460. Cutter's membership in the Appalachian Mountain Club is noted in W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 53, in a chapter that describes Cutter's love of the outdoors.

²Notices of Cutter's lectures are found yearly in the Library Journal, often with a note on the content. Short-hand notes on his first lectures given in February 1888 are available by M. Dewey in the Dewey Papers, CUL, and by George W. Cole in the Cole Papers at the American Antiquarian Society.
evening to see a couple of plays in which Cutter participated. Mary S. Cutler's comment on Cutter's avocation was a warm, "He was charming." ¹

In between the various occasions of personal satisfaction and joy there were other instances of pain and loss. On April 28, 1883, Cutter's second son, Philip Champney, died. His aunt, Charlotte, who with her sister Cordelia and the Bradbury's continued to live with the Cutters, died three years later. ² And Charles Cutter himself experienced a growing difficulty with his vision. While it is not certain what the specific ailment was, it is known that from an early age Cutter experienced severe nearsightedness. He was also known for a certain amount of absentmindedness, and in 1889 at the approach of his second annual meeting as president of the American Library Association, he answered Dewey's reaffirmation of attendance in the following words:

Moreover, I rely on you to assist with your good eyes and unfailing memory a purblind and forgetful president who will have difficulty in "recognizing" the speakers. The thought that you might have failed to come freezes my blood. ³

¹Letter, Mary S. Cutler to M. Dewey, April 20, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers; Mary S. Cutler, "Library School Visit to Boston," LJ, XV (June, 1890), 176-78.

²Winchester, Massachusetts, Reports of the Town Officers [for 1883] (Boston: Press of Stanley and Usher, 1884), p. 84. The cause of death for Philip Cutter was listed as "peritonitas." For Charlotte's death, see Probate Records, County of Middlesex, Massachusetts, Case 21063, 1886.

³Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, May 4, 1889. In an undated letter also to Dewey, Cutter wrote, "Your letter came too late: I have had my eye taken out and cleaned, to speak popularly, and have to depend on others eyes and
Administrative Conflict

Despite the continuation of those themes of success that had highlighted his earlier period at the Athenaeum, Cutter encountered during the last half of his stay a concurrent and growing opposition to his administration. The causes that led him to resign his post in 1893 were not, however, an open conflict over any particular administrative action. Rather they arose as a result of an accumulation of various actions by the trustees that limited Cutter's administrative freedom and that brought into question the priorities of his administrative philosophy. To the trustees, Cutter simply did too much that was unsettling. A comment by C. K. Bolton some years after Cutter had left his position is enlightening. In reviewing the history of the institution and in attempting to characterize its strong points, he wrote, "Its policy has been progressive, but, as far as possible, without the spirit of unrest which sometimes characterizes the introduction of new library methods."¹

He went on to point out the importance of the institution's tradition:

and pens . . . ." In this case the letter was dictated to Anna G. Soule of the Athenaeum staff, which would place it before 1892, the year she left. Both letters are in CUL, M. Dewey Papers. In an earlier letter to Charles Alexander Nelson, May 13, 1886, Cutter wrote disparagingly, "Dr. Homes [of the New York State Library] was here today. He's 25 years older than 1 and he's just beginning to have trouble with his eyes. I don't expect to have any eyes at all when I have added 50 per cent to my life." NYPL, C. A. Nelson Papers. Cf. also, W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 5.

¹Bolton, "The First One Hundred Years," p. 56.
Through all its various changes, the Athenaeum has represented what was best in Boston. The "golden age" of New England literature grew with it and even within its walls. Its traditions are a part of its life, and are passed on from father to son. Because its ideals have been high the Athenaeum has appealed to men who lead as well as to those who follow. And with their continued support success in the future seems assured.

Cutter ran into difficulty precisely at this point. It would seem that in his enthusiastic professional attitude and his willingness to submit the Athenaeum to all that was best and advanced in the emerging library field, he failed to fully take into account the Athenaeum's traditions and the perception held by the proprietors of their own institution.

Basic to an understanding of the events of this period is a knowledge of the changes that occurred in the two official bodies that had most to do with the operation of the library. The Trustee Board was composed of four officers and fifteen other members. The presidents during Cutter's years were John Amory Lowell (1860-76), Charles Francis Adams (1877-79), and Samuel Eliot (1880-98). The vice-presidents were Andrew T. Hall (1866-75), Charles Francis Adams (1876), Charles Deane (1877-84), Robert W. Hooper (1885), and James Elliot Cabot (1886-98). The treasurers were Henry Bromfield Rogers (1869-76) and Charles Pickering Bowditch (1877-98). And the secretaries were Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1868-72), his brother, Brooks (1873-79), Charles H. Williams (1880-87), and William R. Richards (1888-94).

1Ibid.
After the stormy years of the early 1850's when the trustees had had an almost complete turnover in membership, the constancy of the membership was regained. In fact some of the members elected in the mid-1850's served very lengthy terms well past 1880. Among those were Robert W. Hooper (1855-85), Edward N. Perkins (1856-98), James Elliot Cabot (1857-98), and Francis Parkman (1858-93). From 1869 through 1876 the fifteen member board remained essentially unchanged. And its members represented views of longstanding tenure. Beginning in 1877, however, a slow turnover of the membership began that accelerated during the 1880's. It began with the election of Ephraim W. Gurney and John Chipman Gray and included the election of Henry Cabot Lodge in 1879. In 1880 two more of the older trustees were replaced, one of the new members being Howard Stockton. In the next two years three more trustees were elected, representing in six years a turnover of seven of the fifteen members. From 1883 to 1887 four more new members were elected, among whom were John T. Morse, Jr., Stanton Blake, Edward J. Lowell, and George B. Shattuck, bringing the total change to eleven of fifteen of the pre-1877 membership. The four new members elected between 1888 and 1892 did not change that makeup, but they included among their numbers, Barrett Wendell and Thomas Minns.¹

¹The changes that took place in the membership of the Trustee Board are taken from "Officers," in The Athenaeum Centenary, pp. 115-122.
The Library Committee of the Trustees also remained constant in membership during the earlier period. From 1868 through 1876 its membership did not change at all except through the attrition of one member. In 1876 the members were James E. Cabot, Charles Deane, Charles E. Ware, Robert W. Hooper, Christopher T. Thayer, Francis Parkman, and Samuel Eliot, all long-standing trustees. Beginning in 1877, however, new members of the Trustees were appointed regularly to the Library Committee and it too underwent a change in composition. The committee was also increased from its undermanned number of seven to a total of nine. By 1881 only four of the pre-1877 members belonged to it. By 1885 this number had shrunk to three and by the next year to two, namely, Cabot and Parkman. Of those new members added, the most active seem to have been Lodge, Stockton, Edward J. Lowell, and later, Barrett Wendell and Thomas Minns.¹

It cannot be demonstrated that specific changes in the makeup of the leadership of the Athenaeum were directly responsible for a growing dissatisfaction with Cutter's administration, although the newer trustees seem to have been conspicuously involved in those actions that represented a gradual tightening of the trustees' control over Cutter's work. During this period there was, however, a pervasive movement toward defensiveness by many within the more elite

¹The appointment of the Library Committee is recorded each year in the Records of the Trustees.
Boston intellectual circles. To the extent that that movement was in fact reflected in the newer leadership, it lends support to the idea that a basic shift in the spirit of the institution itself was an underlying, although probably unconscious, cause of the conflict.

It has already been mentioned that what has been called an intellectual community of patrician bearings grew out of conservative and Federalist wealth in combination with an advancing Unitarian moral philosophy. In its earliest form the patrician bearing of the community rested primarily in its self-image as an intellectual and cultural resource for the re-ordering of the nation. As the century progressed, however, kinship ties grew stronger and the social relationships became even more determinative, giving rise to the social register and to the popular conception of the "Proper Bostonian," an opinion of the elite that was not always complimentary.¹

¹The phrase is taken from Cleveland Amory, The Proper Bostonians, although similar overtones can be seen in Henry James' Bostonians published in 1886. On p. 35 Amory records the jingle,

And this is good old Boston,
The home of the bean and the cod,
Where the Lowells talk to the Cabots,
And the Cabots talk only to God.

Originally proposed after the turn of the twentieth century as a toast, the rhyme should be taken in the hyperbolic sense in which it was given. It does point out, however, at least a sense of a trend that was taking place. In a similar vein, Walter Muir Whitehill has noted a highly colored, but, in his eyes instructive, caricature of the leadership of the Museum of Fine Arts—and perhaps incidently of the Athenaeum—from the same time as the above rhyme, in Museum of Fine Arts, pp. 212-13. Regardless of any social exclusiveness that may have arisen, it is important to note that this is cited only to highlight the more general shift in spirit that for the
The former leaders passed their mantle to a younger generation. The younger leaders not only faced currents of social unrest and change that seemed far more complex and unmanageable than those of ante-bellum years; they also bore the legacy of frustration among many of that intellectual community to directly effect their own idealistic goal of enlightened democracy. It was indeed for many of that bearing an 'Indian Summer'. By the end of the century, varying conceptions of America's national destiny led to the contradictory extremes of national imperialism and immigration restriction. The effect upon the patrician intellectual community was to provoke a defensiveness that reinforced a renewed racial nativism. John Higham has written an account of the crisis of the nineties that is instructive not only in general outlines, but also by reason of the individuals within the New England community that he has noted.

On the whole, the Anglo-Saxon tradition in its new nativistic form still found its support within the patrician circles where it had persisted throughout the age of confidence. Now, as then, the race-thinkers were men who rejoiced in their colonial ancestry, who looked to England for standards of deportment and taste, who held the great academic posts or belonged to the best clubs or adorned the higher Protestant clergy. Some . . . were active reformers, especially in the municipal field. But, in general, racial nativists worshipped tradition in a deeply conservative spirit, and in the tumult of the nineties it seemed to them that everything fixed and sacred was threatened with dissolution. . . .

A substantial number of these patrician nativists belonged to the cultivated intelligentsia of New England, the region where the Anglo-Saxon idea was most firmly entrenched. There the proportion of foreign-born in the total population was rising more sharply than in any present purposes had to do with intellectual concerns.
other part of the country. There too the declining vitality of the native culture contributed to a defensive attitude. Brahmin intellectuals such as Lodge, Henry Adams, and Barrett Wendell, knew that the historic culture of New England had entered its "Indian Summer," and the knowledge gave them added cause to see their race and region beleaguered by the alien. 

At Harvard, Barrett Wendell, whose English accent matched his Anglophile interpretation of American literature, was settling into the conviction that his own kind had had its day, that other races had wrenched the country from its grasp for once and all.¹

It seems likely that the general growth of pessimism and of a defensive posture among patrician intellectuals was generally related to the emergence of a limited self-image in such institutions as the Athenaeum. In former days the community's ethic placed a high value on the personal, if not a bit sentimental, obligation that wealth and culture gave one towards society as a whole. Accordingly, the Athenaeum was seen as a public institution even if the "public" served was somewhat restricted. The goal of proprietors and librarians alike was to make of the library the best possible service available to that public. In that way, patrician philanthropy could affect the growth of the national character and identity.

Charles Cutter, who had come to the institution in an earlier day, had been schooled in the older tradition and had accepted many of its goals as his own. He himself felt the strong pull of tradition and culture. James Lyman

Whitney, an assistant librarian at the Boston Public Library, quoted Cutter as having said on the subject of training library assistants, "The older I grow the more I believe in cultivated assistance and the Brahmin blood." He was well aware of the special nature of the Athenaeum and of its special clientele, quite a different class than those who frequented a regular public library. He could point to that clientele as the chief reason that the Athenaeum could afford the luxury of free access to the stacks, a freedom that he, along with many others in the profession, doubted would work in a public institution. The same clientele also made it possible to perfect and use in it a classification that was minutely subdivided, for "Libraries used by the learned can profitably be much more subdivided than those used by the ignorant, who would not understand even the names of the divisions." Above all the Athenaeum represented the best in cultured and intelligent users.

1. C. A. Cutter, quoted in James L. Whitney, "Selecting and Training Library Assistants," LJ, VII (July/August, 1882), 138. Whitney quoted Cutter as agreeing with his contention that prospective assistants not only be examined, but that the examination delve into their background. "I have said that this examination must be a thorough one, and it may well go back of the candidate himself to his ancestors, to see what of intellectual as well as physical quality he has inherited from them."


But regardless of the different class of users that the Athenaeum represented, its mission could still be spelled out in terms of its service. In commenting on the publication of the first two volumes of the Index Catalogue of the U. S. Surgeon-General's Office, he reported in the Nation that a French scholar had supposed the rationale for such an expensive catalog to be "because Americans of the Brahmin or reading caste" enjoyed literature so much. In fact, they not only liked books, but books about books. Cutter's retort was to agree with the statement, but also to add that in the end it was the drive to be of public service, "a feeling very strong in all Americans, except perhaps politicians."¹ His statement reveals an earlier patrician optimism and it informed not only his appreciation of the catalog in question, but also his view of his own work at the Athenaeum and his view of the place of the Athenaeum in the library world. In fact, Cutter's views could be called an extension of the older ethic to its logical conclusion. That is, by means of scientific professionalism, the ideal could be approached. Because his library represented wealth and culture, its role would be to lead the way among libraries. And not only would it lead, but in the stewardship of its resources it could develop the best in open policies and the best in scientific applications to its own progress. Indeed, the

¹C. A. Cutter, Review of U. S. Surgeon-General's Office, Index Catalogue of the Library, Authors and Subjects, Vol. 1,2, A-Cholas, [by John Shaw Billings], Nation, XXXIII (September 22, 1881), 238.
best that it could offer was to be truly professional in
its approach to its mission. In that light one could sur-
mise that Cutter saw the Bemis and Howes legacies as an
enablement to fulfill the ideal.

But with the change in leadership came a reaction to
Cutter's extension of an older ideal toward a narrower view
of the role of the Athenaeum. Rather than this institution
being involved in a mission of the ideal, the newer leaders
give evidence of being much more protective towards it. The
first sign of reaction came in the late 1870's when Cutter's
policy of "maximum-use" was in full swing. Cutter's prac-
tice of soliciting the use of proprietors' unused shares
by non-proprietors had been questioned but not absolutely
forbidden. And even so ardent a trustee as Samuel Eliot
had proposed the official authorization of the practice,
although his proposal did not pass beyond the Library Com-
mittee.¹

In January 1881, however, the issue was raised again,
but more forcefully. Howard Stockton presented to the trus-
tees a letter written by Cutter that had "accidentally" fal-
len into the hands of Robert Hooper.² In the letter Cutter
had solicited a member of the Massachusetts legislature for
the transfer of his right to take books out for the use of
a non-proprietor. It was a doubly bad situation for Cutter.

¹See above, pp. 160-63.
²Records of the Trustees, January 17, 1881.
While the idea of the transfer of a proprietor's rights to another person was allowable according to the rules and regulations of the Athenaeum, it had been the prejudice of the trustees that such a use of one's share would be the exception rather than the rule. More specifically, they had not intended that the practice be pursued by the librarian. Worse than that, members of the legislature had never been given the outright privilege to check out books. Rather they had been given a general privilege to use the books in the library. Cutter had apparently assumed that they had the privilege of circulation and since many of them did not use their privilege, he intended to make good use of it for others.

The minutes of the trustees' meeting for that session suggest a good deal of heat over the discovery. The trustees noted that members of the legislature had only limited privileges and that the limited privilege, being honorary, could not be transferred in the first place. Upon discovering that Cutter had been making such solicitations for several years, the trustees recorded,

There has never been any hinderance to the use of the library by scholars and they have been allowed to take out books whether proprietors or not, and books have even been sent to Chicago to be used for special work.

The Public Library supplies the demand for a large circulating library, the Athenaeum should rather be used for purposes of consultation.¹

¹Ibid.
Cutter sent to the trustees in the form of a letter his own defense of his practice, a few comments of which are preserved in the minutes. The excerpt of his explanation contained an economic consideration. In 1880 the 185 non-proprietors that used the library were assessed through the ten dollar annual subscriber's fee a total of $1,566. That total was somewhat lower than the rate would have provided because some were charged for only part of the year. "In 1881 I expect to have about 200 giving $2,000. All but one of the 185 of 1880 wish to continue, and some new persons have already applied." 

The trustees were obviously not very happy with the situation. They voted to "not recognize the right of members of the legislature to transfer any privileges which they may have under the Charter of the Boston Athenaeum." Furthermore, after committing to the Library Committee for special action the problem of what to do with those legislators who were currently checking out books, they censured the librarian by voting,

That the circular, issued by the librarian to the members of the General Court is not approved by the Trustees, and that no similar circular be issued in the future without the authority of the library committee. The situation was upsetting enough that Dr. Hooper moved in the next meeting to strike Cutter's written reply from the records of the meeting, but the motion did not carry.

\[1\text{Bib.} \quad 2\text{Bib.} \quad 3\text{Bib.} \quad 4\text{Records of the Trustees, February 21, 1881. Unfortunately, Cutter's letter, which is noted in the Records as}\]
An added bit of fall-out from the situation was the call for a new printing of the rules and regulations of the library.\(^1\) The new printing still included the clause that any proprietor could transfer his rights to a non-proprietor, but the trustees voted, "That whenever the librarian sends a request to any Proprietor—for the use of his share under the fifth rule, he shall also enclose to him a copy of said rules."\(^2\) By December 1881 the issue was in the air again. Charles P. Bowditch called attention to the increased costs of library operations. Hooper noted that 160 non-proprietors were still using the library. A motion was subsequently proposed by Henry Cabot Lodge aimed specifically at the librarian and was later inserted in the rules themselves. It was voted,

that there shall be no transfer of a Proprietors right to take out books except on the expressed wish and by the request of such proprietor, and the librarian is instructed not to solicit such transfers or assist in procuring them.\(^3\)

Curiously enough, when the above motion was finally approved in January 1882, the Library Committee also submitted another document which was entitled, "Rules for the Administration of the Library of the Boston Athenaeum."\(^4\) It too having been inserted, is missing.

\(^1\)Records of the Trustees, March 21, 1881; Records of the Library Committee, March 22, 1881. R. W. Hooper and Charles Deane were appointed a sub-committee to prepare the rules, but Deane resigned from the assignment in April.

\(^2\)Records of the Trustees, March 21, 1881.

\(^3\)Records of the Trustees, December 19, 1881.

\(^4\)Records of the Trustees, January 16, 1882.
was approved, and while it contained nothing new in the way of regulations, its significance perhaps lies in the fact of being drawn up in the first place. It was as if the trustees of the Athenaeum were asserting their prerogatives to control the librarian's work. Of special note in the document is the codifying of the various injunctions on what rooms and collections in the library were off-limits to various types of users, and what standards of conduct were expected from users in general.

Cutter's own views on the above happenings are not known, explicitly. The moves were in direct contrast to the freedom that he had enjoyed in his previous years. An indication of how he felt may perhaps be seen in a short "Communications" inserted in the January 1882 Library Journal. In an unusually cryptic manner but typical for its dry humor, he wrote,

You hope to see the ideal library? You are more sanguine than I. The ideal library, in a librarian's estimation, is the one in which he is able to carry out his own ideas. To that there are always two obstacles, one of them the want of money, and both usually insuperable.\footnote{C. A. Cutter and Jacob Schwartz, "Scraps of Script," LJ, VII (January, 1882), 7.}

But in May of the same year, in an editorial on the Astor Library in New York, he also reaffirmed his own type of library experience:

The libraries of private munificence--the Lenox and the Astor--may not be all that could be desired, but the library of public taxation, bringing a new element of
corruption into politics and controlled by bosses, is not a spectacle to which any friend of American libraries can look forward with pleasure.¹

Cutter's perceptive comment on the need for money was perhaps prophetic of the next sort of stricture that eventually overcame his work at the Athenaeum. Despite the special funds available, from 1880 to 1884 total expenditures were pushing to the limit, and at times exceeding, income. It was due in part to extra expenses for to the building itself, but also because of the reduction of subscription income from the strictures on non-proprietors. The trustees of course showed concern but saw the solution in cutting expenditures in the operation of the library. As early as January 1882, the Library Committee voted to get rid of the Athenaeum's printing equipment as soon as the catalog was completed and to contract the List of Additions to a local printer. To cut costs further they decided that the long annotations that Cutter was including in the list would have to be shortened, if not eliminated altogether.² That, of course, would have limited Cutter in one of his most esteemed innovations and favored projects. His own reaction was to include a counter-move in his annual report written one month later. He suggested discontinuance of the List altogether.

It is a good thing to have, and when accompanied with notes as it has been for the last 4 years I believe it to be worth its cost. But the Committee have ordered, to my great regret, that the notes be discontinued; and

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, VII (May, 1882), 79.
without notes its cost is really thrown away, for the simple reason that hardly any one looks at a barren list of titles. It was the observation of this fact during the time when we had no notes that led me to add them in the hope of making the list attractive and therefore of use.¹

His logic seems to have persuaded the Committee, for not only was the order to dispense with the printing equipment rescinded by the end of the year, but the List of Additions was continued with annotations.

The concern over the high cost of operations continued. In February 1883 at the annual meeting of the proprietors the treasurer presented a summary report of the cost of operations for each year since 1876. At the same time the Standing Committee of the trustees made its first report of what was to become in succeeding years a specific effort to budget the unrestricted funds. One week later at the regular meeting of the trustees it was voted to investigate the possible "re-organization" of the working force, in effect a move for economy. Henry Cabot Lodge and the Standing Committee were appointed a special committee to investigate the problem. Lodge reported in March 1883 after consulting with Cutter, that the only way to cut the force of nineteen women and one man would be to curtail services. He also reported that the pay for the women was generally lower than for similar work done at the Public Library or at Harvard.²

¹Cutter, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]." His reference is to the earlier new book list that was begun by Poole and continued to the end of 1871.

²Records of the Proprietors, February 12, 1883; Records of the Trustees, February 19 and March 10, 1883.
In the first of two letters written on the subject to Lodge for the trustees, Cutter outlined the simple alternative: reduce the amount of work to be done and the work force could be immediately reduced. It was a time of heavy book purchasing due to the Howes legacy. With a sort of coup de grâce to the issue, he added that in fact the staff was behind in its current work and would not catch up until the normal summer slump. In effect, no reductions could be made "without injury to the efficiency of the library."¹

In a second letter Cutter added a description of how work assignments were arranged and appended a list of workers and their primary jobs. The typical procedure was for any one assistant to interrupt his normal routine to help other assistants who had patron demands that they could not fulfill alone. Although the division of labor became somewhat intermixed, the efficiency of service to the users of the library was preserved. He could fall back on the argument that it was the amount of work to be done rather than inefficiency on the part of the work force. He stated, "No one is idle here."² He won his case and the report by Lodge was accepted by the trustees.

At one point Cutter may have undercut his own project. He promised to cut the work force as soon as the amount of work was reduced. He also suggested as an example

¹Letter, Cutter to H. C. Lodge, February 21, 1883 (No. 1), BA.
²Ibid. Letter, Cutter to H. C. Lodge, February 21, 1883 (No. 2), BA.
and in an off-hand way, "If we stop the rearrangement of the library I can send off five persons at once." It was just that alternative that arose the following year. As a result of finding out that the general funds had been overexpended by more than $2,400 (due mainly to the cost of fitting out the upper rooms), the question of how to cut costs was again raised, this time with reference to the cost of arranging the library according to the new classification. The discussion had been raised in a special meeting, and at the next regular meeting one week later, Lodge again reported with another Cutter letter in hand. In the letter, addressed to Howard Stockton, Cutter answered three explicit questions. How much longer would the rearrangement take? How much of the present allocation for attendants could be saved if the library were being arranged by the old system? And, would it be possible to stop the rearranging in mid-stream, leaving the library with a part of its collections under each of two systems?

His reply to the first query was to suggest two dates of seven or nine years depending on whether or not all of the periodicals and government publications were also reclassified immediately. His reply to the question of the cost of the actual work force necessary took the form of outlining the procedures necessary for the reclassification and

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1 Letter, Cutter to H. C. Lodge, February 21, 1883 (No. 1), BA.

2 Records of the Trustees, February 11 and 18, 1884.
comparing them with the procedures necessary for classifying under the old system. He demonstrated that though the cost did involve two or three hundred dollars in excess of what would be normally needed, it would be saved in the long run by not having to rearrange a fixed system. In answer to the question as to whether the rearrangement could be stopped in mid-stream, his answer was, "Perfectly practicable, but not expedient."\(^1\) It was practicable because they were living with two systems during the process of re-classification anyway. In an aside he suggested, though, that it could not be stopped all of a sudden, for those classes that were more than half-done would need to be finished. It was far more inexpedient, however, because,

1. It defers putting the books into a more scientific and thorough classing than they are in now.
2. It defers marking the books by a better notation than they are marked by now, a notation which enables the examiners to examine the library in less time and the attendants to get the books more quickly and therefore less expensively than they can under the old system; that is, it prolongs a state of things which is both unsatisfactory to the public and costly to us.
3. The delay will make the change more expensive in the end, by the whole number of books added in the interval to that part of the library which is yet unchanged. The new books which are put into the new system are classified (in a majority of cases) once for all. Books put into the old system cost as much to incorporate as the others, and besides that they will cost hereafter an additional sum when they are either (a) put into the new system, or (b) moved under the old system, which moving is sure to become necessary, and judging by the past will be necessary several times in succession, say once in every 15 or 20 years.
4. We have now a corps of girls trained to do this work, namely two classifiers, two assistants, two markers,

\(^1\)Letter, Cutter to Howard Stockton, February 14, 1884, in Records of the Trustees, February 18, 1884.
and two letterers. If we turn these off there is no certainty that we would get them again, and if we did not we should have to train new persons, which is not economical.¹

In an addendum to his report Cutter added a bit more force to his logic. He compared the costs of operation for the Athenaeum with those of the Harvard College Library, exclusive of the book expenditures. The result was to demonstrate that the Athenaeum’s expenditures on the work force were not out of line with those of a recognized library of comparative size.² Cutter’s arguments prevailed and the trustees voted to continue the reclassification.

Three years later in January 1887 another effort on the part of the trustees and the Library Committee to check into Cutter’s administration of the work force arose because of complaints of inattention on the part of the attendants in the delivery room. It resulted in the order to keep a record of the work of the assistants, and particularly to check on how much time they were taking to retrieve the books that were requested. The record was made, but was discontinued by April of the same year.³

The above record of the questions put to Cutter concerning his administration in a certain sense demonstrates the effect that the gradual change in the makeup of the

¹Ibid.

²C. A. Cutter, "Comparison of Expenses, 1883 [between Harvard and the Boston Athenaeum libraries]," in Records of the Trustees, February 18, 1884.

³Records of the Trustees, December 20, 1886; Records of the Library Committee, January 3 and April 25, 1887.
trusteeship was having. The question, however, did not represent a serious conflict as much as legitimate differences of opinion. Cutter himself remained satisfied with his position. When Melvil Dewey proposed in 1885 that Cutter move on to another library, Cutter replied,

Your question was so entirely unexpected that I thought I must take one night to consider it. I have not arrived at a positive decision, however, today. But this is my feeling, just at present: — My position here now is pleasant and promises to be permanent. I have $3500, am on good terms with the Trustees, to say nothing of friends among the Proprietors. So that I should not care to leave the Athenaeum except for some decided gain. $4000 "to start with" as you say, is a temptation; $3500 is not. But I should not like now, without knowing more of the duties, powers, and possibilities of the place, to say that I would come.¹

Yet, the questions raised about his administration did indicate an unconscious attempt on the part of the trustees to regain a part of the authority they had lost in the earlier period when Cutter had for the most part free reign to do what he thought best. The trustees were asking questions that they had not asked for a long time. That it was due to the change in the makeup of the Board of Trustees is, of course, only conjecture. But it is significant that for the most part the moves for more trustee control came from the newer and younger members. If, however, the events recorded above represent a time when the trustees were again becoming conscious of their authority, the events of the period from 1888 to 1893 reveals their more complete

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 25, 1885, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Unfortunately, the new library position that Dewey suggested is not identified.
re-assumption of that authority, for it was a period in which whatever influence and prestige that Cutter may have had previously seems to have dissipated in a low-key struggle for control based on differing philosophies of the goals of the institution.

The first indication of moves to seriously limit Cutter's freedom in administration came in the area of book-purchasing. In January 1887 Edward J. Lowell was appointed a sub-committee with Cutter on the exchange of duplicates held by the library. By itself such a move may not have seemed significant, but the practice of dealing with other libraries in this matter was a practice that Cutter had conducted mostly at his own discretion since he had first come to the Athenaeum. It would seem significant also, therefore, that by June the letters between the Athenaeum and the American Antiquarian Society began to deal with the problem of settling the account between the two institutions in the matter.¹

In May the Library Committee ordered that once again all auction catalogs would need to come before the committee with the lots marked by the librarian in order that the purchases could be approved. From that point in the minutes of the committee the record of auction purchases approved ceases. In November following, the vote of April 1882 that gave the

¹Records of the Library Committee, January 31, 1887; Letters, Cutter to the American Antiquarian Society, particularly June 9 and August 11, 1887, Librarians' Correspondence, American Antiquarian Society.
Librarians' authority to purchase books in the area of American history without restriction, was rescinded. Then, in December 1887, a more explicit motion, introduced by Edward J. Lowell, was passed reverting to the older practice of having the Library Committee more directly involved in book selection. The resolution read,

That hereafter no book be added to the Athenaeum Library by purchase, exchange, or otherwise without being previously passed on by the Library Committee, with the exception of the books sent by Trübner & Co. under their general discretion.

However, even the books from Trübner were to be submitted to the committee before being added to the library.

In addition two other motions, also introduced by Lowell, but tabled, indicated the severity of the intentions meant. One provided that a list of all newly acquired books be listed and read at the next regular meeting of the Committee. The other provided that no bill for books be sent to the treasurer for payment until it had been approved by a member of the Executive Committee who could vouch for the fact that all the items had been passed on by the Committee.

The following March another committee member replaced Lowell in working with Cutter on the exchange of duplicates.

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1 Records of the Library Committee, May 16 and November 21, 1887. It is of some interest to note that the rescission of the vote on American historical materials was made in the absence of Francis Parkman.

2 Records of the Library Committee, December 5, 1887.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Records of the Library Committee, March 26, 1888. John Chipman Gray was the appointee.
In April 1888 the Library Committee further expanded their resolution on book approval by giving directions on the matter of gift books. Though it dealt with exceptions to the Library Committee's approval policy, the exceptions were in a very real sense concerned with unimportant types of materials that did not require the librarian's judgment.

They voted,

That the following classes of gifts be excepted from the rule passed Dec. 5, 1887, requiring all books, pamphlets, etc., to be submitted to the Library Committee before they are incorporated in the library: (1) Continuations of works already in the library. (2) U. S. government, Massachusetts state and Boston city official publications. (3) Works relating to Boston, including reports of Boston societies (except reports of money-making corporations) and charitable associations. (4) New England general and local history.

Voted, that the following classes of gifts be rejected without reference to the Library Committee: (1) Reports and annual catalogues of colleges, libraries, and charitable societies outside of New England (with exceptions). (2) Reports of financial associations. (3) Town reports. 1

The stricture against collecting reports of libraries must have been a disappointment to Cutter, who, during his long career, had made it a practice to collect such items.

The fact that the Library Committee asserted its right to control the acquisition of books did not mean that Cutter no longer had any discretionary powers in the matter, or that the library was reverting to a book selection policy that had no guidelines. On the contrary, Cutter was still given authority to acquire items in some limited areas without committee approval. But the areas were of continuations,

1Records of the Library Committee, April 30, 1888.
and of specific subjects that were well-defined by the committee in advance, such as English novels and books of fashion plates, and the above mentioned classes of gifts. Still, the change in procedure must have felt confining to him in contrast to the practice of previous years. In succeeding years control by the Library Committee increased even more.

In April 1889, again at Lowell's suggestion, the Committee decided to divide the critical journals among themselves in order to accumulate book order suggestions. And in the early months of 1892 it was decided to go ahead with Lowell's earlier suggestion that all book purchases made within any one week be read to the committee at its next meeting, including the name of the person who ordered the item, and what decisions had been made about its acceptance or rejection. Finally, just before Cutter left the Athenaeum in 1893, a decision was made to submit even the continuation orders to the committee's scrutiny.¹

In another area, that of the needed changes in the building with regard to book storage, the trustees also showed their independence of Cutter's ideas, at least in part. The matter of the building, however, was not as severe an issue as book purchasing, for the trustees had more traditionally asserted their independence in this matter. As

¹Records of the Library Committee, April 15, 1889, January 18, April 25, May 23, 1892, and February 27, 1893. A continuation was an item that was published regularly, for example, an almanac.
early as 1880 Cutter had foreseen the need for additional space for the collections. His proposed solution at that time involved building an iron stack either on the third floor or in a new building. From 1880 through 1887, however, the only method of coping with the problem was to make periodic rearrangements of major groupings of the materials. In their annual report for 1883 the Library Committee reported on some of those moves and then summarized Cutter's own view of the matter.

The librarian reports that although some temporary relief has been gained by the removal and extension of the art department from the upper story he is already beginning to feel cramped. The second story had become so over-crowded before the third was shelved that a large part of the new space was at once filled by over-flowings; since then new books have been coming in rapidly, and there is not now in the building as it is at present shelved, enough room to properly arrange its contents and leave suitable space for growth. 1

During the latter half of 1887 the Standing Committee of the Trustees began to make proposals for more shelving, and in February 1888 the Library Committee stated the severity of the problem:

The re-arrangement of the Library has always been conducted under great difficulties owing to the want of suitable places in which to put the books in their new order. The problem has been like that of making a house out of the materials of the old house, but continuing to live in the old house while the new one was building. The library is now rapidly approaching the time when there will be no room at all, convenient or inconvenient, for the annual additions. The Trustees have therefore been considering plans for an addition

1 Annual Report of the Library Committee, February 11, 1884.
and it is hoped that shelf-room will be provided before the next meeting for 60,000 more volumes, the growth of perhaps ten years.¹

Cutter had expressed for many years his own decided views on the needs of library buildings. The experience of working in the totally unsuitable Gore Hall at Harvard had undoubtedly affected his feelings for those needs. And the pronouncements of John Langdon Sibley must have certainly added to his early knowledge of what things were to be avoided as well as having indicated some reasonable alternatives. During the early years of the American Library Association his comments reflected especially the Harvard situation, namely in the matters of lighting and ventilation.²

After the Harvard iron stack was constructed and proved successful and after his own experience with the changes made at the Athenaeum during the years 1877 to 1880, Cutter's thoughts on the matter became more systematic. The total function of a library was to be considered basic to its design. The various requirements of "light, air, heat, space, convenience, economical administration, close-packing, and capacity of enlargement" were to be seen as a part of a total system, each requirement affecting the others.³

¹Annual Report of the Library Committee, February 13, 1888; Records of the Trustees, July through December, 1887.


³C. A. Cutter, "Library Architecture," LJ, X (February, 1885), 35, an extract from his longer article, [Library Architecture], Nation, XL (January 8, 1885), 36. The index title in the Nation for the article is "Library Architecture No Joke."
During the early 1880's when the profession was aroused over the proposals for a new building for the Library of Congress, Cutter turned more often to criticizing architects who did not appreciate the uniqueness of the library's functioning system of arrangements and who subordinated any considerations of function to aesthetics. In his view, a house was a house, a church a church, and a library was uniquely a library.¹ He reported the 1883 annual Association meeting in the Nation and very deliberately spoke to the issue, summarizing his own as well as the Association's views.

At Buffalo, last week, the Library of Congress was considered, as usual, and the Washington scheme (as it may be called) of making it a vast show-building was defended in a letter from the Librarian. The Association would like to see the national library housed in Washington in a building which should be a worthy representative of the three thousand libraries of the country. They have no objection to its being a monument to the glory of the architect and a symbol of the wealth of the nation; indeed, it is manifestly to their advantage that the importance of libraries to the country should be materially represented in the capital. They have no objection to seeing it associated with an art gallery, or with any other reasonably appropriate show-rooms; but they desire that it should be first and foremost a library, a place expressly made for the safe keeping and convenient use of books, a place where the library idea shall receive its best expression. If they can have this, they care not whether ten or fifteen millions are spent in ornament; but they do not wish the books to be subordinated to or made a part of the architecture, for they know by wretched experience what that always leads to. For the success of a building as a library it is absolutely necessary that the purpose of making a library be prominently and persistently put forward as the first, almost as the only, object; the plans must be made for that end only, and, when they are

complete, the architect may be permitted to design a handsome case for the machine. No other course ever prevents the books and readers being sacrificed to the stone and the gazers. This appreciation of the true object of a library may have existed in the various committees or commissions who have had the plans in consideration, but there has never been the slightest indication of it.¹

Following these comments Cutter mentioned three alternative plans submitted by librarians, including one by William F. Poole. He then summarized his own plan given in his conference paper, "The Buffalo Public Library in 1983." In that utopian scheme, he had described the need for the "stack" concept of book storage and for electric lighting which made the stack concept feasible. The stack concept was in his thinking the most economical method of storage. It would be good for the patron because it would reduce the walking time for the retrieval of books, whether by page or by the patron himself. Such a saving "would justify almost any expense, for nothing is more exasperating and more complained of in great libraries than having to wait for books."² Cutter's insistence on function before form and, likewise, his insistence that librarians themselves were the best source for helping the architect to plan a library, perhaps made for him few friends among architects of libraries. But there seemed to be little love lost. He stated categorically at the 1888 conference in the Catskills from his presidential


position, "I think from our experience of architects' plans that we can safely say the architect is the natural enemy of the librarian." As if to add exclamation points to the statement, the next year he referred to his own statement of the year before and further elaborated it.

Meanwhile, the trustees wrestled with various alternatives for providing additional shelf space. Two original plans, one for building a steel stack of several levels in the west end of the building, and the other, for building a lighter stack on the third floor were discussed. In February 1888, however, a new plan was proposed in which the gigantic Sumner staircase would be torn out and a two-story iron stack would be constructed in its place. It was this plan that was eventually adopted. Changes began in June 1888 and were completed a year later at a cost of more than $30,000.

While the idea of more efficient book storage was approved of by Cutter, the way it was carried out at the Athenaeum was not very satisfying to him. He informed readers of the Library Journal on one occasion of the progress being made in the change, and included a squib of local

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2 [C. A. Cutter?, American Library Association, St. Louis Meeting], Nation, XLVIII (June 13, 1889), 490. Cutter's authorship of this article is uncertain but probable. Regardless of that uncertainty, the article mentions the reiteration of his remarks.

3 Records of the Trustees, February through May, 1888; Annual Report of the Library Committee, February 10, 1890.
newspaper reaction to the abandonment of the "glorious" Sumner staircase. The accounts complained that there were too many books anyway, and book purchasing should be cut to save the monument. Such reasoning probably amused Cutter. But his dissatisfaction with the plan that the trustees adopted showed up in his comments in the Association within the next two years. He indicated to his fellow librarians that the construction of that particular stack was not his choice, but he, of course, was forced to live with it. The new stack would provide space for approximately 70,000 additional volumes, but in the light of how fast the library was increasing, Cutter seems to have felt that the trustees were really selling themselves short in the long run.

As a culmination to the whole problem he provided other librarians with a verbal description of how not to plan a library building, using the Athenaeum as his example.


2C. A. Cutter, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XIII (September/October, 1888), 319. Cutter's views are also noted in Addison Van Name, "Report on Library Architecture," LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 164. Cf. also Letter, K. Linderfelt to W. F. Poole, September 7, 1889, Newberry Library, Poole Papers. Linderfelt knew that the Newberry Library would soon be building and went on at length with his dislike of the Harvard stack system. He suggested that Cutter did not like the stack system either, but that would seem contrary to Cutter's published views. However, with regard to the particular adaptation of the stack concept to the Athenaeum, Linderfelt reported, "You know my deputy went East last winter for some weeks and she tells me Mr. Cutter showed her this room with the melancholy remark, that he wanted her to learn how not to do it."
Coming in for the most severe of his criticism was the alcove system and the size and placement of windows in relation to lighting needs. He also criticized its floor plan as inefficient for administration; that is, it had long galleries but stairs only at one end so that there was a lot of walking by the attendants.\(^1\)

Regardless of Cutter's dissatisfaction, the plan accomplished its goal of providing needed space. The trustees were pleased with it and noted that the changes had been with approval from the readers. But Cutter was not greatly pleased with the trustees. In a curious addition to his previous statement on the antipathy between librarians and architects, he added a new roadblock between the librarian and a useful building; that is, trustees themselves. At the same meeting in which he described the problems of the Athenaeum's building, he suggested that trustees along with architects were really interested in the appearance of the building, and not in the efficiency of its design. He stated,

They do not feel what we feel strongly, that the success of the library, in a very great degree depends upon the adaptation of the building to its purpose. They do not understand that the cost of running the library will depend largely upon whether it is suited to its purpose, and whether it is constructed so as to admit of economy of administration.\(^2\)

By the end of 1889 the administrative situation at the Athenaeum was the opposite from what it had been ten

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years earlier. In the intervening years the general philosophy of the role of the library held by Cutter on the one hand and the trustees on the other hand had come into opposition. Cutter had been motivated by the ideal of the Athenaeum as an example of the best in libraries for the library mission in general. While it is true that it was owned by proprietors, it was also to be of the greatest possible service to the wider community and its library system needs. The trustees, especially as their official body changed its constituency, seemed to see the library in a different light. It existed more for its proprietors than for any ideal example that it might afford to the national library scene. That this was the case seems to be indicated by a conversation that Cutter reported to Melvil Dewey at the time of his resignation in early 1893. A trustee was reported to have issued a sharp rebuke over the librarian's running "a universal system of libraries." The Boston Athenaeum's primary interest was in its own existence, rather than in being a public library.¹ The privileges of the proprietors were to be zealously guarded and promoted first of all, and if there was a residue that it provided for the community at large, then that was to be considered an added but not absolutely essential benefit. Book selection seemed to become narrowed in its scope and not related to the whole library system. Cutter's suggestions for a cooperative

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 1, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
acquisition program among the Boston area libraries seems never to have materialized. The reforms of an overzealous librarian were to be balanced by the financial ability of the institution itself. And if some of the reforms, while perhaps good in themselves, were too expensive and not essential to the well-being of the proprietors, then they could be dispensed with, or at least not carried out in full. In short, the trustees were insuring that an overzealous interpretation of the public role of the Athenaeum would not undermine the institution itself.

Whatever the full nature of the conflict of philosophies, by the end of 1889 the situation seems to have taken a turn for the worse. In the 1889 annual report of the Committee for the Examination of the Library given in February 1890, Cutter received a rather severe censure. Since the innovation of Cutter's new charging system in 1878, this committee had had comparatively little to do. Circulation records arranged by the call numbers of books had made the annual recall of books unnecessary, and the work of the committee consisted in simply following an attendant around to check the various alcoves with the records at hand. The 1888 annual report had suggested that the work of the committee was not a popular assignment.

Cutter's 1880 suggestion for a cooperative acquisitions policy with other Boston area libraries seems never to have materialized or at least by 1890 was defunct. He reported, "But the fact remains that the three great libraries and five or six important special libraries clustered around the Massachusetts State House, make practically no effort to avoid duplication." Editorial, LJ, XV (February, 1890), 36.
This committee annually consists of twelve proprietors, but it is well known that the co-operation of the majority of them is, as a rule, purely nominal, and it seems only just to record that, during the past year, the most irksome part of the work has been voluntarily assumed by two of its members, Mr. Minns and Mr. James M. Hubbard.¹

During the 1889 examination the approach to the committee's work was altered. First, the committee hired a special auditor to do the "irksome" work of checking the shelves to determine what books had been lost during the year. Second, the committee examined the physical appearance of the books themselves and wrote out an extensive report. They noticed several serials that were incomplete and recommended that they be filled out. They also reported on the conditions of the book bindings and recommended that special attention needed to be paid to that problem. They found "far too many volumes soiled and torn, far too many where the binding needs renewing or repairs, to say nothing of those serial works where completed volumes have stood for years unbound upon our shelves."² By their own count 868 volumes needed repair or rebinding in the delivery room, the reading room gallery and one other room. Using that figure, they extrapolated for the entire collection and estimated that 8,000 volumes in all may have been in such a state of disrepair. They concluded,

¹Annual Report of the Committee on Examination, February 11, 1889.
²Annual Report of the Committee on Examination, February 10, 1890.
That so large a number of books should be at any one time in such a state seems to your Committee to indicate either an unwise economy in the administration, or a want of proper care and oversight on the part of the person in charge of the library. The Committee recommend a greater expenditure and much more vigilant supervision in this direction.¹

They also suggested a policy of weeding the shelves, in order to get rid of valueless items such as school books.

Such a report could not help but to trouble Cutter in his role as librarian. He himself had made extensive recommendations concerning binding ten years earlier, but the concern with other matters had pushed the matter into the background. At the same time, it was probably true that Cutter was much less interested in the physical appearance of the books than in other matters of administration. The matter only served to show how far apart the librarian and the trustees had moved in the consideration of what was important in judging what was a 'good' library.

A year later the same sort of a report was again presented by the Committee on Examination, this time chaired by Barrett Wendell. They recommended that attention to binding be continued and that the volume of book requests of proprietors be especially consulted by the Library Committee. They also, however, came down hard on the classification that Cutter had made for the library.

The committee is of the opinion that the subdivision of classes in the new arrangement of the library has been carried so far as to be in some respects confusing. It recommends that in the classification of those parts

¹Ibid.
of the library not yet rearranged, subdivision of classes be restrained as far as possible. 1

As far as it is recorded those are the only two years of Cutter's tenure that the Committee on Examination produced reports on the overall administration of the library. Their recommendations in the matter of binding resulted in an extensive rebinding program that cost several hundred dollars beyond what was ordinarily spent for that item. It is unlikely, however, that they affected the classification, as it was already nearing the final stages. Besides, to alter the minuteness of the subdivisions would have made necessary a major overhaul of the classification itself.

Meanwhile, Cutter was turning more and more to his activities outside the Athenaeum in order to express his philosophy of librarianship. He busied himself in working out still a different classification system, publishing the first six parts of his Expansive Classification between 1891 and 1893. He helped to found and became the first president of the Massachusetts Library Club in 1890. 2 Within the American Library Association he became more vocal upon the subject of the relationship of the trustees of a library to their librarian. In his Nation report of the 1890

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1 Annual Report of the Committee on Examination, February 9, 1891.

2 The original organizational meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club is described in "State Library Associations," LJ, XVI (January, 1891), 19.
American Library Association meeting he supported wholeheartedly the move to establish a trustees section in the Association. It would not only help to gain trustees' support of the Association's bibliographical ventures, but would also help to convince libraries to send their librarians to the annual meetings. A more important purpose of the section, however, was to provide an education for trustees in library economy.

We said, when the Library School was established, that it would be worth while to have a school for trustees as well as for librarians and their assistants. The ignorance of trustees about library matters is necessarily great. When appointed, they generally know absolutely nothing of library management, and sometimes very little of literature; and yet, because they have been elected by the town meeting or appointed by the City Council, and have the power, they at once feel themselves qualified to decide everything. If they are wise enough to secure a competent librarian and let him run the library under criticism, not as to details, but as to results, perhaps the less they know the better; for sometimes a little knowledge in a trustee is a dangerous thing. Competent librarians are not always to be had, though, thanks to the Library Association, and especially to the Library School, they are becoming more common. To select a librarian well, however, requires some knowledge of library affairs, and at least the feeling that the selection is a serious matter, and not to be governed by party association, or personal friendship, or charitable feeling. Then there are broad questions of management on which the best librarian may be glad to have advice. Whatever, then, interests trustees in the science of the library, enlarges their views of its possibilities, and familiarizes them with the questions under discussion, will be in the end a great gain; and this will be the effect of the new movement.1

The above comments were, of course, especially applicable to a public institution. Cutter's primary interest,

1C. A. Cutter, "Librarians in Convention," Nation, LI (October 9, 1890), 282.
however, was in expressing the librarian's plight in the face of trustee control. In his presidential address to the second meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club in January 1891 he generalized about one's philosophy of librarianship and the reason why a local professional association could be useful. He surmised that librarians came to a professional meeting from a selfish motive that had an altruistic end. That is, they wanted to make their own libraries the best in the country. They wanted to achieve the greatest economy of operation in order to arrive at the greatest ends. Reality indicated, however, that on the one hand librarians did not always have enough money to do so, and even if they did, they could not always get their own way in its use. If on the other hand what a librarian was doing was unwise, the interaction of a professional meeting could help him correct his methods.¹

Finally, in January 1892 Cutter editorialized in the Library Journal even more explicitly on the issue of the proper roles of librarians and trustees. He wrote ostensibly on the situation that had developed at the Boston Public Library where for eighteen months the library had been run by the trustees without a chief librarian. His comments, however, are reminiscent of his own views in his letter of acceptance to his own post in 1868. He stated that if the delay meant that they were carefully searching for,

¹Cutter's remarks are summarized in, "Massachusetts Library Club," [Report of the 2d Meeting], LJ, XVI (February, 1891), 47.
a competent man to whom a certain latitude of action shall be left, and who shall be judged by results, but not hampered in detail . . . , there may be some reason in the demand; but if it only looks to the appointment of a head clerk with a high salary, tied down by rules which take away all authority, unable to do anything without asking permission; if the library is still to be run by one of the trustees, as in the last librarianship, it is not easy to see what is gained.

A librarian, to be of much use, should be fully, and without restriction, the executive officer of the library; he should have practically, if not in name, the power of appointing and dismissing his assistants. He should have large discretionary powers in the interpretation and application of the regulations of the library; his advice should be sought and considered in regard to its policy; he should be in fact its manager. And if, after fair trial, he proves unable to make the library a success, either through ignorance, indifference, indolence, irascibility, an illiberal spirit, ill-judged measures, or other incompetence, he should be asked to resign and a better man chosen in his place. In truth, the chief office of trustees is to choose a librarian and watch over him—not themselves to manage the library, but to see that he so manages it that it produces the greatest possible amount of good.¹

If Cutter's words seemed like a challenge to the Athenaeum's trustees, they were not long in acting on them. In February they referred the question of the appointment of a librarian to the Library Committee.² That action by itself was significant. The election of the librarian at the Athenaeum had always been an annual affair, but for twenty-three years it had been a pro forma matter, usually accomplished by the time of the annual meeting of the proprietors in February.³ The trustees had simply re-elected

¹Editorial, LJ, XVII (January, 1892), 3-4.
²Records of the Trustees, February 15, 1892.
³The annual meeting was held in January through 1881 and in February thereafter. That a question was raised at this late point suggests that some hurried, perhaps less than deliberate actions, were being taken.
Cutter without any questions being raised about searching for a librarian. Cutter confided to Melvil Dewey the seriousness of the problem.

Strained relations between me and my trustees are reaching a point at which it may be more comfortable for me to be somewhere else. You have I know not been unwilling to say a good word for me in times past. Will you again bear me in mind when you [missing word] of boards seeking an experienced and not unindustrious librarian.

Keep this to yourself for the present, unless you have occasion to suggest my name to some. Nothing may come of the present disagreement.¹

Indeed, the problem was solved for the present. The Library Committee finally recommended in March that Cutter be re-elected and the trustees approved their report unanimously. But for Cutter the situation had become too severe. Within a week of his re-election he again wrote to Dewey that he was looking for another position. "My election this year (for the 24th time) was unanimous but I shall not be a candidate for another year."²

Dewey's reaction to Cutter's situation took the form of a proposal. He had already been in correspondence with William Rainey Harper, the president of the newly formed University of Chicago, concerning Harper's desire that Dewey come to the University in order to head the libraries and establish his library school there. Their talks had broken down by the end of January 1892 when Dewey withdrew his

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 24, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 27, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers; Records of the Trustees, March 21, 1892.
initial positive enthusiasm. Harper persisted, and during February and March, Dewey claimed to be reconsidering the offer. ¹

In a move that had other overtones of a more involved nature, Dewey wrote to Cutter in the beginning of April about an alternative plan. ² He spoke to Cutter of the Chicago situation and although he noted that he had no authority for his proposal, asked Cutter whether he would consider joining him at the new university as the university librarian. Dewey himself would be the head of the entire university library system. His proposal carried with it two explicit conditions, however. First, although Cutter would oversee the day-to-day operations of the library, Dewey, as his superior, would be involved in all policy decisions. Dewey suggested that that would present little difficulty for he felt that their ideas were so alike they could easily work together. Second, only the Decimal Classification could be used and promoted, a matter Dewey

¹The negotiations between Dewey and Harper are contained in the correspondence between them and can be found in the CUL, M. Dewey Papers and in the Presidents' Papers (Harper) at the University of Chicago. Dewey at first seemed very enthusiastic but by the end of January was attempting to withdraw from his tacit agreement by claiming that New York was not easy to leave and by demanding a salary greater than the one originally offered.

²The other overtones had to do with a conflict between Dewey and Cutter (with Justin Winsor) over the rewriting of the A. L. A. constitution and the purpose of the Association. For its implications, see ahead, Ch. VIII, pp. For the details of his alternative proposal, see Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter, April 6, 1892 (Letterbook copy], CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
thought absolutely necessary for making Chicago "the library center of the world." ¹

Cutter responded to Dewey's request for a frank reply in two short notes a week apart, each of which bore evidence of his cautiousness. In the first, written immediately upon receipt of Dewey's proposal, he asked for time to consider it. He assured Dewey that he would be willing to work with the Decimal Classification, although he thought his own to be better. He also expressed his feeling that they could indeed work together despite their differences. In the second note, Cutter responded at somewhat greater length, but in even more measured tones. He spoke of his desire to do more work on the Athenaeum's classification. He claimed that he would leave the Athenaeum immediately for a very good position, but he felt that Dewey's Chicago proposal had some bad features as well. He also added what he would expect in the way of a salary, that is, $5,000 a year inasmuch as living in Chicago was more expensive and he would have to give up the editorship of the Library Journal. ²

In the end the grand scheme failed to materialize and any chance for Cutter to have come to the University of Chicago vanished. One possible reason was that Dewey seems not to have been convinced about going to Chicago in the

¹Ibid.
²Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 8 and 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
first place and his letters to Harper suggest that his reconsideration was not serious. He could have suggested to Harper at an early point that Cutter be considered in his place. In fact, Charles C. Soule, an acquaintance of both Dewey and Cutter, had suggested to Dewey as early as March 29 that he do just that, if he [Dewey] did not want the position. But Dewey did so only in May when he wrote to Harper and very explicitly made known his intentions to remain in New York. He did at that time, however, recommend Cutter highly, stating that he was "one of the best and most famous librarians in America." Others also wrote to Harper on Cutter's behalf and Dewey himself reiterated his recommendation of Cutter to Harper in both June and August. But Harper, apparently having become disenchanted with Dewey, showed no further interest in Dewey's ideas or recommendations and turned to a local person for the position.

It is probably quite certain that in the succeeding months Cutter let the trustees know of his impending action. In October 1892 they raised the question of who would be

1It should be noted that although Dewey's letters to Harper convey the attitude mentioned, Cutter's letters to Dewey show that he received quite an opposite impression.


3Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, May 5, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers, in which Cutter mentions that Soule and Samuel S. Green (Worcester) were the other two correspondents on his behalf. See also Dewey's letters to Harper, June 3 and August 8, 1892, Presidents' Papers (Harper), University of Chicago, in which he reiterated Cutter's qualifications.
elected librarian and directed the Library Committee to again report on the matter. The following February Cutter announced his decision to decline and it was determined that he would remain until the end of April when the new candidate, William C. Lane, Harvard's assistant librarian, would take over.¹

Cutter's decision was accepted by the trustees with little recorded comment. It could hardly have been otherwise, of course, for Cutter's decision was final, considering the circumstances of the previous months. The matter struck at least one of Cutter's close friends as a tragedy.

In the February issue of the Library Journal, Richard K. Bowker inserted a signed editorial in which he took the trustees to task and made known Cutter's need for another position.

The Journal announces elsewhere the resignation from the Boston Athenaeum of Mr. C. A. Cutter, whose association with that library during the present library generation has made the name of the library and the name of its librarian almost convertible terms. His retirement emphasizes the change which has come over library affairs in Boston since the start of the American Library Association and the Library Journal, . . . . It is to be regretted that the willingness of the trustees of the Boston Athenaeum to accept the resignation of this veteran librarian--veteran, not in years, but in service--emphasizes a weakness which the library profession shares with the ministerial calling--a willingness to let tried servants go after long years of service, because of what are commonly known as "differences in the congregation." . . . . It is the intention of our associate to spend some time in a well-earned vacation abroad and not to resume library work until the fall. That library will be fortunate which secures his services, for his

¹Records of the Trustees, October 17, 1892, February 20, 1893.
name is to the library calling a synonym of scholarship and effective administration; but there are few libraries adequate to provide sufficient field for Mr. Cutter's great knowledge and ability.¹

Cutter responded to the editorial with a note to Bowker that had he been consulted he would have advised against printing it, "but if anything was to be printed it couldn't have been put more neatly."²

Others, however, found the editorial to be disconcerting. For Dewey, who was the current president of the American Library Association, the editorial only served to emphasize that one of the Association's top librarians had come to loggerheads with his trustees over the issue of control. In reality, Cutter's case was not that unusual. Other librarians were regularly experiencing the same difficulties, and even one so renowned as William F. Poole was currently involved in a similar problem.³ Coming as it did, the editorial did little to help the Association in its conscious drive to enlist the support of trustees in the library movement. Accordingly, Dewey sent a circular letter to various librarians concerning whether or not the new trustees section of the Association should meet with the librarians at the upcoming annual meeting to be held at the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in the summer. Justin Winsor replied to the query sternly:

¹R. R. Bowker, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (February, 1893), 35.

²Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, February 21, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

³Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 161–81.
It is a ticklish business, and I am not [wise] enough in the [service] of such things to have very definite ideas of what is best. Such articles as Bowker wrote in the last Library Journal about Cutter leaving the Boston Athenaeum will do more mischief than a score of conversations can patch up. Bowker ought not to have [delivered] himself in such a way on what he would call, I suppose, "general principles." No one could write a proper notice for such an event without full knowledge and I know no way in which Bowker cd have had full knowledge. Cutters record can take care of itself. It would have been well to let that of the trustees be equally free from gratuitous imputations.¹

With regard to Cutter's specific situation, Winsor wrote to Poole in Chicago,

Cutter needs sympathy to help him get another place, for I fear if enquiry is made about him of the Athenaeum trustees, a recital of their experiences, as they would put it, would not strike the ear pleasantly. Cutter would be entitled to tell his story, and it is to be hoped it will help him. He wants, as I understand, a place in the autumn. He goes abroad for a short run about May 1. I thought Bowker's paragraph in the Library Journal an unfortunate one, in as much as there was the best possible opportunity in Cutters behalf of saying nothing. Bowker simply told everybody that the trustees got rid of their librarian for incompatibility. The question every one will ask is what is this incompatibility which made a large board of trustees a unit.²

The decision to leave the Athenaeum having been set, Cutter needed to put matters in order before he left, find another position, and finish the various other professional projects that he had been involved in. Letters of sympathy came in abundance, not a few of them suggesting other places he might consider. Dewey suggested first that the Boston Public Library might be a possibility. But Cutter discounted


²Letter, J. Winsor to W. F. Poole, March 20, 1893, Newberry Library, Poole Papers.
the idea with the suggestion that if they had wanted him
they would have already contacted him. Besides, he wrote,
"I shd have preferred Crerar to any now possible because
I'd rather have a learned libry than a city libry. But
beggars must not be choosers."\(^1\) Bowker's suggestion was
for the Lenox Library in New York City, but Cutter dis-
counted that suggestion also, not only because he thought
his bibliographical acumen not quite up to the qualifica-
tions needed, but also because of the same conflict of li-
brary philosophy that had caused his leaving the Athenaeum.

I want to make books useful to the greatest possible
number. If my Trustees couldn't stand that at the Athe-
naeum how would the Lenox trustees like it. I haven't
the slightest sympathy with the spirit that made Mr.
Lenox send word to Henry Ward Beecher who wanted to
consult one of his treasures that he didn't know Mr.
Beecher. I don't think I could stand a library founded
and carried on in such a spirit.\(^2\)

Dewey also suggested that he make application for
the Newberry Library in Chicago but with Poole still there
Cutter would do nothing to jeopardize the older man's posi-
tion, even though Poole himself was in administrative dif-
ficulty. Poole and his assistant, Charles Alexander Nelson,
together decided that either the Crerar or the University
of Chicago libraries would be the best place. Nelson com-
municated the idea to Cutter and Cutter thought it a good

\(^1\) Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 27 [1893],
CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The year is not indicated on the
letter, but the context strongly supports 1893.

\(^2\) Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, March 2, 1893,
NYPL, Bowker Papers.
idea, especially the Crerar.¹ The Crerar legacy which had recently been settled made that proposed library something of a plum. It was talked of in the professional library circles and many men aspired to the position. For the library scene as a whole, several of the largest libraries needed librarians during the years 1893 and 1894, producing an atmosphere of hopeful opportunity for many of the more energetic and aspiring librarians to move up. These libraries included the Crerar, the Newberry, the University of Chicago, the Tilden trust in New York City, and the proposed Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts.

For Cutter, however, all of the hopeful suggestions produced little solid results. He wound up his work at the Athenaeum and in an effort to get a rest traveled to Europe for the months of May and June 1893.² He had already made several commitments for the summer meeting of the American Library Association, and he had to make arrangements for those. He had fortunately completed his work on the catalog exhibit in February. For that project he partially displayed his new Expansive Classification. Of the papers he had promised to deliver in the summer he withdrew from the one on cataloging and classification and the work was done instead by his successor at the Athenaeum, William C. Lane.

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 1, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers; Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, March 2, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers, in which Cutter related the action of Nelson and Poole.

²A notice of his plans appeared in, "Librarians," LJ, XVIII (February, 1893), 60.
He reconsidered another paper--on the subject of proprietary libraries--that he at first asked Dewey to be released from and wrote it hurriedly before he left for Europe.\(^1\) In the short summary of his thoughts he portrayed the relationship between proprietary libraries and public libraries as that of a matter of cooperation and emphasis in the total library resources of the nation. Proprietary libraries had been parent to the public institution but in the process of the growth of the library movement had often been absorbed by public libraries. But where the proprietary library was strong enough to survive, it was good to have both institutions. The proprietary library could serve scholarly needs that the public institution could not. In doing so, however, he suggested that the proprietary library needed to see itself as a branch of the whole public library system. That would be its necessary rationale for existence.\(^2\)

Cutter prepared enough material for the *Library Journal* to care for the April and most of the May issues and left the editing in Bowker's hands. He had already decided by the time of his return in the beginning of July, however, to return to Europe after the summer meeting of the Association.\(^3\) At the end of the summer, therefore, he regretfully

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\(^1\) On his preparation of papers for the summer A. L. A. see letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 7 and 8, and April 23, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.


\(^3\) Letters, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, March 6 and August 4, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
relinquished the editorship of the periodical that he had held since January 1881. With his business cared for he set sail for England in October 1893 with no other position in hand and not knowing for sure when he might return.
CHAPTER V

THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM CATALOG AND
SUBJECT CATALOGING

When Charles Ammi Cutter departed from the Athenaeum, a cloud hung over his future. His achievements were secure, however. Two of them, the printed catalog of the Athenaeum and his Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue, were outstanding, and an account of how they were produced is essential to an understanding of Cutter's contribution to the library profession. 1

The Boston Athenaeum Catalog was the first of the two achievements. The cataloging rules were published after the first two volumes of the catalog were completed. The two items together exerted a strong influence in the library world, for in them Cutter formalized the modern dictionary catalog concept. Despite the critical evaluation that has accrued in a century of use, that concept has provided a theoretical and practical basis for cataloging in the

1 Boston Athenaeum, Catalogue of the Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1807-1871, [comp. by C. A. Cutter] (5 Pts.; Boston, 1874-82). (Hereafter cited as Boston Athenaeum Catalog); Charles Cutter's Rules were first published in 1876 and were entitled Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue. The second and third editions were published in 1889 and 1891 respectively and were entitled Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue. The fourth edition was published posthumously in 1904 and was entitled Rules for a Dictionary Catalog.
American library community ever since. The existence today of dictionary catalogs in almost every American library provides a continuing tribute to his work.

Apart from the ultimate effect of these two achievements, however, is the fact that they were also an essential part of the professional library scene in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Though Cutter's dictionary catalog concept may seem to have appeared quite suddenly and have swept the library field without opposition, in reality it was not so. The lineage of the concept is traceable and its triumph was far from foregone. In fact, Cutter twice revised various parts of the Rules in accordance with the growth of a consensus of cataloging opinion. Despite those changes, the basic idea of the dictionary catalog remained, and Cutter's work provided the chief framework for the general discussion of cataloging rules and principles that took place during the period.

Work on the Project Through May 1872

The Boston Athenaeum had long needed a new catalog, and the need was accentuated by greatly increased acquisitions beginning in 1846. In 1852 after the institution had become fairly well settled in its new building, the Library Committee outlined the problems. They reported that the 1827 printed catalog and the 1840 cumulative supplement were inadequate. Together the two covered only 30,000 of the

1Records of the Trustees, February 9, 1852.
50,000 volumes in the library and lacked entries for the large pamphlet collection. Furthermore, regular cataloging had gotten in arrears and not even the author catalog on pasted slips was up-to-date. The Committee suggested first the necessity of an interleaved title (i.e., author) catalog so that "any person by referring to it, may readily ascertain whether any particular book belongs to the library." That is, there would have to be a single alphabetical sequence of authors and their works. Second, the information on the slips needed to be transferred to cards, from which a systematic index according to subjects can be arranged. The titles on cards can be made out in connection with the entry upon the interleaved catalogue with comparatively small additional cost. They will be indispensably necessary [sic] to the economical printing of a Catalogue of the Athenaeum, when the funds of the Athenaeum will warrant such an expense.

The chief problem of the plan was how to get the work done. The librarian simply had no extra time to work on the project. Although finding other suitable persons was difficult, the Committee reported that there was one person whom they had heard of who would be able to do the job; Ezra Abbot. He was then busy making his Cambridge High School catalog and would do the same for the Athenaeum at the same rate of pay, that is, two dollars a day. To help him, the Committee surmised that other clerical assistants could be hired.

The trustees authorized the Library Committee to proceed with their solution for the problem, but apparently

1Ibid. 2Ibid.
little came of it. Abbot was eventually hired for the regular staff of the Athenaeum in 1854, but after three years of institutional struggle over finances, a struggle that affected the administration of the library, Folsom, the librarian, retired, and Abbot left for the Harvard College library. The catalog project seems never to have been pursued seriously.¹

During William F. Poole's twelve years at the Athenaeum, the catalog project was begun but never finished, although it twice came close to completion.² The ultimate aim of the trustees was to provide a printed catalog, but the format was changed in keeping with Poole's experience in making a catalog for the Boston Mercantile Library Association in 1854. There was to be a simple alphabetical sequence of authors and subject-word entries, the latter taken for the most part from the titles. Ranz has written that Poole's 1854 catalog did much to popularize the dictionary arrangement, for it was both a serviceable list and cheaply made.

By the use of short titles and authors' initials rather than forenames, the entries were held to a line in length. Further economies were effected by omitting

¹Authority for the Library Committee to pursue the project was given at the same meeting. Abbot was elected assistant librarian on January 9, 1854. Both Folsom and Abbot resigned in the spring of 1856.

²A concise account of the catalog project under Poole is contained Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 32-37. The more detailed account upon which the above is based is contained in Williamson's Ph.D. dissertation of the same title, especially pp. 116-19, 143-46, 173-77, and 191-204.
cross references and by keeping contents notes and entries for parts of books to a minimum. Such a catalogue was obviously economical of space and easy of compilation; at the same time, it was surprisingly useful.¹

That format—popularly called a title-a-liner and manifestly different from either Abbot's systematic Cambridge catalog or the Athenaeum Library Committee's original desire for an author list combined with a systematic subject index—became the basic plan for the project. But the project was not destined to be completed during Poole's administration. In 1861, when the catalog seemed ready to print, because of the state of the Union, the trustees held off from the financial burden that it would impose. The cost of printing the catalog had always been a decisive factor for the trustees and would continue so.

After the 1861 failure, a new factor arose to deter completion of the project. From 1857 to 1861, when Poole himself had been nominally in control of the project, no standardized rules for the compiling process had been made. Williamson suggests that the lack of a formal procedure was directly related to Poole's method of doing his own indexing work. He himself knew how to handle difficult entry problems, and for continuity in such projects he depended upon his memory. But with others working on the project and with Poole's own propensity to supervise only loosely, serious errors began to creep into the work. Cutter later described the growing trouble.

¹Ranz, The Printed Book Catalogue, p. 49.
²Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 34-35.
The making of it, I have been told, was entrusted to several young men. They were intelligent and industrious; one of them, at least, has since made his mark in the world; but they had never had any instruction in cataloguing, probably had never been trained even in accuracy of copying. Sometimes they took the title from the back of the book, sometimes from the title-page, sometimes from the half-title, and sometimes, apparently, from their own imaginations. They omitted freely, of course, and they altered the order of words for the purpose of omitting, and of the words which they retained they abbreviated the greater part to the verge of unintelligibility. They spent no time on the investigation of authors' full names or in the discovery of the authors of anonymous and pseudonymous books, nor did they trouble themselves about cataloguing rules. Their chief object must have been quick work; their writing, therefore, was often illegible or ambiguous by reason of haste; their copying was often faulty, especially in names and dates; ... The result, if it had been printed would have been one of the most remarkable catalogues ever issued. Of course, working so rapidly, these writers got over a great deal of ground; the worse they worked, the more they did, leaving a larger crop of errors for others to uproot, and the nearer the catalogue seemed to completion the farther off it really was.

Charles Russell Lowell, employed upon the project since 1857, assumed full direction of the work in 1862. Cutter described what Lowell found and how he dealt with the situation.

He [Lowell] was a lover of books, and familiar with the Athenaeum from his earliest years, and he took up the task and pursued it almost as a labor of love. His best course would have been to throw the work of his predecessors into the fire and begin anew. But unfortunately he also was without experience. Not knowing what a catalogue ought to be he was not shocked at the material which came into his hands; besides, most of the errors were not, like those which I have instanced, on the surface, and it was only after several years that he acquired the habit of assuming every title of his pre to contain some mistake. He continued on their lines. But Mr. Lowell, though without the special training of a cataloguer, had a sympathy with students, and

1C. A. Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," in Boston Athenaeum Catalog, V, 3399.
the instincts of a life-long reader. He found that the
catalogue, as it had been made, was a very unsatisfac-
tory assistant to researches in the library. He began
to study the somewhat scanty literature of cataloguing,
and to introduce the ideas which he there found into his
practice. As the work was evidently too much for one
person, he was allowed a copyist to assist him, and then
another, and finally a third.\(^1\)

Cutter went on to describe how the new staff recop-
ied much of the previous work and cataloged new accessions.
As Lowell learned more and more about the art of cataloging,
he went back over the earlier work and continually changed
it. For some entries he repeated the process as many as
five or six times. The continual recopying only added to
the mistakes, however, and after several years the catalog
slips varied greatly in form and accuracy.\(^2\)

After another near approach to completion and another
frustration of the attempt to print the catalog in 1866, the
trustees seemed more concerned than ever to get to the bot-
tom of the problem. In May 1867 they hired Ezra Abbot as a
special consultant to examine the catalog and report on its
"readiness for printing."\(^3\) Abbot completed his examination
in the fall of that year and reported to the trustees at the
end of December. His written report followed in January
1868.\(^4\) He supported the changes that Lowell had been making

\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid. \\
\(^3\)Records of the Trustees, May 20, 1867. \\
\(^4\)Charles Deane made a verbal report of Abbot's find-
ings at a meeting of the Library Committee, December 30,
1867. Abbot's report was entitled simply, "To the Trustees
of the Boston Athenaeum," and was dated January 4, 1868.
but contended that those changes needed to be carried out even more systematically. To the degree that the trustees accepted the authority of Abbot's views, his report represents an important shift in the rationale of the catalog, for it made his own more rigorous approach to cataloging the basis for the catalog's future development. A further confirmation is suggested by the freedom that Cutter, Abbot's protege, was later allowed when he made the catalog into something entirely different from the simple dictionary title-a-liner that Poole had envisioned.

Abbot's critique dealt with the scope of the catalog and the adequacy of its format, the latter partly under the rubric of accuracy. With regard to scope, Abbot noted that a cut-off date for new entries set for the beginning of 1866 had been observed, and that all bound volumes were purported to be included up to that date. He also praised the work done on analytical entries for books containing collections of articles. An analytical entry was the entry of a part of a work. By that method, access was given to specialized materials otherwise buried within collections. The analytical entries were both author and subject and in Abbot's words, "must greatly increase its [the catalog's] value as a guide to the contents of the Library."¹ The same applied for the contents notes for voluminous works.

With regard to format, in words reminiscent of his own 1863 report on the Harvard College library catalog, he

¹Abbot, "To the Trustees of the Boston Athenaeum," p. 4.
praised Lowell for having made full entries under the subject words instead of only references to the author entry. The superiority of that arrangement came in the savings in time afforded to one searching for books on a subject, for having found the full entries under the subject word, the user was not obliged to refer to the author entries for full descriptions of the books. He noted that the execution of that arrangement was not perfectly carried out, but that if abridgments were to be made for the purpose of economy,

let it be made in the titles as given under the authors' names, rather than under subjects; for the person who looks under the name of an author is supposed to know the book he wants, his only object being to learn whether it is to be found in the Library; while to one who is investigating a subject, a comparatively full description of the books is of great advantage.¹

With regard to the accuracy of the entries, Abbot had a less enthusiastic evaluation. In a random sample of entries he found a considerable number of small errors, but he did not doubt that such errors would be easily caught during proof-reading. In the matter of accuracy related to format, and especially with regard to the rigorous selection of subject names, he suggested several major improvements. He advised that synonymous subject headings be entered under only one of the terms and that cross-references from related subjects be increased in number.

The catalogue therefore might be much improved, and that without a great deal of labor, by a careful examination of all the names of subjects which it contains, for the express purpose of connecting special branches

¹Ibid.
with the general class by means of references, . . .
and also of bringing together under one head the titles
which are separated by being entered under synonymous
terms. 1

He also advised doing it, "before beginning to print; for
the necessary changes in the alphabetical place of many of
the entries cannot be anticipated." 2

With regard to the author entries he suggested a
rigorous identification and separation of authors with the
same surnames in order to gather all the works by any one
author together. He also advised that rigorous attention
be paid to the title transcriptions of works in certain sub-
ject areas, for the entries that he found were very inaccu-
rate. The work on the author entries he suggested did not
need to be completed before printing began, but rather could
be done concurrently with the printing process.

Abbot concluded his survey with a note of praise
but also a question about the propriety of printing in the
first place.

In conclusion, the undersigned would congratulate
the Trustees of the Athenaeum on their possession of a
catalogue, which, whatever may be its minor imperfec-
tions, has been prepared with great labor, on a good
plan, and which, if only made accessible to those who
consult the Library, will unquestionably be found of the
greatest practical utility. Whether it is expedient to
print it, is a point on which there may well be a dif-
ference of opinion; but there can be no doubt that it
ought in some way to be made available to the proprie-
tors of the Library, and to all who are permitted to
enjoy its privileges.3

The year 1868 proved to be a decisive year for the
future of the catalog. In actuality Abbot's report was only

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1 Ibid., p. 8. 2 Ibid., pp. 8-9. 3 Ibid., p. 12.
one part of an extensive effort on the part of the trustees to inquire into the difficulties of completing the project. A special committee of investigation was appointed late in 1867 and later received as special reports, not only Abbot's survey, but a statement from Charles R. Lowell, and a list of extracts taken from the Athenaeum's official records on the subject of the catalog. The latter was probably prepared by William F. Poole.¹ The report of the special committee itself was given in November 1868 and enumerated the reasons for the delay of the project. Perhaps the most significant of these was the shift in the format of the catalog from a finding list (under Poole) to what they termed a "bibliographic" catalog (under Lowell).² One is not sure whether that change was welcomed by the trustees, but it was not stopped, and consequently, the final direction of the catalog's format was set.

When Cutter assumed his post at the Athenaeum in January 1869, Lowell was still considered in charge of the catalog. In April 1869 Cutter gave his own report on the needs of the project. He made a thorough presentation of goals and alternative measures of meeting those goals. His opening statement was a measured plea for a sensible attitude.

¹Charles R. Lowell, "To the Trustees," January 13, 1868; "Extracts from Proprietors' Records of Reports of the Library Committee on the Subject of a Catalogue, 1858-1868," MSS, BA.
²"Committee of Inquiry into the Index Catalogue of the Library to the Trustees," November 16, 1868, MS, BA.
I suppose I need not insist upon the importance of the catalogue-question in this library. Yet many of the difficulties and much of the disappointment which the Athenaeum has experienced in this matter have been caused by not foreseeing and providing for the difficulties of the work, and by underestimating its extent,—both of which causes imply its insufficient consideration. I hope therefore that it will not be thought necessary to settle this question today, merely because it has been brought before a full meeting today. It is natural that you should be impatient to have something decided, so that a beginning can be made of doing something; but the past warns you not to give way to the feeling so as to do in haste what you might repent at leisure.¹

Because the catalog question had long revolved around the adequacy of Lowell's slip catalog work, Cutter presented his report as an analysis of catalog styles. Any catalog would have to meet certain general requirements. These included, "immutability of plan, permanence of execution, durability of materials, cheapness of construction, [and] convenience in use."² His basic assumption was that Lowell's work was "not perhaps the best that could be imagined, but . . . an excellent catalogue, and capable of being of great service."³ Nevertheless, it could not be presented to the public without extensive changes and corrections. Furthermore, it would have to be copied because of its many-layered appearance, and therefore, it remained to determine what the final form should be.

Accordingly, Cutter presented five alternative plans. The first was to print the catalog. Dismissing the advantages

¹Cutter, "Librarian's Report on the Best Method of Copying Mr. Lowell's Catalogue."
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
of this form as "obvious," he listed briefly two disad-

teavantages: its high cost, and the need for supplements
"which are a great evil, and an evil that increases with
time." His comments on printing were brief for he felt
that since the high cost was an "insuperable" objection,
that plan required no further consideration.

The second plan was for a manuscript book catalog.
It would require them, "to copy on the pages of a book (not
on slips to be pasted, but on the pages themselves), without
leaving any space for additions; the titles of new books to
be put on interleaves, or in supplements." Its
advantages
were first its permanence and second its convenience. It
would last for perhaps forty or fifty years before the need
to recopy it. It would present for the reader, as did a
printed catalog, many titles at the same time, this in con-
tradistinction to a pasted slip catalog or a card catalog.
Its chief weakness was the same as that of a printed catalog,
that it would need supplements to accommodate the growing
collection, and supplements would make it necessary to work
with multiple filing sequences, a time-waster for patrons
and librarians alike. Moreover, the disadvantage was pro-
gressive. "The convenience of the catalogue is seriously
diminished, and this diminution increases every day, till at
last all the superiority of this catalogue vanishes." The
weakness could be lessened by interleaving pages of additions,
but only at the expense of order in the catalog, for

\[1\]Ibid. \[2\]Ibid. \[3\]Ibid.
the inserted pages very soon get out of order and the
page gets full, and we are driven to supplements; and
supplements are as hard to keep in order as the original
catalogue, and bring back before us the whole question
how we shall copy our catalogue still unsolved; we have
failed to find, as yet, a catalogue that does not re-
quire a periodical re-creation.¹

Cutter's previous experience was evident. In his
extended description of the troubles of interleaving and
interpolating new entries, one can see the catalog problem
as he found it at the Harvard Divinity School Library. The
plan seemed to him, therefore, to have many more disadvan-
tages than advantages and he advised rejecting it altogether
as the worst possible alternative. He added one final argu-
ment against both it and the first plan. Lowell's work was
in no condition to proceed directly to copying, but instead
needed to be redone a little at a time. Any plan that made
insertion of new entries or changes difficult would frustrate
progress toward the final product by increasing the problem
of inserting entries found to be out of order in Lowell's
catalog in the first place.

The third plan was for a slip catalog. Its method
of construction was,

to copy [the entries] on slips to be pasted into a book
leaving large spaces for the insertion of new titles,
and guards for the insertion of new leaves, and pasting
the slips so that they can be taken off and repasted as
the influx of additions necessitates redistribution of
parts of the work.²

The advantages of the plan included an ability to
scan entries as in the printed or manuscript page catalogs,

¹Ibid.  ²Ibid.
although not quite as great, and most of all a freedom from supplements. It would cost more than a manuscript catalog because there would be more volumes and the pasting process required more labor. But the increase in the number of physical volumes (he estimated that 130 volumes would be necessary) would help in the convenience to the user by allowing more readers to use the catalog at any one time.

This plan also had serious disadvantages. Chief among these was the constant state of flux that the catalog would be in because of re-writing, re-pasting, and re-binding, a problem of such proportions that Cutter claimed to have no confidence in the catalog's durability.

We should hardly have finished copying the last volume before in the first the additional titles of new books and of over 30,000 as yet uncatalogued pamphlets would disturb the alphabetical order of the earlier volumes. Then would begin a new course of detaching slips, cutting up slips, rewriting slips. The first step would be to move them about, till several consecutive pages got full; then we should have to write more than one title on each slip. Then would come a title which ought to go between two, and the slip must be cut, so as to make two narrow slips, exposed to all the dangers of being torn off which are giving us so much trouble in the present catalogue, or else we must copy the three titles anew, and, by bringing in so much additional width be driven to the rearrangement of the whole page and perhaps of several pages. For the preservation of the proper order is a sine qua non in a catalogue intended for the public.1

Furthermore, Cutter discounted the idea of randomly allowing spaces for the interpolation of new entries. Using the example of allowing such spaces on the shelves he demonstrated that the process was purely guesswork. A slight modification

1Ibid.
of this plan could make this approach more acceptable. If in the beginning the slips were written with a manifold writer, future expenses would be lessened. On the other hand, using a manifold writer would greatly increase the initial cost.

The fourth plan was to complete the present card catalog. It had been started by Poole in 1866 in anticipation of printing Lowell's slip catalog at that time. When the decision to print was rescinded the card catalog was continued for new accessions until 1868 and resulted in two author catalogs. The chief advantage of this plan was its apparent cheapness. On the other hand it would require a great deal of additional work, for as it was it held only part of the collection. It would also be more expensive in the long run, because the cards that had been chosen were "twice as large as they need be, which would cost more and require us to use larger and more expensive cases than moderate sized cards."\(^1\) The cards were also too thin for durability. Cutter felt that to follow this plan would be "penny wise and pound foolish. . . . It is only fit to be abandoned."\(^2\)

The fifth plan, Cutter's own choice, was to build a card catalog much like the Harvard catalog. His lengthy explanation of this proposal is a classic defense of what today is taken as standard library equipment. The cards would

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\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid.
be of moderate size, close to the two inch by five inch
cards of the Harvard system.

These are to be kept in cases of drawers in the deliv­
ery room, for general use. A wire guard is to prevent
people from taking out and misplacing cards; quickness
of consultation to be facilitated by labels outside,
blocks and wider cards inside, copious references, etc.;
the shelf number to be on the side of the card; the
accessions-number on the back.¹

The advantages of the card catalog were manifold.
It would have only one alphabetical sequence for it was to
be in the dictionary catalog format. It would be easy to
keep in "proper order" even when new entries were added.
It required no repasting or expensive redistribution, for
the time involved in inserting cards was almost negligible
in comparison to interpolating new entries in a book catalog.
It was permanent. It needed no rewriting. In addition,
the cards themselves had distinct advantages. They afforded
more room for each title, making it unnecessary to abbre-
viate essential information. They had a greater capacity
for arrangement in a subject system. They were written as
unit entries, the author appearing on each instead of on
only the first entry of any one of many works by one author.
Therefore, if a card ever became misplaced, all of the infor-
mation was present. Cards were also easy to consult, al-
though they did not allow scanning. But with proper guides
in the drawers they would be easy to manipulate. Cards were
more durable than slips and on the average stayed neater and
cleaner over a longer period of time than a book catalog.

¹Ibid.
Because of their durability they would not need to be re-copied often. They also afforded a convenient record for keeping track of subject entries and provided an index to the accession volume.

After having gone on at length about the advantages, Cutter could find only two disadvantages. A card catalog showed only one card at a time, and the format was a novelty. He felt that both were minor problems. With regard to novelty, it was not as if the Athenaeum had to forge a tool that had never been tried before. He emphasized that the Harvard catalog was living proof that the system worked. In a long argument he praised Abbot's Harvard library work and contended that even those book or slip catalogs considered successful could claim few of its advantages. He concluded with the opinion that the trustees' best course was,

to introduce some features of Mr. Abbot's [catalog] into ours, still adhering to our general system, and to use the results of Mr. Abbot's and my own labor spent in investigations of various sorts so as to avoid making the same investigations over again here.¹

Cutter did not explicitly state what "features" and "results" he had in mind. His presentation had stressed the physical form of the catalog, but his own successful experience at Harvard would suggest he also included in his appreciation of Abbot's system its essential theoretical features as well. His desire would understandably have been to incorporate both aspects. Consequently, his conclusion seems to be very much an understatement, appropriate however,

¹Ibid.
in the light of the situation at hand. He had assumed his post at the Athenaeum only four months before. He made measured recommendations on an important and sensitive issue, perhaps hesitating to appear too insistent about adopting his former Harvard methods completely. Yet, he left little doubt as to the general direction of his sympathies and reinforced Abbot's own evaluation of a year earlier to adopt at least some of those methods as well as the physical format. In a final effort to help the trustees to make a decision in that direction, he appended to his report in the form of a chart a comparative analysis of the worth and costs of each of the catalog forms he had discussed. He began with the last plan, in his opinion the most valuable, but noted that it had a comparatively high initial cost. Printing was also expensive, but it had high value in its ease of use. Finishing the old card catalog had a moderate cost but low value in ease of use. The slip catalog had both moderate cost and moderate ease of use.

The opinion of the trustees on Cutter's report is not recorded. The report itself stands as a unique systematic consideration of the problems of making a catalog in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite Cutter's pleas for the excellence of the card catalog, the trustees continued in their intention to have a printed catalog. The general defense of Abbot's work must have reinforced the trustees' favor for that approach, however; for Lowell continued his efforts without change.
By the following winter the catalog had moved no closer to completion. In March 1870, therefore, the Library Committee took a more drastic step by putting Cutter in effective control of the project, although Lowell continued his supervision of the actual work. The action may have resulted from a second report by Cutter in which he gave specific estimates of the amounts of time necessary to complete each aspect of the project before beginning to print the catalog. The work he outlined seemed overwhelming. Poole's card catalog had to be incorporated into the overall plan, but because its titles were so brief and inaccurate, it was necessary to recatalog all of its entries. Cutter explained that if the library were making only an author catalog, it would be possible to proceed with printing and correct Poole's catalog along the way. But because they were also making a subject catalog and because the subject entries in Poole's catalog were so insufficient, that aspect needed to be done before beginning. To back up his assertion, he examined the entries in Poole's catalog from "W" to the end of the alphabet. He reported,

Records of the Library Committee, March 14, 1870.

Cutter, "Report of the Librarian on Printing the Catalogue," [March, 1870]. The report is undated but a calculation of the amounts of time necessary to complete individual projects listed in it compared to the date when Cutter suggested that the individual projects could be finished places its writing in March 1870. The date also coincides with a meeting of the Library Committee especially devoted to the topic of the catalog and at which Cutter gave a report.
To say nothing of 2 important and 6 unimportant errors of statement, and 5 important and 11 unimportant errors of omission, there were in 21 titles, 5 cases where there was no entry at all under a subject, 19 cases where, although there was an entry, another entry was necessary, and one case where a cross reference from one subject to another was needed.¹

The errors affected entries from one end of the alphabet to the other and for Cutter, made it absolutely necessary to correct the mistakes before printing began. He estimated that it would take seven months to do the work.

There were other matters to be attended to, also. A collection of Polish books had to be cataloged. Certain composite works, including those from various selected learned societies, needed to be more carefully analyzed for individual articles. Parliamentary, congressional, and state documents, newspapers, and the collection of Civil War materials had yet to be cataloged. And the library had hundreds of pamphlets both bound and unbound that had not yet been entered. Last of all, Cutter recommended in words very much like Abbot's of two years before that the subject headings be rigorously disciplined, and that adequate cross-references be made. His description of that work detailed the extensive but necessary labor involved.

The last work before sending copy to the printer must be, if we wish to have all safe, to go over the whole of the catalogue, make out a list of the subjects and see that there are not titles under synonymous headings (as Birds and Ornithology); and whether the proper cross references have been made from general to specific subjects (as from Fuel to the various kinds of fuel, Coal, Peat, Wood, from Manure to Guano, Peat, etc.); and also from specific to general, which is more important,

¹Ibid.
because often the best things on special subjects are found in general works; and from allied subjects to one another, (as from Earth to World, Universe, Atlases, and vice versa; from Man to Archaeology, Ethnology, etc.). These references are often of very great value. They suggest courses of investigation which an inquirer in his hurry or in a momentary inability to collect his ideas, might not remember or think of.¹

With all things being considered, Cutter estimated that by late 1871 the printing could begin. But he cautioned that once it had begun, the printing process would itself require a large amount of work. He described the work involved in printing one of the catalogs of the Boston Public Library:

The books entered in the First "Index" had been catalogued, as fast as they were bought, by a corps of young ladies under the direction of Mr. Jewett and Mr. Vinton and the cards had been revised by those gentlemen. Yet when it was decided to print, Mr. Jewett, Mr. Vinton and Mr. Jillson went over the whole mass of cards, selected such references as they thought proper to print, revised the headings again, made cross-references, and corrected such errors as they noticed. Just before each letter was copied for the printer someone went over it examining every title. Each proof was read (besides the office-reading) by a professional reader in the library, by a young lady who compared every title with the book, and also by Mr. Jewett, Mr. Vinton, and either four or six other gentlemen (trustees, I believe). Moreover the plate proofs were sent to Washington to Mr. Jillson. Yet when the stereotyped plates were revised for a second edition, they found, on an average, more than one error to a page, some of them serious; and there are others which they did not find. The First Supplement was prepared in the same way, but the proofs were not read by so many people.²

¹Ibid.
²Ibid. Perhaps Cutter intended to try one final time to discourage the trustees from having the catalog printed. He could not have done a better job in describing what the trustees could expect in the way of its extensive and tedious labor--overdrawn perhaps, but useful for making a point. Of special import, therefore, was his parenthetical remark about trustees serving as proofreaders.
Cutter advised that the work staff be permanently increased. He also advised that a cut-off date of December 31, 1871 be observed for entries in the catalog and that all subsequent acquisitions be entered in an author and subject card catalog supplement, which itself could be printed after ten years.

With this report a specific work schedule was adopted that held the promise of bringing the catalog project to a point where printing could definitely begin. When Charles Lowell died suddenly three months later, the supervision of the work descended directly on Cutter himself. The decision to print remained a disappointment to him, however. He still preferred the card catalog as the best alternative, and he appended a note to his report to that effect.

I may as well say that I am still of [the] opinion that a card catalogue would be best for us on the whole. It could be made for one quarter of the expense of printing; keeping it up would cost no more than preparing copy for the supplement and it would always be in one alphabet.¹

But the decision by the trustees was firm. They had waited long enough and wanted a printed guide to the collection as soon as possible. Although they had nothing against a "bibliographic" catalog, in the hands of Lowell that style of catalog had become synonymous with 'taking forever.' Perhaps they felt that Cutter's knowledge of cataloging method would reduce the delay. The problem of delay was not, however, solely a matter of efficiency on the part of the

¹Ibid.
cataloger. It was as much a matter of the expanded goals that a "bibliographic" catalog represented. The trustees seem not to have reckoned with that distinction, and despite Cutter's assurances of keeping to a rigid schedule, the expanded format eventually required far more time and effort than even Cutter's expertise could offset. The work of the eighteen months before printing was scheduled to begin demonstrated that fact.

Most of the author entry work that Cutter had outlined was completed by December 1871, with the exception of some things, such as contents notes, that could be done while printing was in progress. In addition, rigorous attention was paid to the accuracy of all the entries. A decade later Cutter detailed what that work had involved.

Christian names were not generally given in full; different persons of the same name needed to be distinguished; the edition was hardly ever noted; the imprint was frequently omitted, especially under subjects; when the publication of a set of volumes had extended over several years, only the date of the first volume was given; many dates had been altered in copying; the number of volumes was often erroneously given, especially where two or more volumes were bound in one; ... It was finally found necessary to go through the whole library, as well as could be done while the books were in circulation, with a view of finding works likely to have been imperfectly entered in the catalogue and having them treated properly.¹

In December 1871 as the projected time for the completion of preparations came to an end, Cutter reported to the Library Committee the extent of his progress.² He

¹Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," p. 3400.
²C. A. Cutter, "To the Library Committee," December 18, 1871, MS, BA. The Library Committee met the same day.
mentioned the increase in the volume of the catalog, particularly the approximately 105,000 additional slips added to the bulk by cataloging the pamphlets. He also mentioned the work of correction, particularly the effort of going through the collections shelf by shelf. He stressed the extent of his work, adding that he had done most of it in his spare time, because he needed to justify his inability to submit the work to the printer, as he had promised, in January 1872. The particular reason was the subject system which remained unfinished, but Cutter felt that the catalog should not be printed without it, although he concluded that authorization could be given to begin the printing as soon as possible.

Cutter's report and the state of the catalog work appears to have engendered a heated debate in the meeting. Complaints were raised not only because of new estimates of the projected time and expense of printing the catalog, but also because Cutter had made of the catalog far more than was desired on the part of the trustees. The ideal for some of the committee members was still a finding list and the most recent example was another catalog made by Poole, this time at the Cincinnati Public Library where Poole had recently gone. Poole's opinion of what constituted an adequate catalog were obviously quite different than Cutter's. Cutter's criticism of Poole's previous work at the Athenaeum must have been irritating to Poole. Likewise, Poole thought that Cutter's work on the Athenaeum catalog bordered on
Picayune and extravagant nonsense.¹ The Cincinnati library meanwhile had gotten a cheaply made finding list completed within two years of Poole's arrival there. Some of the bibliographical work on it had in fact been done in the Athenaeum through an arrangement between Poole and the trustees.² It must have seemed to the trustees that success had once again eluded them and the substance of the discussion was why could not the Athenaeum's catalog have been gotten ready in the previous eighteen months, instead of again being only partially ready.

Cutter wrote to Charles Deane, a member of the committee, immediately after the meeting in order to defend his work.

The Cincinnati catalogue was not made in six months, and ours could not have been made on that plan in a year. Thirteen years ago we had 55000 volumes and, say, 1500 bound volumes of tracts containing 24000 pamphlets. This is equivalent to 25000 + 24000 works.

The Cincinnati catalogue was begun in December (or earlier) 1869, and finished in September 1871, and its 30,000 volumes equal 15000 works. Now if 15000 works require 20 months then 49000 works would require 65 months, or 5 years and 5 months. The other 6½ years which we have actually spent, and the four which are to be spent (10½ in all) are to be laid to the account, first of the addition of 32000 volumes and 14400 pamphlets, say 30000 works to the Library; 2d, to the original adoption of a very bad plan which had to be changed; 3d, to the necessity of doing the work over and over again on account of the use of slips instead of cards; a mistake which Mr. Poole did not repeat in the Cincinnati catalogue; 4th, because our catalogue in the matter of bringing out what is buried in collections, in

¹Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 76.
²Ibid., p. 56. The authorization for Poole to have two bibliographers working in the library is recorded in, Records of the Library Committee, December 13, 1869.
entering a book under every subject of which it treats and not merely under the first mentioned on the title page, in references from different forms of names, in cross references from one subject to another, in all that distinguishes a good catalogue from a bad one, except correctness of title,—is immeasurably superior to the Cincinnati catalogue; 5th, (and this lies a little at the Committee's door) that Mr. Lowell was expected to do his work with two (!!) assistants, whom he described as 'one ignorant and one slow,' and both they and he were called on more or less to do library work.

I agree with you in thinking that the catalogue might have been made in less time, but I cannot agree with you in wishing that it had been worse done.

I am a little surprised at your preferring the slipshod to the thorough execution of work. That is not the way you do your editing.¹

Deane's reply came two days later. He felt that Cutter had made an unwarranted assumption in asserting that he [Deane] preferred slipshod work simply because he had called attention to the fact that the original intention of the trustees was to have a catalog made in the style of Poole's Mercantile Library Association catalog. It would have provided an index in a reasonable amount of time and at a reasonable cost. Deane went on to give a striking analogy:

If I instruct an architect to build me a cottage of moderate size & expense & in a reasonable time, & furnish

¹Letter [copy], [Cutter] to Charles Deane, December [18], 1871, BA. The letter is unsigned and the date does not include the day of the month, but references within it as well as references in Deane's reply establish both the writer and the date. Deane performed extensive editorial work for the Massachusetts Historical Society. Cutter calculated two whole volumes to a work (i.e., title) and one pamphlet. On that basis, the number of works for the original 55,000 volumes held by the library in 1868 should have been given as 27,500 instead of 25,000. But the error was in Cutter's favor and if corrected would have increased his estimate of the amount of time required, although only by three months.
him with a model which he is generally to follow; & he goes to work, building up & tearing down to conform to his improved knowledge, as he goes on, of what he thinks a house should be, & he finally builds me, in a decade of years, an elegant structure which I did not order & can't afford to live in, would I not have reason to feel--very badly! particularly when the bill came in which I have got to pay. I think this is a parallel case to our catalogue--but having got our large, elegant structure which we did not order & did not want, we must do the best we can with it. You have come in at a late day, as an accomplished artisan & artist, to give the work its crowning finish.

Deane went on to apologize for any error he might have made in estimating how long the Athenaeum catalog might have taken if done the other way. Of Poole's new catalog, he said that though it may have been shabbily done, its style might still offer a good index of the kind the trustees were looking for.

Whatever the effect of that particular exchange, the die was cast for proceeding with the catalog in its new format. Final preparations for printing were completed between January and April 1872. These included determining the best form of page and arrangement of type, and the purchase of paper, type, and printing equipment in order to do the work in the building. On May 1, 1872, printing began.

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1 Letter, Charles Deane to Cutter, December 20, 1871, BA. Of course, Deane's assertion that the original intention was to have a simple finding list was only partially true. The 1852 design was for a systematic subject index as well as for a finding list. (See above, pp. 273-74) It should also be noted that Deane seems to have been laying the blame at Lowell's feet--in Lowell's changing idea of a catalog--rather than at Cutter's. Cutter is portrayed as one who simply completed the change already begun. The whole business suggests a lack of appreciation for the relationship between a catalog's objectives and its costs.

2 Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," p. 3401.
A New Concept for the Dictionary Catalog

The catalog that the Athenaeum trustees got but had not wanted was in some measure a result of Charles Lowell's discovery of cataloging rules. But he only began the process. It was Cutter who gave the catalog its final form. His penchant for accuracy and completeness caused him to add more and more details and materials. Its coverage increased accordingly. The single most important factor was his insistence that the catalog conform to rational principles and explicit goals. In the process of shaping it in that fashion he not only increased its scope and size. He developed a new concept for the dictionary catalog.

The dictionary catalog as it was then known was a single alphabetical sequence of entries under authors, titles and subject-words. Its primary objective was to enable a user to find out by means of those access points if the library had a particular book. A second and related purpose was to gather together all of the works of a single author. This objective could be reached by exercising strict uniformity in the form of an author's name. Although the practice had been more of an implicit than an explicit objective before Cutter's time, Cutter and Abbot included it in their own formation of the Harvard author catalog. Cutter had, however, absorbed Abbot's insistence that a catalog had still another major objective: to indicate what books the library contained on any particular subject. That is, it should systematically gather books together under the
subjects that they treated. Abbot attempted to fulfill all of the various objectives by means of his alphabetico-classed catalog. The result was not without its inherent problems, but it seemed to approach a reasonable success in the matter.

Cutter came to the Athenaeum as a devotee of Abbot's alphabetico-classed system. In his own words he had come "to swear by it." He defended it in the *North American Review* not only for its adherence to basic principles but also for its card format. But the Athenaeum already had a simple dictionary catalog in progress and Cutter related that he had to fight his own antipathies for that format. Having to work with a dictionary catalog, however, did not mean he had to accept it as it was. Instead, he changed it (even more than Lowell had done) by incorporating into it the means to answer the objectives of a catalog that both he and Abbot had come to believe essential.

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1 Cutter spoke of his allegiance to Abbot's catalog in his first lectures on cataloging at Melvil Dewey's School of Library Economy at Columbia University. His lectures, given on February 16, 1888, were taken down in shorthand by both Dewey and George Watson Cole, the latter a student at the school and later active as a librarian in the American Library Association. The shorthand system used by both men was the system of "Tachygraphy" developed by D. P. Lindsley and although each man had his own peculiarities in writing it, their recording of Cutter's phrase is the same. See M. Dewey, [Shorthand notes of Lectures at the Columbia University School of Library Economy, February, 1888], MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers; George W. Cole, [same], MS, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.

In 1876 after the first two volumes of the Athenaeum catalog were through the press, he published the results of his work in Commissioner of Education Eaton's special report on public libraries. In an article on library catalogs in part one of the report he gave his rationale for the new kind of dictionary catalog that the Athenaeum catalog represented. ¹

Cutter considered a dictionary catalog to be like a single interwoven fabric based on objectives that arose from the nature of the questions about the library's collections that users brought to it. He therefore began his article with an open-ended list of such questions and noted that the cataloger's goal was to make a catalog that would answer "the most questions with the least trouble to the asker."² For the purposes of the article he dismissed the need to deal with the author and title portions, for he supposed those aspects were already well-developed. The subject catalog was a different matter.

He described two kinds of subject catalogs that had come into existence. The first of these was the logically arranged or classed. Though various classed catalogs differed according to how minutely the subject arrangement was divided, they all had one common motif. "Generally an

¹ C. A. Cutter, "Library Catalogues," in 1876 Special Report, pp. 526-622. Pages 561-622 consist of several tables of catalog statistics, including a listing of 1,010 printed catalogs with their essential facts of publication and format.

² Ibid., p. 526.
attempt is made to bring all books under a strictly philosophical system of classes, with divisions and subdivisions, arranged according to their scientific relations."¹ Cutter suggested, not without wit, that this format offered an attractive solution to subject access.

The maker enjoys forming his system, and the student fancies he shall learn the philosophy of the universe while engaged in the simple occupation of hunting for a book. And there are more real advantages. One who is pursuing any general course of study finds brought together in one part of the catalogue most of the books that he needs. He sees not merely books on the particular topic in which he is interested, but in immediate neighborhood works on related topics, suggesting to him courses of investigation which he might otherwise overlook. He finds it an assistance to have all these works spread out before him, so that he can take a general survey of the ground before he chooses his route; and as he comes back day after day to his particular part of the catalogue he becomes familiar with it, turns to it at once and uses it with ease.²

Cutter also suggested that for desultory readers there were also very real advantages. It would help to direct their reading especially in the absence of their own motivation to do so. It would also decrease the amount of catalog searching for those whose reading was in certain well-defined subject areas for they could go immediately to that section of the catalog. As to the objection that a classification scheme could not do all of the possible relating of subjects that was possible, Cutter replied that a good scheme would satisfy most inquirers.

A classed arrangement had serious problems, however. It was difficult for the user to master, and the more

¹Ibid., p. 529. ²Ibid., pp. 529-30.
minutely it was subdivided, the more difficult it became for both the learned and the unlearned. In addition, a classed arrangement was difficult to make. It took experts in their own fields to discern the proper relationships of their own subjects and to provide that information for the cataloger to use.

There was, however, an even more serious disadvantage to a classed arrangement that prompted a call for an alternative format altogether: the alphabetical arrangement of subjects. Some objected that the user did not approach the catalog with someone else's systematic categories in mind.

The fact is that the action of the mind in outlining a system and fitting books into it is very different from that of inquiring where, in a system already formed by another, a given topic will be treated. It is hard, apparently, for the system-makers to put themselves in the place of the public; otherwise they would have adopted more frequently than they have done the simple remedy which will almost remove all these difficulties—an alphabetical index of the subjects treated in the classed catalogue.¹

In other words, the user's natural mental process in searching was to bring a named subject to the catalog but not necessarily within a structured framework of knowledge. Arranging the subject names alphabetically was as arbitrary as any other method, but since the knowledge of and the ability to search an alphabetically arranged list was common, an alphabetical arrangement of subject names seemed to Cutter to be a generally useful addition to a classed arrangement.

¹Ibid., p. 532.
An alphabetical approach could, therefore, have been achieved in systematic catalogs by the use of alphabetical subject name indexes. But these had not gained wide popularity. Rather, the alphabetical subject catalog came into being. Its simplest form was called the dictionary plan,

in which the attempt to subordinate individuals to classes, and classes to one another, is abandoned, and the subjects, special or general, are arranged like the words in a lexicon. . . . Nothing, one would think, can be more simple, easy to explain, easy and expeditious to use than this.1

But there were difficulties for which the simple dictionary plan did not make allowance. These difficulties occurred in what Cutter outlined as the conditions of interaction between the user and the alphabetical subject catalog. First, the library must have a book on the subject of the user's inquiry, and second, the subject name for the subject of the book must be the same as the word that the user brought to the catalog. If these conditions were not met, the user would fail to find what he needed. For example, if the library did not have a book specifically on the topic at hand, but instead had information on the subject in a book with either a narrower or broader scope, the user would not find it because the other book would be entered under the narrower or broader subject terms. Likewise, if the book had been entered under a subject name that was synonymous but not the same as the term that the user brought to the

1 Ibid.
catalog, he also would not find it. Both of these conditions could have been met with cross-references, Cutter asserted, but making such references had not been the practice up to that time. In order to demonstrate why, Cutter launched into a history of alphabetical subject cataloging.

Cutter's assessment of that development had to do with the common practice of limiting subject names for the most part to prominent words taken from the titles of the books. He summarized,

In these catalogues some word of the title is taken to make the entry under, as an indexer makes his reference from some word that he finds in the text of the work he is engaged upon. If there is no suitable word the cataloguer generally omits the work altogether; sometimes chooses a word under which he thinks the book may be looked for, the idea always being that the inquirer is searching for some book that he already knows of, and this being merely another way of finding it in case the author's name has been forgotten. The entries are really, therefore, only title-entries. The idea of subject-entries, though probably always vaguely co-existent with this, is, as a distinct and dominant idea, of late growth.¹

In other words, traditional subject cataloging, such as that

¹Ibid., p. 534. Cutter continued the comment with an interesting touch of irony, worth quoting: "Consequently we cannot reproach these cataloguers with their want of system, their abundance of synonymous headings, their continually suffering works of precisely the same character to be separated by the mere chance of the use of a different word in the title, their not seldom jumbling together works of very different character, which have the same word (used in different senses) in the title, with their frequent failure to enter books treating of several subjects under more than one, or with the total absence of cross-references. They are not generally intending to make subject-catalogues, by which they would probably understand classed catalogues. As they deal almost entirely with books in the English language there is nothing to prevent their confining themselves to the title. Foreign books lend themselves less readily to this kind of entry and suggest emancipation." One gets a sense of his antipathy especially to Poole's catalogs.
found in Poole's 1854 catalog of the Boston Mercantile Library, served the finding principle of the catalog. True subject cataloging in Cutter's thinking served the gathering principle as well and recent developments pointed to its emergence in practice.

Cutter saw the crux of the problem of achieving true subject access in the practice of using the titles of books as the source of the subject name for the catalog.

We cannot always take the "author's own definition of his book." He knows what the subject is, but he may not know how to express it for cataloguing purposes; he may even choose a title that misleads or is unintelligible, especially if his publisher insists on a striking title, as is the manner of publishers; and different writers, or even the same writers at different times, may choose different words to express the same thing.¹

What was needed, Cutter contended, was a standardization of subject names. To do so systematically, subject names must be carefully chosen by a cataloger; but he noted that for the cataloger to do so was also open to question because "imposing your own names on subjects is as objectionable as classification."² He went on to challenge that objection and in doing so provided his most basic defense of his belief in the possibility of determining uniform subject names for the dictionary subject cataloging system.

In the first place, almost all individual subjects, and the majority of general subjects, have single well-known names; and in the case of pseudonyms or synonyms,


he who is looking up any subject, not having a particular book in mind, is at least as likely to look under the name which the cataloguer has chosen as under any other. The heading is selected for the very reason that it is the most usual name of that topic or class of topics, the one under which most people would be likely to look; . . . 1

In other words, the cataloger would not in most cases be imposing his own subject names on subjects, but would instead be identifying common subject names already in use. Likewise, a patron would not have difficulty in locating any particular subject because he would bring to the catalog its common name. Although Cutter's support for his assertion was not apparently based on an exacting study, it had for him the same authority, for it had come from his general cataloging experience at Harvard and the Athenaeum and his observation of catalog use by patrons. He continued his statement in the form of percentages given as a casual measure of the sureness of what he had experienced.

... a vague and unscientific rule, perhaps, but a thoroughly useful one; for the result is that in ninety-eight cases in a hundred there is no room for doubt where to look, and for the ninety-ninth the inquirer will hit the right heading at first, and therefore will be referred only once in a hundred inquiries. 2

Since the patron's and the cataloger's choice seemed to coincide in actual practice, why, Cutter asked, had the practice arisen of adhering only to the title? Why, in

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., pp. 537-38. The statement implies a casual measure because "99 out of 100" functions as a metaphor for 'almost every time,' rather than as an accurate count. This does not disallow the accuracy of Cutter's assessment of the situation. It simply points out the informal nature of his observation.
other words, had the goal of finding a particular book on
the basis of title-word clues maintained precedence over the
gathering function of disciplined subject names? In answer
to the query, Cutter asserted that to do both would have
required two kinds of entries based on two different systems
of entry, and that practice was deemed uneconomical. Therefore, the less difficult and less expensive method had been followed.

He felt that what was needed was a way to accomplish both with one method, even though they were in conflict. He went on to show how Charles Jewett, among others, had taken the first steps in that direction in the Boston Public Library's catalogs of 1858 and 1861. Subsequently, Ezra Abbot began his Harvard College Library alphabetico-classed catalog in which the practice of carefully choosing subject names was fully implemented. Abbot's hybrid catalog was neither strict alphabetical subject entry nor strict logical entry, for it included both logically grouped classes and alphabetical sequences, and therefore had the difficulties of any classed system. But Cutter admired it and declined to make any detailed evaluation of it, referring instead to his defense of it in the North American Review seven years before. He did, however, compare Abbot's system with the advanced dictionary format that he himself had developed by that time at the Boston Athenaeum and declared, "After fifteen years constant use of the two catalogues, I am convinced that there is very little difference in their
convenience for a person who understands both."¹ His statement suggests, however, not so much the equality of their respective systems as Cutter's recognition of the debt he owed to his mentor. His own system, based in part on the objectives of Abbot's catalog, represented the culmination of the search for a true subject system in an alphabetical format.

The success of Abbot's system in Cutter's mind lay in its accommodation of a broader range of inquirers than any previous system. Using the idea of a range of inquirers as a point of departure, Cutter went on to categorize the kinds of inquirers that any subject catalog must accommodate. He wrote,

Inquirers may be roughly divided into (1) those who want something quickly; (2) those who want to make a thorough study of some specific subject; and (3) those who want to study fully some general class of subjects.²

The categories are important because they provide the structure for Cutter's subject system. On the surface, it would seem that the first category stands apart because the primary measure of usefulness appears to be a time element while for the other two categories, Cutter specifically mentions subject search objectives. This difference is only superficial, for all three categories of inquirers formed a continuum of use affected by both time and subject search factors. With respect to the time factor, the users ranged from those with little time available as in the first group

¹Ibid., p. 540. ²Ibid., p. 541.
to those with much time available as in the other two groups. With respect to the subject search factor, the differences lay in how much information would satisfy the inquirers and the breadth of the subject base from which each inquirer began. Taken together, the two kinds of factors point to Cutter's general view of the use and purpose of the library. Library users consisted of a continuum from the less sophisticated to the more scholarly and cultured. Just as the general purpose of the library was to lead the user up the ladder of accomplishment and culture, so also in subject searches, the catalog was to lead the inquirer from simple quick searches and satisfaction with minimal information to more thorough and therefore more scholarly and cultured searches. Consequently those searches required more time and patience on the part of the inquirer.

The first group, in Cutter's mind, formed the "largest and loudest" class of inquirers and had caused the popularity of the simple dictionary catalog. Their desire to find information easily made necessary the simplicity of a completely alphabetical arrangement. Furthermore, this group wanted simply a minimum of material, perhaps only a single item, that was directly correspondent to the specific subject of their inquiry. Cutter described how in the ordinary dictionary catalog the item they found might not always provide the most accurate or complete answer to their information need, and indeed the answer they received from that

1Ibid.
catalog might not provide them with an answer at all. But they were not interested in spending a lot of time at the task and in their unsophisticated approach to subject searching would be satisfied that the possibilities had been exhausted. It was Cutter's intention to improve the factor of directness and the incidence of successful recall in that limited approach, while at the same time serving the desire for quick answers.

The other two groups of inquirers were willing to make more thorough, time-consuming searches and therefore, to varying degrees, began their searches from a broader base of interest. The second group wanted not simply a minimum amount of material directly on a specific subject, but a thorough accounting of all the library had on that specific subject. This represented an expansion of the search objectives of the first group, but now satisfaction was dependent on how many items were desired and how far afield with respect to the specific subject under investigation the inquirer wished to go.

The third category of inquirers had an even broader objective. They wished to investigate not simply a single specific subject, but rather a general subject that included more than one specific subject. This represented an expansion of the search motivation of the first group in finding items that were directly correspondent with the specific subjects of their inquiry and of the second group in an even greater thoroughness. This category of inquirers represented
the most cultured and scholarly approach to the use of the library as a storehouse of information. It was primarily this group that would have had the patience to learn how to use a logically classed catalog because they saw all knowledge as a part of a unified whole. But they were also the minority in the continuum of users.1

A catalog that achieved subject access had to accommodate all three categories of inquirers, and since the first group was the largest, a format that was simpler than that of the logically classed catalog had to be used. Other contemporary catalogers, mindful of the conditions of inquiry also attempted to serve a broader range of inquirers. Cutter examined briefly the work done by Jacob Schwartz of the New York Apprentices' Library, Stephen B. Noyes of the Brooklyn Library, and the 1869 Library of Congress subject catalog.2 Each of them achieved some success in the quest, although they depended in one way or another on an alphabetico-classed format. Cutter's purpose for examining those attempts was to demonstrate the necessity of still another approach. He was intent upon incorporating the same breadth of accommodation into the common dictionary catalog that he had inherited. Nevertheless, as it had developed, the format of the common dictionary catalog was ill-equipped to serve the range of inquirers as he had delineated them. He found it disheartening,

1Ibid. 2Ibid., pp. 541-45.
a mere collection of fragments, unconnected, and all alike. There is no light and shade, nothing to fix the attention. Admirable as a help to one who knows what he wants, it makes no special provision for the more numerous class who merely want something to read, most of whom, however, would prefer, if they knew how, to improve their minds and increase their stock of knowledge.1

Cutter felt that the common dictionary catalog could be changed, but it would be a new type of dictionary catalog, "not as it exists in any example, but as one might be if there were plenty of time to make it and no need of economy in printing."2

Rules for Subject Cataloging

Cutter's article on library catalogs provided the theoretical justification for the subject cataloging work he had in fact been engaged in for the previous fifteen years, first at the Harvard College Library and more recently at the Boston Athenaeum. The catalog of the latter was his attempt to incorporate those goals in a dictionary format, although by his own admission, imperfectly, because he had found it necessary to assume some practices in its construction that did not accord with his own ideas.3 In order that others might be able to attempt a dictionary catalog

1Ibid., p. 550.  2Ibid., p. 547.

of his new design, he wrote out the procedures necessary in the form of a manual of rules. The manual became the second part of the 1876 Special Report and was entitled, Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue. Because the essence of his new kind of dictionary catalog lay in its subject system; because the rules represented his codification of the necessary procedures for building that subject system; and because the rules go beyond the results achieved in the Athenaeum catalog, it is relevant to examine what he said there with regard to subject cataloging.

The first category of inquirers wanted something quickly. Since the process of subject searching involves matching a subject brought to the catalog by the inquirer with a subject listed there, success for this group required that the matching process be direct (without intermediate steps) and easily made by means of a well-known and simple arrangement (alphabetical order). Assuming that alphabetical order would be the final arrangement, Cutter had to provide for the directness of the match. He labeled the procedure necessary to achieve this, 'specific entry'. He wrote, "Enter a work under its subject-heading, not under the heading of a class which includes that subject." (Rule 66)¹ In his section on definitions he further elaborated what he meant by defining specific entry as,

¹Unless otherwise noted, the rule numbers in this discussion are from the first edition of the Rules, 1876. References are made only for Cutter's discussions of various matters. When only a rule itself is cited, its number is given in the text.
registering a book under a heading which expresses its special subject as distinguished from entering it in a class which includes that subject.

E.g., registering "The art of painting" under Painting, or a description of the cactus under Cactus. Putting them under Fine arts and Botany would be class-entry.¹

Using a subject name denoting a broader class was the practice of classed or alphabetico-classed catalogs and caused the inquirers to seek the specific subject in which they were interested, not directly, but indirectly, under some broader concept. His desire to avoid subject names that were classed in relationship to the item at hand arose from his calculation that the match sought would be most direct if the subject names listed in the alphabetical sequence were directly correspondent with the subjects of the works and not indicative of broader scopes. He was explicit in the importance of the direction. "This rule of 'specific entry' is the main distinction between the dictionary catalogue and the alphabetico-classed."² Failure to make that correspondence would cause the subjects of individual works to be hidden within the subject names of broader scope and consequently, the ease and quickness of access that he desired for the first category of users would be lost.

Because the application of that principle was not always easy, Cutter went on in the remainder of the section entitled, "Choice between Subjects," to deal with four

¹"Specific entry," in Rules, p. 15.
²Rule 66, discussion.
particular situations that might confuse the cataloger. In each case the cataloger had to explicitly determine what the subject of a book was when faced with possible alternatives and choose a not-classed subject name. In two of the situations, biographies of kings and rulers (Rule 67), and books with subjects that overlapped (Rule 69), the matter could be resolved by a close examination of the work itself. For example, if a book was concerned with only the life of a ruler, it should be entered under the ruler's name; but if it also dealt substantially with the country as well, it should be entered under the country. In the case of overlapping but distinct subjects, the book should be entered under the subject that preponderated. In the other two situations, books concerning events in a country's history (Rule 67½) and books that dealt with a subject but only in the context of a geographical area (Rule 68), the matter revolved about the nature of the subject names available. If an event in a country's history had a unique name of its own, entry should be under that name; otherwise, entry should be under the name of the country. In the second case, entry should be under the country and not under an alternative form beginning with the subject itself (e.g., entry under NEW ENGLAND for a book on the birds of New England, rather than ORNITHOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND). In the latter, Cutter demonstrated how he extended his principle of specific

1 The phrase in quotation marks is the caption title of the first section of the subject catalog rules.
entry. He admitted that each form possible (NEW ENGLAND ORNITHOLOGY and ORNITHOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND) was a specific subject name, but the latter when taken with other entries of the same kind would lead to classed sequences in the catalog. Specific entry meant the exclusion therefore not only of classed subject names in relationship to the subject scope of the books, but also headings that when grouped together would produce classed sequences. In that way he hoped to exclude from the catalog all indirect subject listings.

Although specific entry was aimed at the requirement for the first category of inquirers, it also formed the basic structure for the whole continuum of users, because the idea of direct matches ultimately lay at the root of his whole subject system. The specialized requirements of each of the other two categories of inquirers were simply superimposed on that basic structure, with allowances made for conflicts in goals when they arose.

The second category of inquirer wanted to investigate a single specific subject thoroughly. In order to achieve that, the catalog had to gather by means of uniform subject names as much material as was possible that related to that specific subject in one place in the catalog or at least in a minimum of places that were related. Much of this requirement was met by the rigorous application of his considerations of choice for the first type of inquirer.

1Rule 68, discussion.
The second type of inquirer would find, therefore, not only single items that would answer his information need directly, but also other items, if the library had them, that might have been separated by an uncritical approach to the basic idea of specific entry.

For thorough study of a specific subject, however, even more rigorous gathering of material was necessary. To have left the directions as they were would have left much related material scattered under various specific but different subject names. Since the key to gathering like subjects was uniformity in subject name form, when alternative specific subject names were possible, only one should be used. Toward that end, Cutter provided rules for "Choice between Different Subject Names." ¹

In order that the resulting entries would be most useful to patrons he began this section with a general injunction that the habits of users be the first court of judgment in matters of choice. Following the general injunction, he gave the direction to prefer English language terms if they were available. (Rule 70)

Next, he dealt with the major problem area of synonymous subject names. He began with the rule, "Of two exactly synonymous names choose one and make a reference from the other." (Rule 71) He was aware that this could not be achieved in every case. Some synonymous subject names, for

¹The caption title of part 2 of the first section of the subject catalog rules.
example, reflected historical changes in the "method of study of the subject, or its objects, or the ideas connected with it," and therefore were necessary. Nevertheless, the use of alternative forms was to be avoided if at all possible. In order to help the cataloger, he gave an order of preference for choice:

In choosing between synonymous headings prefer the one that
(a) is most familiar to that class of people who consult the library.
(b) is most used in other catalogues.
(c) has fewest meanings other than the sense in which it is to be employed.
(d) comes first in the alphabet, so that the reference from the other can be made to the exact page of the catalogue.
(e) brings the subject into the neighborhood of other related subjects.

The first two directions were based on usage, although for (a) he added that a scientific term was preferable "when the common name is ambiguous or of ill-defined extent." Numbers (c) and (e) call to mind, however, the gathering of subjects that he was attempting to achieve, especially the latter which represented an attempt to achieve proximate gathering if complete gathering was not possible. Finally, in order to emphasize that using synonymous terms was a thing to be avoided, he followed the above rule with a corollary that dealt with almost synonymous subject names. "In choosing between two names not exactly synonymous, consider whether there is difference enough to require separate entry; if not treat them as synonymous." (Rule 72)

1Rule 71, discussion. 2Ibid. 3Ibid.
Cutter also dealt with other aspects of gathering subjects in rules 73 to 83. He re-emphasized in rule 74 the necessity to choose a uniform subject name that went beyond the terminology of the title of a book. Although some claimed that only the use of title terminology represented the truest intention of the author, Cutter disputed the claim, finishing with an example and a quip.

A man who is looking up the history of the Christian church does not care in the least whether the books on it were called by their authors church histories or ecclesiastical histories; and the cataloguer also should not care if he can avoid it. The title rules the title-catalogue; let it confine itself to that province.¹

Perhaps the most difficult situation involved choices between subject names that denoted compound subjects. (Rule 76) Such subject names were found in a variety of grammatical constructions and seemingly made uniformity in subject name form impossible. Three alternatives presented themselves. First, subject name phrases could be used as they read. Second, the phrases could be inverted if necessary to bring the most significant word of the phrases to the entry position. Third, all such phrases could be used as they read with the exception of phrases comprised of a noun preceded by an adjective, in which case if the phrase could not be reduced to a single equivalent word, it should be uniformly inverted.

The objection to the first was that it could be carried to absurd limits as in the case of separating works on

¹Rule 74, discussion.
Ancient Egypt (entered under "A") from those on Modern Egypt (entered under "M") and would result in "filling the catalogue with a host of unexpected and therefore useless headings."¹ The objection to the second was that there could be no uniform agreement as to what constituted the most important word of any particular phrase. The objection to the third was twofold: On the one hand, there would be relatively few subject names affected and the rule, having to be used as an exception, would be difficult to teach to the public. On the other hand, to put the nouns first would sometimes have the effect of producing classed subject sequences, a result that would run counter to the principle of specific entry. Consequently, Cutter felt that a combination of the first and second alternatives was preferable, but only if discretion was used. He gave the direction, "Enter a compound subject-name by its first word, inverting the phrase only when some other word is decidedly more significant or is often used alone with the same meaning as the whole name." (Rule 76)

The third category of inquirers desired to survey a general subject. In Cutter's view this approach placed the greatest demand on a subject catalog. A need such as this was actually more directly served by the logical order of entries in a classed catalog. The same objective was not possible in a simple dictionary catalog, but Cutter wanted to achieve it in his new style dictionary catalog. This

¹Rule 76, discussion.
required that each subject name be shown as a portion of the whole classification of knowledge. Cutter aimed to satisfy that need in the second major portion of his subject cataloging rules with a section entitled, "Entries Considered as Parts of a Whole." He wrote in its introduction,

The systematic catalogue undertakes to exhibit a scientific arrangement of the books in a library in the belief that it will thus aid those who would pursue any extensive or thorough study. The dictionary catalogue sets out with another object and a different method, but having attained that object--facility of reference--is at liberty to try to secure some of the advantages of classification and system in its own way. Its subject-entries, individual, general, limited, extensive, thrown together without any logical arrangement, in most absurd proximity--Abscess followed by Absenteeism and that by Absolution, Club-foot next to Clubs, and Communion to Communism, while Christianity and Theology, Bibliography and Literary history are separated by half the length of the catalogue--are a mass of utterly disconnected particles without any relation to one another, each useful in itself but only by itself. But by a well-devised network of cross-references the mob becomes an army of which each part is capable of assisting many other parts. The effective force of the catalogue is immensely increased.1

His general rule was, "Make references from general subjects to their various subordinate subjects and also to co-ordinate and illustrative subjects." (Rule 85) In terms of a hierarchical structure of the subject classes, his rule meant that references would be made down the chains of terms and between different chains of terms. He cautioned, however, that to construct the network of references, one needed to approach it systematically.

1 Introduction to section B, "Entries Considered as Parts of a Whole," in Rules, p. 47.
The construction of this system may be carried on simultaneously with the ordinary cataloguing of the library, each book as it goes through the cataloguer's hands not merely receiving its author and subject entries, but also suggesting the appropriate cross-references; but when all the books are catalogued the system will not be complete. References are needed not merely to the specific from the general but to the general from the more general and to that from the most general; there must be a pyramid of references, and this can be made only by a final revision after the completion of the cataloguing.¹

He suggested a method of procedure for the final systematization:

The best method is to draw off in a single column a list of all the subject-headings that have been made, to write opposite them their including classes in a second column and the including classes of these in a third column; then to write these classes as headings to cards and under them the subjects that stood respectively opposite to them in the list, to arrange the cards alphabetically, verify the references, and supplement them by thinking of all likely subordinate headings and ascertaining whether they are in the catalogue, and also by considering what an inquirer would like to be told or reminded of if he were looking up the subject under consideration. In this way a reasonably complete list may be made.²

Cutter also included two other directions with regard to the cross-reference system. In the descending order of references in which references were made to the next less inclusive class, some of the intervening classes would not themselves have any books entered under them. In those cases for the sake of economy it would be allowable to omit them, without impairing the usefulness of the system.³ It would also be allowable to refer up the order of classes, that is, from specific subjects to more general classes, but only occasionally. (Rule 86)

¹Rule 85, discussion. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.
Problems in Cutter's Subject System

Cutter was indebted to Ezra Abbot for the basic rationale and much of the structure of his subject system. Each of the elements of his system can be found in germinal form in Abbot's disciplined approach to subject cataloging. Abbot's system worked well in practice and perhaps for that reason Cutter was sanguine about the possibility of incorporating the same elements into the dictionary catalog. He seems not to have reckoned with the comparatively low amount of complexity that Abbot had to face, however. For example, the instances of having to choose a specific entry or to choose between subject names were comparatively few in Abbot's system, and an appeal could be made to patron use to decide issues rather than be based on any consistent principle. And because the classified structure provided much of the interrelatedness needed, the overall number of necessary cross-references in Abbot's system was comparatively small. But when Cutter attempted to do the same things in the dictionary catalog, the application of the same solutions was made complex, not only because of the problems of language itself, but because the instances for making such solutions occurred with almost every subject entered, not simply with a few. As a result, Cutter included in his system ambiguities that made reaching his goals difficult, and measures of economy that in the end seemed to undercut the goals themselves.

1 For a discussion of Abbot's catalog, see above, Ch. II, especially pp. 79-82.
Specific Entry

While Abbot had to deal with specific entry for random subjects, Cutter had to deal with it for every subject. That fact placed a priority on the concept itself. What therefore constituted the essential difference between a subject name that was, properly speaking, specific entry and one that was class entry? Furthermore, did Cutter's rules for determining specific entries produce the desired direct access? These questions are pertinent because in no one place did Cutter define or explain the concept thoroughly, and when various rules and comments are taken into account, his methodology appears ambiguous.¹

The theoretical structure behind Cutter's idea of specific entry came from his view of the universe of knowledge. For Cutter, that universe was an orderly and unitary whole made up of a hierarchy of classes. Each class consisted of subjects that had the same formal characteristics. The resulting subjects were of two kinds:

¹Cutter's use of the idea of "specific entry" has been the topic of a continuing discussion since his day. No attempt is made here to trace that discussion because to do so is beyond the scope of this treatment and because the issue is by itself an exceedingly perplexing one. Of the writers who have referred to Cutter's Rules on the matter, two merit special mention: J. Coates, Subject Catalogues: Headings and Structure (London: Library Association, 1960), especially pp. 19-49; and John Metcalfe, Alphabetical Subject Indication of Information, Rutgers Series on Systems for the Intellectual Organization of Information, v. 3 (New Brunswick, N. J.: Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers, The State University, 1965), passim, especially pp. 29-37, which is essentially a commentary on Coates. For an intriguing treatment of the more basic problem of what a subject is, see Patrick Wilson, Two Kinds of Power; An Essay on Bibliographical Control, University of California
(1) individual, as Goethe, Shakespeare, England, the Middle Ages, the ship Alexandra, the dog Tray, the French Revolution, all of which are concrete; and (2) general, as Man, History, Horse, Philosophy, which may be either concrete or abstract.

The hierarchical structure reflected a process of individuation. Cutter labeled any subject that could be subdivided a "general subject," and considered it "a class more or less extensive." Subjects were the individual elements of a class and their subdivisions were themselves individuated elements. Ultimately, the structure could be reduced to indivisible elements which Cutter labeled either individual subjects or individuals.

Cutter's use of the theoretical structure was contained in an implicit equation in the practice of determining subject names. On the one hand, subject cataloging meant "bringing books together which treat of the same subject specifically." A subject in this sense was, "the theme or themes of the book, whether stated in the title or not." Whatever subject name was chosen, it must be correspondent in scope with the theme of the book. On the other hand, subject cataloging meant identifying the subject of a book in terms of the overall structure of the universe of

Publications, Librarianship: 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), Ch. V.

1"Subject," in Rules, p. 15. 2Ibid.

3"Class," in Rules, p. 12. Cutter used the phrase "individual subjects" as a way to indicate subjects which were not subdivided further; hence, fully individuated and "never being classes." See also his footnote on the same page.

4Ibid. 5"Subject," in Rules, p. 15.
knowledge. Specific entry meant to choose the name of the individual subject or of the individual rather than an including class (e.g., CAT, as opposed to ZOOLOGY, MAMMALS, or DOMESTIC ANIMALS, each with a subdivision CAT; NEW ENGLAND as opposed to a heading GEOGRAPHY, subdivided by the area NEW ENGLAND; CONSTITUTION, as opposed to a category SHIPS, or WARSHIPS, subdivided by particular ships, among them the Constitution). In other words, Cutter equated the operation of determining a subject name that was correspondent with the scope of a book with determining a subject name that was an individual or an individual subject in the overall structure of knowledge. In effect, subject names that expressed the scope of a book were seen as elements of the total hierarchy of knowledge.

Furthermore, Cutter's emphasis on individuals as the ultimate goal of specification seems itself to have come from an observation of use that he had made during his years as a practicing librarian, an observation that he then applied to his understanding of the universe of knowledge. While discussing other subject catalogs in his article, "Library Catalogues," Cutter mentioned a possible alternative type of catalog that had not been tried but which represented a combination of Abbot's alphabetico-classed arrangement and the dictionary arrangement. The plan was most probably one that Cutter himself formulated and would have tried, perhaps at the Athenaeum, if he had had the freedom to do so. The major feature of the plan would have been to
retain classified arrangements for general subjects but to have dispersed individuals throughout the alphabet. By individuals he meant particular persons, places, horses, ships, etc. The practice would have removed such individuals from more inclusive headings such as BIOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHY, ZOOLOGY, SHIP-BUILDING, etc., the normal practice in alphabetico-classed arrangements. His reasoning was that it would make the search for those subjects more direct. Patrons would not have had to go through a general subject first in order to find them. Directness of access for such subjects was most important, because in Cutter's words, "persons and places are the most common objects of inquiry."¹

The effects of the above equation and observation of use were significant because common subject names did not always follow the simplified hierarchical structure that Cutter referred to, and because the emphasis on individuals caused Cutter to extend that idea to explain 'not-classed' entry in choices between multiple concept subject names. First, to varying degrees, the names of some individual

¹Cutter, "Library Catalogues," p. 547. As in the example of Cutter's casual statistics concerning common subject names, this observation on Cutter's part provides another illustration of the fact that his catalog system was ultimately based on his sense of the patron/library interface as he found it at Harvard and the Athenaeum. That fact does not invalidate his findings, despite its being established by less than accurate or scientific measurement. But it does raise a question as to the applicability of his system to the library world at large. It could be that his assumptions are the source of the consternation that subject catalogers have felt in using what essentially is his system, and suggests that the basic context of his work needs serious examination.
subjects were indistinct. Some topics lacked names altogether because the topics were not fully developed (i.e., individuated). Until these topics had attained "a certain individuality" in the process of inquiry and investigation and had gained the "status of a subject," the cataloger could only give them the names of their including classes.¹

Slightly advanced from the above were those topics that were more distinct in one's thinking but which also had not attained a distinct name, and still other topics whose names were at best involved phrases. In the former case, a name could perhaps be constructed and in the latter, the phrase would have to be used until a better one came into general use.

Finally, and even more of a problem, there were some subjects that had more than one commonly used name, one of which was a specific name and the other of which was a class name. Cutter felt that this situation arose from the familiarity of some patrons with classed catalogs. To enter the work under the more specific but less familiar name would, of course, cause confusion to those users who referred to it by the class name. Entry twice, under each term, would solve the problem, but that practice if done consistently would greatly increase the bulk of the catalog, and if done selectively would end uniformity by representing only "the prepossessions and accidental associations of the cataloguer."² Although the dictionary catalog did not prohibit

¹Rule 66, discussion. ²Ibid.
double entry, Cutter suggested that with regard to the latter, "probably the public will not be better satisfied, not understanding why they do not find class-entry in all cases." Consequently, he recommended using only the more specific entry although not as well-known by the users.

With regard to the more difficult cases of multiple concept subject names, the effects of Cutter's practice became more problematical. He discussed two varieties of this kind of subject name: general subject and country; and compound subject phrases. Cutter treated the first kind as a choice between subjects perhaps because the two elements were clearly distinguishable; that is, a subject and an individual. Cutter gave precedence to the individual.

He wrote in explanation,

Ex. Put. Flagg's "Birds and seasons of New England" under New England and under Ornithology say See also New England. As New England Ornithology and Ornithology of New England are merely different names of the same specific subject it may be asked why we prefer the first. Because entry under Ornithology of New England, though by itself specific entry is, when taken in connection with the entries grouped around it (Ornithology, Ornithology of America, Ornithology of Scotland, etc.) in effect class-entry; whereas the similar grouping under New England does not make that a class, inasmuch as New England botany, New England history, New England ornithology are not parts of New England but simply the individual New England considered in various aspects. Of course the dictionary catalogue in choosing between a class and an individual prefers the latter. Its object is to show at one view all the sides of each object; the classed catalogue shows together the same side of many objects.

In other words, a general subject subdivided into its component parts, whether those were conceptual or geographical,

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1 Ibid.  
2 Rule 68, discussion.
was to be considered a classed sequence. A place, more properly called an individual, followed by an array of aspects of view of itself was not to be considered a classed sequence. Cutter admitted that the subject name ORNITHOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND considered alone was a specific entry. It was only when grouped with other like entries that a classed sequence resulted. He rejected such sequences, primarily because the purpose of a dictionary catalog in his opinion was to display objects; that is, individuals. Therefore, apart from any considerations of which form of the entry was most accurate with regard to the theme of the book, a place such as New England took precedence because it was the more individuated name in terms of the overall hierarchy of knowledge. ORNITHOLOGY, on the contrary, was a general subject and not an individual.

Cutter's solution was not thorough-going, however. For example, he does not say what the decision would have been if the subject had itself been fully individuated. Furthermore, considering places as individuals was itself a matter not always so clear. He wrote in a footnote to his discussion of the meaning of "class,"

It is plain enough that Mt. Jefferson, John Milton, the Warrior Iron-clad are not classes. Countries, however, which for most purposes it is convenient to consider as individual, are in certain aspects classes; when by the word "England" we mean "the English" it is the name of a class.¹

That difference notwithstanding, Cutter emphasized that

¹Rules, p. 12, footnote.
countries or places could be considered individuals most of the time and he therefore preferred when possible to use their names in the substantive form rather than in the adjectival. He gave the direction,

When an adjective implies the name of a place, as in French literature, German philosophy, Greek art, it is convenient on the whole to make the subject a division under the country. In this way all that relates to a country is brought together and arranged in one alphabetical series of subjects under its name.¹

Convenience in both instances was most likely based on his observation that users most often looked for 'individuals' in the subject catalog. Such convenience had limitations, however, and he noted that the same practice could not be carried out for place names no longer current or for English or American literature. To do so would have produced many uncommon entries, especially for the latter two examples in which all literature would have had entry under ENGLAND and the UNITED STATES.

The second of the more difficult types of multiple concept subject names were those involving compound subjects. The most troublesome were those that were combined in the following ways: adjective-noun; noun-noun; and noun-preposition-noun. Cutter's solution for choices between different names of this sort was based on an extension by analogy of the idea of individuals as the most specific type of subject name. In choosing between using the phrases as they read or inverting them, Cutter chose the former.

¹Rule 76, discussion.
In Comparative anatomy, Capital punishment the noun is the name of a general subject, one of whose subdivisions is indicated by the adjective. And Capital, Comparative have only this limiting power, they do not imply any general subject. . . . [In the same manner] we can have various headings for Death considered in different lights among others as a penalty; and we can have headings of various sorts of penalties, among others death. It is evident that this collection of penalties taken together makes up a class, and therefore this belongs to a style of entry which the dictionary catalogue is expected to avoid; but the series of headings beginning with the word Death would not make a class, being merely different aspects of the same thing, not different subordinate parts of the same subject.¹

By his reasoning the phrases COMPARATIVE ANATOMY and CAPITAL PUNISHMENT were actually made up of general subjects with subdivisions. In each case the subdivisions (i.e., the adjectives) were the more individuated elements of the classes that were represented by the nouns and should be used as the entry words. In the case of DEATH PENALTY, the two nouns each represented subjects, but the second was a general subject and therefore a class, while the first was more individuated. Consequently, the second noun was only an aspect of the first. As a result, when DEATH PENALTY was placed in the catalog, it would be alphabetized only with the heading DEATH (used by itself) or with other combinations in which the second noun would be considered only an aspect, and no classed sequence would result. Cutter's phrase "different aspects of the same thing"² is in this case analogous to "all sides of each object"³ in his discussion of general subjects and countries. That is to say,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Rule 68, discussion.
'things', which are fully individuated subjects, are to be equated with 'objects', which are themselves to be considered fully concrete 'individuals'. As if to emphasize the analogous treatment, Cutter wrote,

But Ancient history, Mediaeval history, etc., may be viewed not only in this way (History the class, Ancient history and Mediaeval history the subdivisions) but also as equivalent to Antiquity: History, Middle Ages: History (as we say Europe: History), in which case the adjectives (Ancient, Mediaeval) imply a subject and the noun (History) indicated the aspect in which the subject is viewed. Here then we choose Ancient and Medieval as the heading on the principle of §68.1

In other words, ANCIENT, written in the form, ANTIQUITIES, indicated not only a subject but an individual subject that was fully individuated and that could be equated with objects, things, and individuals.

For both kinds of multiple concept subject names, still other considerations arise. First, Cutter allowed aspects of an individual to be listed in sequences, but not subdivisions of a general subject, and he extended the first to include aspects of more individuated subjects. That was, in effect, a fine distinction for the cataloger and for the patron. The latter was in fact the criticism that Jacob Schwartz used when he suggested that all compound subject names of the adjective-noun variety should be inverted, much like the inversion of persons' names.2 Cutter was not impressed with the argument. He felt that it was of small

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1 Rule 76, discussion. Rule 68 had to do with choosing between general subjects and countries.

2 Ibid. Cutter quoted Schwartz's criticism but gave no source.
importance that sequences of aspects of individuals looked like classed lists, because regardless of appearances the directness of the dictionary catalog with respect to individuals was attained. Patrons would not have to make the distinction as long as they could go directly to the individuals they were interested in. To further stress his point, Cutter referred to his view of the habits of patrons in inquiring when looking for individuals. He said, in effect, that users will go directly to a specific subject by its phrase name as it read and not be concerned about the order they found. Only the inquirer doing more general searches or those exhausting the library's resources on a specific subject would be concerned about arrangement implications and these would be cared for by cross-references. The scholar who was interested in depth study would be in a position to learn the entry system principles. Cutter wrote,

The specific-entry rule is one which the reader of a dictionary catalogue must learn if he is to use it with any facility; it is much better that he should not be burdened with learning an exception to this, which the noun rule certainly is.¹

The latter comment raises another serious problem. If exceptions such as Schwartz's noun rule proved troublesome, how did Cutter justify the exceptions he allowed? Perhaps the exceptions he allowed in subject name terminology because of users' habits could be justified by their small numbers and by the use of cross-references. But

¹Ibid. The 'noun rule' was another name for Schwartz's principle of inversion.
Cutter allowed other exceptions that were much more notable. One might point to the practice, noted above, of changing adjectival forms of countries to substantive forms. Again, in choosing between compound subject name forms, Cutter allowed some forms to be used according to common usage, even if they did represent classed forms. And this direction seemed to some extent contrary to that given in rule 66 where, in discussing indistinct subject names, Cutter preferred the less common but more specific form. He seemed to be confident that the exceptions would be few and that usage often did not indicate preference anyway.

Even more serious was his indecision about which subjects to list under individuals (i.e., countries) and which to list in the main alphabetical sequence. Cutter dealt with these not in his section on subject catalog rules, but in a section on arrangement of entries. There he noted that listing general subjects as aspects of countries was the rule, but he also noted that some subjects such as EPITAPHS, FABLES, NAMES, and PROVERBS should perhaps be listed in the main sequence because the "subject cohesion" seemed "much stronger than the national cohesion."\(^1\) Other subjects such as NUMISMATICS, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, SCIENCE, THEOLOGY, and ZOOLOGY were often not subordinated as aspects of a country simply out of common practice. Nevertheless, Cutter listed them all as topical groupings.

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\(^1\)Rule 202, discussion. One might reasonably object that these are essentially form headings and not subjects. Cutter, however, referred to them as subjects.
under the country to which they referred and justified them as the outcome of a tendency in the dictionary catalog toward,

national classification; that is, in separating what relates to parts of a subject, as is required by its specific principle, it necessarily brings together all that relates to a country in every aspect, as it would what relates to any other individual.¹

Because of the above tendency in Cutter's thinking, the most serious problem, therefore, was the arrangement of entries under a country. Cutter was aware that entries would multiply under a country because of his methodology. In order to help the user to find books easily at that location, the entries would have to be further arranged according to topics. Two possibilities were offered. In one the topics were subarranged in strict alphabetical order. In the second, which Cutter had adopted for the Athenaeum, the topics were occasionally grouped in classes, systematically. Cutter admitted that to do the latter violated the principle of the dictionary catalog. Regardless of the distinction between the two plans, he did speak of the subarrangement in either case as a classification scheme. It was, however, a classification that listed only very general subjects and Cutter could justify it by insisting, contrary to his criticism of classification schemes in his article, "Library Catalogues," that it would have only few divisions in most printed catalogs and thus would be easy to learn.²

¹Ibid.       ²Ibid.; Rule 198, discussion.
The overall effect of Cutter's principle of specific entry necessarily produces ambiguity in its application. By equating, in the phrase specific entry, subject names that were both correspondent with the scope of a book and that were 'not-classed', Cutter was not always able to do either effectively. Although the process worked reasonably well when the subjects dealt with had single term names, those with multiple concept names presented the difficult problem of interpreting the relative individuation of the terms involved. That difficulty arose in turn perhaps because Cutter's understanding of subjects was actually very simplified. The process of individuation, which he adopted by analogy from the idea of individuals, is actually not an adequate picture of subjects or of subject relationships. Perhaps a more adequate grasp of the complexity of the universe of knowledge, one that was not limited to a linear, hierarchical arrangement, might have made a better rationalization and system by which to determine the order of the entry elements. In subject and individual subject names, Cutter was actually motivated by his observation that patrons were first of all interested in individuals. But by extending that to include countries, he was forced to build small alphabetico-classed sequences under each country. That could only have confused a cataloger who was looking for a dictionary principle pure and simple. In future generations of catalogers it would not be adequate to care for subjects that were far more complex than Cutter's system could accommodate.
Common Usage

The second problem area that Cutter inherited from Abbot had to do with choosing subject names. Abbot could refer to the usage patterns of patrons for those occasional instances when he needed to decide name forms. Cutter had to achieve a more permanent settlement of the problem because the requirement for the second category of inquirer depended on uniform subject names achieved by choosing between legitimate specific entry alternatives. Therefore, he strongly appealed to common usage as a court of judgment and seemingly raised it to the status of a principle. Comparing rules for choice between subject names with rules for grammar, he wrote, "Usage in both cases is the supreme arbiter,—the usage in the present case not of the cataloguer but of the public in speaking of subjects."¹ The effect was to provide commonly used subject names that would enhance the ease of use of the subject system by patrons.

Two considerations, both of which Cutter seemed aware, show limitations in the use of this principle. First, usage was a helpful concept only to the degree that the interests and preferences of the patrons could actually be determined, and, once having been determined, could demonstrate enough homogeneity to be used as a basis for choice. Cutter defined usage as "the custom of the public to designate the subjects by one of the names rather than by the

¹Introduction to Part 2, "Choice between Different Names," in Rules, p. 40.
He gave no indication as to how to determine that custom and no indication of what constituted sufficient evidence one way or the other. He in fact referred only to very general differences. He was aware that different sizes and types of libraries created differences and simply cautioned the cataloger to be aware of the fact. Perhaps because he had practiced librarianship in libraries whose patrons formed a generally erudite and cohesive group, Cutter felt that the concept of usage was useful enough to appeal to. But he also recognized the ambiguity of the concept and his rules include appeals to other catalogs and to a preference for more technical language if common terms were vague.2

Second, Cutter had to balance his appeal to common usage as a principle with other principles. For example, the concept of specific entry took precedence if a common subject name was clearly of the classed variety and the alternative was more specific.3 Of greater importance was the conflict raised when alternative subject names were fully qualified as specific subject names as in the case of synonyms. In that situation, the principle of gathering subjects under one subject name took precedence over usage, especially over the use of the title as the source of the common terms.4

1Rule 76, discussion. 2Cf., Rule 71, discussion.
3Rule 66, discussion.
4Rule 71, discussion, especially (c) and (e).
Both of the above considerations reflect the basic difficulty of the appeal to usage as a principle of choice. For that reason, perhaps, Cutter also included rather strong opinions to the effect that usage did not always provide a means of choice—strong, that is, in the light of his insistent appeal to the principle in the first place. In one instance, already quoted above, he suggested that the patron did not really care which of two equally valid synonyms should be used for the history of the Christian church. In the case of compound subject names, after defending the use of such phrases as they read, he made the comment, "As is often the case in language usage will be found not to follow any uniform course."¹ Although his statement does not invalidate the basic principle, it does make its application somewhat vague. And to make matters worse he had suggested in the same section that if one compound subject name among alternatives was more customary because of "decided usage," it should be adopted.² The example he gave, however, might well have led to a classed sequence. In addition, the basic rule that he adopted for compound subject names has a phrase that allows exceptions, but Cutter did not say when or how it might be applied. The exception could well be applied for or against a subject name based on usage.

The ultimate effect of Cutter's appeal to usage as a principle, similar to the effect of the specific entry principle, was to make the application of the principle

¹Rule 76, discussion. ²Ibid.
vague, although as in the previous case, the vagueness did not totally negate its usefulness. Nevertheless, the situation provides still another illustration of the difficulties that Cutter faced in adopting Abbot's work to his new kind of dictionary catalog.

Cross-References

The third goal of the subject catalog that Cutter adopted from Abbot was the necessity of showing the interrelatedness of subjects. The adoption of this goal also brought with it certain problems of execution and, as in the case of the second problem area, Cutter was quite explicit about them. In the Harvard system Abbot had depended on cross-references to show the various relationships between subject names that were not shown by the class structure itself. That especially involved relating coordinate specific subjects and relating general subjects to relevant specific subjects that were arrayed alphabetically.

Cutter, however, had no obvious classification structure. All of the classes in his dictionary scheme were broken down into their most specific entries with no indication of related terms. That made it necessary for him to use cross-references to show all the systematic relationships in the catalog, especially with respect to the desire of the third category of inquirer to survey and study thoroughly a general subject. He also assumed that the cross-reference system would provide a way to lead the other types
of users, especially the first category, into a more scholarly approach to learning.

A complete cross-reference structure would include references between related topics, references from specific subject names to their more inclusive classes (narrower terms to broader terms), and references from more general inclusive classes to their more specific elements (broader terms to narrower terms). At first Cutter advocated including all three types of references although he realized that it would be a large task. In December 1871 he wrote,

I might give a hundred examples of the utility of cross references. I do not hope to make half the number that could be made. So closely are all branches of knowledge intertwined, so often does one science throw light upon another that to make all possible references would be an enormous work and practically useless because confusing. We shall have to limit ourselves to the more obvious relations of knowledge. But within such limits I regard the work as of the highest importance. It is this that will bind the Catalogue together & give it unity; that will prevent its being merely a loose, disjointed collection of items, into which you plunge, hit or miss, with a chance of finding the books you want, and an almost equal chance of not finding them; and raises it to the dignity of a scientifically classified system of human knowledge, so far as human knowledge is represented in the Library.¹

By the time that Cutter wrote his contributions to the 1876 Special Report, he was much more explicit about the limits that he spoke of. A full catalog would include references from places to notable persons who lived there, from places to their more local subdivisions, and from classes of persons to notable individuals in the class. But for

¹Cutter, "To the Library Committee," December 18, 1871.
less complete catalogs, he advised vaguely that the cataloger should make only those references "as seem most likely to be used." The effect was to indicate that choosing references to related subjects was not as easy as it might have at first sounded. In fact, the cataloger can never know which ones to include for the variety of possibilities are as wide as the individual inquiries that are made of the catalog.

In a second limitation on making cross-references, Cutter advocated eliminating references that related narrower terms to broader terms. It was both a strategic and economical move. It was economical because the cataloger simply did not have the energy, time, or money to do such a complete job. That was a lesson Cutter learned from the enormous labor which he had already expended on the Athenaum's catalog. It was a strategic limitation because to include them would load the catalog with references that would confuse the user. Cutter suggests that the confusion would arise from the patron having too many subject name possibilities to follow up. He wrote,

The inquirer . . . will find the general works under the general head, and with them a number of cross-references, perhaps five, perhaps fifty. If his needs oblige him to look them all up, his case is indeed pitiable. But how often would that happen? Generally, he will run his eye over the references, find two or three in which he is interested, look them up, and get reading enough for one day at least; and this will be the easier if the references are classified, as they ought to be if they are numerous. But it is useless to deny that here is the weak point of the dictionary

1 Rule 85, discussion.
catalogue. Here is an evil which it tries, not un-successfully, to reduce to a minimum, but can never away with altogether. 1

Cutter's above words suggest a partial remedy to the problem. That is, when cross-references were given, it would be well to indicate their broader or narrower relationships by listing the references themselves in classed groupings.

(Rule 201) Beyond that, the cataloger could only be very watchful of the numbers of references used.

Still another reason for not including the specific to general cross-references lay in the already noted psychology of inquiry that Cutter advanced. He suggested that the practice of users was to go directly to a specific topic and, if anything, to work towards more specific topics that might have a bearing on the search. 2 In other words, Cutter supposed that inquirers generally had the broadest scope of their topic in mind when they began. For that reason the downward references from general to more specific subjects would be the most relevant while the reverse relationships would be helpful only occasionally. With that assumption in mind, Cutter suggested that if a person were interested in doing a very complete general survey, he would have to employ other aids beside the catalog. He wrote,

Of course much information about limited topics is to be found in more general works; the very best description of a single plan or of a family of plants may perhaps be contained in a botanical encyclopaedia. This

2Rule 76, discussion.
fact, however, must be impressed upon the inquirer in the preface of the catalogue or in a printed card giving directions for its use; it is out of the question to make all possible references of the ascending kind. . . . And anyone who desired to take an absolutely complete survey of the subject or who was willing to spend unlimited time in getting information on some detail, would have to consult such books.¹

His decision diluted the helpfulness of the catalog for the second and especially for the third categories of inquirers. The result was unavoidable, although not unexpected, for Cutter was well-aware of being able to attain only some, not all, of the advantages of a classed system in his new type of dictionary catalog.

Cutter made one final limitation on the use of cross-references. Earlier he had suggested that a classified chart of subject names be employed in making the proper cross-references. His intention was to include this 'syn-optical table' in the catalog itself for the benefit of the patrons. By the time he wrote his Rules he could say of making such a table, "I mention its possibility here; I do not advise its construction, because there is little chance that the result would compensate for the immense labor."²

More than twenty years later, in the fourth edition of his Rules, he elaborated on his decision. He had in fact begun such a list for the Athenaeum's catalog. The Library Committee, however, wanted to proceed to the completion of the project without adding the chart itself. It would have been both extensive and time-consuming, and would have added only

¹Rule 86, discussion. ²Rule 87, discussion.
more cost to an already expensive project. Cutter related how he came to agree with the judgment, not only because of the labor involved, but because the development of classification schemes for books on the shelves had come to provide the same information.

Such a table would be infrequently consulted, and it would be incomplete, as new headings are continually added to the catalog of a growing library. But what is too much for each catalog to undertake may profitably be done for all catalogs. In a way it has been done by the tables and the indexes of two well-known systems of classification; the "Decimal" and the "Expansive," which offer to the persistent inquirer—the only one who would ever use such a table—an opportunity to push his investigations into every ramification of his subject.¹

On the one hand his reasoning seems sound. The shelf classification systems that he mentioned did indeed provide such a comprehensive survey of subject relationships. On the other hand, his advice led to a detrimental result. It provided for the separation of subject cataloging from systematic classification. It in effect completed the masking of the systematic classification element of subject cataloging that Abbot had begun. In the absence of the formal classification scheme implicit in the subject system, the relationships between subjects contained in the cross-references were left to less systematic means of record-keeping. In this case, the masking was complete. The goal of including a systematic relating of the subject names of the catalog was in a very real sense abandoned to dependence

¹Rule 188, discussion, in Rules, 1904. His comments also demonstrate the shift from printed to card catalogs, in which the subject system would no longer be 'frozen'.
on the memory of the cataloger and to whatever standardized alphabetical lists that he might devise.

Cutter attempted to formulate a new concept of the dictionary catalog, incorporating the goals that Abbot had found to be essential. In several places he incorporated into his final result the means to undercut the goals that he had set. Although the new concept of a subject system in the dictionary catalog was not a perfect rendition, experience had shown that the system approached its goals adequately enough to ensure its success. Perhaps the reasons that it worked were not fully understood, but in the absence of a better system, the proof of its performance was all that was necessary. That reality, combined with the development of other tools such as specialized bibliographies and shelf classification systems, suggest why, perhaps, between the first and the last edition of the Rules, this section showed remarkably little change.

Printing the Catalog

The printing of the Athenaeum's catalog began in May 1872 and was completed in January 1882. By Cutter's own reckoning it took nine years of working time and nine months of vacation.1 The five volumes totalling 3,402 double-columned octavo pages were published at approximately two-year intervals beginning in 1874. Progress was at first difficult. For the different kinds of entries Cutter had to

1Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," p. 3401.
experiment with and settle on a variety of type styles. He finally settled on brevier type for whole works, nonpareil for pamphlets and parts of whole works, antique for the initial part of independent author and title entries, and small caps and italics under classes and subjects. The use of such a variety of type and the multiplicity of entries made the proof-reading process painfully slow and meticulous, particularly at first. Shortly after beginning, he sent to Frederic Vinton at the Library of Congress two proof-sheets of page ninety-four and explained,

The tinted-paper proof [proof-sheet #1] shows the effect of good press-work, but is very incorrect, as we had not all our accents. Between that & the small paper proof [proof-sheet #2] there were 15 proofs in each of which I tried some experiments of indention, etc.; this proof represents nearly the final form of the Catal., but the paper will be much better... I have the whole thing... on my own shoulders, and I find it sometimes a rather heavy burden.2

Later, when he became more settled in the procedure, he was able to entrust more of the work to his assistants. He especially gave credit to Miss Ellen Francis Knowles, who, hired in 1874 to read proof, "in time came to take a large and of late [i.e., 1882] the largest share in the preparation of the copy."3

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3Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," p. 3401.
Other problems also developed. Some of the work of correcting entries had to be done while the work was in progress and was barely finished ahead of the printer. To accomplish the work, Cutter not only did a certain amount of the searching himself, but elicited the help of various scholar friends. One such exchange with George Nichols concerned the entries for Edmund Burke. Cutter asked Nichols to look over that section in the catalog while in proof in order to make note of any errors that he might notice. After Nichols had performed the task, Cutter wrote his thanks and related,

I am extremely obliged to you for your careful reading of the Burke proof which has saved us from one of the worst blunders we have yet made (so far as we know). The original sins, of commission and of omission to detect it, lie at the door of some who are no longer attached to the library, but that I should read a list of Burke's works without being sufficiently startled by the imprint 1749 to look up the book fills me with dread. The copy swarms with errors. I don't expect to detect all; but that does not lessen my mortification when I discover too late that I have nodded. I cannot make all the corrections you suggest, & some of them ought not to be made; but I am obliged by all.¹

He also noted in a postscript that the sheets for the Burke section would go to press the next day.

Another serious problem involved the subject entry of books that had either never been correctly entered or the

¹Letters, Cutter to George Nichols (Cambridge), July 10, 1873 and [no date], HHL. The second letter, from which the quotation is taken, had no date but is certainly from not long after the first inasmuch as the volume containing the Burke entries was completed in the spring of 1874 and covered the letters A-C. Cutter also corresponded with J. Hammond Trumbull, the librarian of the Watkinson Library in Hartford, for the same reasons. Cf., Letter, J. H. Trumbull to Cutter, January 9, 1874, BA.
slips of which had been lost in the original cataloging process. These entries had to be made while the printing was in process and doubtless resulted in the omission of some entries under subjects already printed. Cutter related that, for example, under ENGLAND and ENGLISH 512 titles were added to the 786 already there. Under THEOLOGY 337 were added to the original 283. There was in fact no subject heading of any significance that did not receive at least some new entries while the work progressed. The work was made somewhat easier, however, by checking the manuscript against the recently published subject catalog of the Library of Congress in order to determine what entries under subjects might be missing.

There were also some general arrangements that Cutter would have changed if he had had supervision of the work from the very beginning. To do so would have brought the work more in line with his Rules. Although he did not specify the various kinds of changes that he meant, Cutter did tell the reason why he did not make all the changes that he wanted to. First, it would have been too expensive to do so. Second, the 'Rules' show the result of experience acquired in printing the first 1300 pages of the Catalogue, and in some matters they advocate a practice better than the one adopted in the beginning, which, however, had to be followed to the end, for the sake of uniformity.

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1 Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," pp. 3401-02.

2 Ibid, p. 3402.
Nevertheless, there was one major change that he did institute after the catalog had been two-thirds completed. Beginning approximately with "Na", Cutter arranged the entries under subject headings, not in alphabetical order of the authors' names but in the chronological order of publication, or, in historical subjects, of the period treated of in the book. This arrangement consumes considerable time in the making, but it is far superior to the other in the assistance it offers to investigation.¹

He continued to keep the various editions of any one work entered under any one subject heading together, arranged after the earliest edition of that title.

The familiar difficulty of funding the project, gained from the previous false starts toward printing, occupied the trustees from the start. With a much more expensive project than they had ever intended, there seemed to be an atmosphere of resignation with regard to what the catalog might eventually cost. Accordingly, the Library Committee authorized Cutter to solicit subscriptions from the proprietors and others at the rate of twenty-five dollars per copy for the completed work, to be delivered in sheets for each whole letter of the alphabet as it came off the press. The assessment would become due in five payments of five dollars each. Cutter wrote a subscription form and circulated it with specimen pages. He outlined the scope of the work and estimated that when finished it would occupy 2,800 pages. He also warned that the work would

¹Ibid.
Within the first two months Cutter received more than 160 orders. In addition, a special fund for contributions was begun. By January 1873 the Library Committee reported that $3,800 had been received from interested proprietors. Afterwards, both sources of income fell off, and by the beginning of 1874 the pinch for funding was again being felt. The trustees were loath to discontinue the project once having begun it. But the cost, an expense that was carried above the regular budgetary needs of the library, was almost prohibitive even for an institution of the Athenaeum's stature and wealth. In earlier years the cost of printing a catalog had been spoken of in terms of a single outlay. Now, however, the cost of printing the catalog took the form of thousands of dollars expended annually with seemingly no way to forecast precisely when the project would be completed.

By mid-1873 new factors arose that helped to encourage the Athenaeum's proprietors regarding the project and to keep them from discontinuing it. In January 1873 the Library Committee reported that despite the great cost,

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1Records of the Library Committee, January 22, 1872. Although printing of the subscription form was authorized in January, it was not circulated until March or April. See also a group of returned forms dated from April 1872 and bound together as "Subscriptions to the Catalogue, 1872," BA.

the relative expense would still be less by doing the composition and the printing in the building itself. More importantly, reports of the excellence of the catalog began coming in. In March 1873 Ezra Abbot wrote to the Library Committee, "I can congratulate you on the execution of the Catalogue. I think it will be the best Catalogue ever published, take it all in all." By the beginning of the following January when funding was at an especially low ebb and encouragement was especially needed, the Athenaeum received letters of praise from several prominent librarians touting the catalog's excellence. Frederic Vinton, the new librarian at Princeton College, wrote, "No book known to me is likely to be of more use in my bibliographical labors here." Justin Winsor wrote from the Boston Public Library to Samuel Eliot, a member of the committee, that although he disagreed with some of the particulars of execution, including the type styles, "I am free to acknowledge that I consider the new catalogue of the Boston Athenaeum, the best printed catalogue extant." J. Hammond Trumbull of the Watkinson Library in Hartford, Connecticut, wrote that no librarian in the country could afford to be without it, not

1Ibid.
2Records of the Library Committee, May 12, 1873.
4Letter, J. Winsor to Samuel Eliot, January 7, 1874, BA.
only because of its author listing, but because of its system of cross-references and subject headings. 1

The Library Committee reported the letters of praise to the proprietors in the 1874 annual meeting and called for a new resolution of support.

It is a heavy burden upon the pecuniary resources of the Athenaeum, but may be greatly lightened if the Proprietors will continue the subscription already begun in aid of it, and which may be easily carried to the desired amount by moderate contributions. Its cost, though large, will be repaid a hundred fold. Its possession and its use increase the value of the Library, by opening every part, making every book and every division of a book available, saving time and trouble to a degree which nothing but daily experience can estimate, and giving our collections at once a completeness and a usefulness which they could not claim as long as they were imperfectly catalogued. 1

Samuel Eliot was directed to write a public statement of progress to the wider intellectual community. Published in the Boston Daily Advertiser on February 4, 1874, the account gave a short history of the project and gave high praise to Cutter, "who took charge of the catalogue at a critical moment in its preparation, and gave it the shape and character by which it will be distinguished, both bibliographically and practically." 2 He went on to dispel the fear that the catalog simply represented "the indulgent fondness of a library for its own bantling" by quoting the letters of praise mentioned above. He spoke in terms of a public service ideal:

1 Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 12, 1874.
2 Offprint of the Boston Daily Advertiser article dated February 4, 1874, BA.
In fact, the catalogue is welcomed by bibliographers and men of letters, far and near, with a cordiality that can but increase as it goes on to completion, and that already shows the service which it can do beyond the limits of the single library for which it has been prepared. Libraries are no more isolated than books themselves. The good done in any one of them spreads to the rest, and beyond the rest to the great community of scholars and readers everywhere.\footnote{Ibid.}

He closed his account with a word of encouragement to the proprietors.

It remains only for the proprietors to provide for the uninterrupted printing of this catalogue until it is completed. The cost is large, but no larger than is consistent with strict economy, and not too large to be repaid, and more than repaid, in the increased efficiency, and therefore increased usefulness, of the library, which it makes known as it has never been known before, either by friend or by stranger. We heartily congratulate the proprietors of the Athenaeum on this great accession to their resources.\footnote{Ibid.}

The first volume of the catalog was completed in February 1874 and bound copies were made. In response to its publication even more words of praise were received. Perhaps the most personally rewarding to Cutter came in a long letter from his mentor, Ezra Abbot. Written in Abbot's typical critical style, the letter bore such a high testimony to the excellence of the work that the trustees had it printed and included in the literature soliciting subscriptions. Abbot evaluated the work from all of the aspects that he himself regarded as essential to its execution, that is, overall economy of entries, the subject system, the analytical entries, the typography, and the bibliographical accuracy. In each instance he found the work admirable, although he was also able to point out some of its

\footnote{Ibid.} \footnote{Ibid.}
limitations. He closed his letter with a statement of how much he believed in the project.

Though I am not so fortunate as to be a shareholder in the Boston Athenæum, yet believing that the printing of such a catalogue will be a public benefit, that it will be invaluable to any large library that possesses it, and of great utility to students in any department of literature or science, I beg to enclose twenty dollars ($20.00) as a humble contribution toward defraying the expense of its publication. It will be a work, when finished, of which the Boston Athenæum may well be proud; which will increase inestimably the practical value of its Library; and which, I believe, will be regarded as a model catalogue wherever it shall be known, at home or abroad.¹

That these words of praise helped to bring in any special sources of revenue is doubtful. A renewed effort in that direction during the spring of 1874 netted apparently only about $500.² The encouragement and praise did, on the other hand, seem to cement the resolution of the trustees to carry the work to completion no matter how long it took or what the cost. They also resolved to disseminate the work as widely as possible regardless of whether or not the catalog could pay for itself. In point of fact, it could not pay for itself, and the trustees proceeded on that assumption. That reasoning probably led to the decision to distribute copies widely in the form of gifts. During the month of May more than forty cloth-bound copies of volume one were sent to noted libraries and individuals.³

¹Letter, Ezra Abbot to Cutter, March 7, 1874, BA. The letter was afterwards printed.

²Records of the Library Committee, March 2, 1874.

³Records of the Trustees, May 18, 1874. Two years later the Trustees added ten more libraries to the list. See Records of the Trustees, May 15, 1876.
As the months and years passed, the financial strain on the institution became more evident. It resulted in an unavoidable slow-down of the work. The Library Committee reported in January 1876 that although the outlay on the catalog was "as necessary as any other part of our expenditures," still it represented a serious financial drain on the annual income and interfered with the overall growth of the library. If more funds would be forthcoming, the printing could be sped up. Otherwise, it must be slowed down. The latter resulted. Cutter's extra time on the catalog for which he had been given extra remuneration was curtailed and copies previously given away were sold at half-price or were given in exchange for the printed catalogs of the corresponding libraries. The project was not finally rescued from its plodding pace until the Howes legacy was received in 1879. Special funds were allocated in order to cut its projected completion time from five more years to two and a half years. In January 1882 the last volume was published.

The completion of the catalog brought with it a variety of reactions. Doubtless for the Athenaeum's proprietors it provoked a sigh of relief. They had their printed catalog, but it had been very expensive. Estimates

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1Annual Report of the Library Committee, January 10, 1876. Copies given in exchange or sold at half-price are recorded in the Records of the Library Committee, beginning in November 1876.
of the total cost ranged upwards from $100,000. The cost, however, had been borne along with the regular expenses of the library. Now the trustees could return to building the library's collections without the expense of the catalog hanging over their heads.

For the library profession and for others interested in the cause of bibliography, the response to the catalog's completion took various forms. First and foremost the catalog represented an authority in cataloging. An unsigned review in the *Nation* stated the tone of the response. It related the previous history of the Athenaeum catalog project and stated, "But under the influence of the newly-awakened interest in libraries which began to be felt at that time, the plan broadened and extended until now the finished work marks the highest point yet reached in the art

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A summary of the various expenses is discussed above, Ch. III, pp. 154-56. The cost of hiring catalogers for the period 1860-1881 amounted to more than $50,000, not including Cutter's salary. Of course, some of that would have been incurred whether or not the catalog had been printed. The cost of printing amounted to more than $25,000. There are no figures for binding. If Cutter's salary or even a part of it were added to the total, the figure of $100,000 seems to be a fairly reliable estimate. A note in the *Nation*, XVIII (April 23, 1874), 265, probably written by Cutter, states that previous cataloging work amounted to about $30,000 and that approximately $13,000 to $16,000 would yet be needed to finish the project. By 1876, however, the cost was soaring and when Reuben A. Guild, the librarian of Brown University, stated publicly in an open meeting of the American Library Association that the total would be $100,000, Cutter, who was present, did not dispute the figure. See *A.L.A. Conference Discussion*, LJ, I (November/December, 1876), 115.
of cataloguing."¹ It listed the points at which the catalog excelled. Its contents notes, analytical entries, explanatory and bibliographical notes, classification of subjects, typography, and almost phenomenal accuracy represented on the part of Charles Cutter, "an amount of labor, of patient investigation, of careful thought, which will never be known except to himself, and will be appreciated at its true value by but few."²

The experts, of course, would know the labor and sophistication that it represented. Frederick Beecher Perkins, previously an assistant at the Boston Public Library and one of the original founders of the American Library Association, wrote to Cutter from San Francisco,

The Cat. is Mon ar Chat (Gaelic to wit)--The Great Cat--and a terrific monument of unappreciated labor. No kind of work can be understood by fewer persons, I take it, than cataloguing. It is the job of a mole or a miner; the harder one works the more he gets out of sight. I take pleasure however in owning this catalogue of yours, and suppose I understand the merits of it.³

Besides being viewed as an authority in cataloging, however, the catalog represented an authority in bibliography. Samuel S. Green reported during the 1882 annual meeting of the American Library Association,

The trustees of this library are deserving of unreserved praise for the liberality shown by them in


²Ibid.

³Letter, F. B. Perkins to Cutter, [no date], BA. Perkins went to San Francisco in 1880 so that the letter was
issuing this catalogue, and Mr. Cutter will always be remembered by librarians and readers with profound gratitude, for the successful efforts he has made to render it the most substantial aid to investigators in general literature to be found in the printed catalogues of the libraries of England and America.¹

In the absence of any centralized source for extensive bibliographical information, it became along with other large dictionary catalogs, a primary bibliographical resource, especially in its specialized collection of early American pamphlets. The comment of Reuben A. Guild, that he used it daily for its bibliographical aid, was typical.²

Perhaps most significantly, the catalog represented the highest form of development of the dictionary catalog to that time. In the words of the Nation reviewer, it had "never before been carried to such an extent in a printed catalogue."³ Lynds Eugene Jones, the manager and compiler of the American Catalogue for Frederick Leypoldt, stated perceptively at the same 1882 Association meeting mentioned above,

The completion of the Boston Athenaeum Catalogue stands deservedly at the head of the year's work. Its importance is not only in the magnitude of the undertaking and in the character of the Library, but in its forming written between that time and certainly not later than 1882.

¹Samuel S. Green, "Aids and Guides for Readers, Yearly Report," LJ, VII (July/August, 1882), 139.


³Nation, XXXIV (March 9, 1882), 212.
Cutter's work was not the only example of the dictionary catalog available, but it was the first of what has since been called the monumental printed dictionary catalogs. In fact, by 1882 two others were already being produced. The first of these was the Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, edited by Dr. John Shaw Billings. Its first volume was published in 1880, but the sixteenth and final volume of that first series was not completed until 1895. In 1883 the first volume of the Catalogue of the Library of the Peabody Institute of Baltimore appeared. Its fifth and final volume was completed in 1892. With Cutter's work setting the pace, each of these contributed to the triumph of the dictionary arrangement over the classed arrangement as the standard for American libraries.

The Athenaeum's catalog bore no pretensions of being perfect, of course, and had to bear its share of criticism, perhaps even more so, because of its pace-setting role. The

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1Lynds E. Jones, "Cataloguing; Yearly Report," LJ, VII (July/August, 1882), 177.

The Nation review offered its own criticisms in that light. The review particularly objected to the inclusion of bibliographical details in the subject entries because they added too much bulk and consequently expense to the catalog. The review also objected to Cutter's use of vernacular spelling for foreign well-known names, and his entering of pseudonymous works under the correct but sometimes little-known legal name of the author. ¹

Others, particularly William F. Poole, criticized the catalog for not following the full dictionary format spelled out in the Rules. That was a point about which Cutter was especially sensitive, and he took great pains to communicate to the library profession the reasons why. In fact, his history of the production of the work appended to the fifth volume in large part stems from that motivation. ²

The most trenchant criticisms of the work had to do with its complexity and its expense. In response to this sort of criticism there were no obvious answers except to experiment with ways of alleviating the problems. With regard to the matter of complexity, it seems obvious upon examination that its rationale was different from the

¹ Nation, XXXIV (March 9, 1882), 212-13.

² William F. Poole, "The Index Symposium and its Moral," LJ, III (July, 1878), 183-84. Poole's remarks were particularly aimed at Cutter's criticisms of the Index to Periodical Literature. Cutter had pointed out the lack of system in the use of synonyms. Poole retorted by pointing out the same kind of inconsistencies in the Boston Athenæum Catalog.
typical public library catalog of the time. Years later Cutter stated, "the old catalogues were not made for children."¹ That is to say, with the incorporation of the extensive bibliographical detail, with the incorporation of the objectives of the catalog and the measures necessary to achieve them, and with the necessity to guide the reader by such devices as a complex system of type styles, the monumental dictionary catalogs were meant not to be simply consulted only briefly, but rather to be read and studied. That was so perhaps because the libraries that the catalogs represented were among the best reference collections then in existence. They were scholars' libraries and the catalogs were scholars' works.

Regardless of that reality, the makers of the catalogs had simplicity as one of their goals, but they did not always achieve it. The Nation review criticized the Athenaeum's catalog for a too rigorous application of classification in its subject system. "The necessity for a minute and careful classification is obvious, but the cardinal rule to be observed in a catalogue for general use is, after all, simplicity."² It also objected to the chronological arrangement of entries under subject headings. The arrangement made the search for any particular title under such a heading difficult and because it was a departure from the ease

¹Cutter, Rules, 1904, p. 6. The comment was made in the context of the changed cataloging situation and the advent of centralized cataloging at the Library of Congress.

²Nation, XXXIV (March 9, 1882), 212.
of alphabetical order, "confusing to the user of the
catalogue."\(^1\)

With regard to the problem of expense, perhaps
Charles A. Nelson's later comment was typical. "We are all
agreed that if a library can afford the cost it had better
print a dictionary catalog, as by far the most useful; but
no library has followed the Boston Athenaeum in putting
$125,000 into such a catalog."\(^2\) This criticism led to fur-
ther efforts in support of cooperative cataloging. It had
been a chief goal of the American Library Association since
its inception in 1876. The monumental dictionary catalogs
simply fed more fuel into the fire. The Nation review sup-
ported that goal.

Of the necessity of devising some universal cata-
logue, or at least some system of cooperative cata-
loguing, we are more than ever convinced after seeing the
large and costly work which the proprietors of the
Boston Athenaeum have published. There can really be
no absolute need that a large part of the revenues of
every considerable library should be spent on a separate
catalogue when the books are mainly the same in each.\(^3\)
The possibilities of the use of the Athenaeum's catalog as
well as others like it were mentioned. Newer catalogs might
simply refer to the fuller analytical entries of collected
works cataloged in the larger catalogs. Or, catalogers

\(^1\)Ibid.; Stephen B. Noyes, himself the maker of a
large catalog, offered the same criticism of the lack of
simplicity next year in a note on the Peabody catalog. See

\(^2\)Quoted in a New York Library Club discussion, LJ,
XIII (March/April, 1888), 100.

\(^3\)Nation, XXXIV (March 9, 1882), 213.
might simply be able to use the larger catalogs as a
source of cataloging information and cut down on their own
cost of cataloging by being able to hire at least in part
only clerical workers who could copy out the information.¹

Finally, and in a reverse sort of logic, the com-
pletion of the Athenaeum's catalog provided another argument
against printing a catalog and in favor of alternative forms
of the catalog. Chief among the alternatives was the card
catalog. A printed catalog while perhaps more convenient
to use, was not only very expensive to produce, but very
quickly out-of-date. The cut-off date for the Athenaeum's
catalog was December 31, 1871. That is, no accessions af-
ter that date were included in order that printing could be
begun. Supplements would of course need to be made. At
the Athenaeum the supplementary catalog was continued in
card form according to the specifications that Cutter de-
sired. In 1882 upon completion of the project a move was
made to revert to the older style slip catalog only this
time with printed slips. Cutter successfully defended
against the move with the same arguments that he had made
more than twelve years previously. Of the card catalog, he
argued, "What we have may not be the best, but it is good

¹Ibid.; Samuel S. Green, "Library Aids," LJ, VI
(April, 1881), 107, said, "With the rules we now have, and
the good examples of catalogues which we may acquire by
purchase at what, considering their cost, is a nominal
price, the work of cataloguing is half done, and can be en-
trusted to skilful persons who have had only elementary
training in this kind of work with a little supervision on
the part of a specially trained cataloguer."
enough for us, at least it is as good as we can afford."¹ And that was the general tone of the argument throughout the profession. James L. Whitney in noting the quick obsolescence of a printed catalog in effect made the same argument against any book catalog. The card catalog, it seemed to him, was the obvious alternative.²

¹Cutter, "Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]."

²Ranz, The Printed Book Catalogue, p. 85, discusses Whitney's argument as found in "Considerations as to a Printed Catalogue in Book Form," contained in the 47th Annual Report of the Boston Public Library in 1898. Whitney had actually made the same argument thirteen years earlier after making a study of how many current book requests could be handled by the Boston Athenaeum Catalog, only three years completed, but fourteen years beyond its cut-off date. See A.L.A Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 315.
CHAPTER VI

CATALOGING RULES

Cutter's work on the Boston Athenaeum Catalog inspired him to formulate a complete manual of cataloging rules. As he later stated, "I had to work out a system for myself; and it was my experience in carrying the first two volumes of the catalog through the press that led to the compilation and publication of the 'Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue'."¹ The actual listing of separate rules was begun by Charles R. Lowell before Cutter arrived on the scene. But Lowell's list was not organized and William I. Fletcher, an assistant in the library from 1861 to 1866, recalled years later, "These rules and precedents formed the basis of Cutter's Rules for a dictionary catalog, but in my day had not had the benefit of Mr. Cutter's marvelous gifts in codification and elucidation."²

Late in October 1874, General John Eaton, the Commissioner of Education for the recently formed U. S. Bureau of Education, announced in a circular letter his intention to produce a government report on the "origin, growth,

¹C. A. Cutter, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XII (September/October, 1887), 435.

present condition, uses, and special needs of libraries in
the United States."¹ In addition to the comprehensive sta-
tistics that he intended to bring up-to-date, he spoke of
his desire to include in the report some articles on spe-
cial topics concerning libraries and their buildings. He
appealed to Justin Winsor, the superintendent of the Boston
Public Library, for advice on whom to ask for contributions
and Winsor immediately recommended Charles Cutter as an ex-
pert on cataloging and classification. Eaton promptly wrote
to Cutter asking for an article on that specialty and Cutter
agreed, outlining his own suggestions for the content of
the contribution.² The primary result was Cutter's article
entitled "Library Catalogues." Someone suggested, however,
that the article be supplemented with a list of cataloging
rules. Cutter related,

To fill a gap in library literature a collection of
"Rules for a dictionary catalogue" was added, in which
many things which I had been accustomed to do as it were
by instinct or experimentally, were set down systemat­
ically with statements, and now and then with discus­
sions, of the reasons for them.³

¹Letter, John Eaton to A. R. Spofford, October 31,
1874, U. S. National Archives, "Letters sent by the Commis­
in microfilm. A second sheet after the above letter listed
the many other libraries and librarians to which Eaton sent
the same letter.

²Letters, John Eaton to Justin Winsor, November 7
and 17, 1874; Same to Cutter, November 17 and 23, 1874,
U.S.N.A., "Letters."

³Cutter, "The Editor to the Proprietors," p. 3402.
Because only the outgoing correspondence from Eaton is pre­
served, it is not certain who suggested the idea for the
rules. It is likely, however, that Cutter made the original
suggestion, for there is no suggestion on Eaton's part.
During the coming months Eaton encouraged Cutter to develop both contributions as fully as possible. He supplied statistical information and a full choice of type faces available in the Government Printing Office, the latter to satisfy Cutter's stylistic needs. The printed proofs of the Rules were sent by the end of December 1875 and the Rules were published during the spring of 1876. They were separately bound as the second part of the special report and were subsequently distributed freely with the first part.

Cutter's Rules were received by the newly formed professional library association both with enthusiasm and with caution. The initial comments concerning them, that they needed to be carefully studied, suggest that their comprehensiveness was overwhelming. The Rules provided a convenient manual for making a dictionary catalog, but they also brought together many questions in the realm of cataloging theory not previously considered in a systematic way. A typical phrase that recurs throughout the text in short paragraphs of discussion—"It has been objected"—in reality appears to be Cutter himself both asking and answering questions of theory. To the library profession there had simply never been a work on cataloging at once so exhaustive and so demanding.

Various letters from Eaton to Cutter during 1875 and 1876 give a picture of the development of Cutter's contributions to the report. The copyright date given in the first edition of the Rules is 1875, but the correspondence shows that it was not actually released until 1876. See F. Miksa, "The Making of the 1876 Special Report on Public Libraries," Journal of Library History, VIII (January, 1973), 30-40.
Cataloging, that is, the making of library catalogs, was by no means a recent innovation. Catalogs had been made almost from the earliest appearance of libraries. They had been made for diverse reasons, the earliest probably having been to provide an inventory of holdings, sometimes in combination with broad subject groupings. With the invention of printing and the subsequent increase in the quantity of books, the necessity for bibliographical control grew and catalogs of book collections took various forms according to the objectives of the library or book owner. When Charles Cutter came on the scene he faced a variety of catalog forms each of which attempted to fulfill its own objectives. He responded to the situation first, by systematizing the objectives themselves, and second, by working out an integrated catalog arrangement that would fulfill as much as possible and with the greatest amount of economy to both cataloger and user, the stated objectives.

Cutter was aware that the objectives of a catalog arose from the kinds of inquiries that users brought to the library. These inquiries were wide-ranging and could include among other things, locating books according to binding,

1Several studies have been made giving the history of cataloging. Among the best are: Ranz, The Printed Book Catalogue; Dorothy May Norris, A History of Cataloguing and Cataloguing Methods, 1100-1850: With an Introductory Survey of Ancient Times (London: Grafton, 1939); For an older comprehensive account see Edward Edwards, Memoirs of Libraries: Including a Handbook of Library Economy (2 vols.; London: Truebner, 1859).
publisher, suitability for various age-groups, particular forms of literature, and even color and size.¹ Some inquiries were more important than others and he made a list of these and the objectives that arose from them in his article, "Library Catalogues."² In his Rules he formalized the most important objectives and grouped them in three general categories:

OBJECTS

1. To enable a person to find a book of which either
   (A) the author
   (B) the title
   (C) the subject
   { is known.

2. To show what the library has
   (D) by a given author
   (E) on a given subject
   (F) in a given kind of literature.

3. To assist in the choice of a book
   (G) as to its edition (bibliographically).
   (H) as to its character (literary or topical).³

Cutter's enumeration of the objects in this manner suggests first that the three groups of catalog objects arise from different basic principles: identifying individual books in order to help users locate them effectively as unique items (finding principle); grouping, that is, classifying the uniquely identified books into categories that users commonly sought (gathering principle); and supplying

¹ "Class," in Rules, 1876, pp. 10-11. Unless otherwise noted, the rule numbers in this discussion are from the first edition. References are given only for Cutter's discussions of various matters. When only a rule itself is cited, its number is given in the text.


³ Rules, p. 10.
bibliographical information and other annotations that would enable users to effectively choose a book on the basis of the catalog entry itself (evaluating principle). Despite the differences among the principles themselves, especially between the first two types, Cutter felt that a catalog could accommodate all of the objects. In reality that accommodation was not always easily obtained and the differences between the basic principles produced conflicts in achieving them.

Second, Cutter's enumeration of the objects points to his methodology for achieving the final dictionary catalog product. He viewed the objects as functions of standard types of catalogs or catalog formats. Objects A and D were functions of the entries in an author catalog. Objects C and E were functions of the entries in a subject catalog. Object B was a function of the entries in a title catalog. Object F was a function of the entries in a form catalog. Objects G and H were not related to a specific kind of catalog, but rather to the fullness of information given with any of the above types.\(^1\) Theoretically, the objects could be achieved by entering each book in each of four different kinds of catalogs in the library. (Of course, if information was lacking, some entries might not be possible. For instance, an anonymous work would not have an author entry.) Since Cutter's goal was to achieve all of the objects in a single alphabetical catalog sequence, the most plausible

\(^1\)Ibid.
procedure was to combine the four distinct types of catalog formats into one sequence. His subsequent directions demonstrate that procedure. He followed his list of "Objects" with a section entitled "Means" in which he rearranged the objects in terms of the types of catalog entry format that would accomplish each, and he followed that with a section entitled "Definitions" in order to provide a "systematic nomenclature" of twenty-four catalog format terms that were used in the rules that followed.¹

The Rules were divided into sections that corresponded to the same approach. The first division, "A. Entry," dealt with making entries in the four major types of catalogs to be combined, as well as with problems of the depth analysis of some multi-faceted items. Taken together, these rules achieved objects A through F. The second division, "B. Style," dealt with the fullness of detail that enabled one to achieve objects G and H, as well as with filing arrangements.

Combining the basic kinds of catalogs made other adjustments necessary. First, although each item in the library might theoretically be given a full entry in each of the four different kinds of catalog elements, not all such entries were necessary or desirable. When all of the kinds of entries were placed in one catalog sequence, some of the entries achieved more than one object, making others unnecessary. Cutter explicitly mentioned that author and

¹Ibid.
subject entries actually achieved multiple objects, but there were other cases also. The finding objects B (by title entry) and C (by subject word taken from the title) were sometimes achieved by only one of the entries involved. At other times both of those types of entries were eliminated because a disciplined subject entry (object E) sufficed. The gathering objects E (by subject) and F (by form of literature) were often so interrelated that the latter was to be considered only an adjunct to the former.

Other entries were not desirable for practical reasons. In some instances entries were omitted because of supposed low use. For example, an anonymous biography, treated as a typical anonymous work, would ordinarily be given a title entry and a subject entry under the name of the biographee. But Cutter felt that, since the chief use of a biography was for its subject, the title entry could be eliminated unless some other factor made it necessary.  

Furthermore, decisions to omit such entries were enhanced because of the savings in printing costs. For example, title entries for books with indistinct titles were eliminated initially because their supposed use value was low. The decision was enhanced because printing economy was also achieved. The most important economies occurred with objects G and H. Full entries, while convenient to the user at each point, were a great expense because they increased the bulk

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1 Rules 62 and 52, notes 2 and 3. In Rules, 1904, rule 121, he instructed that the word subject should be added after the heading, "to show why the entry is made under it."
of the catalog. Therefore, Cutter decided that only one, the principal entry, should have the complete information, the others being briefer in form. Still other entries could be shortened to only the briefest of references. Finally, variations in fullness and omissions were also affected by cost factors that arose apart from considerations of objects. Cutter realized that the economic means of libraries would inhibit the catalog structure. Therefore, he allowed variations on the basis of whether the catalog would be Full, Medium, or Short, corresponding to large, medium, or small libraries.

A second adjustment resulting from Cutter's methodology of combining the four kinds of catalogs was the necessity to include a thorough system of references between the various elements in order to preserve the interrelatedness of the catalog. Sometimes the references were made necessary by the requirements of a single type of object, such as was the case with the subject system alone. In other cases, references were required because of the conflicting requirements of two kinds of objects borne by the same entries, as in the objects of the author and subject entries. Still other references were required for the sake of economy.

The result of Cutter's methodology was a catalog that varied with regard to the completeness of its individual elements (types of entries), but that with its system of references was integrated in such a manner to achieve the objects that Cutter had listed. He called the final product
a quadruple syndetic dictionary catalog. That is, it contained four basic catalog elements, interrelated (syndetic) in a single alphabetical sequence. He added a note to the definitions in the second edition of the *Rules* that stated the result plainly.

In the present treatise I am regarding the dictionary catalogue as consisting of an author-catalogue, a subject-catalogue, a more or less complete title-catalogue, and a more or less complete form-catalogue, all interwoven in one alphabetical order. The greater part, however, of the rules here given would apply equally to these catalogues when kept separate.¹

His priorities were obvious. Author and subject entry were deemed the most important, while title and form entry were often sacrificed for practical or theoretical reasons.

The ultimate effect of Cutter's systematization of the objects of a catalog and of his achievement of those objects in an integrated catalog structure was to transform cataloging from a technique with few stated goals to an art based on one's sensitivity to both practical and theoretical issues. He viewed the catalog made by these rules as an instrument of precision and balance, to be tailored both to the needs of an individual library and to factors of economy. It was a whole fabric woven from diverse elements, a thing of beauty in and of itself. Cutter felt that it was capable of being used by the less sophisticated user because he had included in it considerations of their needs. He intended that it would allow them an entrance to a wider and enriched world of learning. Its ultimate complexity and comprehen-

¹*Rules*, 1889, p. 15.
siveness suggests that he also intended it to be an object of scholarly attention, to be read and studied, not simply consulted briefly. Cutter did not assume that in presenting cataloging in this new and systematic way he had solved all the difficult problems and inconsistencies. His own statement of his goals was modest. After mentioning other cataloging rules that had been made in the past, he commented,

But for a dictionary-catalogue as a whole, and for most of its parts, there is no manual whatever. Nor have any of the above-mentioned works attempted to set forth the rules in a systematic way or to investigate what might be called the first principles of cataloging. It is to be expected that a first attempt will be incomplete, and I shall be obliged to librarians for criticisms, objections, or new problems, with or without solutions. With such assistance perhaps a second edition of these hints would deserve the title—Rules.¹

The Rules: First Edition

Entry (Rules 1-93)

Cutter arranged the rules for entry in five sections: entry in the Author-catalog, Title-catalog, Subject-catalog, Form-catalog, and entry as an analytical. Entry meant "The registry of a book in the catalogue with the title and imprint," under the heading appropriate for each catalog element.² Entry as such was to be distinguished from a reference, which was the "partial registry of a book (omitting the imprint) under author, title, subject, or kind, referring to a more full entry under some other

¹"Prefatory Note," in Rules, p. 5.
heading."¹ An analytical entry was "the registry of some part of a book or of some work contained in a collection, referring to the heading under which the book or collection is entered."² Although most analytical entries were placed in the author catalog, an analytical entry could technically be placed in any of the other catalog elements. Analytical entries functioned, in a sense, as a little catalog within the larger catalog, their difference being that they did not represent whole works, but instead parts of larger works already entered.

Author Catalog Entry (Rules 1-51)

Cutter's basic direction for the author catalog was, "Make the author-entry under the name of the author whether personal or corporate, or some substitute for it." (Rule 1) Following that, Cutter dealt more specifically with entry under personal names (Rules 2-25), entry under corporate names (Rules 26-40), and entry under substitutes for authors' names (Rules 41-43). He also added two short sections on references (Rules 44-45) and economies (Rules 46-51).

There were two basic procedures for entry in the author catalog. The first was the ascription of the authorship of a book to either a person or a corporate body. If that could not be determined, the book would have to be entered in some other way, usually under the title. The second was the need to determine a consistent form for the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 15.
author's name. The idea of ascription of authorship followed the general pattern already set down by Antonio Panizzi and C. C. Jewett. Cutter had elucidated the pattern seven years before.

The rules for making [an author catalog] have long been a matter of discussion, and although bibliographers are not agreed upon all the details, although periodicals and pseudonymous books and publications of societies are still entered in large libraries in different ways, yet almost all the rules may be reduced to two great principles; first, that books shall be catalogued under the name of the author, or (in the case of collections) the editor, or the body responsible for their publication; second, that, if this is not known, the first word in the title not an article or a preposition shall be taken for the heading.1

Although Cutter felt that the concept of author ascription was well-established except for some details, he demonstrated in his discussion of the first rule how the objects of the catalog caused him to expand it. Prior to Cutter, the source for determining author entry had been limited to the information found on the title page of a book. Panizzi's instruction had been to enter a book under the author's name only if it was clearly indicated there. Otherwise, the book was to be entered as an anonymous work even if the cataloger knew the author's name from another source.2 Cutter explained that "whenever" an author's name was known, whether or not the name was on the title page, the book was to be entered under the name. The direction


of his thinking was to seek the ascription of authorship aggressively. The reason for his insistence on determining authors' names lay in his appreciation of the second objective of author entry: gathering all of the works of any one author. He explained that stressing the finding principle based only upon whether the book itself ascribed authorship would cause the full entries of some of an author's works to be scattered throughout the catalog depending upon how the title page appeared. The gathering principle would consequently be unattended or dependent upon brief references. Cutter concluded,

But we have also object D to provide for,—the finding of all works of a given author,—and this can most conveniently be done if they are all collected in one place. 1

For many books the two objects would, of course, coincide because the title pages ascribed authorship clearly. But the two objects were at other times incompatible. When that situation arose, Cutter's prejudice was that object D take precedence over object A. Finding a book in terms of the way the title page appeared could be achieved by some other means, most likely by brief references. In effect, object A was to be superimposed on object D, the primary structure of the author catalog.

1 Rule 1, discussion. In Rules, 1904, Cutter moved this discussion note to the section dealing with the form of name to be used, where it more properly belonged. The question of gathering the works of an author in any one place was a function of the form of name rather than simply of the fact that one was stressing the entry of books by an author whether anonymous or not.
The two procedures produced the structure for Cutter's rules for personal and corporate author headings, because he had to determine for each book who the author was, and what uniform name was to be used. In each case, however, an underlying tension arose between Cutter's desire to adhere consistently to principles and the practices of users. With regard to determining who the author was, some books might be referred to by patrons by some name not correctly the author's such as that of an editor or a translator. Here, Cutter made few concessions. Entry under the commonly known, although wrongly ascribed, person would not achieve the gathering of an author's works in one place. For some works, namely those written "conjointly" by several authors, he could only prescribe the arbitrary device of making the full entry under the first one named. References from the other authors were to be made in order to direct the inquirer to the primary entry. (Rule 2) The rule was arbitrary because theoretically each author was no less important in producing the books and a user might come to the catalog with any one of the names. But Cutter declined to make full entries under each name. He did, however, make the concession to user preference that in the case of works conjointly authored by countries, full entries should be placed under each, with the reasoning, "Each country puts its own name first in an edition of a joint work."1

1Rule 2, discussion. He also reasoned that references listed under a country as an author would confuse an already confused listing.
A work consisting of two or more separate contributions that had been previously published as works in their own right presented a different problem. The issue revolved around Cutter's definition of authorship. In a narrower sense, an author "is the person who writes a book." In a broader sense, however, an author is the one "who is the cause of a book's existence by putting together the writings of several authors." In the latter sense the author is more often called the "editor" or the "collector" of a work.¹

The principal issue for the cataloger resided in the question, who is indeed the author, the writer(s) of the individual works or the person who caused this particular book's existence? Cutter decided the issue by whether the work at hand had a collective title, that is, a title that gave the book at hand an individuality and identity of its own regardless of its separate contributions. If there were no collective title, the book was not to be gathered under its collector even if the collector was named. For Cutter, the work of a collector of such a work was of an inferior type of 'authorship'. The collector was in that case "to be considered merely as the editor." (Rule 43b) Instead, the name of the first author of the collection was to be used as the primary gathering point. (Rule 3) If, however, there was a collective title, the work as a whole was to be entered under the collector even if his

¹"Definitions," in Rules, p. 10.
name was not found on the title page, for the collector was "responsible for the existence of a collection," and functioned more nearly as an 'author'. He was, therefore, no longer to be considered "merely" an editor. It is significant, however, that the rule for making the entries in such cases was not a part of the author entry section. Rather, it was given in the section for substitutes for author entry. Obviously, the collector was not an author in the narrower sense and the rules in the author section were for authorship in its narrowest definition. For that reason, too, the 'authors' of the individual works collected in either kind of book were to receive analytical entries under their names.

In each case the tension mentioned previously is evident. Patrons might not be aware of Cutter's distinctions between grades of authorship. They might ask for a work without a collective title by the name of the collector, and for a work with a collective title by the name of the authors whose works were collected. Regardless of the problems involved, Cutter adhered to his distinctions perhaps because he felt that the author catalog was above all to correctly ascribe authorship. In the case of the second type of book (collections with collective titles), all of those named could be found and a patron would not be at a loss. In the case of the first type, however, Cutter made

1Rule 43, discussion.
no provision for even a reference from the collector's name and that lack represented a distinct difficulty in the 

Rules.

The need to determine the correct author informs all of the rules in this section. Cutter wrote rules with specific cases in mind: works with notable illustrations, works including the work of engravers, cartographers, etc., musical works with text, commentaries, indexes, concordances based on the works of others, and other more specialized cases. In each instance Cutter attempted to write the rules so that a work would be entered under the actual author as he defined the term.

If the tension between adhering consistently to a principle and the practices of users was in evidence with regard to who was the author, it was even more pronounced with regard to the problem of uniform names. Here, Cutter's concessions were no less stringent. The principle that he chose to follow was that the name used should be if possible the author's real or legal name, whether or not that name was used in the publications in hand. In the case of pseudonymous works he wrote, "Enter pseudonymous works under the author's real name, when it is known, with a reference from the pseudonym." (Rule 5) He admitted in his discussion of the rule the tension between his desire to follow the rule of the real or legal name of the author and the realities of patrons' habits in referring to authors' names. It was strongly tempting to use the pseudonymous name, even though
the real name was known for those authors, who appear in literature only under their pseudonyms. It would apparently be much more convenient to enter their works under the name by which alone they are known and under which everybody but a professed cataloguer would assuredly look first.¹

He argued against that practice, however.

For an author-catalogue this might be the best plan, but in a dictionary catalogue, we have to deal with such people not merely as writers of books, but as subjects of biographies or parties in trials, and in such cases it seems proper to use their legal names.²

He went on to suggest that there would be no way to decide what notable authors should be excepted. Besides, he added, when pseudonyms change, the entries have to be changed. He used Mark Twain as one example.

Mark Twain is in a transition state. The public mind is divided between Twain and Clemens. The tendency is always toward the use of the real name; and that tendency will be much helped in the reading public if the real name is always preferred in catalogues.³

Stll, he felt that his solution was not the last word on the subject and, accordingly, suggested to the library profession that, "It would be well if cataloguers could appoint some permanent committee with authority to decide this and similar points as from time to time they occur."⁴

After having settled on rules for choice of personal authorship, Cutter next listed rules for the order (Rules 13-19) and spelling (Rules 20-25) of the personal names used. That is, he gave directions on what part of the name was to be first in the entry heading and what spelling would be

¹Rule 5, discussion. ²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
correct. Both sections show the same underlying tension between the real name principle and patrons' habits in referring to authors' names. Authors known by their forenames only were to be listed by their Christian forename rather than some other form. Authors known by a surname were to be listed according to the most recent legal form of the surname. In particular, British noblemen were to be listed by their family names rather than by their titles of nobility and married women were to be listed by the surname of their latest husband, or if divorced, by the legal name then resumed. For other authors who changed their names, the latest form, "provided that it be legally and permanently adopted," was to be used. (Rule 15)

There were arguments against his rulings on British noblemen and married women, especially if the persons involved were primarily known by a title of nobility or a name different from their legal name. For British noblemen Cutter listed contemporary practice. His preference for surname rather than title of nobility was also the practice of the British Museum. Frederick B. Perkins, among others, however, preferred entry of British noblemen according to their titles. According to Cutter, while that would provide entry in many cases under the more familiar form of the name, it would not provide a uniform entry procedure and thus would destroy the effort to gather all of the works of a single author in one place by the real name principle. British noblemen, whose titles often changed over the years, would
have their works scattered under the different forms, with only references to relate them together. Cutter felt that the latest legal surname form was the most consistent gathering form.\(^1\) The same argument applied to married women. In addition, he also reiterated one argument that he had used against entry under a pseudonym. A biography written about the authoress would refer to the person in real life, and would doubtless use the actual legal name, not her pen-name. Therefore, it was best to be consistent and make her author name-form the same legal form.\(^2\)

With regard to the entry of authors with forenames only, Cutter specified that the English form of the name be used. (Rule 13) He wrote, however,

The direction "Use the English form of the name" was a concession to ignorance; when it was given, that form was almost alone employed in English books; since then the tone of literature has changed; the desire for coloring has led to the use of foreign forms and we have become familiarized with Louis, Henri, . . . If the present tendency continues we shall be able to treat princes' names like any other names; perhaps the next generation of cataloguers will no more tolerate the headings William Emperor of Germany, Lewis XIV than they will tolerate Virgil, Horace, Pliny. The change, to be sure, would give rise to some difficult questions of nationality, but it would diminish the number of titles now accumulated under the more common royal names.\(^3\)

A more definite shift in practice had occurred with regard to French name forms beginning with La, Le, L', etc. These were to be entered under the prefix when it contained an article and under the word following the prefix only when

\(^1\text{Rule 14b, discussion.}\quad ^2\text{Rule 14c, discussion.}\quad ^3\text{Rule 13, discussion.}\)
the prefix was a preposition. (Rule 17a) The practice was uncommon in comparison to traditional English and American practice in which prefixes were dropped, but Cutter felt that the foreign practice was slowly becoming established.¹

With regard to the spelling of names, Cutter followed British Museum practice and directed, "Give the names, both family and Christian, in the vernacular form if any instance occurs of the use of that form in the printed publications of the author." (Rule 20) The effect of the rule would be to enter some foreign authors not according to the more familiar anglicized or latinized form, but instead under a "real", if somewhat more obscure, form such as Zepernik instead of Copernicus. In order to find the vernacular forms of older authors, Cutter suggested the use of Michaelis¹ Wortherbuch der Taufnamen. He also quoted the contrary opinion of a writer who felt that the more familiar latinized names should be used.² In following the vernacular form, Cutter again emphasized his basic rationale, that for effective entry, one must use the rational principle of the legal or real name of the author. Contrary to that ruling, however, he compromised in the entry of countries and cities by favoring the English spelling or the modern as opposed to the ancient spelling.

In the second part of the author section Cutter

¹See his introduction to entry in the subject catalog, p. 37, where he comments further on the shift in practice.
²Rule 20, discussion.
dealt with the entry of corporate rather than personal authors. Two preliminary factors need to be noted. First, although corporate entry had been used in part by Panizzi and had been explicitly advocated by Jewett, Cutter greatly expanded the concept. Seymour Lubetzky has perceptively noted that Cutter's expansion of the concept was the source "from which the mighty complex" of modern cataloging rules for corporate author grew.¹ His analysis, as well as that of Edith Scott, also notes that much of the subsequent growth was based upon confusing terminology, attributable at least in part to Cutter.² While that assessment is true, it leads to a second factor that may help to understand Cutter's role in subsequent developments. Although the terminology that Cutter preferred to use here varies enough from the personal author section to suggest a different approach, the issue is remarkably the same. The same tension between 'real' or 'legal' names and user preferences that dominated entry under personal author name is also evident in this section and provides a basis for understanding Cutter's corporate author rules.

Cutter began by noting the basic concept that corporate bodies are indeed to be considered "the authors of

¹Lubetzky, Cataloging Rules and Principles, p. 18.
²Edith Scott, "J. C. M. Hanson and his Contribution to Twentieth-century Cataloging" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1970), pp. 483-519, in which she discusses the relationship of Cutter's rules on corporate entry to the cooperative code of 1908.
works published in their names or by their authority."

(Rule 26) One still found it necessary to determine the form of the corporate name, however, and that provided the basic problem of the section. He wrote,

"The chief difficulty with regard to bodies of men is to determine (1) what their names are and (2) whether the name or some other word shall be the heading."¹

In other words, the name of a corporate body was not always the name by which it was more popularly known or more easily identified. A common substitute for the identifying factor was, in fact, the place in which it was located (e.g., Museum of Fine Arts, known as the Boston Museum of Fine Arts). Cutter noted, "Local names have always had very strong claims to be headings."²

The practice of some catalogers to add the name of a place to the name of every corporate body was no answer for although some corporate bodies did indeed include a place-name in their actual name, others did not. The use of a local name was an attempt to be true to the principle that corporate bodies were authors but, in the light of no consistent method of determining their names, to use the place-name as a uniform method of providing a gathering point. The assumption may have been that because some corporate bodies included place-names in their names, the catalog user would know enough to extend the principle to the names of all corporate bodies.

Cutter attempted to provide more exact distinctions. He wanted to remain true to the reality of corporate

¹Rule 26, discussion. ²Ibid.
authorship, but he also desired to follow his basic principle that authors' works are most conveniently gathered under their "exact", "real", or "actual" names. The term "actual" functions in this section the same way that "legal" functioned in the personal author section. For certain kinds of corporate authors, the issue was clear. Sometimes the place-name was obviously indicated. For instance, a government was always known by its country's name and its publications were, accordingly, to begin with the country's name. Sometimes the place-name was not so used because the corporate bodies were sufficiently distinct. For instance, some corporate bodies such as congresses, conventions, religious denominations and political parties had clearly distinguishable names apart from any place-names. When they had such "actual" names they could be entered under them. But if no actual names were identifiable, they were to be entered under their places of meeting. (Rule 36)

There was a large class of corporate bodies called societies and institutions, however, that while they had exact names, the names were non-distinctive (e.g., First Church--of Cambridge), obscure (e.g., Masters and Keepers or Wardens and Commonalty of the Mystery and Art of Stationers of the City of London, otherwise, the Stationers' Company), or seemed always better known by a place-name even if they did have distinctive actual names (e.g., state historical societies). The problem for Cutter was to remain consistent with his desire to use as much as possible the
real or actual name of a corporate body as the basic gathering principle, and at the same time to deal with the problem of exact names that were confusing or uncommon to use.

He discussed the approaches to the problem in major catalogs then in use, approaches he called little more than "experiments" in the face of the complexity of the problem.\(^1\) The practice of the British Museum was summarily dismissed as providing no answer at all. It placed all such societies under the catch-word *Academies* and subdivided them geographically. In Cutter's thinking the use of a class word for the gathering point did not belong in an author catalog at all. The practice of Charles C. Jewett in the printed catalog of the Boston Public Library had been to enter all societies under the place of their headquarters. Cutter felt that while the rule perhaps was suited to continental European societies which were little known in America by their actual names, it failed to do justice to American and British societies which indeed often had exact names. Both solutions in summary failed because they did not face the complexity of the situation.

The third plan was that of the Harvard College Library and followed the practice of Edward Edwards, the noted English librarian. This approach placed societies under the name of the place if the place-name entered into the legal

\(^1\)Cutter's discussion of the various approaches is found in Rule 40. The statement about the experimental nature of determining corporate entry is found in Rule 26, discussion.
name of the society, otherwise under the actual name itself. In addition, all purely local societies, that is, societies commonly associated with a city were entered under place. Cutter objected to this plan because it was too difficult always to determine if the place-name was a part of the legal name of a society.

At first glance it would seem that the question of whether or not a place-name formed a part of the legal name of a society was contrary to Cutter's basic rationale of determining an author's real (sometimes stated "legal") name. The distinction here would seem to be deceptive, however. Cutter was desirous of applying the principle of real name to corporate bodies as well as to persons. His use of the term "corporate" would seem to reinforce that intention (i.e., enter under the corporate name). The question involved in the principle that Harvard used would seem not to be simply that a legal name was sought, but that determining whether the name legally included a place-name was made an issue in every case. If there were cases in which it was not the issue, in which there was no question that the place-name added but little distinctiveness to the actual name, why take the time to try to determine if it were so? Why, in other words, did one have to make a test case of a place-name in every instance? Obviously, a finer distinction of cases was needed as a starting point.

A fourth plan, followed by Cutter himself at the Boston Athenaeum and in his own words, "simple and
intelligible," entered English societies under the first word of their names and other foreign societies under place. In addition, as in the third plan, all purely local societies were entered under place. Cutter did not discuss this plan. Instead, he went on to describe two other approaches, the sixth plan being simply the fifth without exceptions. Though he had not apparently tested the fifth plan extensively in practice, he offered his opinion, "that plan 5 is on the whole the best." 2

The fifth plan consisted of two basic rules. The first rule was, "Enter academies, associations, institutes, universities, societies, libraries, galleries, museums, colleges, and all similar bodies both English and foreign, according to their corporate name, neglecting an initial article when there is one." (Rule 40, 5th plan) Corporate bodies of the kind specified whose exact names could not only be ascertained, but were also distinctive (i.e., not common names such as Museum that depend upon a local place-name to give a distinctiveness), were to be entered under their actual names.

Having made the rule, however, Cutter also had to recognize common usage exceptions. Some corporate bodies whose exact names were both identifiable and distinctive were more commonly identified by some other title. Cutter distinguished which cases these would be. The royal acad- of Berlin, Gottingen, Leipzig, Lisbon, Madrid, and other

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1 Rule 40, discussion. 2 Ibid.
European cities, excepting those in England, were more commonly identified by their city (Exception 1). Cutter wrote,

An exception is an evil; this one is adopted because the academies are almost universally known by the name of the cities, and are hardly ever referred to by the name Konigliches, Real, etc.¹

London guilds were to be entered under the name of the guild (e.g., Stationers' Company). This second exception was allowed because the actual names were often too obscure for library patrons to remember. A third exception allowed the entry of state historical societies under the names of their states. In the absence of any given reason, it can only be surmised that this was allowed not because the place-name entered into the legal or actual name of the society, but because the place-name was the more common usage. The first rule, therefore, attempted to place societies with distinctive names under their actual names, but with some specific exceptions.

The second rule was, "Enter churches and all local benevolent moral or similar societies under the name of the place." (Rule 40, 5th plan) Having already dispensed with those corporate bodies whose names were both ascertainable and distinctive, Cutter now turned to those corporate bodies whose names were ascertainable but not distinctive. He described them as "local", but a question arises as to the definition of the term. Rather than giving a definition, Cutter listed what kinds of institution were local and what

¹Rule 40, 5th plan, Exception 1, discussion.
kinds were not. The first kind included young men's Christian associations, Mercantile library associations, public schools, libraries and galleries, and local churches. The second kind included business firms or corporations, and other (that is, private) libraries, galleries and schools. The lists suggest that the primary factor was whether or not the institutions had a legal connection with a city. This was a broader definition than whether the name of a place was legally part of the name of the institution as in the Harvard plan. Other such private institutions and societies were to revert to Rule 1, except the specific types mentioned. Whether the types listed were to serve as a definitive list was not made clear, but Cutter's use of "other" similar societies suggests that besides churches, which are explicitly noted in the rule itself, the types are listed only as examples.

Rule 2 as a whole, therefore, indicates a second level of definition in the term "local." Besides purely public institutions, local also meant some private institutions and societies whose names were ascertainable but nondistinctive. The effect of Cutter's rule was to suggest that a place-name could be used to provide a distinguishing element in addition to the actual or real name involved. The difficulty of the rule resided in Cutter's lack of a specific list of exceptions for the private types of institutions, or at least some way to indicate which ones might qualify.
Lubetzky has suggested that Cutter's fifth plan was, in actuality, an extension of plan four that Cutter used at the Boston Athenaeum. There was a threefold division in both of them. That is, local and foreign societies were entered under place and all others were entered under their names. In the sense that Cutter ended up with approximately the same kinds of entries, the judgment is correct. However, the genius of the fifth plan was the attempt to apply the concept of exact name (a parallel to real name in the personal author section) to corporate bodies of two classes—those with distinctive actual names and those with non-distinctive actual names—and to list the specific kinds of corporate bodies that qualified for each category. Only after that basic distinction did he allow exceptions to the plan. In other words, he attempted to make corporate entry stand under the same rational principle as he applied in the personal author section, that an author's "real" or "actual" name was to be the basis for determining author entry names for the purpose of the gathering objective of the author catalog. Only when those names were non-distinctive was the cataloger to go on to the more difficult question of "local" relationship.

After discussing the two major categories of author entry, Cutter added three short sections of rules that rounded out the author catalog. In a section on substitutes for author entry (Rules 41-43) he made allowances for special

1Lubetzky, Cataloging Rules and Principles, p. 18.
entry in situations in which the author's name was either not distinct by ordinary standards (i.e., authors' names consisting of only initials, and pseudonyms consisting of non-distinct phrases) or involved a question of the nature of authorship responsibility (i.e., a collector, discussed above). In a section on references in the author catalog (Rules 44-45) he consolidated in one list the more than fifty instances in the author section in which cross-references had been called for. For the most part the purpose for the many references was to lead the catalog user from more common but not "real" or otherwise variant names to the name chosen by the cataloger as the primary gathering point in the catalog. He wrote,

It may be thought that an excessive number of references is recommended, but it is plain that wherever there can be a reasonable doubt among cataloguers under what head a book ought to be entered, it should have at least a reference under each head. The object of an author-catalogue is to enable one to find the book; if that object is not attained the book might as well not be catalogued at all. ¹

His words emphasized the syndetic ideal and especially object A in his list of objectives; that is, to find a book of which the author is known. He might well have added, however, that object A was to be accomplished as much as possible in the light of object D; that is, to gather all of the works of any one author in one place by means of a uniform entry name. Last of all, Cutter spelled out a few common economies for the printed author catalog, most of

¹Rule 44, discussion, paragraph (3).
them with respect to a "Short" form catalog. (Rules 46-51)
If the economies failed to systematically reach objects A and D together, Cutter directed that they were to be avoided.

**Title Catalog Entry (Rules 52-65)**

The rules for the title catalog were for the most part directed toward fulfilling object B, finding a book if the title or some word in the title was known. Title listing sometimes served as an alternative type of principal entry. Cutter directed that a "first-word entry" be made "for all anonymous works, except anonymous biographies, which are to be entered under the name of the subject of the life." (Rule 52) A "first-word entry" began with the first word of the title, not an article, and included the imprint and other notes. The first-word entry of an anonymous work was a substitute for author entry. If, however, the author was known from some other source than the title page, a complete substitution was not made. Instead, the work was given double entry, that is, entry both in the title and in the author catalog. By doing so the cataloger indicated not only his insistence that an anonymous book belonged to a category of works that substituted title for author entry, but also his desire to gather the works of an author in one place in the catalog. In order to indicate the anonymity, however, the author's name was added within brackets to the title entry after the title, and the bracketed word "anon." was added after the title in the author listing. (Rule 130) The exception for anonymous biography was also a substitution,
but in this case only in a secondary sense. That is, subject entry was substituted for title entry which itself was a substitute for author entry.

Author entry served the objective of locating a book if its author were known, in combination with the objective of finding all of the works of any one author. Gathering the works of an author, however, also accomplished one other kind of gathering. That is, the various editions of any one of an author's works were also brought into proximity with one another. Of course, variant titles might still scatter the various editions even under the author's name, but Cutter directed in his rules on arrangement, that in spite of title variations, the editions of any one work were to be kept together following the earliest dated one. (Rule 188)

In the case of anonymous works for which a title entry was substituted for author entry, however, no such gathering of editions occurred because the title could easily vary from edition to edition. Consequently, those title entries might possibly be scattered throughout the catalog according to the variety of titles a particular work might have been given. That fact might cause little consternation with regard to anonymous works that appeared in only a very few editions. But, for anonymous works that appeared in many editions, most notably the Bible, the subsequent scattering of the editions according to their individual titles would hinder catalog users. Therefore, Cutter suggested that all editions of the Bible should be entered under the
term "Bible" as a uniform title heading.\(^1\) And in the cases of other anonymous classics, particularly those from the Middle Ages whose titles began with "Incipit," or "Here Begyns," he advised the cataloger to manufacture a uniform title. For his example, the History of the Seven Sages, he listed five different titles in the original Latin, and eleven titles in other language versions and suggested a uniform title, *Septem sapientes*, as the title entry word that would accomplish the gathering function.\(^2\) Title references from key words in the variant titles would direct the searcher to the gathered entries. In addition, in order to implement as much as possible the gathering of the various editions of any one anonymous work that had not been given a manufactured uniform title, Cutter ruled that translations should be entered under the title of the original (Rule 53), and that the cataloger should disregard minor variations in the first word of the title. (Rules 56-58) He surmised that in the latter instance, various editions would stand a good chance of being entered under the same word.

Inasmuch as title entry for anonymous works was only a substitute for author entry, it would have appeared very much out-of-place in an author catalog. Cutter used the occasion, therefore, to tout the excellence of his interwoven dictionary catalog approach. He wrote, "A catalogue of authors alone finds the entry of its anonymous books a source of incongruity. The dictionary catalogue has no such

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\(^1\)Rule 52, discussion.  \(^2\)Ibid.
trouble. It does not attempt to enter them in the author-catalogue until the author's name is known.¹

Another class of materials that received first-word entry in lieu of author entry was serial publications such as periodicals, almanacs, and annuals. The authorship attributable to these works was so diffuse, the editorship so varied, and the habitual reference to them by their titles so common, that Cutter ruled that they should be "treated as anonymous." (Rule 54) In 1869 he had already discussed the issues involved.

Shall periodicals, for instance, be put under the editor's name, as that of the responsible person, or, as anonymous, under the first word of the title? The former at first sight seems most reasonable. A little consideration, however, shows that it is, if not quite impracticable, at least open to very grave objections. There can be no uniformity of entry on this system, for the editors of very many periodicals are unknown or difficult to ascertain. Nor is the matter mended much by deciding to use the editor's name only when it appears on the title-page; for a long-lived periodical may change its editors a dozen times. Which shall be taken, the first or the last? If the last, a new heading must be adopted every time the editorship changes, which is impossible when the catalogue is printed, and causes continual rewriting and rearranging when it is in manuscript. If the first name is taken, the entry is not readily found; for those who know a periodical by the editor's name at all know it by the name of the editor of the day. The suggestion of taking the name to which reference is most commonly made in books is futile. This would require, in every doubtful case, that all books likely to contain such references should be examined to ascertain what is the prevailing practice. And such examinations would show that there is in fact little uniformity among writers in this respect. On the whole, the easiest and most satisfactory plan, both for those who make and those who use a catalogue, seems to be to treat periodicals like anonymous works.²

¹Rule 52, note 2.
Entering serial publications under their titles as anonymous works likewise raised the issue of how to achieve the gathering objective of the catalog. Changed titles would also scatter these works throughout the catalog. In 1869 Cutter suggested entering all of a serial publication under its first title and referring from variant titles to it, as "probably the best way."

In his Rules, however, he suggested two methods and declined to show any preference for either. The two methods were to enter serials as just described, or to enter them under each changed title, connecting the entries with the notes: 'For a continuation, see . . . ', and 'For previous volumes, see . . . '.

First-word entry of works in lieu of authorship was not the only situation for which Cutter directed title entry to be made. He also directed, "Make a first-word entry for all works of prose fiction." (Rule 55) This was in addition to full author entry. Because first-word entry was ordinarily made only for anonymous works and, therefore, did not include an author's name, he had to direct that the author's name be included. A complete first-word entry for works of prose fiction, therefore, consisted of the title, followed by the author's name, and the imprint. His rationale for this practice seems to have come both from his experience with patron use of fiction and from his prejudice in favor of entries rather than references to entries.

1 Ibid., p. 102.
2 Rule 54, discussion.
An entry was a full bibliographical listing and consisted of author (if any), title, and imprint. Because references were very brief, their use required a considerable amount of thumbing back and forth in order to obtain bibliographical details and they were consequently time-wasters. Cutter's basic prejudice was that "entries are better than references for the reader."¹ For that reason Cutter specified that entries rather than references were to be made in the subject and form catalogs. An entry in the title catalog was mandatory when there was no author to refer to, but, for other works it was a matter of choice. Because prose fiction represented a class of books that readers wanted to locate quickly and efficiently, Cutter ruled in favor of making entries under both author and title.

After having dealt with those title listings that involved a first-word entry, Cutter still had to deal with other works that were already entered under author but needed to be accessible by their titles. He would have preferred entries rather than references for every title listing, but an entry at every point was not economically possible. For other title listings, therefore, he used a title-reference; that is, a listing of the title followed only by a reference to the author (e.g., Paul Revere's ride. See Longfellow, H. W.). He provided a variety of forms of title-reference, each of which was a measure of his desire to integrate the title catalog into the structure of the whole catalog

¹Rule 59, discussion.
as economically and usefully as possible. A first-word reference (i.e., Full title, beginning with the first word, but not an article followed by a reference to the author’s name) was to be used for all individual plays and poems (Rule 59), and

for other works which are likely to be inquired for under the first word of the title, whether because the title does not indicate the subject, or because it is of a striking form, or because the book is commonly known by its title, or for any other good reason. (Rule 60)

He purposefully made the latter rule open-ended because he felt that a measure of freedom was needed by the individual cataloger. He did not feel, however, that a first-word reference was called for in the case of every book entered in the author catalog. Of particular note is his direction that, "In a majority of cases, when a subject-word entry is made, no first-word reference is needed."¹ That is, subject name entries dispensed with the need for first-word references in most cases of non-fiction. Although he does not specify why, it can be surmised that in those cases the subject word in the title either coincided with the subject name chosen for the subject catalog or was referred to in the subject system as a whole. This practice did not, of course, rule out the reality that some titles were notable enough to be searched for as they read. Therefore, he continued the above, "But if the title is striking, there should be a first-word reference, or a reference from that part of

¹Rule 60, discussion.
the title which is striking."¹ With regard to the matter of striking titles, he ruled out title-references "from certain common titles, as 'Sermons on various subjects', 'Essays, historical and literary, etc.'", but he directed that they should be made "from less common collective words, as 'Century of painters', 'Century of praise', etc." He also added, "References should be liberally made to the works of such authors as Brown, Jones, Schmidt, Smith, Wilson; . . ." He concluded the discussion by summarizing, "Make a title-reference when the author's name is common, the title memorable, or the subject obscure."²

First-word reference was not the only method of fulfilling the title searching function of a catalog. For works not likely to be looked for under the first word of the title but rather under a significant word from elsewhere in the title, and for anonymous works that would be looked for under another significant word in addition to the first word, he gave the direction that a "catch-word reference" should be made. (Rule 61) A "catch-word" was "some word of the title other than the first word and not indicative of the subject, but likely to be remembered and used by borrowers in asking for the book." (E.g., Scarlet gowns, True and exact account of the. See True.)³ In other words, when written out, the reference was a rearrangement of the title with the significant word in the first position.

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
Another type of access that Cutter placed in the title catalog was dependent solely upon subject-words. The first of these was a subject-word entry. All anonymous biographies were to be entered under the subject name of the subject of the book, rather than under the first word of the title, although for anonymous biographies of some well-known persons, he advised that "for greater security" they should have a first-word title-reference as well. (Rule 62) The purpose of this rule was to place the entry of an anonymous biography where it was most likely to be looked for first. To do so represented both an economical move and an assumption regarding what would be most useful to the reader.

Cutter directed that in some cases yet another kind of title listing was to be made; that is, a "subject-word reference." (Rule 63) Instead of a whole title occupying the entry position, only a single word taken from the title was listed, followed by a referral either to the author or, in the case of an anonymous work, to the first word of the title. This kind of reference was related to, but shorter than, a catch-word reference. The subject words used represented a type of listing against which Cutter had spoken out because of their lack of systematization. In other contemporary dictionary catalogs they represented a way to find a book if the subject name that had been chosen from the title was remembered. To have included all such subject words in the catalog would have, of course, run at cross-purposes with the systematic treatment of subject access.
that Cutter had incorporated into the subject catalog. Still, he recognized that people did in fact look for some books under the subject words in the title whether they were systematically chosen or not. Therefore, he directed that subject-word references were to be made "when the subject-word is not the same as the name of the subject selected by the cataloger." (Rule 63) In order, however, to keep from having a full complement of subject names taken from the titles of books as well as a full complement of subject names chosen systematically by the cataloger, he limited the practice. If the subject word taken from the title was represented by a synonymous subject name in the subject catalog, he directed that the subject-word reference should not refer to the author of the book but rather to the synonym itself. (Rule 63b) The subject entry of the book under the synonym would replace the subject-word reference and the inquirer would find not only the book for which he was looking, but also other books on the same subject. In this way Cutter not only kept from making strings of subject-word references that would run at cross-purposes with the subject catalog, but at the same time was able to relate and integrate the subject-word finding device into the systematic subject system. He reasoned, "a cross-reference, which will answer for all titles, is to be preferred to a collection of subject-word references, being more economical and nearly as convenient to the inquirer."¹ He also advised that if

¹Rule 63b, discussion.
the subject-word in the title was in fact the same as the subject name systematically chosen by the cataloger for the subject catalog, then a "subject-word reference" obviously need not be made. 1

In summary, Cutter attempted in several ways to make books accessible by their titles. For books that had no author entry, he made title entry a substitute. For prose fiction he made entry under both title and author mandatory. For all other works, he provided some way of finding the item by its title, whether that meant by a first-word reference, a catch-word reference, or a single subject-word reference. The latter case was, however, only an occasional substitute for subject entry in the subject catalog, and provided a way to interrelate the title finding objective with the systematically devised subject system.

Subject Catalog Entry (Rules 66-87)

Although a discussion of the objectives and methodology of the subject catalog has already been given, two other factors should be mentioned. Both are concerned with the relationship of the subject catalog to the whole dictionary catalog system. First, the subject catalog was Cutter's chief contribution to a new concept of the dictionary catalog. That fact is obvious in Cutter's own discussion of the catalog structure. He more than once dismissed author and title entry as having been already for the

1 Rule 63a, discussion.
most part settled. The important change was his introduction of the principle of interrelatedness of subjects (the syndetic principle) and the systematic choice of subject names for the subject system. In the sense that both of those principles suggest a systematization of the subject gathering function of the catalog, they take their place as the more pervasive characterization of Cutter's dictionary catalog concept. But the catalog was meant to be an interrelated whole and the syndetic principle can be seen not only as the principle of interrelating alphabetically arranged subject names in a systematic structure, but of interrelating all elements of the catalog. As a result, all four of the major catalog elements, the analysis of collections, and the directions on style were to work together syndetically. They were to join together in order to achieve the greatest possible economy to the catalog maker and the catalog user alike.

Second, in achieving the integrated character of the catalog, the subject catalog was not simply superimposed on the more usual author and title sequence. It was related intimately to the other elements and especially to the title catalog. Title listing and subject listing had in the past been closely related in a confusion of catalog objectives. When Cutter separated them, he did not make their separation complete. He provided instead a working relationship between the two elements. That relationship is evident in his assumption that for many books, a title listing could
be omitted because the subject name entry in the subject catalog served the same purpose. That did not mean that title references could not be made in addition to subject name entries. Instead, it provided that both kinds of listings would complement each other. The same working relationship was also evident in the use of subject-word references, and in the subject-word entry of anonymous biography.

Form Catalog Entry (Rules 88-90)

The three rules that Cutter wrote for entry of books under their form and national origin of literature, or under their practical format were brief. The basic rule limited entries under type of literature to collections of such literature. "Make a form-entry for collections of works in any form of literature." (Rule 88) For example, if a volume contained a collection of poetry by individual authors, it was to be entered under the heading Poetry. He cautioned that for American libraries the heading Poetry most often meant English Poetry. If a library also had a large number of collections in other national literatures, all such entries, both English or foreign, should be made subdivisions of a nation or of a language, or if Poetry was in fact to be considered English Poetry alone, other national literatures should be subdivisions of the nation in question. Single works were to be referred to at the end of such form entry sections by listing the authors' names as a source for further searching.
A second rule allowed form entry for single works in rarer languages. (Rule 89) The languages he gave as examples were Japanese, Kalmuc and Cherokee. The languages to be treated this way were to be chosen by an individual library, and in fact, a note suggested that even these single works might be given only references as in the previous rule.

A third rule allowed form entry for works according to their practical format. "Make a form-entry of encyclopaedias, indexes, and works of similar practical form, the general ones under the headings Encyclopaedias, etc., the special ones in groups under their appropriate subjects." (Rule 90) That is, only general works would be entered under the general term. All others would be subdivisions of a particular subject name. For example, an agricultural dictionary would be entered under the heading, AGRICULTURE-DICTIONARIES, not under the general term DICTIONARIES. As with the title catalog, a limitation was imposed upon this kind of entry by virtue of its interrelationship with the subject catalog. Form entry functioned as a category by itself only part of the time. Otherwise it functioned as a subdivision of a subject name.

There were other limitations that enforced the brevity of this kind of entry and Cutter carefully explained them. The reason for limiting form entry for literature to only collections and not also to single works was a matter primarily of economy. Cutter wrote,

It would be convenient to have full lists of the single works in the library in all the various kinds of
literature, and when space can be afforded they ought to be given; if there is not room for them, references must be made under these headings to the names of all the single authors; an unsatisfactory substitute it is true, but better than entire omission.¹

He went on to say, however, that the lack of form entries for single works was alleviated when library shelf arrangements of fiction placed them in form groupings. Consequently, libraries which had open shelf policies could be spared doing the grouping in both places. Besides, most libraries kept special fiction lists and those by themselves were form entry lists excerpted from the main catalog.

A usual argument against form entry for single authors was its uncommonness in contemporary dictionary catalogs. That is, making form entries of this sort had simply not been the practice. Cutter related this argument as an anonymous attack on what kinds of entry a dictionary catalog should rightly contain. "It has been objected that such lists of novels, plays, etc., do not suit the genius of the dictionary catalogue."² He answered the objection with two arguments of his own. First, even if the practice was improper in some eyes, the usefulness of the entries would dictate their insertion. Second, if the objection meant that they would be difficult to use, that fact was not borne out in actual practice. Form entry functioned very much like subject entry and provided no more difficulty than the latter.

He suggested that the real reason behind limiting form entry to collections was "want of room" and that could

¹Rule 88, discussion. ²Ibid.
only be interpreted as expense in the printed catalog format. Cutter was encouraged, however, by a growing form entry practice in catalogs, begun, he theorized, by the work of Andrea Crestadoro. He concluded, "It is not uninteresting to watch the steps by which the fully organized quadruple syndetic dictionary catalogue is gradually developing from the simple subject-word index."  

Analysis (Rules 91-93)

In a final short section of the entry part of the Rules, Cutter made provision for analytical entries, primarily the author entry of parts of periodicals and of other collections of writings. The amount of information contained in the analytical entry and the number of analytical entries would vary according to whether the catalog was Full, Medium or Short in size. Analytical entries were to be of two sorts. Some were full entries that included imprints for whole works that formed separate volumes of a multi-volume collection. Most were to be an author and title listing only, with a referral to the principal entry of the larger work of which it was a part. Allowance was also made for some analytical entries in the subject catalog.

Style (Rules 94-205)

The second major division of Cutter's Rules dealt with how to write the entries. The 112 often brief rules abound with decisions aimed at producing clarity and printing.

1Ibid.
economy in the way the catalog information was visually presented. He began with a general statement.

Uniformity for its own sake is of very little account; for the sake of intelligibility, to prevent perplexity and misunderstanding, it is worth something. And it is well to be uniform merely to avoid the question "Why were you not consistent?"

The first section dealt with heading words (Rules 94-108) and began with six rules on the use of type faces in order to achieve uniformity. He directed that the headings of each type of catalog entry (the author's name, the title's first word, the form and subject entry's whole phrase) should all be printed in the same distinctive type face. The style should be different from that of the remainder of the listing under each entry. He also listed a variety of special bracketed or parenthetical designations that would help to avoid a variety of possible confusions in what various headings referred to (e.g., 'pseud.' to follow a pseudonym). For the transcription of titles (Rules 109-133) he gave, among other things, extensive directions for the abridgment of title information—when the practice was desirable and how it was to be done. In sections on

1Although the section on "Style" occupies more than one-third of the Rules, it is not treated here at length, because it is not critically important to the dictionary catalog structure. Rather, its importance is more directly related to the printing requirements of the catalog. Likewise, the two appendixes are not discussed at all. They relate to matters other than the dictionary catalog and, in fact, seem to have been included only at the insistence of Commissioner Eaton. For the latter, see F. Miksa, "The Making of the 1876 Special Report," pp. 35-36.

2Introduction to the section "Style," in Rules, p. 53.
Editions (Rules 134-135), Imprints (Rules 136-154), Contents listing and other notes to be made (Rules 155-158), References (Rules 159-160), the use of Capitals (Rules 161-162), Punctuation, accents, italics, etc. (Rules 163-168), arrangement of entries (Rules 169-202), and miscellaneous problems (Rules 203-205), he stressed again and again the need for both simplicity and compactness, based on how the information would appear to the user and, accordingly, what liberties could be taken in the way it was presented.

**Cataloging Discussion in the Library Profession**

The Setting: Cutter and the Rules

Distribution of Cutter's Rules began in earnest in October 1876. Any American public library was entitled to at least one free copy, but prominent librarians such as Justin Winsor at the Boston Public Library and William F. Poole at the Chicago Public Library, were given as many copies of the whole report to distribute as they saw fit. In addition, a considerable number of copies were distributed in England.¹

The initial edition of the Rules numbered 5,000 copies and proved to be very popular. In November 1877, thirteen months after they were first issued, Eaton sent Cutter

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¹The details of distribution are contained in Commissioner Eaton's letters from October and November, 1876. See especially his letters to Cutter, November 7, 1876; to William F. Poole, November 7, 1876; and to B. F. Stevens in England, November 9, 1876, U.S.N.A., "Letters."
ten additional copies of the *Rules* and encouraged him to request more any time they were needed.¹ A month later, however, Eaton wrote,

The first edition of your "Rules" (5000 copies) being quite exhausted I find it necessary to have a thousand additional copies struck off at once to enable me to meet the many calls still daily coming in.

As the demand for the work is likely to continue for a long time it is hoped that Congress will not [delay?] on my request for an order to print a new edition of several thousand copies.

I presume you would not wish to incorporate any new matter for the impression of the thousand copies for my immediate use.²

A new edition did not subsequently appear until 1889, but during the intervening years the *Rules* and, accordingly, Charles Cutter's reputation as a cataloger, were unparalleled. When Samuel S. Green reported on "Library Aids" to the 1881 American Library Association meeting he seemed to echo a common sentiment in his praise of Cutter.

The specific occasion was the completion of the Athenæum's catalog and the *Rules* on which it was based.

We have here the first printed rules for making a catalogue on the dictionary plan. The writings of Mr. Cutter on the subject of cataloguing, and the work he has done in preparing catalogues, have shown that he is an authority in this matter second to none.³

When the second edition was published, a review in the *Nation* emphasized Cutter's reputation with an amusing

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³ Green, "Library Aids," p. 106.
puff. "This long-expected revision of the 'cataloguer's Bible' fills 133 pages, some fifty more than the authorized version of 1876." Further on the review more seriously evaluated Cutter's work. "Mr. Cutter, to be sure, did not invent the dictionary catalogue, but he systematized what was previously without form and void."¹ The latter statement led into a description and justification of the changes that highlighted the larger second edition. Those changes suggest that although the Rules did occupy from the start a highly regarded position, they did not escape from what became a sometimes fervent discussion on cataloging in the library profession. The Rules both influenced and were influenced by that discussion.

Cutter's part in the discussion took several distinct forms. His Rules and his article on library catalogs provided an almost overwhelming statement of the cataloging ideal to be reached. In the face of his almost complete systematization of all previous thought and practice on the matter, there seemed little that anyone else could add. In 1889, Henry B. Wheatley pictured catalog code development as a "battle of the rules" in which Cutter's work occupied the high point. He wrote, "This work stands alone in the literature of our subject. Not only are the rules set out, but the reasons for the rules are given."²

¹Review of Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue, by C. A. Cutter, in the Nation, L (March 27, 1890), 261.

Nevertheless, in 1876 the systematization that Cutter accomplished was still only an ideal for the library profession as a whole. For the younger members of the profession it provided not just a set of procedures to follow, but an extremely complicated textbook of principles to be studied, in order to determine their own procedures. The situation was probably aided by Cutter's propensity in the Rules to make only tentative decisions on some of the tackier questions of cataloging and those only after presenting all the various sides of an issue in long discussions. An early editorial in the Library Journal commented on the same situation in response to a paper in which Cutter discussed the use of capital letters in cataloging.

Each young cataloguer has now to investigate the subject for himself, and after deciding one way often queries whether he ought not to have decided differently. When a system receives the endorsement of the Association, and is put in actual use by a dozen of our leading libraries, this difficulty will be ended.¹

Cutter apparently felt the same pressure for concurrently with the above he inserted the following note in the "Bibliography" section of the Journal.

Catalogue Rules.--Fearing that his "Rules for a dictionary catalogue" enter too much into detail for beginners, Mr. C. A. Cutter is preparing some short rules for cataloguing which will be published in a future number of the Journal.²

Cutter's systematization was not a problem for beginners alone. Despite his exhaustiveness, there were

¹Editorial, LJ, I (January, 1877), 176-77.
factors which he too could not resolve. Lynds E. Jones had written in his review of the government report,

Mr. Cutter has an elaborate and exhaustive article that would seem to cover every point that could arise, did not the experience of every cataloguer show that knotty cases would come up not reducable to any rule.\footnote{Lynds E. Jones, "The Government Library Report," \textit{LJ}, I (September, 1876), 9.}

Although Jones did not specify what cases he was referring to, one important problem showed itself very early in the discussion; that is, the reality of a much less adept clientele than Cutter had encountered at either Harvard or the Boston Athenaeum. Cutter's new kind of dictionary catalog was obviously a very sophisticated tool. Cutter's insistence that the gathering of an author's works by the principle of a "real name" and his incorporation of elaborate goals for the subject catalog resulted in a catalog that was not easily understandable or usable by classes of less-educated patrons. Many catalogers felt that a simpler solution to those issues was demanded. The ideal that Cutter had presented was not, consequently, a final resolution of all the cataloging problems. Rather, it provided his own views of the essential elements of the problem. He had often stated which alternatives to the "knotty problems" he preferred. But many of them were still open to debate and the essential underlying issues were ones that the library profession could not escape.

Having stated the underlying issues, Cutter did all that he could to make them the battleground of the
discussion. He promoted his views primarily through extensive writing both in the *Nation* and in the *Library Journal*, and in the American Library Association conference discussions of the issues.

Cutter's writing had in actuality begun as early as 1875 in the pages of the *Nation* in the form of short notices and reviews of printed library catalogs. He was especially concerned to demonstrate that making catalogs was no haphazard job. All catalogs must be examined in the light of basic objectives. Catalogers must understand how to incorporate into their catalogs materials and techniques that would aid the catalog user. Catalogs were to be considered educational devices that could encourage, direct, and improve "the popular taste for reading."¹

After the 1876 Special Report was published, the amount of Cutter's writing on cataloging increased dramatically. The increase was due for the most part because he assumed the editorship of the "Bibliography" section in the *Library Journal* from the latter's beginning in September 1876. At the same time he continued his library writing in the *Nation*. In the *Journal* he listed recently published catalogs or articles on cataloging. To the former he often added short annotations. To the latter he often gave excerpts from the article, sometimes with his own comments appended or interspersed. Significantly, the articles on

¹C. A. Cutter, [On Jacob Schwartz's Plan for a Catalog], *Nation*, XX (March 4, 1875), 151.
cataloging that he listed in the Library Journal were often his own review notes published anonymously in the Nation. His comments were always brief and often pithy, and presented in one way or another his catalog ideal. Their fervency presents a picture of a man on a mission, crusading for what he thought to be the essential nature of cataloging.

The Discussion: First Theme

Cutter's comments ranged over the whole cataloging discussion that took place. The discussion can be looked on as dealing with two themes or questions. The first of these was whether or not catalogs, and more particularly, the kind of sophisticated tool that Cutter envisioned, were necessary.

The argument against them was for the most part a matter of practical reasoning. They were expensive to make and it was questionable whether or not they were necessary in the first place. Older style author lists seemed adequate enough. Anything more was superfluous. The logic was felt both by librarians and by those who had to pay for them. Cutter, of course, had no doubt that sophisticated catalogs of the type that he had proposed, were absolutely essential.

The discussion of this theme became a public issue when, early in 1877, a move was made by some to discontinue the subject catalog at the Harvard College Library. Dr. H. A. Hagen, a Harvard professor, had encouraged the move in an open letter to the Nation. He argued that Abbot's catalog
was too expensive and to follow its example in the area's large libraries would cost in the neighborhood of a million dollars. The objective of a catalog was simply to enable a patron to find any particular book. In his opinion European style slip catalogs were not only quite sufficient, but preferable to both card catalogs and printed catalogs, the latter easily becoming outdated. For subject access, all that was needed were specialized subject bibliographies. A subject catalog, after all, was limited only to the books in the library at hand.  

Cutter answered Hagen's attack in both the *Nation* and the *Library Journal*. The first was tailored to the more general audience of library supporters, the latter to the library profession itself. In both, however, he offered a complete rebuttal of Hagen's arguments. With regard to the asserted uselessness of a subject catalog, Cutter replied that Dr. Hagen apparently approached the catalog with his subject firmly in mind. The average user did not. The need to find a specific book was a legitimate objective, but it was not the only one. Libraries also needed subject access and a subject catalog with Abbot's objectives was axiomatically the best tool available for the job. Hindrances to subject-type inquiries needed to be kept to a minimum. "A library, and particularly a popular

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library, or one intended for young students, loses half its value if its consultation is made difficult and repulsive.\textsuperscript{1}

In answer to Hagen's proposal that adequate subject access could be obtained in specialized subject bibliographies, Cutter argued that bibliographies on many subjects simply did not exist, and if they did, they were often incomplete or included books that a library did not have in its own collection. In their printed form they were immediately out-of-date, and if they contained supplements, the necessity to consult multiple alphabetical sequences was a time-waster. The latter argument also applied to a printed catalog, but Cutter noted that a printed catalog could at least be supplemented with a single card catalog.

With regard to the costs involved, Cutter argued from the less obvious position of priorities in library administration.

Is it certain that it would be inexpedient to spend twice as much on the catalogue as on the library, if the library was to become three times as useful in consequence? People talk of this expense as if it were a dead loss, as they might well do of the architectural adornment lavished upon some of our libraries. A book's binding costs on the average at least a third as much as the book itself, yet we do not leave our books in sheets; a book's storage costs two thirds as much as the book, yet there never seems to be much difficulty in getting money appropriated or given for a library building. The catalogue alone gets no legacies and very grudging appropriations. So much more are men impressed by the material than by the intellectual.\textsuperscript{2}

He saw the cost factor as including the matter of time:

\textsuperscript{1}Cutter, "Dr. Hagen's Letter," p. 219.

\textsuperscript{2}Cutter, "The Cataloguer's Work," p. 86.
It is, after all, simply a question whether the public will spend its time in hunting up books under all the disadvantages of an author-catalogue, or spend its money in providing an instrument which will save this time. Now if there is any country in the world in which time is money, and therefore worth saving, it is America. The national character demands that the questions which an inquirer has to ask at a library should be answered at once.¹

In answer to the specific estimate of one million dollars, Cutter, using the figure of forty cents a volume (he admitted that, at best, any exact figure was difficult to ascertain), suggested that the cost of cataloging the 600,000 volumes in the area's three largest libraries was closer to a third of a million dollars. But, of that, at least one third alone was for the author catalogs of which Dr. Hagen approved.

Of special significance was Cutter's proposal for the alleviation of expense through cooperative cataloging in the American Library Association. Cooperation had been a central motivation behind the formation of the Association in the first place the year previously. As the organization got under way, Cutter sounded out the cooperative ideal with great frequency. Melvil Dewey struck the first and most resounding note specifically on behalf of cooperative cataloging in an article in the January 1877 Library Journal.² He provocatively described the waste of duplicated work by drawing a picture of a thousand libraries all cataloging


the same books. He stressed the Association's pursuit of a
definite plan. Whether that plan would involve a central
cataloging bureau supported by the Association directly, or
centralized cataloging at the Library of Congress; or whether
it would mean that cataloging would be done by the publishers
as books were published, was not yet settled. The place to
begin, however, was with a uniform list of directions on
"how separate titles are to be prepared." To that end he
submitted an advance report of such a list prepared in con-
sultation with recognized experts in cataloging. The re-
mainder of the article was an informal presentation of the
list. The directions followed to a large extent Cutter's
Rules, although in very brief form. The result of his
article was to set the general tone of at least one part of
the cataloging discussion to come, the need to make a uni-
form code for author entry.

Cutter quickly moved into the thick of the argument
for cooperative cataloging. His reply to Hagen came within
a month of Dewey's article. He repeated Dewey's picture of
a thousand librarians all wastefully cataloging the same
books and strongly suggested that Hagen's arguments against
Abbot's catalog logically demanded not its discontinuance,

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1 Ibid., p. 171.

2 Ibid. An editorial in the same issue, p. 177, gives
a more exact reckoning: "The rules for titles given in the
article on Co-operative Cataloguing are those approved for
a preliminary report by five of the best known of American
cataloguers." Since Dewey's article mentioned six persons
involved, perhaps he considered himself the extra person.
but rather the pursuit of Dewey's cooperative program. He summarized,

Libraries are certainly wasting money in independent action. Mr. Jewett felt this years ago, and proposed a general catalogue of all the libraries in the country prepared on a plan which, he thought, would ensure much better work than was usually obtained, at a much smaller cost. But the times were not ripe for the enterprise. The energetic promoter of the Library Conference, and founder of the Library Journal, has been impressed with the same feeling of the necessity of union, and has undertaken to bring it about. And now the time is ripe. To take the place of the partial indexing of periodical literature going on at a score of places at considerable expense, we are to have a complete index prepared by combined labor. The index to current periodicals will follow. A scheme for co-operative cataloguing is under weigh. Many details have to be settled before a beginning can be made, and it may be some time before anything is actually done, but it is better that there should be no work to undo.¹

Probably because as an expert on cataloging he was so vocal, and because he was already in the inner circle of deliberation on the matter, Cutter was appointed to the Cooperation Committee of the American Library Association sometime in the next few weeks and immediately became its chairman.² From that vantage point he was able to influence the direction of the cooperative cataloging movement in the succeeding years.

Cooperation in order to curtail expenses was, of course, only one way to justify the sophisticated catalog that Cutter championed. He continued at the same time to argue that full access to libraries' collections could only


²His appointment was noted in the LJ, I (April, 1877), 283.
be gained through rigorously made catalogs. He repeatedly emphasized that point in his reviews of other catalogs being printed, especially when they provided him with good examples. One such example was the printed catalog of the U. S. Surgeon General's library, compiled by John Shaw Billings.

Cutter admitted that Billings' catalog would be a "monster" in size, but for the very reason of the bulk of materials cataloged and because those materials needed thorough access, it was absolutely necessary. It was very expensive and very sophisticated, but Cutter had only praises for it. By producing it, Billings provided more than access to his own collections. He provided a bibliographic authority for other librarians, just as the Boston Athenaeum catalog had become, especially with regard to subject analysis. Cutter spoke to that effect about the catalog in the first American Library Association meeting.

I am sure every cataloguer will welcome with delight the prospect of having his choice of subject headings made for him by one who is thoroughly competent. Nothing is so puzzling in our work as this choice; in that matter

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1Cutter, Review of U. S. Surgeon-General's Office, Index-Catalogue of the Library, p. 238, abstracted in LJ, VI (November, 1881), 293-94. Cutter also wrote notices of the catalog when only a sixty-four page fascicle was released in 1876: [Review of Specimen-fasciculus of U. S. Surgeon-General's Office, Index-Catalogue of the Library, (by John Shaw Billings)], Nation, XXII (May 18, 1876), 323-24; (Same), LJ, I (September, 1876), 20. During the 1880's as each of the succeeding volumes of the work were published, notices of them continuing the praise were published in the Nation. Although the authorship of the notices is not known for sure, the likelihood that Cutter wrote them is almost certain.
at least I shall be glad to resign the right of private judgment, and pay the most abject deference to authority.\textsuperscript{1}

Besides being authorities, Billings' catalog, and others like it, provided examples of what every catalog should aim at; that is, as complete access to a library collection as possible. There simply was no other good substitute.

After having dismissed the various arguments against such catalogs, Cutter still found it necessary in his thinking to appeal to an even more basic motivation for the justification of the kind of library tool that he championed. He suggested just such a line of reasoning in his review of the first published volumes of Billings' catalog. The production of the kind of large and sophisticated tool, of which the Surgeon-General's catalog was a prime example, came from the drive "to be of public service." He added with a twist that it was "a feeling very strong in all Americans, except perhaps politicians."\textsuperscript{2} Two years after that, Cutter made an even more elaborate statement of this line of reasoning. In a reply to a London Athenaeum article that ridiculed the American librarians' propensity for bibliography and indexing, Cutter responded in an editorial,

If Americans really have displayed more penchant for this pursuit than the older branch of their race, it may be from two causes: First, from something, be it climate or mixture of blood, which produces in this country

\textsuperscript{1}A.L.A. Conference Discussion, \textit{LJ}, I (November/December, 1876), 122.

a distinct mental resemblance to the French; second, from our mechanical disposition. A bibliography, an index, is a tool, and delights a tool-making and tool-using people. It abridges labor, and the American people have a mania for labor-savers. Every one who prepares a work of this kind believes that he is shortening the road to knowledge, and Americans have a great respect for knowledge and a strong inclination for philanthropy. No country has produced more or more devoted missionaries. Bibliographers and indexers feel that they are humble servants of the gospel of learning, of knowledge, of science. Humble servants, to be sure, but some people are humble and like to labor on low levels rather than not labor at all.

In summary of the initial theme of the cataloging discussion, Cutter argued for the absolute necessity of full bibliographic access for libraries. In his thinking, the best method of achieving that goal was through the kind of sophisticated catalog ideal that he had formulated. He could not deny the expensive nature of his ideal, but he felt that the expense could be alleviated through cooperative effort.

The Discussion: Second Theme

Cutter found that arguing for a more complete system of bibliographic access and championing his own sophisticated version of it were two different matters. Consequently, the second theme in the cataloging discussion involved determining the necessary elements of the catalog ideal for the library profession as a whole, and determining the extent that Cutter's rigorous standards were acceptable in the elements that were kept. During the early years of the Association, a general consensus arose as to which elements of

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bibliographic access could be handled separately from a regular library catalog. Cutter had already mentioned one of these when he referred in the Nation to the cooperative work being planned for Poole's Index to Periodical Literature. The Association had agreed at the 1876 conference to assume work on that project, first by making a retrospective index and afterwards by making a continuing current index. Doing so would make it unnecessary for catalogers to include analytical entries for periodical articles in their individual library catalogs. Entries of that sort had formed an important part of the Athenaeum catalog but Cutter recognized even while including them that they were an expensive addition. A committee including Cutter was appointed in 1876 to direct the cooperative project. 1

Cutter had also championed the inclusion in catalogs of annotations that would give indications to the users of the relative merits of the books, especially with regard to fiction and biography. Although he himself had not included such annotations in the Athenaeum's catalog, he approved their appearance in other catalogs, and attempted to do the same thing in the Athenaeum's List of Additions. This element of the catalog ideal was also handled separately. In August 1877 Melvil Dewey gave voice to the need by proposing a standard catalog of five or ten thousand annotated works

1 The committee consisted of Cutter, Justin Winsor, and William F. Poole. It was appointed at the Philadelphia meeting and met for the first time at the Boston Public Library on October 20, 1876. See report, LJ, I (January, 1877), 181. It met often for the next two years.
that could be used by all public libraries not only as a basic list of books but as a cataloging guide. A committee was appointed (including Cutter) to pursue this project, called the A.L.A. Catalog.¹

There were also other minor facets of the catalog ideal that would eventually gain separate consideration. The primary emphasis of the second theme of the cataloging discussion dealt, however, with adequate bibliographic access in the basic author, title, and subject elements of the catalog. There seemed to be no question in accepting the alphabetical arrangement as basic. But, should the dictionary catalog be of Cutter's formulation? Or, could the dictionary catalog be standardized with something less than the rigor that Cutter had incorporated? How, in fact, was the dictionary catalog to be defined?

Subject Element

With regard to the subject element, the basic question was, should standardized subject access include Cutter's objectives? If so, what form should the subject catalog take and how could those objectives be achieved? At first glance it would seem by the lack of much direct discussion that the alphabetical subject system of Cutter's design was the accepted choice of librarians. That appearance is suggested

¹Melvil Dewey, "The Coming Catalogue," LJ, I (August, 1877), 423-27; Cutter's appointment is noted in LJ, III (November, 1878), 331, in a report of the Cooperation Committee of which he was chairman and which made the appointment as a committee action.
by the way American cataloging was represented by some library leaders, including Cutter. That is, the use of the term "dictionary catalog" seemed to imply Cutter's concept rather than the older simpler form. The 1877 New York conference of the Association dealt extensively with cooperative cataloging. The Boston Traveller account reported the discussion of subject cataloging in terms of Cutter's view of the matter.

Very few have any idea what the work of cataloguing is. Not merely the writing of titles, but of classifying them, under the different heads where they would naturally be looked for. Yet without a well-arranged catalogue, the increasing size of a library renders it more useless year by year. How is anybody to find what is wanted on any subject, unless the catalogue is arranged with nice gradations, letter by letter, as the dictionary is made, so that the slightest clue leads with certainty to the desired end? To do this for the convenience of the lowest scholar in a grammar school requires the patient labor of highly educated men, and more than this, men of a special order of genius. Dr. Cutter's manual for the compilation of catalogues contains more than a hundred of the dryest rules which every cataloguer has to learn to bring his work up to the standard of the association. Cataloguing ranks with those delicate calculations about turbine wheels and steam engines which Professor Peirce works out for corporations, and gets lawyer's fees for.¹

A month later at the international library conference held in London, the subject of what a dictionary catalog should include was again fervently discussed. English librarians praised Cutter's Rules highly, but expressed doubt that a subject catalog was feasible, especially on Cutter's plan. To include both an author and a subject

¹"The Librarians; Interesting Review of Their Work," Boston Traveller, September 12, 1877. The story was signed "Chipie," and postdated, September 6, 1877.
catalog was simply "far too wide an undertaking to meet with wide approval."¹ Two years later Richard Garnett of the British Museum struck out even more explicitly against Cutter's whole dictionary concept, but especially against the subject system. The cross-reference system was much too involved and bulky and was based on too much deference to the average user. Cutter answered by claiming that Garnett over-exaggerated the bulkiness of the cross-reference system. He also suggested that the argument about deference to the average user was in reality an argument in support of the necessity of the subject system, rather than an argument against it.² In 1882 Justin Winsor spoke in his presidential address to the Association of the appearance of dictionary catalogs in Europe and suggested that it was a compliment to Cutter's system.³ And, of course, while others

¹That remark was made by James M. Anderson, the assistant librarian of the St. Andrews University Library, in his paper, "On Cataloguing," in Transactions and Proceedings of the Conference of Librarians held in London, October, 1877 (London: Printed at the Chiswick Press, 1878), p. 83. (Hereafter cited as London Conference of Librarians, 1877) In the discussion that followed, Cutter remarked (p. 156), "My English friends seem to consider a subject-catalogue as something very excellent, to be sure, but utopian--impracticable. With us, on the contrary, a library that has no subject-catalogue is regarded as little better than one which has none at all."


were not differentiating the meaning of the term, Cutter was busy promoting his own ideal in reviews and other articles.

At the same time there were others who expressed dissatisfaction with Cutter's subject system. In a written symposium on the plan for the new edition of Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature*, Cutter proposed that a systematization of the subject heading be made, in the use of both synonyms and cross-references.¹ Jacob Schwartz reinforced the idea with his general dictum, "If we must have the alphabetical (or rather dictionary) arrangement, let us have it in its perfection as developed by a Cutter, and not in its infancy as advocated by Mr. Poole."² Stephen B. Noyes took exception to some of Cutter's directions, particularly to Cutter's preference for subject entry by geographical name rather than by subject name when both were possible. Using the *Boston Athenaeum Catalog* as his source of information, he wrote,

Mr. Cutter, in his catalogue of the Boston Athenaeum, found all his unequalled capacity for methodical arrangement very fully taxed to dispose of the subject-matter which he places under England, English and Great Britain, and covering in all 84 double-columned pages of that great work. . . . Now, if the literary and artistic sub-divisions had been arranged under their respective generic subject-headings, qualified by the subordinate geographical division, would not his task, difficult at best, have been greatly lightened, with a proportionate increase in the facility of reference?³

²Ibid., p. 146.
³Ibid., p. 142. Noyes published the catalog of the Brooklyn Mercantile Library during the years 1878-80.
Poole, too, was irritated by the attempt to convert his system into Cutter's. He took exception to Cutter's insistence that synonyms in the Index needed to be questioned and pointed out in detail subject headings used in the Boston Athenaeum Catalog as synonyms that not only were not clearly synonymous, but that were contrary to the Rules.¹

Sometime later, Frederic B. Perkins, in raising the issue of where the term "dictionary catalog" had come from, asserted that since the term gained its meaning from before Cutter's Rules, it rightly implied only that the entries were in alphabetical order, not more particularly Cutter's subject system. Perkins preferred an alphabetical subject catalog that was more rigidly based on a classed system. Cutter agreed that the term was not very descriptive, but, that it did imply that both authors and subjects were in one alphabetical sequence. He suggested, "Probably the best term we can get is 'alfabetic catalog of authors, subjects, and titles.'"²

The most incisive criticism of the dictionary catalog that appeared came from the hand of Jacob Schwartz in 1886. But it is not certain whether he was evaluating the older


²Perkins' comments on the meaning of "dictionary catalog" appeared in A Rational Classification of Literature for Shelving and Cataloguing Books, with an Alphabetical Index (rev. ed.; San Francisco: Frances, Valentine & Co., 1882), p. v. For Cutter's notice of the publication to which he appended his difference of opinion, see C. A. Cutter, [Comment on A Rational Classification of Literature, by Frederic B. Perkins], LJ, X (June, 1885), 139.
form or Cutter’s version of it. Towards the end of his article it would appear that he was criticizing the earlier type. Nevertheless, some of his criticisms applied equally to Cutter’s system.

Schwartz began by listing his own set of questions that patrons brought to a catalog. Of three types of catalogs devised to answer the questions—the dictionary, the systematic, and the alphabetico-classed—Schwartz examined the dictionary form to see if it could achieve its stated objectives, inasmuch as it was the most popular and had the reputation of success. But Schwartz was not sanguine about its claims.

A superficial examination of its claims and apparent advantages is apt to mislead the librarian; the more especially as its defects lie concealed, and can only be discovered by a patient examination, while its advantages are on the surface, and are apparent to the most superficial observer. A searching examination of its alleged claims is the more necessary, as we think we shall prove in this paper that, instead of being (as is supposed) the best and most convenient, it is in fact the worst and least convenient of the three forms of catalogue.¹

He posed a series of questions and statements that were aimed at its weaknesses. How could one choose rightly between synonyms or between popular or scientific terms? How could one rightly choose the proper order of compound subjects? How could the dictionary catalog be considered complete without references from specific topics to broader topics and therefore how could it claim to provide a

comprehensive survey of a general subject? In point of fact, Schwartz put his finger on one of the basic problems of Cutter's dictionary system by pointing out that the opposing needs of the desultory reader and the systematic investigator made the cross-reference system incapable of serving the latter need adequately. Schwartz claimed that an even more basic problem was in the structure of the dictionary catalog itself. It resolved all subjects to their most specific names and then attempted to re-relate them through cross-references. It did so, however, without adequately showing the differences between the subjects and, consequently, for a student to follow up all the references was in reality an interminable task. In other words, the dictionary system's method of relating subjects imposed no intelligible order on its process of relating, but rather referred between topics in a more or less haphazard and undifferentiating manner. Though it achieved its objectives some of the time, it failed more often because there was little orderly design in its system. Schwartz suggested, "For whose benefit this undigested mass of titles is brought together it is difficult to conceive."\(^1\) After other incisive comments on the form catalog part of the dictionary catalog, he concluded, "The Dictionary catalogue can be improved, but not on Dictionary catalogue principles."\(^2\) He himself preferred an alphabetico-classed approach.

Perkins' and Schwartz's comments reveal that Cutter's

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 473. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 474.
subject system was not so widely accepted as might have appeared and that alternative methods of subject access were vying with it. The alternatives included shelf classifications, classified catalogs that used the notational systems of the shelf classifications, and even subject bibliographies. Opinion on the matter was unsettled, most likely because Cutter's system was a relatively recent innovation and had severe difficulties inherent within it. To agree upon its standards would have necessitated that librarians have had extensive experience in its application. But that was not the case and the Association's response suggests that the lack of experience in the matter was in fact the most obvious problem. Still, by 1893 the alphabetical subject catalog seems to have won the day. The victory took a different form, however, than that of a code of rules as in the case of the author and title aspects of the dictionary catalog.

Instead of attempting to standardize the rules for subject entry on the basis of the principles involved, the Association took the alternative route of promoting the compilation of authoritative lists of subject headings. Cutter had himself suggested this route in his proposal that the subject headings used in John S. Billings' monumental dictionary catalog of the Surgeon General's library could be used as an authoritative list. The same use had also been suggested of Cutter's own Athenaeum catalog.

Richard R. Bowker was the one who set the movement
afoot for a cooperative effort in this direction, however. In planning the subject section of the American Catalogue, he found it necessary to provide a disciplined approach to subject headings, much as Cutter had expressed in his Rules. For Bowker a disciplined approach meant that choices must be made between synonymous terms and the cross-references must be systematically chosen. He also added that the subject headings thus chosen should be correlated with a classification scheme. He proposed that the need for a subject system be resolved by a cooperative effort to make an authoritative list of subject heading choices. The list should be a correlation of those subject headings already in use in the best catalogs of the day, and should subsequently include their incorporation into a classified structure. The result would be a two-part thesaurus of subject heading terms, one section in alphabetical and the other in systematic order. He further suggested that the list be made by a committee of those involved in editing the cooperative projects already begun by the Association (Poole's Index and the A.L.A. Catalog) and the editors of the American Catalogue. If done cooperatively, a person looking up any one subject would have uniform subject access to the whole body of literature in those publications, including periodical articles, books in print and the Association's basic catalog of recommended books.¹

¹Richard R. Bowker, "On a Co-operative Scheme of Subject-entry, with a Key to Catalog Headings," LJ, III (November, 1878), 326-29.
Ten months later Frederic B. Perkins offered a similar proposal, except that its bias was more completely toward beginning with a classification scheme rather than with a list of specific subject headings already in use. He called attention to Cutter's ideal of the interrelated character of the subjects in an alphabetical catalog. He also noted that Cutter subverted his own ideal by suggesting that one need not make a synoptical table of subjects. Perkins' notion was to begin with a fully developed classification scheme, "so detailed that the smallest number practicable of titles of books shall be grouped under each ultimate topic (by topic I mean subject)." After making cross-references and an alphabetical index of the subject names chosen, the classification scheme could be exploded "into its atoms or topics," and each individual topic inserted in "its proper alphabetical place in the Dictionary Catalogue." In addition, copies of the unexploded scheme could be made available "for constant guidance of the cataloguers in questions of subject synonymy and of classification generally." Together, the two proposals emphasized the need for an authoritative list of subject headings correlated with a systematic classification of knowledge.

The Association responded in the 1879 meeting with the appointment of a Committee on an Index to Subject

1Frederic B. Perkins, "Classification in Dictionary Catalogues," LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 231.
2Ibid. 3Ibid.
Headings consisting of Bowker, Perkins, Cutter, Stephen B. Noyes, and William I. Fletcher (representing Poole's Index).\(^1\) Cutter presented the Committee's first report at the next Association conference in 1881, but by then Perkins had already removed himself from the scene and the work of the others had languished. Cutter noted the difficulty of the task and quoted extensively from a letter written by Fletcher on the nature of the problem. The Committee had apparently wrestled over the problem of uniform rules for subject entry. Fletcher reiterated Cutter's own admission in the Rules of the difficulty of determining the principles involved and noted that he [Fletcher] had not had the time to devise anything better than what Cutter had already done. In light of the obvious difficulty he suggested that, "the chief desideratum now is the establishment of some tribunal of reference for vexed questions in this department."\(^2\) That is, without standardizing Cutter's rules and in the face of no authoritative list yet completed, the practical problem of choices between subject headings could be dealt with simply by ad hoc decisions made by a group of experts.

Fletcher's advice became the permanent solution of the question of catalog subject access. It would appear that there was a desire for some sort of standard disciplined subject approach for catalogs, but the problem was

\(^1\)The committee appointments are noted in LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 288.

\(^2\)A.L.A. Committee on an Index to Subject Headings, [First Report], LJ, VI (April, 1881), 114.
too difficult and too time-consuming to resolve. Cutter's concept had raised more questions than it had settled and uniform rules for subject entry were out of the question. But even making an authoritative list of subject headings proved to be enormously difficult and work was discontinued until 1892.

**Author and Title Elements**

Subject access in Cutter's ideal of the catalog formed only one side of the discussion of the basic definition of the dictionary catalog. Matters pertaining to the author and title elements formed the other side and revolved around the extent to which the Association was willing to incorporate into its standardized form Cutter's rules for author and title entry and for style.

The issue of standardization was first raised at the 1876 conference with respect to indicating the sizes of books. After Charles Evans delivered a paper on the problem, an extended discussion was held in which many expressed their dissatisfaction with the traditional method of indicating a book's size by its paper fold (i.e., folio, quarto, octavo, etc.). Cutter had used the traditional method in his Rules, but he observed that the traditional method was only a "fancied necessity," and "a heavy burden borne for a long time without advantage to anyone." He suggested curtly that most people did not care about the fold; rather, only "whether the books they think of calling for are so small that they can be slipped into an overcoat pocket or so large that an
expressman must be sent for them." He added, "A few scholars, bibliophiles, and bibliomaniacs are anxious about the exact form of a few books. By all means let them be gratified."¹ For the great mass of books, however, he agreed that there was a need to fix the sizes. He suggested that the issue could best be settled through the work of a committee. The Committee on Sizes that was appointed (of which Cutter was made a member) subsequently outlined two alternative methods, one of which was to indicate the size in centimeters, the other of which was to make a standard list of approximate measurements.²

The issue of how far to accept Cutter's synthesis of entry first appeared in the project to prepare a new edition of Poole's Index. The committee appointed to that task, and of which Cutter was a member, outlined a list of indexing instructions that included the direction:

Mr. Cutter's rules for cataloguing will be observed in the headings as to the names of sovereigns, noblemen, and married women, and in other respects where they are applicable. It is very desirable that the system of indexing used should be uniform, even though there may be a difference of opinion among librarians as to some of the rules. No person should be placed upon this work who is not thoroughly competent to catalogue books on

²The appointments are noted in LJ, I (November/December, 1876), 141. The report of the committee presented by Cutter is found in A.L.A. Committee on Sizes and Cooperation Committee, "Sub-report on Sizes," LJ, III (March, 1878), 19-20. See also ahead, Ch. VIII,
Mr. Cutter's or the British Museum system. The work of an inexperienced person will be worse than useless.¹

That direction aroused some consternation, however. In the 1877 conference meeting a discussion arose concerning the statement. Henry A. Homes, the New York State Librarian and a man of many years experience, stated what apparently was a wide sentiment. "I for one do not consider myself thoroughly competent to catalogue books on that plan so as to satisfy Mr. Poole or any other gentleman. I think the language there used is rather strong."² An attempt by Frederic B. Perkins to mollify the impact of the direction probably did little to relieve its ominous nature.

It was not required that a person attempting to catalogue on Mr. Cutter's plan should be competent to do so right away; but in time he would learn. It was more as a guide which would lead him to ultimate competency.³ There was certainly little desire that cataloging be considered less rigorous than it really was. A statement that Cutter made some time later with regard to the catalog of the Astor Library in New York City most likely found adequate sympathy among professional librarians.

The fact is that cataloging requires, besides a certain amount of forethought and common (that is uncommon) sense, considerable technical knowledge which is not to

²A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, II (September, 1877), 17.
³Ibid.
be found, as Alderman O'Brien said the qualifications of a librarian were to be found, 'in the first man you meet on the street.'

Simplified Rules

Regardless of the mixed sentiments, it was obvious that something less rigorous was needed. The result was a move led by Melvil Dewey to develop a simplified code of rules. When Dewey wrote on the need for cooperative cataloging, his chief concern was the descriptive detail in uniform author entries. The standardization of descriptive detail was especially necessary in the face of several cooperative projects—the new edition of Poole's Index, the desire for publishers to catalog books before they were released, and Dewey's proposal for the A.L.A. Catalog—that were primarily dependent on single entry listings. The details of describing books had to be settled once-for-all in order to arrive at a brief form that would promote printing economy and therefore inexpensive distribution. Frederic B. Perkins wrote to Dewey and explicitly outlined the requirements.

Jewett's plan failed because it was new and costly and required more concert of action than was or is possible among libraries. His titles as printed required far too much room.

His rules, modified to suit a short-title system somewhat like that now used in the Boston Public Library,

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1 C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, VI (September/October, 1881), 256. The personal reference was to Alderman Hugh O'Brien of Boston to whom the remark was attributed during the struggle that resulted in Justin Winsor leaving the Boston Public Library in 1877. See Whitehill, Boston Public Library, pp. 106-09, for the details of the controversy.
are perhaps as good as any that can be found. ... Short titles at 50 or even 100 entries to a printed page must be the rule in America at present. The titles in the Congressional Library catalogue, & even the style of the new Boston Athenaeum catalogue, are too elaborate for most folks. Either the Boston Public Library style or that of the Philadelphia Mercantile Library (same thing nearly in larger type) is more nearly the right thing now.¹

Because of the above reasoning the preliminary report on a uniform cataloging code that made up most of Dewey's article on cooperative cataloging began with descriptive detail first. Only after discussing those details did the report briefly cover the matter of choice of entry (except subject and form entry) and other problems that formed the basis of Cutter's more detailed dictionary system.²

The Committee on Uniform Title Entries that was officially appointed at the 1877 Association conference to deal with the matter, consisted of Cutter (chairman), A. R. Spofford of the Library of Congress, Samuel S. Green of the Worcester Public Library, John N. Dyer of the St. Louis Mercantile Library, and Lynds E. Jones of the editorial staff of the American Catalogue.³ The Committee made its first report in the March 1878 Library Journal but even by that early date it was obvious that questions of entry, that is, choice and form of names, were far more involved than anyone might have at first cared to admit. The general arrangement

³The appointments are noted in LJ, II (September, 1877), 31.
of their rules remained the same as in Dewey's paper (descriptive detail first, entry problems second), although the numbers of Cutter's rules that corresponded to the rules in the report were noted along the margin. Some new directions were given for descriptive detail, particularly in the use of capital letters and of abbreviations, but for the most part the rules for descriptive detail remained the same.¹

On the other hand, in the matter of entry, a considerable number of new directions were added, some of which doubtless came from the influence of Cutter. The most obvious example was a direction to enter anonymous biographies under the name of the subjects about which the books were written, rather than by their titles as other anonymous works were listed. The names of married women and other persons with changed names were to be entered "under the last authorized form,"² a direction in line with Cutter's 'real name' principle. And, when an author was known by more than one name, a brief direction was given to make references from the variant forms, a concession to Cutter's desire to relate variant names in order to direct the catalog user to the gathered works of any one author.

Not all the additions were in line with the preferences given in Cutter's Rules. Noblemen were to be entered under their titles of nobility rather than under their

²Ibid., p. 13.
family names, a change from the preliminary report. Allowance was made for the use of some notable pseudonyms, even if the real names were known. The pseudonym exceptions were to be confined, however, to an authoritative list made by a committee. And a rule for the form of the name of societies was added, but it was for entry under the name of a society with none of the exceptions that Cutter's Rules had outlined for alternative entry under place.

An extended discussion gave the essence of the problem of standardization that the Committee had encountered.

The Committee have been urged to prepare rules that should have no exceptions; but they do not believe in 'making a desert and calling it peace.' Gentlemen cry 'Unity, Unity,' when there is no unity. A rule may perhaps be made so general as to cover all cases; but such a one is likely to be so vague as to be of little use. The Committee do not think it well to give directions that do not direct. They have tried, therefore, to hit a happy medium and make rules few enough to be easily remembered, and definite enough to be understood and followed in ordinary cases.¹

The report continued by demonstrating that the issue of standardization actually revolved around a basic tension. That is, should exceptions that are concessions to common usage be allowed to disrupt an iron-clad code that aimed at simplicity and brevity for the cataloger? A code with exceptions made the rules more difficult to follow while a code with no exceptions sacrificed the convenience of the user. The tension was especially evident with regard to the entry of British noblemen (under title or family name?), pseudonymous authors (under real name, or sometimes under

¹Ibid.
pseudonym?), and societies (under name or place?). The Committee's resolution of the issue, which included taking into account the opinions of other librarians by means of a questionnaire, was given.

The innovations introduced by the Committee may be summed up thus: Less uniformity in the entry of noble and pseudonymous authors, arising from a concession to general ignorance, or to common habits of thought; rigid uniformity in regard to societies, with an utter disregard there of popular prejudices and associations.

The inconsistency between the two extremes was rationalized by considering that the matter of personal names was more of a problem to the ordinary user and thus needful of exceptions, while the matter of the names of societies was less of a problem to the ordinary user and thus susceptible to a more rigorous rule. "The rule on societies has all the usual advantages of simple rules,--it is easy to remember, easy to teach to the public (which is a great point), and generally easy to apply." With regard to societies, however, there was much less uniformity on the Committee than the outcome suggests. Cutter and Green were in favor of some exceptions for entry under place; Jones and Spofford were in favor of determining the authorized or corporate names of societies; and Dyer preferred no immutable rule at all. In fact, Dyer had specifically recommended to Cutter that a master list of societies' names be drawn up (similar to the list that the Committee recommended for

1Ibid., pp. 14-16.  
2Ibid., p. 16.  
3Ibid.
notable pseudonyms) for the use of catalogers everywhere.\(^1\) The actual rule on societies seems to have been chosen by default, in the face of no agreement on a more detailed solution.

Although the conflict between a code that incorporated concessions to popular use and a code with no exceptions made supposedly for simplicity in cataloging created tension for the Committee, it was not the same conflict that Cutter had faced in his Rules. On the contrary, Cutter had shown few qualms about making exceptions. For him, the choice was between concessions to popular use and the need to base the rules for the author catalog on techniques of gathering authors' works by a 'real name' principle. Simplifying the rules in favor of brevity was no panacea for resolving that difficulty.

The discussion aimed at a brief code, however, would seem to have influenced Cutter in one direction; that is, in the need for more exceptions based on the preferences of users in referring to authors. Cutter showed evidence of this in his comments in the Library Journal about some of the Committee's concerns. He very early and very explicitly sided with those who favored the entry of British noblemen by their titles of nobility, and with the use of at least some pseudonyms. In other areas, however, he remained firm in the preferences already shown in his Rules; notably with

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 15; Letter, John Dyer to Cutter (Letter-book copy), December 26, 1877, St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, Librarians' Correspondence.
regard to the entry of anonymous works by the first word of the title rather than by some other word (except, that is, for anonymous biographies). Jacob Schwartz, following English practice, had publicly advocated entry by the first significant word of the title, but Cutter explicitly disagreed with him, suggesting that it was a confusing practice, and not based on a principle of uniformity.¹

If the effort to write a simplified code influenced Cutter in the ways mentioned, it is also evident that Cutter influenced the ultimate form of the code. After 1878 the work of the Committee slowed to a standstill. One of the reasons for the slowdown lay in the failure of the cooperative cataloging projects for which the brief code was intended. In 1882 the discussion of a uniform code was revived, only this time directly under the Cooperation Committee rather than as the work of the Committee on Uniform Title Entries. Cutter remained the chairman of the effort.

The final form of the code came in 1883 and demonstrated in a remarkable way Cutter's influence, for in the absence of the constraints of the cooperative projects, Cutter's dictionary catalog ideal was in part substituted.²

¹Jacob Schwartz, "Communication," LJ, I (May, 1877), 128-29; C. A. Cutter, "Adversaria," LJ, I (July, 1877), 403-05. Cutter's proposal that English noblemen be entered under their titles of nobility is recorded in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, II (September, 1877), 32. Other short comments by Cutter on various points of the proposed code are scattered throughout the first three volumes of the Library Journal.

²"Condensed Rules for an Author and Title Catalog," LJ, VII (September/October, 1883), 251-54.
As a result even the brief code became more complicated. The most evident change occurred in the arrangement of the rules. They were put in the same order as Cutter's Rules. Additional choice of entry directions were added that followed his choice of entry section under personal authors, and a section on arrangement of entries (i.e., filing rules) was tacked onto the end, also as in the Rules.

More important than the above was the change in the spirit of the brief code. Its name was changed to "Condensed Rules for an Author and Title Catalog." Cutter privately expressed to Melvil Dewey the change of emphasis. With respect to the added directions for uniform title entry of anonymous religious works, he wrote,

> These rules are not meant especially for lib's wh. have a separate title Catal. Of course, the entry of *anon.* books under 1st word does not belong to the *author* catal.¹

The distinction between catalog elements was, of course, a major emphasis in his Rules. A detailed list of specific directions was also added for making author and title references, an essential feature for binding together the whole fabric of Cutter's dictionary system. Finally, as if to give even more emphasis to the new direction, Cutter added a note to the new code that for examples of the rules, a cataloger should refer to his Rules. He wrote to Dewey

¹"Condensed Rules for an Author and Title Catalog," Corrected proofs with notes appended by C. A. Cutter, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The underlining of part of the title is my own emphasis.
about the footnote, "You seem to think I am making a new ed. of the Rules. Can't giv everything. Will refer to Rules for eamples."\textsuperscript{1}

With the final form of the brief code set, the general cataloging discussion on the author and title elements of the standardized dictionary catalog for the most part came to a close, not to be resumed until the next decade. A few minor features were discussed, including the correspondence of the American rules with a similar code drawn up by British librarians, and rules for the transliteration of foreign languages. But the general direction of American cataloging was set. In the process the shape of the next two editions of Cutter's \textit{Rules} was determined. As the chairman of the Transliteration Committee, Cutter wrote in its 1885 report what amounted to a convenient summary of the direction that the discussion had given to his own systematization of the cataloging ideal.

In determining the principles of transliteration it must be remembered that a catalogue is not a learned treatise intended for special scholars, and bound to an erudite consistency, at whatever cost of convenience. It is simply a key to open the doors of knowledge to a partly ignorant and partly learned public, and it is very important that such a key should turn easily. A good catalogue, therefore, will be a compromise between the claims of learning and logic on the one hand, and of ignorance, error, and custom on the other. Speaking generally, that form of name must be chosen with which people now are, and in the future will be, most familiar. This reference to the future is important. The catalogue must not be in advance of its age; but, on the other hand, it will not be well that it should be behind the next generation. If, therefore, there is an evident current of progress in any direction the makers

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.
of the catalogue will do well to be a little before the present practice, in the hope that the world will soon catch up with them, not to pass them before the catalogue itself has been superseded by another. The larger the catalogue, therefore, and the less likely to be soon reprinted, the more may it venture to be ahead of the times. Nevertheless the maker will do well to remember that the future is very uncertain.¹

The Rules: Second and Third Editions

Although Commissioner John Eaton had suggested as early as 1877 that a new edition of Cutter's Rules was needed, it was not until 1886 that a move was made in that direction. Cutter wrote to Eaton in February of that year inquiring of the possibility and Eaton replied that only after the close of the fiscal year could the project be considered, and then only by his successor, for he was resigning. Eaton's successor, N. H. R. Dawson, resumed correspondence on the matter in November 1886 noting that, since the work was in the form of stereotype plates, corrections must be held to a minimum and be confined for the most part to addendum material.² By the following March galley proofs had been sent to Cutter for what was intended as simply minor corrections.³ Cutter, however, wished to make more than

¹A.L.A. Transliteration Committee, "Report" [with discussion], LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 302. The report was written by Cutter according to letters from Cutter to M. Dewey, January 2 and 17, 1885, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²Letters, John Eaton to Cutter, March 4, 1886; N. H. R. Dawson to Cutter, November 9, 1886, U.S.N.A., "Letters." The date of Cutter's original inquiry to Eaton was February 16, 1886 and was noted in the second of the two letters above.

minor corrections. He renumbered the individual rules, adding some new material to them and rearranging them. But the increase in the total from 205 to 261 rules resulted not from the new material, but instead from spreading out material previously contained in the discussion of single rules. He also contributed considerable addendum material.

His additions and changes extended by several months the time for carrying the new edition through the press. Because the original stereotype plates were in the hands of the printer and Cutter dealt directly with him, the process of revision aroused the animosity of those in the Government Printing Office. The tension was only heightened when Cutter found himself too busy with his duties as president of the American Library Association promptly to return proofs. By the fall of 1888 the government printer had called a halt to his part of the work and, when Dawson resigned his office in mid-1889, the new commissioner, William Torrey Harris, had to settle the dispute by appealing to his superior, the Secretary of the Interior.¹

Printing resumed by the end of 1889 and the work was finally released in early 1890. It lacked an index that Cutter had hoped to make, but the plan for the index suggests

¹A series of letters between the Commissioner of Education and Cutter reveals the development of the conflict. Of special importance are the letters, N. H. R. Dawson to Cutter, April 17, 1889; Charles Warren (acting in Dawson's absence) to Cutter, November 2, 1888; William T. Harris to Cutter, September 30, 1889; and William T. Harris to the Secretary of the Interior, September 15, 1889, U.S.N.A., "Letters."
why. Weston Flint, at that time an official of the Office of Education, reported on the completed second edition to the 1890 Association conference and on the index, not finished but subsequently planned for still another edition.

To make this great help still more practical and useful, Mr. Cutter suggested the need of an index to the Revised Rules, and this is already in preparation, and will be printed as soon as ready. The plan for this index is to have it very full and complete, with the rules so explained by examples and references, that it will aid the librarian practically in his work. It is proposed to have this index much larger than the Rules themselves, and so arranged that it can even be used by itself without the Rules. When this work is completed, it will be a step far in advance, in practical cataloguing.1

The inspiration for the index may have come from Dewey's very practical "Library School Rules" which in their full form included examples of catalog cards.

While it is not known for sure just how many copies of the second edition were printed, the demand for the work was great enough to require a new printing very soon afterwards. But Cutter did not find the time to make the extensive index of which he had spoken. He made, instead, a small index of six pages, and without any other changes, the new

1Westin Flint, "Libraries and the Federal Government," LJ, XV (Conference no., 1890), C65. Cutter had sent W. T. Harris a specimen of what the index would be, and Harris replied, "I have received your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing specimen pages of the proposed Index to your Rules, and as this seems to me by far the most important part of the work I certainly shall esteem it a great favor to receive the complete text of it, as early as your other pressing duties will allow. We can then issue another edition of the Rules with the Index at once. The plan of the Index proposed seems to be all that can be desired until our librarians shall receive further light." Letter, W. T. Harris to Cutter, April 26, 1890, U.S.N.A., "Letters."
printing became the third edition of the work and was issued in 1891.  

The two editions, considered together, gave evidence of the slowly changing requirements of cataloging and of the previous cataloging discussion. Cutter changed the title to Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue, omitting the reference to printing. He added in his introductory section on definitions that though the rules were "written primarily for a printed catalogue; almost all of them would apply equally to a card catalogue." The statement revealed Cutter's awareness of the growing popularity of that catalog format. Even with his statement and with an occasional reference to how the rules might be applied to a card catalog, however, they remained basically oriented to the economies of a printed book catalog format.

As a result of the discussion of cataloging standards, Cutter added several recently made brief cataloging codes, including those of the American Library Association, the

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1 The printing history on the verso of the title page of the fourth edition lists this edition as 20,000 copies. The accuracy of the figure is doubtful. Harris wrote to Cutter soon after the edition had been released and said, "It can hardly be said that the edition of "The Rules" recently issued is exhausted, although the supply is fast being sent out. The edition was so small that I do not consider it advisable to send more than one copy to any library, save on very special occasions, but have concluded to keep a memorandum of all extra requests to be attended to when another edition is struck off." Letter, W. T. Harris to Cutter, April 21, 1890, U.S.N.A., "Letters."

2 Introductory section, in Rules, 1889, 1891, p. 15. Unless otherwise stated, the rule numbers in this discussion are from these two editions which are paged the same. References are given only for Cutter's discussion of various
Library Association of the United Kingdom, the Bodleian Library, and of the School of Library Economy founded by Melvil Dewey (Appendix I). He added the 1885 report of the Transliteration Committee (Appendix II), the 1878 report of the Committee on Sizes (Appendix III), a set of rules on alphabetizing devised by John Edmands (Appendix IV), and a list of abbreviations that had been approved by the Committee on Uniform Title Entries in 1878 (Appendix V). He also expanded his list of reference works useful in cataloging from its previous three pages to five. Because of the inconclusiveness of the discussion of subject catalog principles, the subject catalog section of the Rules remained for the most part the same. Several revisions in the author catalog section were, however, significant.

A review of the new edition in the Nation explicitly noted the change in mood. After mentioning Cutter's role in systematizing what before him had been "without form and void," the reviewer went on:

Under the circumstances it was not unnatural that a reformer's zeal should make him somewhat rigidly systematic. Nor was his zeal misdirected: to insist on the intrinsic value of method was to teach a lesson much needed at the time. Today, however, when method is too frequently preferred before sense, a different lesson is needed, and no one is abler or more willing to teach it than is Mr. Cutter. Accordingly he has modified his rules in various significant respects, moving always towards vital usefulness, and frequently away from dead uniformity. ¹

Cutter himself signaled the change in the preliminary materials of the Rules. He appended to his "Objects" of the

catalog and his "Means" of accomplishing the objects, an
additional section entitled, "Reasons for Choice," in which
he voiced his awareness of the themes of the cataloging dis-
cussion that had taken place in the preceding years. He
wrote,

Other thing being equal, choose that entry
(1) That will probably be first looked under by
the class of people who use the library;
(2) That is consistent with other entries, so that
one principle can cover all;
(3) That will mass entries least in places where it
is difficult to so arrange them that they can
be readily found, as under names of nations and
cities.\(^1\)

In other words, the cataloger must pay attention to patterns
of use among his patrons (number 1) and aim at simplicity in
the way the catalog grouped its entries, especially under
place-names (number 3). At the same time, however, he should
attempt to be as consistent as possible in holding to the
principles that would achieve the objectives of the catalog
(number 2).

The movement of his new edition was largely towards
incorporating more concessions to common usage. There were
several places where the change is obvious. With regard to
the common use of personal names, he set the theme by refer-
ing to the spirit of the "Condensed Rules" that he had
helped to formulate. "Authors should be put under their
names. The definition of a name is 'that by which a person
or thing is known.'\(^2\)" Rather than adhering strictly to a

\(^1\)Introductory section, in Rules, p. 8.

\(^2\)Rule 21, discussion.
real or legal name definition, Cutter now preferred to allow common use to determine what name should be used in some cases where there was a choice. Accordingly, he directed that British and foreign noblemen be entered under their titles of nobility rather than under their family names, "except when the family name is decidedly better known." (Rule 21) Married women were to be entered under "the last well-known form" of their names, rather than strictly under their last legal names. (Rule 20c) Other persons who had changed their names were to be entered as in the first edition, "under the latest form, provided the new name be legally and permanently adopted." (Rule 22) But Cutter added the note, "Do not worry about the proper form of changed and transliterated names, nor spend much time in hunting up facts and deciding."  

He directed that references be made from the variant forms in all three cases, and wrote, "If the necessary references are made, it is of little importance which form is chosen for the main entry, provided of course, that the library always chooses the same heading."  

Cutter's treatment of pseudonymous names also followed the same course by allowing entry under notable pseudonyms. He directed, "Enter pseudonymous works generally under the author's real name, when it is known, with a reference from the pseudonym; but make the entry under the pseudonym, with a reference from the real name, when the writer is better known by the false name." (Rule 6) He explained,

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1Rule 22, discussion.  
2Ibid.
I am now in favor of frequent entry under the pseudonym, with a reference from the real name. I should recommend the pseudonym as a heading in the case of any popular writer who has not written under his own name, provided he is known to the public chiefly by his pseudonym, and in the subject catalogue for any person who is so known. In some doubtful cases a card catalogue might profitably make entry both under the real and false name. This elastic practice will give a little more trouble to the cataloguer than a rigid rule of entry under the real name, but it will save trouble to those who use the catalogue, which is more important.

He added that the practice should not be used for those authors who used a pseudonym only a few times or for those authors who were known primarily by their real names. Of course, by allowing even some concessions to common use, problems of uniformity would arise. But Cutter rationalized the procedure.

It is plain that this practice of entering under the best known name, whether real or false, puts an end to uniformity of entry between different catalogues, leads to inconsistency of entry in the same catalogue, and will often throw the cataloguer into perplexity to decide which name is best known; but for the last objection it must be remembered that the catalogue is made for the reader, not for the cataloguer, and for the first two that references will prevent any serious difficulty; and in the few cases of nearly equal notoriety, double entry is an easy way out of the difficulty.

Finally, in seeking to fulfill the new spirit, Cutter allowed for the entry of a collection fully under its title as well as under its collector if the work was primarily known that way. (Rule 59d) He added, however, that only one of the entries needed to include contents and other notes, a space-saving economy.

Entry according to commonly used forms of names

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1Rule 6, discussion.  2Ibid.
rather than according to a strict real name principle was only one side of the new spirit that informed the second edition of the Rules. The other side was Cutter's desire to make the grouping of entries as simple as possible for the user. That desire was especially applicable to those directions in the first edition that had caused great masses of entries to be grouped in obscure places, particularly under place-names. The new spirit was especially applicable to his rules for the entry of societies and institutions.

In the first edition Cutter had attempted to delineate a rule for the entry of societies by a consideration of their actual or real names. The two rules of his 'fifth plan' were based on a distinction between societies with distinctive actual names, but without a place-name involved (5th plan, rule 1), and societies with actual names that were non-distinctive (5th plan, rule 2). In terms of what Cutter added to the fifth plan in this edition, it seems likely that the practical interpretation of his twofold approach must have led to the practice of placing more societies under place than he had originally intended. Therefore, Cutter further expanded each section in order to more explicitly demonstrate what he intended.

He added to the first rule, that called for entry of societies with "individual names" (i.e., actual and distinctive names), the phrase, "and churches that have an individual name."1 Other churches whose names were non-distinctive

1Rule 56, 5th plan, rule 1.
and depended on a place-name for distinctiveness, were covered in rule two, but Cutter demonstrated by the phrase added here that he did not intend to place all churches in the 'non-distinctive' name category as the first edition might have led one to believe.

Furthermore, he added two more exceptions to the three already listed for rule one in the first edition. Formerly, two of those exceptions called for the entry of certain foreign royal societies and American state historical societies under place-names, even though they had distinctive actual names. In this edition Cutter added state agricultural societies to these. The third of the exceptions in the first edition directed that a catchword name be substituted for the distinctive actual names of London guilds. In this edition, that exception remained the same, but Cutter listed two other similar types of corporate bodies for which (while they had distinctive actual names) other forms of distinctive names were to be preferred. He directed that orders of knighthood should be entered under the significant word of their English title, and that bodies whose legal names began with such words as Board, Corporation, and Trustees, were to be entered, "under that part of the name by which they were known." In other words, rule one, which called for entry under actual name, was expanded only slightly in what it listed as place-name exceptions to that practice (i.e., state agricultural societies). But it was

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1 Rule 56, 5th plan, rule 1, exception 3.
greatly expanded in terms of delineating societies that were to be entered under their actual names, or in terms of delineating substitutes other than place-names for their actual names.

The second rule dealt with societies that had non-distinctive names. It directed that such corporate bodies be entered under place. As in the first edition, rather than giving a definition, Cutter simply gave a list of examples of which institutions he intended to include in this category, although this list was also expanded in size. In the first edition he had directed that, "Public schools and libraries and galleries instituted or supported by a city go under the name of the city." Here, the expanded list read, "National libraries, museums, and galleries and libraries, museums, and galleries instituted and supported by a city go under the name of the city." But he added the phrase, "provided they have not a name of their own."¹ That is, the reason for the place-name entry of such corporate bodies in the first place was not only the fact that they were supported officially by a city, but also because without a distinctive actual name, a place-name would add distinctiveness and an entry point. By adding the latter phrase, Cutter reinforced his desire to avoid having entries made under a place-name because of a misinterpretation of his intention, thus helping to fulfill his objective of reducing the long list of place-name entries.

¹Rule 56, 5th plan, rule 2, part d.
Cutter's desire was to gain more simplicity for the user in the entry of societies. To do so, however, he found that he had to make his rule for entry of societies even more difficult for the cataloger by virtue of its expansion and its need for added examples and exceptions. The corresponding increase in the complexity of the rule must have caused him some hesitation with regard to its applicability, for instead of his sentiment in the first edition that the fifth plan was "on the whole the best," he simply stated that there were "strong objections" to it.¹

Cutter's desire to achieve a simpler arrangement also led him to incorporate three other changes. The first was the already mentioned possibility of double entry under both a pseudonym and a real name of an author as a way to put entries in places where they "can be readily found."² The second was his direction to arrange the works in which an author functioned as a "joint-author" with the works in which he had been the single author. (Rule 240). Previously, an author's jointly-authored works had been arranged in a separate alphabetical sequence following the works that he had authored by himself. The third change was Cutter's basic rearrangement of entry headings that began with the same word. In the first edition the order had been, Person, Place, Title, Subject (except Person or Place), and Form.

¹ Rule 56, concluding statement of the introductory paragraph.
In this edition the order was listed as Person, Place, Subject (except Person or Place), Form, and Title. The difference in examples was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First edition</th>
<th>Second edition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes, H. A. (Person)</td>
<td>Homes, H. A. (Person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes family (Persons)</td>
<td>Homes family (Persons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes and shrines (Title)</td>
<td>Homes (Subject)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes (Subject)</td>
<td>Homes and shrines (Title)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Rules: Fourth Edition

Cutter's second and third editions were given wide distribution including, as with the first edition, a special shipment to England, this time, however, directly to the Library Association of the United Kingdom. Besides being used by libraries, they were also used for instruction in the various new American library schools coming into existence. By 1898 the supply of copies had again become exhausted, however, and the Bureau of Education found it necessary to make printings of 1,000 copies at a time for five of the six years from 1898 to 1903.²

At the same time, Cutter himself felt the need to issue an extensively revised edition. Several developments in the cataloging scene made it necessary. Even before the

1 Rule 214, discussion; Rule 170, discussion, in Rules, 1876.

² For a notice of the distribution of the Rules to the L.A.U.K., see The Library, 1st Series, IV (April, 1892), 133. Notices occurred frequently concerning the various library schools throughout the 1890's in the Library Journal. The small reprint editions are noted in the printing history in the fourth edition and are confirmed in the annual Reports of the Commissioner of Education to the Secretary of the Interior, in U.S.N.A., "Letters."
second edition had been issued, a host of new, often briefer
codes had been issued. Cutter had listed them in a footnote
to the preface of the second and third editions, and had re-
printed some of them as addendum material. He had also con-
tributed his own effort to the appearance of other such
codes by publishing at the Boston Athenaeum in 1890 the
Eclectic Card Catalog Rules compiled by Klas Linderfelt.
The "Eclectic Rules" were for the most part based on a com-
parison of existing codes, but significantly included the
first English translation and use of some of Carl Dziatzko's
German cataloging rules that had been issued in 1886. Lin-
derfelt's "Eclectic Rules" signaled a change that was over-
taking the cataloging scene. There was a renewed interest
in cataloging and, with the appearance of various codes, in
achieving a new synthesis of cataloging rules. Linderfelt
reported to the Association in 1890,

In marked contrast with the lull in new classifications
is the activity shown, during the period covered by this
report, of efforts to reduce the work of the cataloger
to a system of order and uniformity. Facile princeps
in this work is unquestionably the second edition of
Cutter's Rules for a dictionary catalogue, publish by
the National Bureau of Education, which has been thoroly
revised and greatly enlarged, until it is impossible to
see what could be added to it, in order to make it more
complete or more helpful to our craft.¹

He continued his observations by comparing his new code with
others and with Cutter's and noted how a consensus of cata-
loging opinion was growing. At the same meeting and in the
same vein, William C. Lane, then the head of cataloging at

Harvard, noted that Henry B. Wheatley's book, *How to Catalogue a Library*, also used several codes as a court of examples upon which one could draw his own conclusions.¹

The movement became even more pronounced at the 1893 Columbian Exposition Association meeting when the Association's library exhibit included a comparative display of cataloging codes. At that meeting William C. Lane, in another report on cataloging, listed the points of agreement and disagreement in the growing consensus of opinion. He also noted the relative frequency of code use by various libraries and although Cutter's *Rules* topped the list (85 libraries used them without modification), it was perhaps significant that a large number of libraries used other codes alone (the "Library School Rules" were used by 36 libraries and other codes were used by 14 libraries). Still other libraries either used more than one code (26 libraries) or made no report (39 libraries). The result of his investigations demonstrated that there was still room for standardization and for a uniform code to be made.²

The desire for more uniformity was increased because of new or renewed cooperative projects under way. The desire for uniformly printed and commercially available catalog cards prompted the Rudolph Indexer Company to attempt to

¹William C. Lane, "Wheatley's How to Catalog a Library," _LJ_, XV (March, 1890), 72.
enter that field in 1893 and the Library Bureau to meet that challenge by their own project of the same nature. The final outcome of such efforts occurred in 1901 when the Library of Congress began distribution of its own printed cards and took over the field.

Renewed projects contributing to the discussion were the "A.L.A. Catalog," a select list of books, and the List of Subject Headings, both under way by 1893. Cutter again took part in the latter project, but mainly by his contribution of a short essay to the work entitled, "Some Hints on Subject Cataloging in Dictionary Style," in which he referred to his Rules as the source of the theory behind the practice.\(^1\) Although the committee that worked on the project noted that the list was "to be considered as an appendix to Cutter's Rules for a dictionary catalog,"\(^2\) it seems obvious that the subject system and the subject heading principles were no longer of primary interest. Instead, there was a greater interest in simply constructing a list of usable subject headings as found in contemporary practice and to provide a guide to choices with regard to synonymous words and cross-references. Of special significance was the fact that there was no attempt to relate the cross-references to systematic classification as Cutter had suggested in his

\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, "Some Hints on Subject Cataloging in Dictionary Style," in American Library Association, List of Subject Headings for use in Dictionary Catalogs (Boston, 1901), pp. 197-98.

\(^2\) List of Subject Headings, preface.
Rules, and as both R. R. Bowker and F. B. Perkins had proposed was fundamental to the goals of the project so many years before. Consequently, the cross-references in the list were simply a collation of those in use in the catalogs of major libraries (Boston Athenaeum, Peabody Institute Library, Cleveland Public Library, and the Harvard College Library) and in the American Catalog. For this same reason the committee chose to disregard Cutter's original distinction between classed and specific subject names and preferred a looser interpretation of the rule for inverted subject headings. For example, instead of using the headings ANCIENT HISTORY and MODERN HISTORY, they chose HISTORY, ANCIENT and HISTORY, MODERN. Cutter was not satisfied with the result and submitted his own 'minority report' to the list.  

1 The interest in writing a new uniform code endorsed by the Association became stronger by the end of the 1890's. A new committee that included Cutter was appointed in December 1900 to prepare it. During the same period Cutter began preparing a new edition of his Rules that would take into account the changing climate of opinion, but he died before completing the revision. What he had finished was issued posthumously in 1904 by his nephew, William Parker Cutter, who noted that "no liberties whatever have been taken with the manuscript left by the author, and the additions

1ibid.; Cutter's minority report is given as a footnote to the preface.
made are only those necessary on account of the lack of manuscript."

Although the resulting work shows some evidence of its incomplete revision in terms of inconsistencies between the changes and what went before, it also bore evidence of the new currents in cataloging. Cutter gave expression to the changes in a preface written before he died. He began,

On seeing the great success of the Library of Congress cataloging, I doubted whether it was worth while to prepare and issue this fourth edition of my Rules; but I reflected that it would be a considerable time before all libraries would use the cards of that library, and a long time before the Library of Congress could furnish cards for all books, long enough for the libraries to absorb another edition and use it up in that part of their cataloging which they must do themselves.

He went on, however, to express a certain frustration:

Still I can not help thinking that the golden age of cataloging is over, and that the difficulties and discussions which have furnished an innocent pleasure to so many will interest them no more. Another lost art. But it will be all the better for the pockets of the public, or rather it will be better for other parts of the service—the children's room and the information desk, perhaps.

Since the above statement about the end of a cataloging age has often been quoted in assessing the history of cataloging codes, it will be valuable here to ascertain what Cutter most likely had in mind, particularly as an insight into the changes in his fourth edition.

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1"Editor's Note," in Rules, 1904, p. 7. Unless otherwise stated, the rule numbers in this discussion are from the fourth edition. References are given only for Cutter's discussions of various matters. When only a rule itself is cited, its number is given in the text.

Cutter noted that the advent of catalog cards cheaply furnished by the Library of Congress made it foolish for a library "not to make its catalog mainly of them." At the same time the rules for the new cards differed from his own not only in matters of punctuation, capitalization, etc., but much more significantly, with regard "to place of entry of the card in the catalog, or of choice of heading." Without detailing the changes, Cutter went on to reiterate an older theme that had occupied the discussion of cooperative cataloging in the earlier period. He spoke of the tension between a catalog made for the convenience of the public and a code of cataloging rules that were simple for the cataloger to apply because they admitted few exceptions. However, because catalogs serve the public, Cutter noted that it was "unwise for the cataloger to ignore them [the public and their habitual way of looking at things], even if they demand a sacrifice of system and simplicity." He next noted that the work of the new cataloging code committee was to devise the new code expressly "for the use of a learned library." He cautioned that although older catalogs were more complex, modern catalogs had to be made for children, "especially in a circulating library, for the children are the library's best clients." He continued with what amounted to a questioning of whether the code committee had the proper perspectives in mind and a suggestion that

1Ibid.  2Ibid., p. 6.  3Ibid.
4Ibid.  5Ibid.
his own experience had led to different conclusions.

That the committee has always understood the public's views, estimated correctly its power of changing them, and drawn the line in the right place between a conservative regard for custom and a wish to lead the public toward a desirable simplicity and consistency is too much to assume, but I have at least always looked for the reasons on both sides.¹

After noting that the greater length of the fourth edition resulted not from making new rules, but from "taking out from the long notes many recommendations that were in effect rules," he concluded,

Cataloging is an art, not a science. No rules can take the place of experience and good judgment, but some of the results of experience may be best indicated by rules.²

Cutter's discussion gives light to his assertion that "the golden age of cataloging is over," by suggesting first, that the new situation in cataloging was highlighted by uniformity in cataloging according to the requirements of centralized cataloging, rather than by the wise application of cataloging principles to a particular library's situation. In the traditional tension between simplicity in the rules and concessions to common habits of use, he had championed the effort to devise rules that would take the tension into account, but that would also allow for local variations. Centralized cataloging would, however, do away in great measure with local applications of the principles in favor of accepting the cataloging that had already been prepared. Centralized cataloging would, in effect,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
give rise to the situation, about which Cutter had expressed himself so many years earlier, of catalogers who might not understand and would not question the cataloging system that they used. The new code and the cards produced from its application would not only provide such a cataloging system, but would freeze the allowable exceptions for common habits of use once and for all, and would supply that rigid system to all libraries. That prospect must have disappointed Cutter, for whom cataloging was an art and catalogs were meant to be works of art based on an appreciation of many factors, not the least of which were the users for whom they were prepared.

That sentiment on his part suggests a second aspect. Cutter specifically noted that the new uniform catalog cards differed from his system in the matter of "place of entry in the catalog." His system had been built as a woven fabric in which all of the elements were part of a systematically devised whole. The fact that the new standardized catalog was to be on cards obviated, of course, many of Cutter's rules with regard to economy and simplicity in printing. But, of greater significance was the lack of attention paid to the objects of the catalog that he had specified. Ostensibly, the new unit cards were part of a dictionary catalog. In reality they circumvented the ideal of the system that he had promoted by disregarding many of the finer points of the relationships between the elements of the whole. In effect, the new cooperative cataloging achieved simplicity
and uniformity at the expense of catalogs made on the basis of conscious principles and mediated by "experience and good judgment."

The situation being what it was, Cutter attempted to incorporate into his fourth edition what changes he could in order to meet its challenge. His efforts in that direction are immediately noticeable in the preliminary section on definitions. In the first three editions he had included twenty-five terms, all aimed at explaining the basic catalog elements (that is, author, title, subject, and form catalogs, and analytics and references), and how they were interwoven to reach the objectives of the whole dictionary system. In the fourth edition, Cutter added seventy-five new terms, most of which explained the details of bibliographical description or had to do with matters in the technical services of libraries unrelated to a dictionary catalog, and some of which specifically had to do with matters pertaining to a card catalog. The statement in the second edition in which Cutter suggested that the rules might be used for a card catalog was changed to read, "These rules, written primarily for a printed catalog, have been enlarged in this fourth edition to include the needs of a card catalog."¹

While Cutter's intention was to care for the new and changed situation, the addition of rules for card catalogs was, therefore, no more than the imposition of a new system

upon the old. The rules on style for a printed book format remained the same, while at the same time other occasional rules were added for a card catalog format, often in the form of what the American Library Association code revision committee recommended as alternatives to his own practice.

In the rules for entry the new situation was most obvious with respect to the needs of what has come to be called a unit card system. In a unit card catalog, almost all of the points at which a work would be entered were represented by a full card with a uniform amount of information in each place. No longer was there one principal entry in one of the catalog elements with other access points being represented by varying degrees of abbreviation of the information. For instance, in Cutter's printed format, a non-fiction book would have been given author and subject entries (i.e., author, title, imprint, contents, and notes). It would have had some kind of access point that would allow it to be located by its title, but that may have been in the form of a first-word, a catch-word, or a subject-word reference (or perhaps no title reference at all if the subject entry sufficed). Because the unit card catalog had a full entry at every access point, the titles no longer referred to another part of the catalog but to the information found on the card at hand. A new terminology was devised for the new situation. Instead of a principal entry in one of the catalog elements (and occasionally an additional entry in one of the other catalog elements), and
references elsewhere, the card catalog had a main entry (usually an author entry) and added entries, all of the cards being the same except for what appeared as the first, or filing line, at the top of the card. Cutter adopted the new terminology, but he also kept all of his rules for determining both entry points and references, and attempted only to superimpose the needs of a card catalog as additional material. The lack of a principal entry point in a catalog system made it difficult at best to conceive of the dictionary catalog as an interwoven fabric of several catalog elements, and, in reality, all of Cutter's distinctions of what kind of entry belonged to what element of the catalog became of little importance.

Therefore, even with the changes in terminology and the addition of materials, the fourth edition of the Rules differed little from the previous editions in its basic structure. The subject system that had remained unchanged in the second and third editions again remained for the most part unchanged—aside from a slight rearrangement of materials—and probably for the same reason; that is, because of the inconclusiveness of cataloging objectives and principles for this section. The rules for choice of entry and form of name retained the emphases that had been added in the second edition, with only occasional sharpening of some of the explanations of the exceptions to the 'real name' principle that he had originally chosen to follow.

At only one point did Cutter make any extensive
changes at all, and that was in the section on the entry of corporate authors, and most specifically for the choice between name and place-name entry for societies and institutions. In place of what in the previous editions had been a discussion of various plans for entering societies, Cutter substituted an entirely rewritten section of rules with no reference to plans of any sort. He mentioned, however, the difficulty of any solution for this entry problem.

Where to enter societies is the most difficult problem in cataloging, so difficult that the Germans evade it, not entering them at all, and the British Museum solves it by putting them in a separate catalog.¹

The resulting rearrangement bore many similarities to what had previously been the fifth plan. Cutter was still attempting to enter societies on the basis of a distinction between those with distinctive and those with non-distinctive names. The only differences were his arrangement of the rules and a different delineation of what corporate bodies he intended to include under each category of the distinction. In the previous editions he had stated two rules for the fifth plan which were in fact the reverse of each other. The first rule was for entry of certain societies by their names with notes for exceptions and for distinguishing what societies rather came under rule two. Rule two was for entry under place-name with explanations of what societies in effect came under rule one. In this edition Cutter framed one basic rule, that is, to enter corporate

¹Rule 60, discussion.
bodies under their names. (Rule 61) All alternative forms of entry names were then framed as exceptions either as an inversion of the actual name, the substitution of another better known actual name, or the use of a place-name. In order to better denote his concept of names for corporate bodies, Cutter did add some attempts at definition. The names of bodies were to be considered their names "as they read." (Rule 61) He listed the kinds of organizations that he meant, and added the phrase that he had used in previous editions, that entry under the name of a corporate body was to be made when the body had "an individual name."¹

Generally, an individual name was one that was uniquely identifiable and not one that involved only the use of generic words or common words. To further qualify them he wrote, "An individual name is generally one taken from the name of a person." (Rule 70) For the sake of clarity, he added an explanation of names that he did not consider to be "individual." "Universities, galleries, etc., called merely Imperial, Koyal, National and the like are not to be considered as having individual names, except the National Gallery in London."² The explanation would have seemed clear except for the exception that he noted, for the exception suggests that names of corporate bodies gain individuality by use, rather than by their relationship to the names of persons. His definition, however, covered only

¹Rule 61, discussion section entitled, "Specification."
²Rule 70, discussion.
part of the problem of what was to be considered a name sufficiently unique to be entered under. He also attempted to define what he meant by corporate bodies with "distinctive names." He wrote, "A distinctive name is usually one beginning with a proper noun or adjective." (Rule 77)

Cutter's basic goal, therefore, was to enter as many corporate bodies under their uniquely distinctive or individual names as possible. He still had to allow that some names were not sufficiently unique, and for these he directed that entry be made under a place-name. But he was as specific as possible in listing only those categories of corporate bodies that qualified under this alternative approach. One of the categories that remained the same as in previous editions was churches that had no unique names. But for those churches that did have distinctive or individual names, he directed that they be entered under their names "as they read."¹ One significant change from previous editions was his decision to enter purely local benevolent or moral societies, mercantile library associations, and others like them, not under their place-names, but under their own names. (Rule 85) In the previous editions these had had place-name entry, but it seems likely that Cutter came to the conclusion that what he had considered non-distinctive names had arisen not because of only common or non-personal names in their corporate names, but through the common habit

¹Rule 81, discussion.
of identifying them by their local manifestations. For example, the Mercantile Library Association in St. Louis, while having a name that was non-distinctive compared to mercantile library associations of other cities, still had a distinctive name, when compared to corporate bodies that were named only generically, such as the Public Library, or the First Church. As a result, Cutter stressed even more his intention to enter fewer corporate bodies under place-names, and, in the words of his statement of "Reasons for Choice," in gathering them in places "where it is difficult to so arrange them that they can be readily found, as under names of nations and cities."

In summary it could be said that the fourth edition differed little in spirit from the third, except for the imposition of occasional adaptations based on the growing use of standardized card catalogs. He had suggested that a new edition seemed a bit superfluous. The publication of the American Library Association's Catalog Rules in 1908 proved him right, for with that code cataloging practice headed away from questions of principles and emphasized questions of detail. Although the general format of a dictionary

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1 Rule 86, discussion. With regard to benevolent societies, J. C. M. Hanson related at the A.L.A. conference in 1901 that in the discussions of the code revision committee, "Mr. Cutter said that he had more trouble with this rule than with any other. He had, in fact, I believe decided to enter under name, not under place, but it seems during the discussion he changed back to the old rule." See LJ, XXVI (August, 1901), C160. Cutter, of course, decided to enter such local societies under their names in the final run.
catalog remained, the question of principles would not be again raised significantly until the work of Seymour Lubetzky in the 1950's.
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHARLES AMMI CUTTER: NINETEENTH-CENTURY SYSTEMATIZER OF LIBRARIES

VOLUME II

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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CHAPTER VII

SHELF CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Another of Charles Cutter's major efforts to systematize libraries lay in the development of two shelf classification systems, one for the Boston Athenaeum, and the Expansive Classification, designed for libraries in general. As to their ultimate effect, his shelf classification systems cannot be considered the equal of his cataloging theory and practice, for neither system was ever accepted widely in practice. They did provide in their day, however, an alternative to other systems then being developed, especially to the decimal classification formulated by Melvil Dewey, and significantly they laid the groundwork and at least in part the inspiration for the Library of Congress shelf classification system. The latter and the decimal classification are today the two chief shelf classification systems used in American libraries.

The Beginnings of the Boston Athenaeum Shelf Classification System

In Cutter's early days of librarianship, the usual method of indicating the shelf location of a book was to give its physical position in the system of shelving. Cutter described such notational systems as follows:
Formerly a book's place in a library was fixed on a certain shelf, where it remained (except when out) till the library was rearranged. Its mark might be something like 1254-30, which would mean that it was on the first floor, in the second room, in the fifth case in the room, on the fourth shelf in that case, and the thirtieth book on the shelf, counting from the left. The shelves were usually only half filled at first, to leave room for new-comers to be added in their proper place in the various classes.\textsuperscript{1}

The same system could also approximate a subject classification if broad subject groupings were limited to specific alcoves. Sometimes the shelving could itself be constructed along symmetrical lines such as the system designed by Nathaniel Shurtleff, in which ten alcoves or sections each having ten shelves gave the notation the appearance of a decimal system.\textsuperscript{2} Because all such systems of arrangement and notation were tied to the physical structure of the shelves themselves, the notation was called "fixed" or "absolute."

When Cutter came to the Athenaeum he had already had practical experience with the fixed location system at Harvard. Fixed location had, of course, some advantages. It provided, in a day of relatively small collections, a simple method of shelving. It provided a way to bring together books on similar subjects without an overly sophisticated classification scheme. Scientific or systematic classification was relegated to the catalog. It also

\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{1}Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 234.

\textsuperscript{2}\textsuperscript{2}Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, A Decimal System for the Arrangement and Administration of Libraries (Boston: Privately printed, 1856).
provided "local memory" for both the patron and the librarian, that is, familiarity with the physical alcove and shelf location of particular books. In days when going directly to the shelves of a library (especially in private institutions that catered to the more cultured classes) was accorded a sort of mystique, a communion with knowledge and truth, this aspect of the fixed shelf location system was highly regarded. One became familiar with both the books and the atmosphere and surroundings of his or her favorite subjects. The library in this sense was a place of sanctity and culture, for those already of genteel background an extension of their home, and for those of less cultured resources, a step into an ideal world.¹

Of various vignettes describing the life of the Athenaeum in this respect, one by Mrs. James Francis Thomas especially illustrates this mood. She had become a proprietor before Cutter began to institute his movable shelf system.

The old arrangement of the library pleased me better than the new. An alcove with its own windows and table and light with books grouped by subject seemed a cosy little place, with a bit of privacy. . . . Those were the days when we were looking for a new book by Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Blackmore and lesser lights. Herbert Spencer was running a race with death (as he supposed) to give his philosophy to the world, published in the Popular Science Monthly. Many people were hanging on his words. . . . The atmosphere is unique. From its broad windows one overlooks that precious spot of greenery, a jewel set in bricks and mortar, where the sleepers rest, to the hurrying crowd beyond the past. ¹

¹Charles Folsom had considered the library a 'sanctum'. Cf. Parsons, "Memoir of Charles Folsom," p. 30.
and the present. After a feast of reason and flow of soul within, one is sometimes greeted by one of Boston's magnificent sunsets.1

Fixed location also had serious difficulties primarily because of rapid collection growth and because of the growing complexity of subjects. Cutter wrote,

This [arrangement] worked well till some of the classes became full, which always happened irregularly, some shelves being soon crowded while others were hardly any fuller than when the library was first opened. Then came all the trouble of double rows, of books laid on top of others, and of books placed in another class because there was no room in their own. At last the day arrived when a new building or a new room or at least some new cases had to be provided.2

The books would have to be rearranged and that also required changing the location symbols in the catalog. Cutter described the process as,

a long and tedious work, which experience shows to be peculiarly liable to error, in which errors are peculiarly prejudicial to the library service. For a book mismarked is a book lost, mortifying if it is not found, and wasting time whether found or not.3

There were ways to get around the problems of the fixed notation without doing away with it. Cutter described three such methods. One was to simply repeat the arrangement in another part of the building. Another was to leave gaps in the shelf numbers. Still another was to extend the individual stacks themselves.4 The difficulty of

1 Mrs. James Francis Thomas, "Reminiscences of the Boston Athenaeum," 1928, MS, BA. The "precious spot of greenery" is the Old Granary Burial Ground adjacent to the rear of the building.

2 "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 234.

3 Ibid. 4 Ibid., pp. 234-35.
each plan was that the rearrangement and remarking of the catalogs was only put off to a later time. In each of them expansion was made possible by duplicating in some way the classed groups of the original arrangement whether in completely separate rooms or in contiguous alcoves or stacks. Cutter wanted a system that overcame all such problems.

Besides the difficulty that a fixed location system raised with regard to the expansion of the library was the need for more complete and immediate subject access to a library's collections. A shelf classification could aid that need. In a library such as the Athenaeum where patrons could themselves go to the shelves, seeing the books on one subject gathered together was better for the patron's sense of selection than a catalog. "For most purposes," Cutter could say, "the books themselves are the best subject-catalogue." Such direct access also at times saved the time of the library staff. A patron could go directly to the shelves and find the books on his specific subject of inquiry already gathered together. If the shelves were not classified or only broadly classified, the patron would have to search with difficulty or would have to rely upon an attendant to do the same. Cutter summed up the advantages of time savings and immediacy at the 1877 London conference of librarians. Speaking of his personal bibliographical

project on demonology and witchcraft, he related his delight that he would be allowed,

to visit, under the supervision of an attendant, that portion of the British Museum which is devoted to Demonology. There, in an hour or two, I can make valuable notes of many works hitherto unseen; whereas, if there were no shelf-arrangement, I should not even attempt to look through the million and a half volumes. And even a classified catalogue would not answer the purpose so well for then I should be obliged to write two or three hundred slips, and send two or three hundred attendants running all about the library, instead of sitting down quietly with all the desired works almost within reach of my table.¹

The kind of shelf classification of which Cutter spoke would have to be minutely subdivided in order to achieve the kind of subject access he desired. But a fixed location system put a limit on the number of possible subdivisions, unless a great deal of space was strategically allowed for later accessions in any particular subject. If space was not available, new accessions would require that the librarian shift the existing shelf positions of the older books in each subdivision, and consequently require him to rewrite the shelf marks in the catalog. Thus it was best to keep subdivisions at a minimum and to allow plenty of extra space in those that were used. But even with few subdivisions, new accessions caused constant rearranging and rewriting.

The process of rearranging and remarking had been a course pursued by Cutter many times at both Harvard and the Athenaeum. Therefore, in 1876 when he found it

¹C. A. Cutter, spoken comments in London Conference of Librarians, 1877, p. 167.
necessary to expand the Athenaeum's collections into the third floor area previously occupied by the art gallery, Cutter strongly desired to use an altogether different method of marking books. He had two goals. He wanted a notation that would allow him to expand his collection without the constant reshifting and rewriting that accompanied a fixed location system. And he wanted a classification scheme that included a relatively high degree of subject subdivision. That he conceived of the two aspects as obtainable in one system is not known, but probably doubtful. He had experimented with a classification scheme of library economy and history as early as 1873 but apparently only in terms of its classification schedule and not with a notation. He had also written early in 1873 to Jacob Schwartz, the librarian of the New York Apprentices' Library, for details of Schwartz's system then being developed. Schwartz's system was one of the earliest attempts to provide a systematic movable shelf classification system. However, the appearance of Melvil Dewey in 1876 with full details of his Amherst classification scheme changed the picture entirely.

Cutter and Dewey had first met in 1873 when Dewey was in the Boston area. The Athenaeum was one of the more than fifty libraries visited by the young college student to study methods of library organization and administration.

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In April 1876 Dewey moved from Amherst to Boston to pursue educational endeavors that would eventually include a library periodical, a library association, and the publication of the Amherst shelf classification. Within days of his arrival in Boston he brought the classification plan to Cutter for appraisal. Although he had apparently spoken to Cutter of the scheme on earlier visits, this time he brought it in publishable form. For several days the two men met frequently, discussing the merits and difficulties of the plan and making minor changes where they seemed advisable.¹

Dewey's plan gave to books numbers that indicated not their physical location in the shelving system, but rather their relative location in a classification scheme. It was called, therefore, a 'movable' or 'relative' shelf classification system. The classification was a hierarchical enumeration of knowledge expressed by a hierarchy of decimal numbers. Nine broad subject classes and one class of general material were assigned the digits 0 to 9. Each of these broad divisions was further subdivided into its constituent parts, the subdivisions themselves expressed in the notation by the use of additional digits.

¹A concise sketch of Dewey's move to Boston is contained in Fremont Rider, Melvil Dewey, American Library Pioneer Series (Chicago: American Library Association, 1944), pp. 20-40. The details of how the two men consulted on the Amherst classification are contained in Dewey, [Diary], Bks. IV-V, passim. The details of Dewey's classification are taken from Melvil Dewey, A Classification and Subject Index, for Cataloguing and Arranging the Books and Pamphlets of a Library (Amherst, Mass., 1876).
In only one detail did the plan fail in systematic organization. Once a book was assigned its proper class, Dewey simply placed it within the class sequentially after the last book assigned there. Thus, if the class number was 658, the fourteenth book to be added to that class would have a notation, 658·14. And in order to differentiate books of exceptional size, Dewey inserted a size symbol between the class number and the book number as a key to which shelves in a particular section would contain such books. For example, the notation 658·3·14 indicated that the book in question was the fourteenth book in class 658, but was between \(2\frac{1}{2}\) and \(3\frac{1}{2}\) decimeters in height. Therefore, it would be placed on the bottom shelf of that particular section of shelves. Books less than \(2\frac{1}{2}\) decimeters in height bore no size notation inasmuch as they fell in the size limits for the regular classification sequence. Despite the problem of arrangement within a class, Dewey's system combined a simple notation for a movable shelf system with a classification of knowledge that seemingly had endless possibilities of minute subdivision. It was precisely the combination that Cutter was looking for.

Cutter was very impressed with the scheme. Because he was in the midst of seeing his erudite contributions to the 1876 Special Report through to completion, he wrote to Commissioner of Education, John Eaton, and encouraged him to include the new plan in the report despite its late appearance.
Within the last week Mr. Melvil Dewey has explained to me very carefully his system of numbering books in libraries which has been in use at Amherst College library for the last 2 or 3 years. I cannot pretend yet to fully understand the scheme in all its details and in all its bearings, but so far as I do comprehend it, it seems to me one of the most important contributions to library economy that has been made for many years. The circular would be very incomplete without some account of it, and I am the more desirous that it should not be omitted from your volume because unless I am mistaken it lessens the force of some of the objections brought against Classed catalogs and in the contest between dictionary and classed affords considerable aid to the latter, by enabling them to add to their own advantages the great merit of the dictionary plan to ready reference. How this is done by substituting for the succession of the letters of the alphabet known to us by the natural succession of numbers, Mr. Dewey will explain if you desire.¹

During the coming weeks Cutter came to know the system in more detail and by June he had apparently made up his mind to try the system at the Athenaeum. He wrote to Annie Godfrey, librarian of Wellesley College,

Mr. Dewey has explained his system to me and we have talked it over several times. I have brought against it all the objections I could think of, and he has answered nearly all. I think it is plain that the defects of the system are defects that it shares with all other systems and that it has some merits, which no other system has. Of course it is possible that use may develop some inconveniences which I cannot foresee, but those are balanced by greater conveniences. If I would [be] starting a library I should use this system; and I intend to try it in our projected extension, designed to hold 125,000 volumes.²

¹Letter, Cutter to John Eaton, April 20, 1876, copy in Dewey, [Diary], Bk. V, p. 10. Cutter's reference to classed catalogs reflects Dewey's own statement concerning the multiple purposes of the classification scheme. Dewey wrote, "Though the system was devised for cataloguing and indexing purposes, it was found on trial to be very valuable for numbering and arranging books and pamphlets on the shelves." 1876 Special Report, p. 623.

²Letter, Cutter to Annie Godfrey, June 28, 1876, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Fremont Rider remarks that Annie Godfrey,
Cutter worked at applying the Amherst scheme to the Athenaeum's collections in the months following the Philadelphia convention in October 1876, but he did not eventually use the system at the Athenaeum. In attempting to apply it he found "inconveniences" that made it unsuitable for reaching the degree of refinement that he desired. Sometime after the beginning of 1878, Cutter began to develop a plan of his own. It was based on the principles of the Amherst scheme, that is, 'relative location' and 'minute subdivision', but it applied the latter principle with a much greater degree of precision, profiting from other participants in what at times was a fervent professional discussion of the matter.

Jacob Schwartz inaugurated the discussion with an article that appeared in the March 1878 Library Journal.¹ His paper was a brief summary of a plan designed to achieve the same objectives but in a different manner. Schwartz claimed to have devised his own approach as early as 1871 and to have used it at the New York Apprentices' Library since 1872. He suggested that there were three basic ways of arranging books, numerically, alphabetically, or

who became Dewey's wife in 1878, was perhaps one of the first persons in the Boston area to have the system explained to her. She happened to be visiting the Harvard College Library when Dewey came in to talk to John Fiske about his system. Fiske persuaded Dewey to give a lecture to the Harvard Library assistants, and Godfrey joined the group for the lecture.

systematically. Libraries had often combined one or another approaches, but no one had considered making a notation that combined the numerical and alphabetical approaches, although in his opinion, "this combination gives us the only possibility of a perfect system."¹ His own plan combined the two by allowing the twenty-five capital letters of the alphabet (omitting J) to represent the main classes, alphabetically arranged according to the class names, the numbers 1 to 9 the first array of subclasses in each main class, and the twenty-five lower-case letters of the alphabet, a second set of subclasses if needed. A particular subject might therefore be indicated by the symbol B8c, although he found that he often had no need to subdivide further than two symbols.

In addition, he provided a scheme of numbers that would arrange the books within any particular class both by their sizes and alphabetically according to the authors' names. He did so by making a fourfold differentiation of duodecimos, octavos, quartos and folios. He then divided the numbers 0 to 999 into four parts assigning 0-499 to duodecimos, 500-799 to octavos, 800-899 to quartos, and 900-999 to folios. Within each of the four sections of numbers he distributed the alphabet of possible authors' names according to frequencies that he had statistically established by going through the collections of his own library. That is, he assigned integer equivalents to an

¹Ibid., pp. 6-7.
alphabetical list of authors' surnames. The numbers, representing an alphabetical order, allowed him to interpolate new books into any one class by the assignment of the proper numerical equivalent to their authors' names. If the number was already used he could add a letter to the end of the number, either to represent another book by the same author or to indicate an author whose last name began with the same letters. His own experience, he claimed, showed that that situation did not often arise, because the distribution of the numbers within each of the four sections took into account those places where often used authors' names began with the same letters.

Schwartz listed the advantages of his alternative method. It provided not only for the minute classification and alphabetical arrangement of subjects, but also for alphabetical arrangement of authors within any one class. A typical call number would appear as B8256 in which B8 indicated the class and 256 indicated both the size (in this case a duodecimo) and the alphabetical position of the book in the class. His system provided relative location. The notation was simple, not often running to more than four figures (letters plus numbers) but in case of expansion, it could provide by his estimate for a library of fifty million volumes with only six figures. And the system of classes were themselves very elastic. Subclasses could be added when needed by the simple expedient of adding to the basic class symbol in the manner indicated. Schwartz
had not actually worked out on paper an extensive schedule of subdivisions. He simply enumerated the main classes and allowed the possibility of further subdivision as the library expanded.

Although Melvil Dewey had laid the foundation for a new approach to shelf classification with the 1876 publication of his own system; compared to what it later developed into, especially with the second edition in 1885, the first edition was a relatively undeveloped plan contained in a pamphlet of only forty-two pages. Schwartz's plan provided the first published alternative approach to Dewey's system. It was distinguished by a broader notational base and by the systematic arrangement of books within classes. It also stressed the openness of the field in which new systems might compete for the attention of librarians, a fact that Cutter doubtless sensed. That he had no reservations as to the need for a scheme with the requirements already mentioned and that he was willing to be radical in his solution were indicated in May 1878. Cutter, with several local Philadelphia librarians and library officers, was invited by Lloyd P. Smith, the librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia, to take part in a consultation at that library on the need for a new shelf classification there. The library was then about to move into its new Ridgway building. The shelf classification previously used was based on the sizes of books and a fixed location notation. The report of the consultation summarized the
responses of each of the participants to the four basic questions considered:

1. Is it desirable to have any of the books on the shelves arranged by subjects?
2. Is it desirable to arrange the entire library by subjects?
3. What plan is best for arrangement of the books on the shelves, de novo?
4. What plan of arrangement is best adopted for the books to be transferred to the Ridgway Library, and its future accessions?¹

Cutter insisted on the need for an orderly classification especially since the library of necessity had already arranged some of its books (fiction and dictionaries) according to classes anyway. He felt that any plan was very desirable even if it was not the most satisfactory. "The worst plan I ever saw was better than none. Half a loaf is better than no bread."² He was also insistent on relative shelf location, although he was not sure whether the notation should consist solely of numbers as in Dewey's system or should be of Schwartz's mixed variety. He said he leaned towards numbers but realized that letters gave a broader base and that perhaps a combination of the two was best.

¹[Report of the Consultation on Shelf Classification held at the Library Company of Philadelphia on May 27 and 28, 1878], MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The report ended up in Dewey's hands probably because Lloyd P. Smith had been corresponding with Dewey during March and April in order to persuade him to accept an appointment as the head of the Ridgway Library. The report, which praised Dewey's Amherst classification highly, must certainly have been of interest, and may have come from Smith himself, or perhaps from Cutter. Dewey turned down the offer. The correspondence is also in the Dewey papers.

²Ibid.
John Edmands, another participant and the librarian of the Philadelphia Mercantile Library, also favored a mixed notation and spoke of a plan that he was beginning to adopt at his own library. He too used twenty-five capital letters for the main classes. But for a second symbol he simply used lower-case letters. In addition he also worked out a numbering system for the books within any particular class in order to keep them in alphabetical order as in Schwartz's system. His 'author numbers' had only one sequence of alphabetically equivalent integers (1-999) and included no size factors. Edmands had applied the authors' numbers to the fiction class first. Because that class had no regular class number but was kept in a section by itself, a more distinctive location symbol was needed than the number by itself. Therefore, he added the first letter of an author's name to the front of the author number. Thus, Hale might be assigned the number 342, but when written, the number would appear H342. Because the spread of the numbers was inadequate to accommodate every author's name individually, an alphabetical sequence of several names would often be assigned the same number (for example, all those whose names began Hal to Hall). In cases where the different names were actually present in the form of books, Edmands assigned still a third number below both the class and first author number, that would differentiate these authors and keep their works together.¹

¹Ibid.
During the conference Lloyd Smith advanced his own plan for a new shelf classification based upon the divisions in the library's classed catalog. The catalog had been made years before and contained six main divisions: Bibliography, Religion, Jurisprudence, Science and Arts, Belles Lettres, and History. Smith's plan was to assign the vowels (A, E, I, O, U, and Y) as notation symbols to the main classes and to assign lower case letters to the subclasses already outlined for each main division. The books could then be put in the classed order of the present catalog making allowance only for their separation on the shelves into size categories within each class. In other words, Smith devised a notation that would fit the classification of the existing catalog rather than enumerating any new system for the shelves. In that way the entries in the catalog would not have to be marked with any new notation. Instead, a catalog user only needed to translate the catalog entry into the new shelf symbols by means of a general chart.¹

Cutter advised that a plan be adopted with only slight regard to past practice and prejudices in the Philadelphia library, and his response to Smith's plan indirectly revealed his disappointment. He spoke of the conditions facing the provision of a new shelf classification for the library: the existence of the printed catalog, the habits and prejudices of the present members, and the nature of

¹Ibid.
future convenience that was desirable for both users and librarians. He then indicated which he thought the most important.

Now I think the finite and rather brief past is of much smaller account than the infinite future. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems and even if it were a question of throwing away the catalogue and offending all the associations of the members. I should say that if the loss of throwing it aside is less than the future inconvenience ensured by the adoption of an inferior plan I would throw aside the present catalogue.¹

That opinion was perhaps expected of one who had so recently developed a new style dictionary catalog and who felt it to be superior to any classed catalog.

Other members of the consultation also expressed themselves as to what would be an adequate shelf classification. Dewey's Amherst system brought high praise as opposed to Schwartz's, but perhaps only because Schwartz had not worked out the detailed array of subjects that Dewey had, and because he had no alphabetical index of subjects to make his easy to use. Despite the fact that of the two plans already available the members of the consultation favored Dewey's, Smith's plan was recommended to the trustees, probably because of its intended economy.

As a result of the stimulation provided both by the consultation and by Jacob Schwartz's article, Cutter was spurred to develop the outlines of a plan of his own, during the summer months that followed. Its basic features were borrowed from the Amherst plan, but that system had two

¹Ibid.
major difficulties and when Cutter gave a preliminary report of his scheme in the September 1878 Library Journal, he related how he intended to overcome them. ¹

The first difficulty that Cutter had encountered was the restrictive nature of Dewey's notation and consequently the distribution of the classes within the system as a whole. Dewey had used only nine main classes (besides a class for general materials) and Cutter found that they were distributed in the wrong proportions for the Athenaum's collections. In order to subdivide to the required degree, long numbers were unavoidable for some of the classes. He wanted a classification with a broader base that could be minutely subdivided, but with relatively short numbers for even the finer divisions. He saw the alphabet as his only alternative for a notation.

The main defect of the Amherst system applied to a large and minutely classified library is that the ten digits which mark the primary classes are not distributed equally through the field of knowledge. Philosophy, for instance, which, except in special libraries has a small literature, and in all libraries does not need much subdivision, has a class number to itself; and History (including Geography), which in most libraries has twenty times as many volumes, and, from its nature, fifty times as much need of division, has no more than one class-number. This is the best that can be done with the 10 digits; but if we substitute the alphabet one can give one letter as before to Philosophy, but three to Theology, and five or six to History, and so on.

Again, to have only 9 divisions in some classes is to be cramped. The alphabet gives 26 divisions. One need not always use them all, but it is very convenient to have them on hand. In the case of History, 5 capital

letters, each divided by 26 lower-case letters, give 130 sections, noted by only two characters apiece, whereas the Amherst scheme, to get only 100 sections in History, has to use three characters apiece. Now, except Fiction, which requires a special treatment, History is more used in the Athenaeum than any other class, consequently a saving there in the number of characters needed to mark and charge the books is an important saving. A further subdivision and the use of three characters gives 3380 subdivisions, which Mr. Dewey's plan gets only by employing five figures.¹

Without specifying what the main classes of a notation based on the twenty-six letters of the alphabet might be, Cutter went on to outline the second difficulty of Dewey's scheme that he intended to modify, Dewey's method of marking books within any one classification division. As mentioned above, the Amherst system provided that books within any one class would be given only a sequential number. Cutter evaluated the provision.

If all books were purchased as soon as published, and no old books were ever bought, this numbering would give a chronological arrangement, which in many subjects would be an excellent thing; but as neither of these conditions is fulfilled in any library, the result is that within the sections there is really no book arrangement at all, except that the latest accessions (not simply the books latest published) are always at the end of each section. For finding and charging purposes in a library without public shelf-access this perhaps is enough. But where not merely runners but librarians and readers go to the shelves an alphabetical arrangement will be a great help, not merely in biography, drama, and fiction, but in other classes.²

Cutter's first thought was to combine Dewey's class numbers with the book numbering system developed by Jacob Schwartz. He was impressed with the precision that Schwartz's system brought to the shelves by extending the

¹Ibid., p. 248. ²Ibid., p. 249.
ordering of the books down into each subdivision. Edmands' plan had also of course attempted to do the same thing—having been inspired by Schwartz's method. In either case Cutter was aware that the use of integers in a sequence of 1 to 999 placed limitations on how many new books could be interpolated into any one division. There were simply many more than 999 different authors and when many books whose authors' last names began with the same letters were placed in any one section, the integer numbering system ran out of room. He related that it occurred to him, "to have a book-number exactly analogous to the class-number, in being constructed on the decimal system, and therefore, like a card-catalogue, capable of indefinite interpolation."¹ Instead of having the alphabet assigned to a series of whole numbers, it could be assigned to a series of decimal numbers. In that way, if an author was represented whose name fell between those listed, the numbers could be extended by one digit and the author's name interpolated.

Accordingly, Cutter divided the alphabet according to his own statistical study of last name occurrence frequencies: A-Bo=0; Br-C=1; D-F=2; G-H=3; etc. Each of the single digit equivalents could be subdivided by the addition of a second digit, so that Ga-Gik=30, Gil-Goq=31, Gor-Guk=32, etc. If necessary, a third digit could be added in order to accommodate several authors in any one section. For instance, Gordon = 320, Goupil = 321, Gray = 322, etc.

¹Ibid.
Occasionally the figures would need extension to four digits, but Cutter found that the situation did not often arise. Cutter's intention was to use only the numbers and not the initial letter of the authors' names as Edmands had done. If two or more works by the same author were placed in the same section, they would be distinguished by suffixing a lower-case letter taken from the first word of the title. In order to indicate size, he instituted a series of checks and slashes that could be added to the book number in the catalog, while on the book itself, the position of the number on the spine would indicate the difference. For instance, folios, because they were generally placed on the lowest shelves, would have their call numbers on the uppermost part of the spine, octavos, at seven centimeters from the bottom, and quartos at five centimeters from the bottom. 1

Cutter's modifications of Dewey's approach to shelf classification would, therefore, provide an expanded notation based on the alphabet and a decimal book number that would allow for the infinite interpolation of books into any one class. Having announced how his own plan would proceed, he had both to work out its details and to defend it against criticism.

The first comment on Cutter's plan came from Schwartz within the month. Because Cutter's presentation incorporated some criticism of Schwartz's author numbers, Schwartz attempted to answer them. He disagreed with Cutter's

1Ibid., pp. 249-51.
feeling that the limited interpolation possibilities in the integer book number was a problem. Schwartz's experience was that the situation of limited interpolation of new authors' names had not occurred very often. And if it did happen, the subject section itself could be subdivided. As for Cutter's system as a whole, Schwartz complained that its intended degree of minute systematic subdivision would produce very long numbers for some divisions regardless of the base involved. He raised a cry that was to plague the shelf classifiers for the next few years, "I believe in economy of figures." He claimed that in his system only four figures and two letters were used most of the time and these were not arranged in extensive schedules with long numbers. He claimed that his system, subdivided only as the need arose, could accommodate a library of 100 million volumes!

Both Cutter and Dewey replied to Schwartz in the next issue of the Library Journal. Both of their systems (Cutter claimed that his was only a modification of Dewey's) were alike in the principle of indefinite hierarchical expansion, and both men strongly disagreed with the limits imposed by Schwartz. They were agreed that minute systematic subdivision was not only needed, but that it ought to be done with extensive schedules in order to avoid the

1 Jacob Schwartz, "Mr. Cutter's Numbering Plan," LJ, III (October, 1878), 302.

necessity of changing call numbers later and to achieve an overall meaningful order in the classification. Their implication was that long classification numbers were unavoidable on occasion.

The same issue of the Journal also contained one other criticism of Cutter's system. Cutter noted in his "Bibliography" column that the London Academy had suggested that his modifications of Dewey's system were destructive of Dewey's pure notation. The Academy comment read,

Mr. Cutter in a long paper proposes a modification of Mr. Melvil Dewey's system of numbering books. But he proposes to use an elaborate combination of letters and figures, so that he entirely loses the great recommendation of the Dewey system—viz. the simplicity and homogeneousness of the numbers.¹

It was a criticism that was to plague Cutter for the remainder of his classification development. He had attempted to head off this sort of sentiment in his September report.

I do not see that the use of letters instead of digits interferes with the greatest advantages of Mr. Dewey's plan—the relative location, the index, and the various mnemonic correspondences. On the contrary, it gives greater opportunity for mnemonics. Certain letters can be appropriated to form-subdivisions (dictionaries, periodicals, societies, etc.), and others to local subdivisions, and the same letters can be used for a country under all the subjects.

The objections to the use of letters are (1) that it is more difficult to write them than figures; (2) that there is more danger of mistake, since few persons write letters as carefully as they write figures; (3) that it is more difficult to remember the meaning of the class letters, because there are more of them; (4) that with them it is more difficult to find the sections on the shelves, since it is very much easier to follow the sequence of numbers than the sequence of the alphabet; (5) that in consulting the catalog it is

¹Academy, XIV (November 16, 1878), 471.
difficult to catch with the eye certain queer combinations of letters, as Qzk or Pfb, and difficult to remember them while going to the shelf; (6) that some combinations having an odd significance, as Rat or Pig, may excite the ridicule of the inconsiderate.¹

Cutter considered objections (3) and (4) of little account, even if the shelves were open to the public, and that the second objection was a danger only if the public had to write out their own charging slips. On the whole, therefore, he concluded,

Where the public have access to the shelves, change very slowly, do not write call-slips and where all the charging is done by the library clerks (who can be trained to write letters as quickly and distinctly as figures), I am inclined to think the letters are preferable.²

Cutter responded directly to the Academy criticism in January 1879.³ He suggested that the Amherst system was in reality as complicated as his own in the class symbols and that his own book numbers were more complicated only by suffixing an occasional work-letter at the end to distinguish different works by the same author. But the result of his only slightly more complicated book number was to subarrange books within any one subclass alphabetically by the authors' names, something the Amherst system could not do. He continued his rejoinder by questioning the value of the supposed homogeneity of Dewey's system. He pointed out that

²Ibid., p. 249.
it was not in reality homogenous because it used both decimals and integers, the latter for the book number. But the resulting unhomogeneity bore no disadvantages for the system. Why not be even more unhomogeneous, he surmised, for it would not really make much difference. He suggested that when Dewey's call numbers went beyond five digits, they became difficult to read anyway. Therefore, he felt that a combination of letters and numbers would be an advantage. He concluded his communication with what was the first hint that Cutter considered his system not only the step-child of Dewey's system in terms of its principles, but also its competitor. He claimed to not be disparaging Dewey's system, for he had used its good points. If, however, his system was a bit more complicated than Dewey's, it was because it attempted to effect more, and that, if it was less homogeneous, it was because it attempted "to avoid an evil result of apparent homogeneity," that is, its lack of breadth.

To the modern observer, some of the remarks in the foregoing exchange may seem not only elementary, but at times sophomoric. But the issues of the appearance and the length of the notation symbols were of the greatest concern in developing shelf classification systems in that period. During the next six months Cutter fleshed out the details of his system, while both Dewey and Schwartz commented on

\[1\text{Ibid.} \]
the side-lines. The issue at stake was essentially how complicated would the notation be?

Cutter later related that after having settled on the general direction of his system, he attempted to work out the class structure on the basis of alphabetical symbols alone. But even with the expansive possibilities of the alphabet which allowed for classes in numbers of the powers of 26 (i.e., $26^1$, $26^2$, $26^3$, etc.), he found himself cramped in the process of subdividing because the base was still not large enough. He wrote,

It then occurred to me to use the figures 0-9 in addition to the letters, appropriating the former to designate what may be called the "generals and preliminaries" of each class; that is to say, to the Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias, Compendia, Tables, Periodicals, and publications of Societies, and to the books which treat of the Bibliography, History, Geograffy of the various subjects, which it is desirable to have in a uniform place under class.¹

A series of communications to the Library Journal dated from January to March 1879 but collected in the March issue detailed this as well as other developments. He wrote in his letter from January, "I have introduced an element of complexity which will justify the criticism of the Academy. My class notation is no longer homogeneous but the change has been made for good reasons.² He described his use of the above concept of numbers that denoted forms of literature and listed their tentative values:

¹Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 236.
In his letter dated March 13, he added still another and even more complex feature, a system of mnemonic likenesses for subjects of literature, geography and history. Mnemonic likenesses were at first considered to be any type of repetitious subsystem that could be remembered. Thus, the consistent use of a number or letter to represent one thing (e.g., C = Christianity; 3 = Encyclopedias) throughout the system, or used in a certain distinguishing way (e.g., 3, when preceded by a special mark such as a dot), was considered mnemonic. Later, as the systems were refined, mnemonic devices referred more narrowly to the correspondence between subject names and the letters used to denote them. Other types of repetitious subsystems were termed "correspondences." Cutter outlined his intention to devote three class numbers to each of the three subjects names above. The first class number would be for the subdivisions peculiar to that class. The second and third class numbers would be devoted to a geographical subdivision of the same subject. He had divided the geography of the world into two sections, Eastern and Western. Within each of those he

1Ibid.
used the lower-case alphabet to list twenty-six separate geographical entities. Thus, for example, the Eastern section was divided:

| a. East, Hemisphere | n. Austria |
| b. Europe           | o. Greece |
| c. Iceland          | p. Turkey in Europe |
| d. Scotland         | q. Asia |
| e. England and Wales| r. Turkey in Asia |
| f. France           | s. Syria, Palestine, etc. |
| g. Germany          | t. Persia, etc. |
| h. Netherlands      | u. India, etc. incl. Indian |
| i. Italy            | Ocean |
| j. Switzerland      | v. China, Japan, etc. |
| k. Spain            | w. Siberia, Central Asia, etc. |
| l. Scandinavia      | x. Africa |
| m. Russia           | y. Egypt |
| l. Other countries in Africa |

The Western section included North and South America and also room to develop a very extensive breakdown of the areas of the United States. Two class numbers were necessary under each of the three subjects because Cutter was not able to completely subdivide the geographical areas of the world within the twenty-six letter span of the alphabet. And even with the use of the alphabet twice he had to cover the Orient and Africa very generally. As an example of the nomenclature that he had constructed, three individual letters would indicate the class of geography. The first would deal with general subdivisions of geography. The second letter would be for geography of those areas in the Eastern list, the third for geography of those areas in the Western list. With regard to literature, Cutter outlined the general subdivisions of the subject. If the letter for

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1Ibid., pp. 89-90.
literature were to be R, then RO, R1, R2, etc. would signify the form of literature subdivisions (i.e., collected works, periodicals, societies, etc.). The remainder of the general class was to be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ra</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
<th>Rn</th>
<th>Legends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rb</td>
<td>Poetical romances</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>Fairy tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rc</td>
<td>Ballads</td>
<td>Rq</td>
<td>Fables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rd</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Rr</td>
<td>Prose romances of the Middle Ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re</td>
<td>Parlor drama</td>
<td>Rs</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rf</td>
<td>Dialogs</td>
<td>Rt</td>
<td>Fiction (translations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rg</td>
<td>Wit and Humour</td>
<td>Ru</td>
<td>Oratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rh</td>
<td>Epigrams</td>
<td>Rv</td>
<td>Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ri</td>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>Rw</td>
<td>Essays, as literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rj</td>
<td>Parodies</td>
<td>Rx</td>
<td>Ana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rk</td>
<td>Popular literature in general</td>
<td>Ry</td>
<td>Period Literature (History)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rl</td>
<td>Folk lore</td>
<td>Rz</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rm</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to show the same divisions with regard to a particular country, the next two general class letters would be used. For example, using his "area list", German drama would be marked, Sgd, where S signified the second letter of the literature schedules, in this case the Eastern hemisphere, and 'g' the designation for Germany. For other classes, however, he could only suggest that something else would have to be done, because he had only twenty-six main classes and he could not use three letters for each general subject.

By far the most important innovation that Cutter adopted occurred during March 1879. Dewey had broken a self-imposed silence on writing about classification by contributing in January and March two articles on the

\[\text{\cite{Ibid.}}\]
principles underlying shelf numbering systems. The first discussed his contention that arabic numbers were a superior basis for a notation. In the second, he suggested a far different approach in which the numbers 0-9 and the letters A-Z (omitting '0') could be used sequentially to form a thirty-five character base for a notation. The primary sequence could then be subdivided by thirty-five subclasses, and the sub-subclasses likewise subdivided, and so on throughout the notation.¹

Cutter announced in the fifth and final note of his series of communications that he had decided to adopt Dewey's idea of a thirty-five character base for his Athenaum notation. The geographical list was correspondingly expanded to allow for thirty-five geographical units for each of the two area lists. The notation would, of course, take on an added complexity, because a mixture of numbers and letters in seemingly random order could result. But Cutter felt that the resulting breadth of the scheme was worth the complexity of the symbols.²

¹Dewey had earlier felt that to press for movable shelf classification among the members of the Association would appear only as a conflict of interest. With the discussion beginning in mid-1878, however, he wrote that he felt constrained to add his opinions also. See LJ, III (August, 1878), 231-32. He subsequently wrote, "Principles Underlying Numbering Systems--First Paper," LJ, IV (January, 1879), 7-10; and "Second Paper," LJ, IV (March, 1879), 75-78. He followed those with two papers on author numbers in LJ, IV (April, 1879), 117-20, and (June, 1879), 191-94.

²Cutter, "Mr. Cutter Continues," p. 90.
Having settled on a notation, Cutter next had to determine what his thirty-five basic classes would be. It is unlikely that he developed the two as separately as he implied. He needed a larger notational base because he had in mind the number of classes he found it necessary to enumerate. But he, as well as Dewey, seemed to have proceeded first from the idea of a notation, and then to how an enumeration of classes might fit into the system of symbols.¹

In the summer of 1879 Cutter presented the main classes and general characteristics of his new system to the Association in an elaborate blackboard lecture. He described the main classes tentatively as follows:

1 Philosophy, Mental and Moral.
2 Religion (Natural), Religions, Mythology.
3 Christian theology.
4 Ecclesiastical history.
5 Biografy, Gen. and East.
6 Biografy, West.
7 History (Gen.), Chronology, etc.
8 History, Eastern Hemisphere.
9 History, Western Hemisphere.
A Geografy, Gen. and East.
B Geografy, West.
C Statistics, Political economy, Commerce.
D Sociology (Gen.), Poor, Public morality, Education.
E Government and Politics, Law (Gen.)
F Law and Legislation, Eastern Hemisphere.
G Law and Legislation, Western Hemisphere.
H Natural sciences in general, Mathematics, Mechanics, Physics (General, Fluids, Gases, Sound, Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism), Chemistry, Astronomy.

¹"Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 237. Cutter's own words were, "Having chosen a notation, the next step was to select the thirty-five classes, and determine in what order they should succeed one another."
I Geology, Dynamical (Physical geography, Physiography), Geology, Statical (Geol. proper), incl. Mineralogy, Biology. Microscopy.

J Palaeontology (General). Natural history (i.e., Botany and Zoology together), Fytology (Botany and Botanical palaeontology). Zoology and Zoological palaeontology.

K Comparativ anatomy and physiology.

L Anthropology and Ethnology.

M Medicin.

N Arts in general, Extractiv arts (Mining, Agriculture, Animalculture), Chemical arts, and Domestic arts.

P Constructiv arts (Bilding and Engineering), and Metric arts.

Q Fabricativ arts (Manufactures and Handicrafts) and Commercial arts.

R Combativ (Military and Naval) and Preservativ arts, Shipbilding and Navigation, Aeronautics.

S Recreativ arts.

T Music.

U Art.

V Literature, Gen. and East.

W Literature, West.

X Book-arts (Authorship, Writing, Printing, Book-trade, Reading, Libraries) and Bibliograky.

Y Language, Gen. and East.

Z Language, West.

In addition to enumerating the general classes, Cutter also explained some of the special features of his system adapted for the new notation from his March Library Journal notes. Of primary importance was his use of correspondences. The most general of these were the form of literature subdivisions that could be put at the beginning of any particular subject. A second correspondence was his use of area lists. He found it necessary explicitly to denote which two of any general class symbols were to be used for a special geographical arrangement of the subject at hand. Furthermore, the subarrangement could be used

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1Ibid.  2Ibid., p. 239.
anywhere in the schedules. For example, it was to be used for the general classes of History (8 and 9), Geography (A and B), Law and Legislation (F and G), Literature (V and W), and Language (Y and Z). But if a general class had only one letter, the geographical subarrangement could be incorporated somewhere else in its own schedule. Later when he had worked out the subdivisions of the Book-arts (Class X), geographical subarrangements were used as follows:

X4, X5 Catalogues of manuscripts.
XE, XF Publishers and Booksellers' catalogues.
XH, XI History and catalogues of private libraries.
XX, XL History of public libraries.
XM, XN Catalogues of public libraries.
XT, XU Bibliography.
XV, XW Literary history.1

Cutter felt that the consistent incorporation of the area list would be a help to the memory of the library user, not because any attempt should be made to memorize it outright, but because it was used so often in the schedules, "a good part of it is committed to memory almost unconsciously by those who use it."2

A third kind of correspondence, more limited in scope, was the repetition of special sequences within certain schedules. He described his use of this device in his section on the arrangement of Bibles. Under whole Bibles (Class 31) he made a special arrangement of versions (Classes 310 to 31R) and repeated the sequence under Old

2Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 239.
Testament (Class 32; therefore, the special arrangement was for sections 320 to 32R) and under New Testament (Class 34; therefore, sections 340 to 34R). He could do so not by actually writing out the sequence in each place, but by referring to the sequence in Class 31 with the phrase, "As under Bible." \(^1\)

Still another kind of correspondence occurred by using to a limited extent the mnemonic suggestiveness of the alphabet. Although Cutter did not attempt to carry this sort of help to any extreme, he did have some notable examples. In the area list, E always signified England, F, France, G, Germany, and I, Italy. Thus, when the area list was used, the last symbol of the class notation would always be suggestive of those particular countries. He wrote,

It will illustrate this point to follow England through the chief classes. 5E = English biography, 8E English history, AE English geography, C1E Statistics of England, DAAE Education in England, DSF English universities, D2AE English charities, E8E the English constitution, EAE English politics, EIE prisons in England, FE English law and legislation, JAKE English botany, JYE English Zoology, N4AE English agriculture, ROAE the English army, VE English literature, YE the English language. In the same way 5F is French biography, and so on to YF French language. \(^2\)

Another feature of the classification scheme was Cutter's intention to provide an alphabetical index to the classification schedules. The idea for an index had come from Dewey, who by its use in Cutter's words, had "entirely done away" with the objection to a classification scheme

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 238. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 239.
that "the enquirer has to acquaint himself with the system before he can get any good from it."¹ The index would make it possible for a person to locate subjects in the scheme with only the knowledge of the alphabet. Cutter's index was to have had a greater use than for his own classification scheme, however. He suggested that he had perhaps thought to develop it as a part of the American Library Association project on a list of subject headings in which he was involved and thus correlate it with the subject access system of dictionary catalogs.

Such an index as his [Dewey's], but very much enlarged, will be added to my Classification, and I have been fortunate enough to secure the cooperation of Messrs. R. R. Bowker and R. Bliss, jr. We shall cull from catalogs and from the dictionary as many subject-headings as possible, arrange them alphabetically, and against each set its class-mark according to both the Amherst and the Boston Athenaeum systems, and in the case of synonymous headings we shall show in some way not yet determined which we prefer. Then the young librarian who does not know where to put his new books, the novice in cataloging who is puzzling over the proper heading for his card, the experienced librarian whose brain has momentarily struck work, the reader who wants to know whereabouts in the library or in a classed catalog he shall find books on his subject,—can all solve their doubts with ease.²

Still another feature of Cutter's scheme was the principle upon which he based its order. He intended that the classes would naturally merge into one another as a result of their natural connections.

After scores of schemes had been tried and rejected, I settled upon the general theory that the grouping of classes ought to bring together those which have a practical connection, so that when a reader is using

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 240.
any division of the library he would have on either hand the classes of books which he is most likely to wish to use at the same time. The idea cannot always be carried out, because some classes have close relations to three or four others, but of course can stand between only two of them, so that the relation to all except those two must be disregarded. But it has had a strong shaping influence on my scheme, both in regard to the order of the main classes and of their divisions, being sometimes modified in the latter case by the usual practice of putting the most general subdivisions first and the special sections afterward. . . .

How the classes glide into each other will be seen by anyone who examines the scheme with reference to that matter. It would be still clearer if the subdivisions could be given here. I will only call attention to three points. First, the interposition of Ecclesiastical history—which belongs to both Theology and History—between those two classes. This I do not remember to have seen in any other scheme. Second, that in the Natural sciences we not only advance from matter to life in the classes, as is evident enough; but in the sub-arrangement of the biological part we follow the order of evolution, commencing Botany with the protofytta and ending with the polypetalæ, commencing Zoology with the monera and ending with the primates, which leads us naturally to Anthropology and Ethnology. The next class, Medicin, which by reason of Anatomy and Pysiology, is a branch of Zoology, and by its division Practice belongs to the Arts, is the proper link between the two. The third point which I wished to mention is Class X. Bibliografy is properly one of the "generals"; it covers all of the six great divisions of the scheme. It was, therefore, at first numbered 03, and 3 was made the bibliographical number under each of the classes. It can still be put there by any one who desires. Its present place was preferred on account of its close connection with Literary history, and because X is more easily written than 03. Putting with Bibliografy all the arts which go to make up a book, though a departure from strict classification, finds its justification in an evident convenience. ¹

The inclusion of the concept of evolution as the ordering device for the biological sciences would not appear at first glance to fit very well into Cutter's overall pragmatism. That is, the concept of evolution was then

¹Ibid., pp. 237-38.
a relatively new theory and one could assume that he used it simply to be more theoretically correct, rather than because of any practical purposes it might serve. The application of the concept to the scheme, in fact, was not made directly by Cutter, but instead through his employment of Richard Bliss to work out the schedules for the biological sciences. Bliss, a thorough-going evolutionist, worked as an assistant in the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology from 1871 to 1873 and had directed its Ichthyology Department from 1876 to 1877. He began developing the classes I through L as early as 1879 upon Cutter's request and continued working to refine the scheme until after Cutter's death in 1903. His influence on Cutter increased over the years so that later Cutter acknowledged Bliss as his "coadjutor" in all of the classification work.¹

Cutter was doubtless sympathetic with the evolutionary viewpoint. Although his schooling had taken place during the antebellum years before the concept had gained wide popularity in either biology or sociology, he seems to have been in step with a post-war generation of professionals that looked to the concept as a way to synthesize nature with modern society. One possible indirect source

¹Harvard University, Historical Register of Harvard University, 1636-1936, p. 126. Cutter later described Bliss as an assistant to Agassiz, most likely Alexander, who was in charge of the Museum of Comparative Zoology from 1875 to 1892. The statement about Bliss being Cutter's "coadjutor" occurs in, Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 6-July 16, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
for the development of his thought on the matter and for his use of it in shelf classification might well have been John Fiske, one of the popularizers of Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism. Cutter continued to make frequent visits to the Harvard College Library long after Fiske took Ezra Abbot's place in 1872 and it seems likely that the two men knew each other quite well, at least in a professional relationship. Both men were interested in classification from a librarian's point of view, a fact indicated by Melvil Dewey's comment in 1876 that of all the librarians he had consulted in the development of his own scheme, those two deserved special mention.¹

But Cutter's use of the concept in shelf classification was as much an expression of his sense of practicality as it was a desire to be current for its own sake. In other words, being up-to-date was a matter of practicality. A year after introducing his system to the public, he elaborated on the matter in a paper on the classification of the natural sciences.

This table has been drawn up in an attempt to determine the best arrangement of the natural sciences in a library, and to justify to others the order finally chosen. It forms part of a complete library classification, in which one end constantly held in view has been to bring related subjects together as often as possible (it cannot always be done), and to avoid abrupt transitions. In the present section—natural sciences—this is not so difficult as in some other parts. In judging the result, it should be remembered on the one hand that this is not a classification of the sciences but of books, on the other hand that any arrangement

¹Dewey, A Classification and Subject Index, pp. 9-10.
of books which is to suit the worker of the future must be based upon the real relations of the sciences. So far as the books of the past have been written under a misapprehension of those relations, a classing based upon present ideas will not suit them; but it will fit the books of the present, and may fit the books of the future. We cannot expect that any order we may now adopt will wholly suit coming science; an arrangement that is already antiquated certainly will not.¹

In his desire to make a classification that would be eminently useful to those who used the library, Cutter felt that books should be grouped in a way that scholars conceived their subject content. Since the concept of evolution represented the most advanced scholarly trend in the sciences and would seem to have corrected older views, and since it was a framework of thought by which the most recent books were both written and consulted in contemporary scholarship, Cutter thought it most practical to classify with that view in mind. Although he phrased the issue in terms of a distinction between a classification of books and a classification of knowledge, he noted that the two kinds were in fact not in opposition. For Cutter, a classification of books simply meant a classification of knowledge in its most current state of advancement as represented in the most current books. Practicality was not a function of either sort of classification but rather of currency.

His desire to be practical did not, of course, militate against making a sophisticated classification schedule,

a fact that his natural sciences scheme demonstrated. The scheme proceeded with a "natural" order of "general before special, past before present, dynamical or theoretical before statical or descriptive." It involved the use of a special set of terms dependent upon Greek root meanings, particularly -logy (λόγος), used to denote theory and principles in the life sciences, and -graphy (γράφη), used to denote descriptive aspects. He explained,

To obtain a symmetrical nomenclature it has been necessary to coin several new words. These are not proposed for common use, but are made up specially for this table, and used like algebraic signs to bring out the correspondence of different parts of the table. Biografy, for instance, is used in a practically unallowable sense, simply because, having the same ortho­grafical relation to Biology that Fytografy has to Fytology and Zoografy to Zoology, it marks to the eye the relation of the statical life sciences to the dynamical. Of course it could never be popularly used in this sense, and except to fill out a formula like the present it is hardly needed. Biografics might perhaps serve. Some of the words, however, are needed, and would enrich the vocabulary of science. There is no single name for works treating of Hydrostatics and Hydrodynamics together. The two subjects are often included, but badly, under the latter name. Hydrics is at once expressive and short. We have now no term for the sciences that relate to matter taken collectively, and no good one for the sciences that relate to life. Biology ought not to be employed for the latter, because usage has given it the more limited meaning of the theory of the life sciences. Hylognosy (ὑλή, matter, γνώσις, science) and Biognosy not only precisely render the two ideas, but show their parallelism. A similar word, Fysiognosy (φύσις), supplies a name which was wanted for the natural sciences collectively. Kumatics (κύμα) is as good a synonym for wave theory as Acoustics for sound. Somationics (σωμάτιον) has the advantage of shortness over "theory of radiant matter."  

Finally, as if to head off any apprehension about the complexity of his scheme (despite his claim of building

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1Ibid., p. 166.  
2Ibid., p. 163.
on the basis of practical connections), Cutter closed his presentation before the Association in 1879 with a general defense of the idea of minute classification for the shelves. He reviewed three general criticisms of both his and Dewey's approach to the task; that is, that minute classification was needless, confusing, and that it wasted room. The first criticism was based on a supposed superfluity of minute classification especially for a small collection. But Cutter argued that even in a small library the user would be better off with small subdivisions. He used as an example a library that contained 200 volumes of history of all kinds. If only one of the books was a history of Germany, it would be better to have a class on German history than to have to search through all 200 volumes to find the one work. And if there were two histories of Germany, the user would be even still better served because the works would have been gathered together, "and having found one, he need look no further."  

The criticism of wasted space was also summarily dismissed. He demonstrated that no more space was lost in a movable than in a fixed location system. As to a related complaint that books constantly shifted to make room for expanding classes would become overly worn, Cutter asserted that the complaint was a misconception and was entirely unfounded. Spaces could be left where the collection was

1Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 240.
likely to grow, just as in a fixed location system, in order to cut down on the amount of shifting required. As to the argument that "local memory" was destroyed, Cutter countered with the argument that signs and directions in the stacks would alleviate any such loss of memory. Of particular help also would be the placement of indexes to the classification at various points in the stacks. He had, however, no answer for the argument of the loss of "atmosphere."¹

With regard to the criticism that minute classification on the shelves was confusing, Cutter related at length how the ideals of classification were aimed at simplicity and ease of use rather than confusion. Minute classification was at least no more difficult to use than a library that was divided in only the most general classes. He admitted that it would be easier to find a book by a given author if the classes were few or if there were no classes at all, provided that the books were arranged alphabetically by author. But, he went on,

That is the purpose of a catalog. The object of the classification is to guide people readily to all the books on a given topic, which is accomplished in the case of a large subject by placing near together all the subordinate topics which belong to it, and in the case of a small subject, by separating it from all its coordinate subjects and from the general works of its including class.²

Furthermore, he argued that minute classification in a small library did not interfere with its facility of use,

¹Ibid., pp. 241-42. ²Ibid., p. 241.
especially if the library had never been classified in the first place. Using the example of the Winchester, Massachusetts, Town Library, a collection of 4,600 volumes that Cutter classified with his system as a test case, he found that the librarian was able to dispense more books than ever before simply because they were grouped for convenience.¹

And finally, to close his defense of minute classification for even a small library, Cutter gave some principles for the application of his own scheme to a small library.

The general principle that should determine the extent of classification in a small library is this: When a class may be distinctly and clearly separated into well-known parts (as in the Natural Sciences and in History and Geography), separate them, even if the groups of books resulting are very small. But when the divisions are vague, indefinite (as in Philosophy), let the class remain undivided till the number of books in it is large. In the first case the classification is easily made by the librarian and is profitable to the user, as he comprehends it quickly; in the second, the classifier might have to puzzle long to decide on the proper place for his book, and therefore saves much time by not classifying; and the user, as he would not easily understand the principle of the arrangement, might get from it more hindrance than aid. But when a class like Philosophy becomes large, certain natural divisions make themselves felt, and the separation of the books becomes at once easy and useful. The librarian who is using a minute scheme of classification is not obliged to apply it all. In Philosophy, for instance, he can make the two great divisions, general and mental (1), and moral (1M), and neglect all the subdivisions.²

In summary, Cutter found it highly desirable to build a minutely classified and hierarchical system. His

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
system differed from Dewey's scheme only in the attempt to be more rigorous and up-to-date and in the complexity of the notation with its more extended and mixed base of numbers and letters.

The Classification Debate

There were others who felt that both Dewey and Cutter were being far too complex for what was required in a library, and therefore were making unnecessary confusion for both the library patrons and staff. Underlying their objections was a sentiment that what the two men were trying to accomplish bordered on sophistry because, in their opinions, minute shelf classification in hierarchical order was basically an impossible task to do satisfactorily and resulted in little more than grief for everyone.

Consequently, in reaction to the stated goals of Dewey and Cutter, a debate took place in the pages of the Library Journal, over a period of several years, particularly during 1879, 1882, and 1885-1886. A variety of spokesmen criticized both the Dewey and Cutter systems, offered alternative approaches to the problem of shelf arrangement, or made comments from the sidelines as to how well one or another approach had worked out in practice. The criticisms and suggestions that were made affected both of the primary system makers, for the end of the debate in 1886 saw both the publication of Dewey's second edition, a greatly expanded and enhanced form of his original brief Amherst scheme, and Cutter's announcement that he was
preparing an extensively revised system that would take some of the criticisms into account.

When the first rash of articles on shelf classification appeared beginning in the January 1879 Library Journal, an unsigned editorial, probably by Dewey, suggested that questions of shelf classification would "promise to afford one of the chief tournament grounds of the year."¹ The motivation behind the widespread interest seemed to the writer to be the implicit desire to develop one shelf classification system that could be accepted by the Association as a whole. The editorial went on to suggest that the Amherst system, having been the most popular, would lie at the basis of any most desirable system.

Cutter also felt the same motivation. Six months later, when he introduced his system to the Association at the Boston conference, he stressed that making a shelf classification de novo involved a great deal of labor. He advised librarians to adopt one of the systems then extant, and particularly either Dewey's or his own system, in order to "come into harmony with a certain number of other libraries."² Cooperation seemed to him to be just as applicable to this area as to cataloging.

All cooperation is very much helped by uniformity of methods. In the Title-slip Registry, for example, we put the Dewey number on each title, and hereafter we

¹Editorial, LJ, IV (January, 1879), 12.
²Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves" (1879), p. 242.
may add the Boston Athenaeum class-mark, that so any librarian who uses either of these schemes will have his hand. Of course he need not follow our dictum in regard to any book, if he thinks some other classing is better; but even in that case it may be a help to know what our idea of the proper classification of the book is. I take it many librarians would be very glad to have the books' places fixed for them without any trouble. And if, in the course of a generation or two, some such practice should become general, think what a saving,—to have one man do the whole classification for fifty, or a hundred or a thousand libraries, instead of fifty or a hundred or a thousand men doing each the same work independently. It is the difference between the copyist making slowly and laboriously his one copy of a work and the printing-press striking off at once a whole edition.¹

The fact that Dewey's and Cutter's systems were put forward as the most viable for cooperative purposes did not indicate a consensus of opinion between the two men. They were working closely together during this period, especially under the aegis of the Readers and Writers Economy Company, and their comments suggest simply their enthusiasm for their own projects and their willingness to indicate their own preferences in the Library Journal which they effectively controlled. But they were not at all unwilling to allow other points of view; for example, that of Jacob Schwartz.

Schwartz had already given the outlines of his own approach to shelf classification the previous year. But he had dwelled mainly on the alphabetical arrangement of authors within any one particular class in the schedules. He had been criticized by both Cutter and Dewey for deprecating minute hierarchical classification as it was

¹Ibid., pp. 242-43.
represented in their systems. In January 1879 he replied to their criticisms by discussing more completely his own approach to the question of subject classification itself. He considered his plan a totally mnemonic approach to shelf arrangement.¹

The essence of Schwartz's idea was to arrange the classes at every level alphabetically rather than in some sort of a logical or systematic 'natural' order. In that respect it resembled the order in an alphabetico-classed catalog. Because both the symbols for a notation and the class names would be alphabetical, Schwartz considered the system to be "self-explanatory."² Whereas in his previous paper he had suggested that he would use twenty-five main classes, he had reduced that number to twenty-one. They were in actuality built on the basis of three general groupings of history, literature, and the sciences. But they were arranged in alphabetical order according to the subject names chosen.

The notation was based upon the first letters of the class names. Therefore, class B, Biography, and class H, History, for example, though a part of the general grouping of history, would follow in their place in the alphabet, rather than be grouped together because of their logical or natural relationship. All of the major classes began with

² Ibid., p. 3.
a word that could be signified mnemonically by the letter that began it, except, that is, in the case of the two classes, Language and Literature. Since both began with "L," Schwartz had to substitute some other word for one of them. He chose Kalligraphy for literature and made it class K.

Nine subclasses under each of the main classes were likewise arranged in alphabetical order according to their subject-names. However, in this case, Schwartz converted the letters to numbers according to the table: A, B = 1; C, D = 2; E, F = 3; G, H = 4; I, J, K = 5; L, M, N = 6; O, P, Q = 7; R, S, T = 8; and U-Z = 9. His purpose in making the conversion was to keep the notation simple while at the same time preserving an alphabetical arrangement. And attached to the two-level class notation were his already mentioned book-numbers. Schwartz recognized that the conversion table was not a foolproof method of arrangement. Sometimes two subclasses began with the same letter and no amount of manipulation would enable him to substitute another word for the one used, as he had done in the case of Kalligraphy. But, he claimed that the problem arose only rarely and thus constituted no threat to the system as a whole. In such cases one only had to use the next higher or lower number in the conversion table, even though that meant violating a strict use of the conversion values.

The reactions to Schwartz's idea were severe in tone. Dewey excoriated it as a "mongrel classification,"
and though ingenious, very impractical. Frederic B. Perkins hesitated to make a judgment but expressed dismay that it was so heavily dependent upon "mechanical conveniences", rather than being essentially concerned with the subjects involved. Cutter, echoing Perkins' remarks, thought it to be attractive at first sight, but found it to be "unsatisfactory in the choice of subject-names (which is too much affected by the desire to get words that will fit an alphabetical arrangement)."¹ The mnemonic aids simply did not atone for the loss of congruency. Taken together the criticisms stressed that Schwartz was not concerned enough with the systematic nature of the subjects themselves. He was too concerned with fitting subject names into a mnemonically suggestive notation.

Schwartz's rationale involved more than a desire to make a mechanically ingenious system. He also wanted, like Dewey and Cutter, a satisfactory logical system, but to him the task was impossible and an alternative was needed. In a long communication to Cutter he argued his point.

In the Athenaeum for [blank space] a critic says that my "Mnemonic Classification" violates every principle of logic and common-sense. This seems to imply that a scheme of classification must be "logical" by which I assume he means that it must be deduced from some metaphysical basis, which will impose a necessary and fixed order on the various divisions. Many experiments have been made from the time of Aristotle to Herbert Spencer, but no two of the schemes so produced agree in the order or even the number of their divisions.*

Disgusted with the lame and impotent conclusions of such ambitious attempts to evolve from the inner consciousness an exhaustive map of the universe of knowledge, Bibliographers have generally agreed to adopt the so-called 'practical' system devised by the French. This method abandons the attempt at a metaphysical concatenation of classes and is content to group together those subjects that 'common-sense' shows to be related. With more or less modification this system has been adopted by most classed libraries, notably the British Museum. The leading divisions of the 'practical' system are I. Theology, II. Jurisprudence, III. Science and Arts, IV. History, V. Literature. Inasmuch as the scheme is a protest against the 'logical' systems, this order must be purely arbitrary, and I cannot see why it is not equally 'practical' to arrange these five general divisions in their alphabetical order. And as there is no occult reason why the chief divisions should be exactly five, what objection can there be to making them twenty-one or twenty-five and assigning one to each letter of the alphabet as I have done?

The arrangement and order of the subclasses in "practical" systems is also purely arbitrary; no two systems will be found to agree. If we therefore arrange them in a secondary alphabet, we have at least some clue to their order in the series, and we do not disturb the grouping of related subjects. The classification and arrangement of books in a library is purely a matter of internal administration, and that system is the best which will enable the attendants to get the books with the greatest facility. An alphabetical arrangement affords at least some aid to the memory, whereas a 'logical' or even 'practical' system does not, but must be learned by long experience. It surely cannot be of the slightest interest to the average attendant that Theology 'logically' precedes Jurisprudence nor will that fact enable him to learn in which division of the former he will find 'Ecclesiastical history', or whether German history 'logically' precedes French or vice versa.

The Dictionary system as applied to catalogues has been held up to our admiration, and has been generally accepted as a satisfactory substitute for Classed or Systematic catalogues. The main argument for its supposed superiority over the latter is that an alphabetical arrangement is self-explanatory. If that is the best form for classification in a catalogue why is it not also the best for the arrangement of the books on the shelves? It seems to me that both must stand or fall together.

When the advanced thinkers of the present day shall have succeeded in producing or 'evolving' a 'logical'
system, that is intelligible to ordinary common-sense and is accepted as satisfactory by the scientific world, it will be time enough to apply it to the arrangement of books.

*Not only are different results produced where the premises are different, but even where they are the same, as in the modification of the famous Baconian scheme, there is a total want of agreement. The Mercantile Library of St. Louis, for instance, gets 235 classes, the St. Louis Public makes sixteen general and 99 subclasses, and Mr. Dewey, in his modification has 10 general and 1000 subclasses and the order of divisions is different in each scheme. What is the logical necessity for this divergence?*

Schwartz was troubled by any attempt to build a totally interrelated shelf classification system. All systems he felt resulted in the serious displacement of at least some subjects. In another note appended to the above communication he added,

To show what absurd results may be reached when the terra firma of common-sense is abandoned and one attempts to walk in the clouds, it is only necessary to refer to a few specimens of 'logical' classification. In one scheme we find Games of Chess under Medicine, in another Treatises on the physiology and anatomy of fishes are placed under History, and Architecture under Poetry. Rhetoric is classed as a 'Useful art' in one scheme and as a 'Pure science' in another. In the face of such "misdirected ingenuity" I might retort upon my critic that logical schemes are simply 'classification run wild.'

1 Jacob Schwartz, [On Shelf Classification], received by Cutter, March 10, 1879, MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. There is in actuality no addressee on the long manuscript, but it is signed by Schwartz and has Cutter's Athenaeum stamp with the date noted. The nature of the note appended to it by Cutter suggests that he had received the item and had sent it on to Dewey. Perhaps it was intended for the Library Journal, although there is no record of it having been published there. Schwartz did reiterate the arguments later.

2 Ibid.
Schwartz's solution was to abandon all attempts at logical classification and to substitute the ordering device of the alphabet. His final argument had been taken from Cutter's own article on library catalogs in the 1876 Special Report in which Cutter argued for the convenience of alphabetical over classed arrangements in catalogs. But Schwartz seems to have missed the point of Cutter's original argument. Cutter had not stated that a logical arrangement was totally useless, but rather that it needed an alphabetical subject index, an uncommon practice. And of the alphabetical subject arrangements that Cutter had found, little attempt had been made to make them in a disciplined manner. Cutter was able to adapt the alphabetical subject arrangement for the dictionary catalog because he had developed a systematic approach to the determination of subject names. Furthermore, his use of an alphabetical subject system was clearly a compromise based on the imperatives of his situation at the Athenaeum. By using Cutter's argument, Schwartz had suggested that Cutter implied alphabetical subject arrangement was prima facie the best and only suitable arrangement for subject access. He was in effect using only a part of Cutter's argument on the arrangement of catalogs to support his own contention that any 'logical' arrangement was 'absurd'.

That was not Cutter's sentiment. He felt that a classed arrangement could be helped with a good index such as Dewey's and planned such an index for his own system.
And he did not feel in any way that the systematic grouping of subjects was impossible or absurd. Yet, he also did not feel that there was any best or final subject arrangement. Cutter, who apparently sent Schwartz's communication on to Dewey, added his own evaluation in the margin.

Schwartz misses the point. We do not assert that there is only one logical arrangement. There may of course be many for arranging logically is putting subjects together which have points in common, & almost every subject has points in common with several other subjects. But it does not follow from this that it is well to put subjects together which do not have points in common.1

Schwartz had raised the issue, however, and also the issue of the absolute necessity of keeping in mind the requirements of the persons who would use the system. His own solution may not have been very useful, but his questions were important.

During the next two years, discussion on shelf classification all but died out. Cutter contributed his article on the classification of the natural sciences in mid-1880 but it was for the most part descriptive. He continued to develop his own scheme in its finer details but was hampered by the heavy burden of finishing the Athenaum's catalog and by other changes in his own library. And he found the development of his own shelf classification to be a much more difficult task than he had at first supposed. He reported at the Washington conference in 1881 that the plan for literature had been finished and the ones

1Cutter wrote his comment in the margin of the Schwartz document, obviously intended for Dewey.
for history and geography nearly completed. Echoing his words of 1879, he stated, "The more I work over the scheme the harder it seems to me to make a satisfactory classification, and the more I am convinced that even an imperfect classification is better than none."\(^1\) In the same report he also summarized and refuted some of the same arguments that had been brought against the idea of minute and movable shelf classification in the previous three or four years. He reiterated again that for a library with an open shelf policy, "the importance of a good, and, especially, of any easily explained, system is incalculable. No catalog, however well made, can compare, for educational power, with the sight of the books themselves; or, for convenience, with a thorough and minute shelf-arrangement."\(^2\) But even if the library did not permit patrons to go to the shelves, a shelf classification would assist the librarian in many ways to advise what books on well-defined subjects might be used by inquirers. With regard to what kind of basic order was best, Cutter could make no final judgment. "You cannot say that any arrangement is the best. Everything depends on the end which you wish to reach."\(^3\) He described the experiment at Harvard that provided for the development of specially classed departmental libraries. In his own

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\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, "Classification on the Shelves," \(LJ\), VI (April, 1881), 64. (Hereafter cited as "Classification on the Shelves" (1881)).

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 66.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 67.
library, Cutter found that he needed a general rather than a specialized arrangement.

With regard to the need for a well-developed general scheme, however, Cutter had no reservations. He added a word on the procedures involved. In reacting to a paper by an English librarian suggesting that a classification scheme ought to be worked out pragmatically as the books came into the library, in contradistinction to working out an elaborate enumeration beforehand, Cutter suggested that there was a better way to proceed.

Do not make your scheme out of your own inner consciousness merely; that is unpractical. Do not decide any individual case on its own merits as it comes up, with no general ideas to go upon; for the result of that will be inconsistency, contradiction, confusion. That is equally unpractical. Make your plan beforehand, but make it from books. A scheme suggested by and made so as to contain all the books now in the world would not require much stretching to embrace those that shall hereafter be written. Of course no one can actually get at all these books themselves; but catalogs will supply their place. If you wish to prepare a frame for art literature, examine carefully the largest art library you can find, and make a skeleton arrangement that will suit that; then consult all the art catalogs you can lay your hands on, and see if you have omitted anything in the first sketch; then consider the subject itself, the relations of its parts, and the possibilities of future discussion. The scheme you will form in this way will be far superior to the hap-hazard order which our English friend suggests. It is true that the covering of the mollusk and the skeleton of the vertebrate grows with its growth, and is altered by its environment and the accidents of its life; but for all that it grows in accordance with a prearranged plan.¹

He concluded with an assertion of his belief that an elaborate system could be developed that would be lasting:

¹Ibid., p. 68.
Buildings become too small, become antiquated, decay, are abandoned; but geography does not become history; the natural sciences are not metamorphosed into the social sciences; mathematics will never be theology; fiction remains fiction, the drama the drama, poetry poetry, as long as literature and libraries last.¹

Cutter's words were actually more than a criticism of the plan of the English librarian. It was also a criticism of Schwartz's deprecation of minute classification "beforehand," and in fact of any approach that was not in the beginning an attempt to coordinate the fields of knowledge in some kind of practical or logical arrangement, whether the scheme was an older philosophical arrangement or more up-to-date being based on the current literature itself. Whether or not Schwartz specifically took note of Cutter's remarks is not known.

The year 1882 saw a recurrence of the debate of 1879 as well as the appearance of several new or revised systems of shelf classification. Frederic B. Perkins, who had become the librarian of the San Francisco Public Library in 1880 published the first edition of his Rational Classification in late 1881 and followed it with a revised edition in 1882. Cutter published for the first time a synopsis of his own scheme intended primarily for the proprietors of the Athenaeum, but which he distributed widely. He also read to the summer American Library Association conference in Cincinnati a paper prepared by Schwartz (who could not attend) giving a slightly revised version of the latter's

¹Ibid., p. 69.
system. At the same conference Lloyd P. Smith presented the shelf classification that he had developed for the consultation of librarians in 1878.¹

The one theme reiterated in the many comments presented on shelf classification during the year was the practicality of the schemes being developed. Schwartz and Cutter began the year with an exchange of notes printed in the January Library Journal concerning the relative practicality of Schwartz's and Dewey's systems with regard to circulation procedures.² In the next issue Cutter took Frederic B. Perkins to task for the assertion in his pamphlet on classification that fixed location was by far a better approach to shelf classification than was the relative location epitomized by Dewey's system.³

Inasmuch as Perkins' ideas on fixed location were only a minor part of his remarks, it seems odd that Cutter felt it necessary to criticize them point by point. By far the most innovative feature of Perkins' classification was his disavowal that a classification scheme should begin with a notation and fit the classification of books to it.

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He had instead begun with a long list of subjects represented in the books and grouped them generally according to Brunet's scheme. Only afterward did he affix any numbering system to them, and then only a long sequence of whole numbers. The notation did not provide numbers for the titles of the inclusive categories, but rather only for the most minute divisions in any part of the scheme. They were not, therefore, expressive of the hierarchy of his classification schedules. Perkins had two reasons for proceeding the way that he did. First, he wanted to be able to make as many categories as he needed apart from any constraints that a notation gave. Second, his classification system was not intended to be a shelf location system, but rather a number key to the classification headings he had used in his catalog. In other words, a patron could find a number in the dictionary catalog and proceed to the classification scheme in order to see the relationships of the subjects as a guide in his research. Perkins did allow that the numbers could be used to place the books on the shelves, but a later criticism by Lloyd P. Smith outlined the difficulty of their use. That is, they were a long unmitigated series of numbers approaching 10,000 classes and offered to the eye no differentiation either mnemonically or structurally. In the second edition of the work Perkins corrected that fault by assigning capital letters to each of his eight major classes and numbering the sub-classes consecutively, but only within each of those
classes. In that way his notation showed at least one level of subordination.  

Perhaps because Cutter had adopted the practice of defending both his and Dewey's systems as one, against those who criticized schemes of minute classification and complex notation, when they were in actuality two different systems, Dewey requested Cutter to present the major differences between the two. Cutter subsequently did so, in terms of their relative practicality. With little surprise, Cutter's scheme came out ahead. The Athenaeum scheme had a greater class capacity because of its broader notational base. Yet it was easier to adapt to smaller libraries who wanted to use a coarser classification and its notation was easier to remember than Dewey's long string of numbers. Mnemonically, the Athenaeum scheme was far more developed because it was not limited to such a small base. Therefore, the system of correspondences, particularly the geographical area list, was far more useful. 

By making a public distinction between two systems that, despite their differences, had stood together as protagonists of minute shelf classification, Cutter seems to have invited specific criticisms of his own system. The first such comment came the following month from Jacob Schwartz. He compared the relative practicality of both

\[ \text{1Cf., Perkins, A Rational Classification of Literature, both editions.} \]
\[ \text{2C. A. Cutter, "Thirty-five Versus Ten," LJ, VII (April, 1882), 62-63.} \]
Dewey's and Cutter's systems with that of his own, particularly with regard to their incorporation of mnemonic devices. Dewey had criticized Perkins' scheme because it contained no mnemonic likenesses. Cutter, he recalled, had criticized Dewey because his system did not have enough mnemonic devices. But Schwartz contended that Cutter's system could be criticized for the same reason. Cutter indeed had more such likenesses in his system than did Dewey, but still not enough. And like Dewey, Cutter had a still more serious problem; that is, the arbitrary use of numbers with little or no attention paid to alphabetical arrangement. He went on to laud any system of mnemonics that used alphabetical arrangement and launched into a preview report of his revised system to be presented in the summer to the Association. The only objection to his system, he asserted, was that it dispensed with "natural order" in the classes. But he continued to defend his earlier assumption that no order of subjects was natural except to its maker, and in that light, the best order was alphabetical rather than logical.¹

Schwartz received a rebuttal from one unexpected source. Richard Bliss, disturbed that the idea of natural order in Cutter's classification had been called into question, replied with a strong denial of Schwartz's whole contention on order. Bliss could not claim, of course, that

¹Jacob Schwartz, "Twenty-five plus Ten Versus Thirty-five or Ten," LJ, VII (May, 1882), 84-85.
any final classification of knowledge had been recognized, but he was confident that it would be so determined, and when it was, it would be based on evolution.

The principle of classification which will ultimately be recognized as ruling in all departments of knowledge, as it now rules in science, is unquestionably the principle of evolution, the corner-stone of which is a progression from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous—a principle that now forms the basis of that part of Mr. Cutter's new classification of which the arrangement has been mainly entrusted to me. 1

Alphabetical arrangement in a shelf classification, he asserted, borrowing a phrase used by Cutter in another context, was a "shock to the classificatory sense."  2 Schwartz countered that although classification based on a natural order was perhaps tenable for the natural sciences, it still was not possible in the other fields of knowledge. Later, Bliss continued his attack:

Whether this system, which I have endeavored to carry out in science is applicable to other branches of knowledge, is the real point at issue. Mr. Schwartz thinks it is not. I think it may be; at all events I doubt if the conclusion is at present foregone to such an extent as to preclude a reasonable difference of opinion upon it. I look upon all efforts to establish a rational classification of knowledge as tentative experiments which may or may not prove futile, but the fact that no unanimity of opinion as to any one system at present prevails does not seem to me presumptive evidence that a rational system will never be found, since the same objection might at one time have been urged against a similar classification in departments of knowledge now logically arranged. 3

1Richard Bliss, "Alphabetization versus Classification," LJ, VII (June, 1882), 104.
2Ibid., p. 105.
3Richard Bliss, "Logical Classification," LJ, VII (October, 1882), 251. Schwartz's interim reply was given
Another kind of criticism of Cutter's scheme arose for the first time at the summer Association meeting. Cutter was questioned about the appearance of his notation of seemingly random combinations of letters and numbers. He expressed surprise that it troubled anyone. He claimed that he had encountered no trouble at either the Winchester Town Library or at the Athenaeum either by patrons or by the staffs. The criticism was one that would reappear, however, with increasing frequency over the next few years.¹

Despite the kind of argument that was taking place over shelf classification systems, the mood throughout the Association seemed to be more in favor of the kind that Cutter and Dewey were proposing. Josephus N. Larned, the librarian of the Buffalo Public Library, added perhaps the most incisive rationale to the quest. The attempt to classify knowledge, he asserted, was in actuality a feature of the broader movement for democratization.

It is to popularize the means of learning,—to open and ease the paths by which knowledge is pursued,—that a better practical classification of books is continually sought. It is a movement in opposition to the exclusiveness of the aristocracy of letters; not hostile to the titles and the decorations of that best order of nobility, but insurgent against its privileges and its pride.²

¹ A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VII (July/August, 1882), 195-96.

He compared intellectuals with the myth of frontier woodsmen who spurned maps. Like the woodsmen, it was a matter of pride for the literati to spurn shelf classification, choosing, rather, to be at home in a literary wilderness. In that company, classificationists were obnoxious.

But democracy must have its way, not in politics alone, and all things are given over to it. The public library is no longer the sequestered academic retreat of a studious few; it is the common town-school of the inquisitive people. . . . So the library must be shaped and organized to meet the popular demand upon it, and it is that which makes careful classification a necessity now, if it was not in earlier times. ¹

He cautioned, however,

There is no best arrangement. There is no structural law that is absolute enough to be recognized by two persons in two different states of mind. . . . To a very great extent it is a matter of whim, of idiosyncrasy, like the planning of a house. So we can all of us criticize every scheme of classification that ever has been or ever will be produced. ²

Further Development of the Boston Athenaeum System

After Cutter finished the Athenaeum catalog early in 1882, he devoted himself more completely to developing his full classification scheme. His task at hand was to develop the classification schedules for each major subject. Although he had Richard Bliss¹ help in the sciences, for other areas he had to do the work himself. Sometimes

¹Ibid., p. 126. Larned's analysis of the literati is interesting, but not incapable of being itself criticized perhaps as a myth. His thesis did provide him with a rationale, however, for stressing the movement for popular access to the means of culture.

²Ibid., p. 129.
as in the case of his classification of the book arts (Class X), he found himself gathering subjects that had not before been gathered in one place. The book arts as he saw them were those subjects that had to do with book production, distribution, buying, collecting, and storage, bibliography, literary history, and selection of reading. In other classifications these subjects had ordinarily been distributed among several other major subjects. Because books on these related subjects were often used as a well-defined group, he found it convenient to gather them in one place. He wrote,

Now, I do not deny that these [previous] classings were correct, and that my proposal of grouping all the book arts together is highly unsystematic; that to bring into one group several classes having reference to a concrete thing like a book, and intrude this group among classes founded on abstract conceptions, as Philosophy, Religion, History, Sociology, is an incongruity; and to form this group by taking various subdivisions out of the proper classes is a robbery. But, nevertheless, I maintain that there is an overbalancing convenience, both for the memory and for use.¹

A similar problem arose in the classification of folklore and Cutter asked the Association for advice on the matter. In previous classifications, folklore had been subsumed under the general classes of literature or religion. But to class it that way was not always true to the subject itself. His musings on the issue cogently illustrate the problems that a classifier faced:

But there is much in Folk-lore that is not religion or literature. There is much medicine, and natural history, and a good deal that illustrates manners and customs, and sports. Folk-lore is the philosophy, the religion, the science, and the literature of the people; of the uninstructed, the untrained, the blundering, the confused. It is unphilosophical philosophy, superstitious religion, unscientific science and unwritten literature. Why should its science be put under religion or its religion and science under literature, or its natural history under philosophy?¹

He went on to suggest other ways in which the subject might be treated.

Why should it be put in any class? Why should it not be a class by itself? And if it is allowed an independent standing, it should come, since like Lord Bacon it takes all knowledge to be its province, not in any of the six great divisions, but in what I have called Generals and Preliminaries, where the Encyclopaedias and books of "universal erudition" are to go. If it were to be put under one of the main classes, I might present the claims of Primitive culture as a division of Anthropology, itself a division of the compound class Zoology, or of Antiquities and Manners and Customs, one of the side historical sciences.²

In all of the schedules Cutter attempted to impose some sort of logical or systematic order, although in places he admitted that the order he imposed was purely arbitrary and sometimes even a bit far-fetched. In the classification of the recreative and athletic arts (Class S), he arranged ball games according to whether the ball was propelled by the foot, the hand, or by an instrument, and whether it went on the ground or through the air. With regard to the schedule as a whole, he wrote,

¹C. A. Cutter, "The Place of Folk-lore in a Classification; a Problem," Lj, IX (August, 1884), 136.
²Ibid.
In preparing this scheme some niceties of arrangement have given trouble decidedly out of proportion to their practical utility. The order of the divisions imitates in a general way the progress of man from barbarism to civilization—that is, the fighting arts are followed by the hunting arts, these by sports, these by games, first outdoor, then indoor. Similar is the progress in two of the subdivisions. The fighting sports begin with the contests of animals, which are followed by those kinds of fighting in which man uses only his body, and then by those in which he employs artificial weapons, firearms of course coming last among these; in the same way in water-locomotive sports swimming precedes the use of oars and sails, in land-locomotive sports walking and running precede wheeling, and that is followed by progression by the aid of horses.

Suitable transitions have also been provided for. Angling leads naturally from hunting to aquatic sports. Skating has characteristics both of motion through the water, which comes before it, and of motion over the land, which comes after it. The minor boys' and girls' games form a link between the games of strength and the indoor games of skill.1

He added, however, his own misgivings about the attempt.

It will not do to scrutinize these arrangements too closely, and at the best they have given more satisfaction to the classifier than they will give to the reader. In the practical use of the classification they would generally be unnoticed. Nevertheless, it is worth while to take pains in regard to such points. It will be found that if the classes are grouped with some regard to their natural affinities, the classification will in the long run suit the books—past, present, and to come—better than if they are thrown together helter-skelter. It will not suit all the books; no classification can do that. But it will suit a larger majority than an arrangement less in accordance with the divisions and relationships of the subject.2

The above sections were in some ways the least of Cutter's problems. The sections on science and particularly of the life sciences contained much more subject


2Ibid., pp. 7-8.
material and, because of Cutter's desire to follow Bliss' evolutionary order, required much more exacting labor. Bliss, however, could correct Cutter when the latter had reached the limits of his own knowledge of the subjects.

With regard to how Cutter adapted the notation to his sometimes complex schedules, a section of the scheme for statistics, political economy, and commerce (Class C-CL), illustrates his method.

C  Sociology, in general.
C1  Statistics.
C11  Methods.

C12  to  Statistics of subjects (In general the books will be put under their several subjects).
C1Z

C21  to  Statistics of countries
C3Z  (England: C2E1-9 subject div. if needed C2EA-B places in England.)

C4  to  Political economy, systematic, gen. and misc.
C5  works, arr. by the countries of the writers.

C6  Monographs on some special subjects such as value, etc.
C7  Population.

C8  to  Production (Including the numerous works on the production and exchange (Industry and trade) of a country. Agriculture, manufactures, etc. in their economical aspect grouped by countries. As arts, they go in class N; i.e., the discussion of their methods is there).
C9

C8°C  to  Consuls reports & other gen. geog.
C9°  works on Production, etc.

C8°C C  Cotton trade.
C8°C L  Lumber trade.
C8°C T  Tin trade.
C8°C W  Wood trade.
Transportation and communication.

Laboring classes. Capital & labor (Grouped by countries).

Hours of labor.

Children's work (Women's work CCW or DZ).

Wages.

Trades unions & guilds.

 Strikes, arbitration.

Cooperation.

Exchange (of products).

Transportation and communication.

Internal improvements, Canals, Express, Railways, Shipping, Telegraph, & Telephone (economically considered; as arts, these come under P)

Canals

Express

Railways General

Shipping (For their making, see Engineering)

Telephone

Tunnels

Transportation by countries and internal improvements.

General transp. (Eng.)

Eng. canals in general.

Birmingham canal.

English Expressage.

London & Birmingham expr. etc.

Commerce (incl. works on commerce & banking, commerce & finance)

Trade, Business.

Theory and practice of business.

Advertising

Book-keeping.

Panics

etc.

Commerce by countries.

etc. 1

1The above schedule for Class C-CL is taken from the original working draft, MS, BA. Eventually, many of these schedules were printed as offprints. See note in
As the schedule indicates (e.g., C21 to C3Z, CI1 to CJZ), Cutter used geographical subdivision often, although occasionally the subdivision referred not to the subject, but to the national origin of the author as in C4, C5. It should also be noticed that because his area list needed two consecutive class numbers to include both hemispheres, the whole schedule was considerably lengthened. Occasionally he subdivided according to the subjects of the major classes of the entire scheme as in C12 to C1Z. Often, however, his subdivisions were of special topics. Sometimes they were simply incorporated into the sequence of symbols (e.g., CC to CG). At other times, when he desired to group special topics of a subject at the beginning of a section, he incorporated a small zero after the class mark and used the letters of the alphabet to make mnemonically suggestive subclasses (e.g., CK°). If more than one subclass began with the same letter (e.g., CI°T, Telegraph, Telephone), he had the option of extending the letter like a decimal author number. Sometimes, however, he chose not to follow the mnemonic pattern, as in CI°U, Tunnels. He also often included special subdivisions to illustrate a pattern, using the example of England. This was probably a reflection of the large number of books in the Athenaeum that concerned themselves with British life and thought.

Bibliography under C. A. Cutter, [The Boston Athenaeum Classification (Boston, 1879- ?)].
An added problem that Cutter faced was his occasional rearrangement of the schedules. More than once he changed his original groupings, probably to the consternation of those who sought and received from him copies of the schedules of individual classes. One such change occurred in the schedule for philosophy (Class 1). He had developed his original scheme for philosophy as early as 1879. When he published the outlines of that scheme in 1885, he had arranged one part of the historical section as follows:

13 Early Christian and mediaeval philosophy.
131 Gnostic.--132 Patristic.--133 Scholastic.--
134 Modern (exclusive of Oriental).
135 Transition period.
136 Bacon.--137 Bruno and other Italians.--
139 Böhme.
13C Rationalism.
13D, 13G Descartes and Geulinx.--13M Malebranche.--
13S Spinoza.
14 English philosophy, incl. its History, etc.
15 French philosophy, " " "
16 German philosophy, " " "
17 Other European philosophy, incl. its History, etc.
18 United States philosophy, incl. its History, etc.
19 Other American philosophy, incl. its History, etc.¹

Shortly thereafter, however, he rearranged it in the following manner:

13 Early Christian and Medieval.
131 Gnostic
132 Patristic.
133 Scholastic.
(The Works of the Fathers are in 3B)

¹C. A. Cutter and Josephus N. Larned, "Two Classifications of Philosophy," LJ, X (April, 1885), 79. The second classification of philosophy in this article was devised by J. N. Larned in 1884.
14 Modern
   General, Arranged by Periods.
   15  1500-1599.  
   16  1600-1699.  
   17  1700-1799.  
   18  1800-
   National (except Oriental and Greek and Roman), Geographically Arranged.
1A Eastern Hemisphere.
1B Western Hemisphere.
   E.g., 1AE, English; 1AG, German;
   1B5, United States. The arrangement under each country is by periods, indicated by letters (D=1500-99, E=1600-99, F=1700-99, G=1800-49, L=1850-99), thus: Locke (1632-1704) is in 1AEE, Hegel (1770-1831) in 1AGG, and Spencer (1820- ) in 1AEL.
   The works about any philosopher immediately follow his own writings.¹

Cutter also made several lists to be used for special purposes. These included a special classification for Shakespeariana, and a specially constructed table of Greek and Latin authors to be used in their respective literature sections (Classes VJ and VP). The Shakespeare schedule represented a departure from Cutter's normal procedure in the classification of literature of separating the works by an author from the works about him. The former he placed in the geographically arranged literature classes, V and W. The latter he placed in the geographically arranged classes for literary history, XV and XW, the correspondence in the

¹Taken from "Philosophy", a twelve-page offprint of the schedule for philosophy from the Athenæum classification. It most likely appeared in the late 1880's. Cutter subsequently used the same schedule for the seventh expansion of the Expansive Classification, along with an additional scheme prepared by Professor H. N. Gardiner of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. The only major difference between Cutter's scheme for the Athenæum classification and the one for the seventh expansion was the notation.
class-marks being intentional. For Shakespeare, he decided to keep all of the works by and about the author together in the literature section, VE, with a special involved decimal mark, S1 to S9, to follow the class notation.  

Perhaps the most pervasive special subdivision that Cutter developed was his geographical area list. He used it more than any other facet to subarrange various subjects. But, as mentioned above, the necessity to provide for two consecutive class symbols greatly extended the schedules as a whole. In its final form, the list varied widely from the one first published in March 1879 and was considerably more complicated because Cutter not only made subdivisions of areas by using two and sometimes three symbols, but also used the symbols for both geographical and language area lists. The following example illustrates his method:

Eastern Hemisphere.

1 Asia
1R Siberia
2 Japan

6 Persia
7 Arabia
8 Palestine [Parts of Palestine and other parts of the Near East: 8T to 8Z]

9 Asia Minor
A Europe
AX Northern Europe
AZ Slavic races.
B Russia
C Scandinavia [Individual countries: CS to CZ]
D British Empire (in Geography)
D Keltic races (in History, Language, and Literature)

The list for the western hemisphere remained much as it had been developed earlier, except that by 1883 Cutter was able to provide a geographical division of the United States. But even that was no easy task. He described the typical quandary of the classifier.

One of the difficulties of classification is choosing between the various possible methods of arrangement. One can almost always find two or three or four different orders which seem almost equally good. In this case one might have all states, counties, towns, rivers, lakes, mountains, in a single alphabet; or one might arrange the States alphabetically and under each put its counties, towns, mountains, rivers, lakes, etc.; or, finally one might arrange States geographically, and put under each its towns, etc., alphabetically. I was inclined to the first method, which would have made our shelves a sort of gazetteer of the United States, where every single place could be found with very little trouble; but the whole history and geography of each State would not be brought together.²

¹Cutter, How to Get Books, pp. 10-11. The bracketed material is mine.

²"The Arrangement of the Parts of the United States in a Historical and Geographical System of Classification," LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 205.
His final solution was to place geographical features and smaller political units under the states. The states were divided into six groups corresponding to six perpendicular bands placed on a map of the country. Each group was itself subdivided into northern and southern regions. The smaller political units and geographical features were denoted by the addition of a letter and a number, much like an author number in the regular schedules.

Working out the schedules of the classes and the special lists was, of course, only one part of the process of shelf classification. Cutter had to provide for the arrangement of the books within any one subject section. Furthermore, he had to differentiate between books by the same author and he had to indicate the sizes of books. In marking books, therefore, he used a four-sectioned call number, consisting of a class mark, a size mark, an author number, and, if needed, a work or edition mark.

A class mark could be as simple as 5E (English Biography) or as complicated as CIEC.B (Canals in Birmingham, England). He next indicated the size of the book in one of four categories by the use of a special symbol that was to follow the class mark: duodecimo (·), octavo (-), quarto (+), or folio (/). He found it necessary to do so in order to economize on shelf space. By this means he could arrange the books in parallel sets of the same classes in any one alcove, the smaller books on the upper shelves and the larger books on the lower shelves. Third, Cutter
provided an author number which would arrange the books in any one class in alphabetical order according to the authors' surnames. When he had originally borrowed the idea of an author number from Jacob Schwartz and had converted it to a decimal instead of an integer, he intended to use the number alone, except in literature where he prefixed the authors' initials to the numbers. By the end of 1879 he had changed his use of the author mark to include the authors' initials at the beginning of all author numbers. Finally, in order to distinguish different works by the same author in the same class, Cutter added the first letter of the title of the different works to the author number. If he had different editions of the same work he added either an edition number or a year number after the work letter. The result of his numbering system was a number that often appeared as simple as 5E.D24 which incorporated three of the above parts of the call number. Or, the whole notation could appear as complicated as CIEC·B+24e, or CIEC·B+C482+2. In the latter case, where there was no work letter taken from the title, but a different edition was indicated, the size mark was repeated between the author number and the edition symbol.

1C. A. Cutter, Review notice of Winchester (Mass.), Town Library, Class and Author Lists, [Edited by C. A. Cutter], LJ, IV (November, 1879), 426.

2Except for the previous note, the description of how to write the call number of a book is taken from Cutter, How to Get Books, pp. 7-18. See especially the summary on p. 17.
Cutter's scheme was the most extensively developed shelf classification extant during the early 1880's and because of that it gained a reputation for being the one most applicable to a large scholarly library. The notation, however, had an almost formidable appearance and for that reason caused much concern among those who would have wanted to make use of the system. Josephus N. Larned summed up the issues at stake very cogently in his own foray into the classification field in 1884. He first leveled what had become a standard criticism of Dewey's system, that its classification was distributed poorly because of the need to fit all subjects into the ten digit base of the decimal system. He claimed that despite the simplicity of its notation, the problem of distribution in the scheme "appears so serious that few experienced librarians have been willing to adopt it, notwithstanding the attractiveness of its notation." Librarians wanted more freedom in the basic system itself, something that Cutter had provided with his larger notational base.

It is beyond question that Mr. Cutter, on that liberal scale, is slowly working out a scheme of classification which is vastly more satisfactory for the arrangement of a collection of books than anything possible within the limits of the decimal scale.

He went on, however, to severely criticize Cutter's notation:

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2. Ibid.
But when the several mixed signs that he employs to represent subject-class, country, time, literary form, etc., are put together in the necessary combinations, they exhibit a most forbidding cryptographic appearance and show nothing in themselves that promises a key to their meanings. The history of English poetry, for example, is represented by XVEP, the combination XV standing for literary history, the E signifying England and the P poetry. For the history of France in the reign of Hugh Capet we have 8F81, the first 8 meaning, in this case, history, in the Eastern hemisphere, the F designating France, the second 8 standing for the third royal house in France and the 1 for the first monarch of that house. Here we have no familiar sequence of the signs employed, to satisfy the expectancy which habit in the usage of letters or figures has fixed invincibly in our minds, and which has acquired, as I have said, all the force of a natural sense of order in us, the offending of which is not agreeable. The combinations look eccentric and grotesque; there is nothing in them that the mind, without an entire training of new habit, can lay hold of for help in learning and remembering the significance of their several elements and spelling out the composite meanings. Moreover, the same elementary signs are necessarily used to represent different things in different connections; and so the alphabet and grammar of the scheme seem nearly as formidable as Hebrew to a beginner.  

In order to build a less cabalistic notation and yet to retain the breadth that Cutter had incorporated, Larned suggested that the notation ought to be constructed in conformity to a more strictly defined nomenclature. The symbols ought to be less varied and certain kinds of them ought to be assigned certain functions and not be used otherwise. He referred to his own system as an example in which he used only the letters of the alphabet. Furthermore, the letters were used in two different kinds of combinations, the first, consonant-vowel-consonant, and much

1Ibid.
more numerous; the second, vowel-consonant-vowel, and much less numerous. The two different kinds of combinations were given separate functions.

Larned noted that there were two traditional ways to classify, the one by subject and literary analysis, the other by geographical division. Each of the methods typically had been used as a facet of the other. He went on to say,

Until Mr. Cutter gave the hint of something different, these two proceedings of assortment—by subject or form and by geographical division—were always carried on together, in a mixed way, under one continuous system of notation. Mr. Cutter was the first, I believe, to draw up a complete separate scheme of geographical distribution, with its own series of signs, to be unchangeably used in combination with the signs of the subject-classification of history, geography, biography, law, language, and literature, where the geographical assorting of books is most necessary. But he was obliged to employ the same signs for this that he had used for his subject-classification, with nothing but their position in the combination to distinguish them. Moreover, his thirty-five signs being much too scanty for even the most generalized divisions of geography, he had to use them again twice over—in one series for the Eastern Hemisphere, and in another identical series for the Western.¹

Larned proposed an alternative to the above by suggesting that of his two separate types of letter combinations, the vowel-consonant-vowel be restricted in use to area divisions, and the consonant-vowel-consonant be restricted in use to subject and form divisions. Because the two sets of letters were kept separated, one would always know clearly what kind of subdivision was being intended. It was also obvious that either part could be primary and the user

¹Ibid., p. 63.
would know automatically what kind of arrangement was primary. For example, Ad-Bab was obviously a geographical unit subdivided by a subject, while Ca-Ab was obviously a subject or form subdivided by a geographical area.

Although Larned had been severely critical of Cutter's notation, Cutter did not react to the criticism negatively. He showed, rather, a very enthusiastic response to Larned's concept of integrity in the use of symbols. He wrote,

All the great systems before and after Brunet throw books into great subject divisions, as history, geography and travels, science literature, and subdivide these by countries. The Boston Public Library was the first, so far as we know, to break through this traditional order and make a geographical arrangement. . . . But all of the schemes of classification with a movable location, Mr. Schwartz's, Mr. Dewey's, Mr. Edmands's, Mr. Smith's, Mr. Cutter's have gone back to the old division by subject, either because they did not think of geographical arrangement or because, as was the case in the last instance, they did not see how it could be marked with their notation. Mr. Larned has removed this difficulty.¹

Larned's idea would subsequently become a significant feature of Cutter's later classification scheme, the Expansive Classification.

When Cutter first began to develop his shelf classification he considered it a step-child of Dewey's Amherst system and was careful to make that fact known when he referred to it. The two men were also working closely together in the Readers and Writers Economy Company and one

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, IX (July, 1884), 116.
of the goals that they envisioned was to publish Cutter's scheme as a project of the fledgling company. Cutter publicized the intention to do so in the Library Journal. The title of the shelf classification was to be "Melvil Dewey's 35 Character Notation applied to Book Classification, by C. A. Cutter, with an Enlarged Edition of Dewey's Index."\(^1\) The company failed in 1880, however, and the publication of the scheme never materialized. Of course, Cutter had not been able to work out the details of the plan at the time and publication would have been premature in any event.\(^2\)

By 1882 when the general discussion of shelf classification had resumed with some fervency, Cutter made the above noted differentiation between his and Dewey's system. Perhaps because his writing and discussion of shelf classifications was notable and because Dewey's system in its original 1876 format could not compare in fullness of detail, and certainly because of the strain in relationship caused by the failure of the company two years before, Cutter's article was more than simply a differentiation between the two systems.

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\(^1\)A hand-drawn title page of this wording is in the M. Dewey Papers, CUL. The printed notice of publication was given in LJ, IV (March, 1879), 98, with the wording, "A Classification and Subject-index on Melvil Dewey's Amherst plan, and 35 character Notation, for Cataloging, Indexing and Arranging Books, Pamphlets, Clippings, or Notes."

\(^2\)Cutter noted that the scheme would not be published in, "Classification on the Shelves" (1881), p. 64. He wrote "The idea of publishing the classification in form similar to Mr. Dui's [i.e., Dewey's] Amherst system has been given up for the present, as I prefer to subject my ideas to the test of actual use before fixing them by type." He added, however, "Copies of the parts which are complete have been made for the use of several other libraries."
It bore the clear sign of a declaration of competition. He not only noted the practical differences between the two systems, but he summarized the differences in terms of their overall precision.

The differences may all be summed up in this, that the Athenaeum scheme is in comparison an instrument of precision, a fine tool instead of a coarse one. As actually developed the Amherst scheme is not precise enough for a library of over 40,000 volumes.¹

He made his declaration explicit with the statement, "In conclusion let it be remembered that the 35 base was of Mr. Dui's own suggestion; and if he himself is beaten, it is with a weapon furnished by himself."²

Cutter's optimism was not to be rewarded. In 1885 Dewey published the second edition of his scheme in a greatly expanded form. The original forty-two pages became more than three hundred and the classification was carried out in often very minute detail.³ Dewey acknowledged a year later,

I remember that ten years ago, when Mr. Cutter told me my Amherst skeme was not close enuf for his use, I felt he was all wrong, and argued the matter without being convinced. I hav found that I was the one that was wrong, . . . and I publicly acknowledge to Mr. Cutter today that in that discussion he was entirely right


²Ibid., p. 63.

and I wrong. If I read the signs of the times, there are many others going thru just this experience.\footnote{Melvil Dewey, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, \textit{LJ}, XI (August/September, 1886), 351.}

Dewey's new edition brought his system in line with the degree of minute shelf classification that Cutter had been stressing. In fact, it surpassed Cutter's scheme because Cutter's was not complete.

The improvement of Dewey's system was only one reason for what eventually became its overwhelming popular success. During the early 1880's a number of librarians began combining Cutter's author numbers with Dewey's classification. Dewey had only provided for the consecutive numbering of books in any one class and not for alphabetical arrangement. Cutter had first printed his author tables in the spring of 1880. By the time Dewey published his second edition, even he was using the combination along with a system of chronological subarrangement developed by W. S. Biscoe. To meet the demand for the tables, Cutter allowed the Library Bureau to publish a formal edition of the tables in 1887 worked out to two decimal places. Cutter wrote an explanation of their use that was printed in the \textit{Library Journal}. The growing popularity of the combination of the tables and Dewey's system enhanced the usefulness of the latter and helped to tip the balance towards the decimal classification in what amounted to a competition between the two classification schemes. There is perhaps a bit of
irony in the fact that Cutter, who had differentiated his
own system from Dewey's, supplied the one element that
Dewey's system lacked.  

With Dewey's second edition published and with his
own scheme still unfinished, new developments overtook
Cutter which eventually changed his approach to shelf clas-
sification and furnished the material from which he even-
tually developed what came to be called the Expansive
Classification.

The Year of Change

The context of the change was the renewal of the
Association's debate on shelf classification in 1886. In
addition to Dewey's new edition, Jacob Schwartz also pub-
lished a greatly revised version of his own system in sev-
eral issues of the Library Journal during 1885. Although
he adhered to his previous methodology, he revised the gen-
eral structure by using only numbers instead of a combina-
tion of letters and numbers in his notation. He retained
his alphabetical mnemonic ideal, for wherever a number was
used to signify any class, it represented the first letter
of the subject class-name according to his conversion table

1Dewey commented on his use of the author tables in
A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October,
1885), 344-45; See also Melvil Dewey, "Eclectic Book-
numbers," LJ, XI (August/September, 1886), 298; Walter S.
Biscoe, "Chronological Classification on the Shelves," LJ,
X (September/October, 1885), 246-47; C. A. Cutter, Alfa-
betic Order Table [Boston: Library Bureau, 1887]; C. A. Cut-
ter, "How to Use Cutter's Decimal Author Table," LJ, XII
(July, 1887), 251-52.
previously discussed. Because the use of a base of ten restricted the breadth of the basic classes, Schwartz reverted in part to the rationale of a fixed location system in order to determine how to distribute the classes.¹

The effect of his new plan was significant because he raised again all of the older arguments of fixed versus movable location systems and, because he used only arabic numbers, the argument against mixed notations. He wrote to George Watson Cole, then a young librarian seeking information on library administration, of his change with regard to the latter issue.

An experience of twenty years has convinced me of the great practical advantages of simplicity in the use of symbols. The mixture of symbols--letters & figures--in Mr. Cutter's scheme where the two are used interchangeably, I regard as wholly objectionable.²

Schwartz also suggested that the major headings of his system could as well be used in an alphabetico-classed catalog, much in the same way that Frederic B. Perkins had desired to use the subject divisions of his "Rational Classification" in relation to a dictionary catalog.³

Cutter editorialized on all of the shelf classifications current in the January 1886 Library Journal in such

¹ Jacob Schwartz, "An Alphabetico-mnemonic System of Classifying and Numbering Books," LJ, X (February, 1885), 25-27; (April, 1885), 77-78; (July, 1885), 149-50; (August, 1885), 174-75; (November, 1885), 371-75.


a way as to suggest that none of them was really good enough to do the job desired. He attempted to mollify Schwartz by commending the intention of his scheme. "His argument will show the merits of his classification, which has been, perhaps, unduly laughed at." In the same issue, however, he also took Schwartz severely to task for the partial use of a fixed location rationale.

In the February and March issues, Schwartz and Frederic B. Perkins together (perhaps because they both had some affinities in their respect for fixed location systems and perhaps because they both had some resentment against Dewey's claims of originality in his own system) published a two-part scurrilous attack on Dewey and his decimal system. In the article, entitled "The Dui-Decimal Classification and the 'Relativ' Index; a Duet," they charged that Dewey had pirated his ideas from others without giving proper credit. They also indicted Dewey's system for not doing what it claimed to do.

2 C. A. Cutter, "Note on Mr. Schwartz's Classification and Notation," LJ, XI (January, 1886), 8.
3 Frederic B. Perkins and Jacob Schwartz, "The Dui-Decimal Classification and the 'Relativ' Index; a Duet," LJ, XI (February, 1886), 37-43; (March, 1886), 68-74. Cutter noted in his editorial, LJ, XI (February, 1886), 36, that he thought their article to be "a somewhat savage attack on Mr. Dewey's Decimal Classification, which implies a demand for perfection rarely reached in bibliographical or other mundane enterprises." An extended recounting of the debate that their article engendered including the various replies by Dewey, Cutter, B. Pickman Mann, and the rejoinders by Perkins and Schwartz can be found in Comaromi, "A History of the Dewey Decimal Classification," pp. 150-88.
Schwartz's and Perkins' attack in many ways signified the sad state that classification discussion was in. Indeed, Cutter's January editorial had concisely mentioned the problems of all the shelf classifications taken together. Dewey's was unbalanced in its classification scheme. Schwartz's was so obvious a contrivance that it shocked "the classifying instinct of everyone who looks at it," and Cutter's notation "offends many persons." The internecine debate that took place over the next three months, accordingly, was not as significant for its details as for the frustration that it exuded. By the time it ended later in the year, Cutter and Dewey would seem to have laid to rest any further effective argument against minutely classified movable shelf classification systems, although Schwartz had the last word when, in a charming satire entitled "King Aquila's Library," he further pressed his own arguments by caricaturing all the major protagonists. Dewey was represented by Dr. Decimus and, significantly, Cutter was represented as Dr. Sector who proposed a most perfect system.


2. Jacob Schwartz, "King Aquila's Library: a Sequel to 'King Leo's Classification'," LJ, XI (August/September, 1886), 232-44. The reference in the title was to a similar humorous treatment of classificationists done by E. C. Richardson the preceding year. An extensive explanation of the various persons represented in the allegory is given in Comaromi, "A History of the Dewey Decimal Classification," pp. 176-80. It should be stated, however, that Comaromi takes the spoof by Schwartz much too seriously. He suggests that Schwartz "struck again," and concludes that because E. C. Richardson actually read the paper at the conference, Schwartz had stayed away by reason of "fear or pressing
The main argument of the anti-close classificationists was that the system of Dewey and by implication that of Cutter claimed to put subjects in all of their relationships. Dewey in his enthusiasm had seemingly made that claim. Cutter, however, attempted to show the relative nature of the quest.

I must begin by saying that the close classification which I was led to make by finding on trial the insufficiency of the first Decimal System, . . . is not that absurd idea against which the Duet has directed its arguments--a classification which should bring absolutely everything in the library on each subject into one place. This Mr. Dewey claimed as the effect of close duties." Richardson did read the paper, but Schwartz was listed as having attended the conference with his wife. Although the "Duet" article was indeed very harsh, the spirit of the satire was understandably in a lighter vein. Cutter recounted in [American Library Association's Milwaukee Meeting], Nation, XLIII (July 22, 1886), 77, "The element of humor was not wanting this year. There were the usual hits at the absurd questions asked by the ignorant and the puzzle-headed, but the piece de resistance was a continuation of the clever satire of last year on systems of classification, but by another hand. Of this its victims said that it was a sufficient testimony to the substantial reasonableness of their schemes that the writer was obliged to caricature them so much in order to render them ridiculous."

A year afterward Perkins wrote to Dewey of his continuing friendship: "I haven't changed my views, but--as the young lady says in the opera, 'I love thee still the same.'--I like you very much, as I always did, & hate your (epithets) old plan as much as ever." Letter, F. B. Perkins to M. Dewey, December 31, 1887, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Schwartz continued in his light vein concerning Cutter a year and a half later in "Francis Bacon and the Athenaeum," LJ, XIII (January, 1888), 12-13. The article was very clever and certainly appealed to Cutter's own sense of humor. It made a play on the Latin word, cuttare, to divide; on Francis BACOn (i.e., Boston Athenaeum Classification); and on the fact that the dedication in the Novum Organum had thirty-five letters and dots, as in Cutter's notational base. Therefore, Bacon must have had some influence on Cutter's system. That in itself was a considerable spoof, because if any classical system had an influence on Cutter's classification, it was Brunet, not Bacon.
classification; he never thought or spoke of it as its essence. The phrase is merely a comparative term, meaning minuter classification than has hitherto been customary. . . . We believe that for large libraries and for some subjects in smaller ones and for particular subjects in special ones, utility is served by carrying the subdivision of classes farther than has usually been done.1

The remainder of the arguments against minute classification were more or less aimed at the complexity of that approach, as opposed to the simpler systems that were more broadly classed. Cutter answered the criticism with a pragmatic dictum: "The man who doesn't like classification has only to disregard it; the man who knows how to use it is assisted by it."2

Regardless of who vanquished whom in the controversy, the unmistakable impression gained is that the Association as a whole was questioning whether the minute classification systems of Dewey and Cutter were worth the effort.

Some, of course, were inveterately against the idea. William F. Poole wrote to George W. Cole concerning Perkins' and Schwartz's paper early in the year making the remark, "What a comical paper and awful satire on the whole theory of


2Ibid., p. 182. Cutter also took his editor's prerogative and answered Schwartz very directly and systematically by appending to Schwartz's "Alphabetical Classification; An Anti-criticism," LJ, XI (June, 1886), 156-58, three pages of remarks countering Schwartz's arguments point by point. The answers in this as well as in the July article noted above were the same in their essential points. C. A. Cutter, "Remarks by C. A. Cutter," LJ, XI (June, 1886), 158-60.
minute classification of books.”¹ The comment of William I. Fletcher to Dewey himself, however, was most telling of the quandary that librarians found themselves in.

My experience constantly seems to reach the fallacy of minute classification on the shelves as a guide to the library and of the idea of making books catalogue themselves, except where a simple alphabetical arrangement can be made within a class as in fiction or in periodicals.

I am led to make more and more of the catalogue as a guide and to depend more on a simple and in most cases practically arbitrary reference from the catalogue to the place of a book. Of course I want to bring books of a kind together for practical purposes, but this, while it may be called classification, is not what you and others are after under that name.

Hence my unwillingness to pay much attention to any classification scheme.²

Fletcher went on to deliver a paper at the 1886 Milwaukee meeting of the Association in which he disparaged any need for minute shelf classification and advocated subject bibliographies in their place. The problem was not only that the systems were complicated with sometimes very lengthy notations, but that they offered no help for small libraries who needed only a simple system.³ Of course, as the average size of library collections grew in the next few years, the need for the more elaborate systems grew. But in 1886 the smaller library still presented a problem. Cutter noted in an editorial that a classifier was often


so engaged in providing classification for his own larger library that,

he forgets to point out to others that they need not use any details which seem to them unnecessary. This has been a defect in schemes of classification. Hereafter their makers should carefully state that their minute subdivisions are not intended to be all put into use by small libraries. Better still, if, by the side of the elaborate tables, they publish some that are more general,—a small door for the chicken as well as a large door for the hen.¹

With that remark Cutter hinted at his own intention to pursue a different course in his own classification work. The following year at the Thousand Islands conference of the Association he announced that he was preparing an entirely new scheme that would take into account the developments of the past ten years of discussion. It would be based on a simpler notational system, using for the class marks only the twenty-six letters of the alphabet rather than a sequence of both numbers and letters. It would incorporate Josephus Larned's principle of the integrity of symbols. And it would take into account the needs of smaller libraries by being in fact a series of different schedules suited for libraries from the smallest to the largest collections.²

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XI (December, 1886), 467.

Cutter summarized his new attitude toward shelf classification in his presidential address to the American Library Association in 1889. The title and theme of his address was "Common Sense in Libraries", and he applied his words of wisdom to classification as well as to other areas of library administration. He felt that common sense called for classifiers to recognize the requirements of different-sized libraries. But common sense also did not allow one to do away with minute shelf classification simply because the prospects for making one were difficult. After referring to the controversy in which he had taken part, he listed the classification lessons that he had learned.

It takes time and costs brainwork to divide books minutely.

It is not worth while to divide books more minutely than is needed for finding readily those which treat of each subject.

When the subjects are distinct and generally recognized, setting each off by itself gives much more help than when they are vague and ill-defined.

Therefore the sciences dealing with concrete matters lend themselves to minute subdivision much better than the abstract sciences like philosophy.

Libraries used by the learned can profitably be much more subdivided than those used by the ignorant, who would not understand even the names of the divisions.

Libraries that have many books must be more divided than those that have few.

Libraries that are going to have more books need to plan their classification with a view to enlargement as much as their building.

These statements seem to me reasonably certain, and the practical result to which they lead is this: to secure the best results and greatest economy, a system of classification and notation should be contrived that in its simplicity and intelligibility will suit a very small library, the divisions being broad, well-known subjects, and only a few subdivisions being made here and there of subjects on which the number of books is
sure to be great, as fiction in literature; and yet these divisions and subdivisions should be parts of a great scheme that would suit a very large library, so that when the library grows and the different subjects increase—as they always will—irregularly, each can be subdivided when its time comes without disturbing any of the others and upon a plan prepared at the very beginning. This I believe to be more in accordance with common sense than to divide a little library with a minuteness that would suit the largest, or to consider a classification as a suit of clothes that must be entirely abandoned when the boy gets too large for them. The classification that I would have is the tree's bark that grows with it.¹

Accordingly, the most obvious feature of Cutter's new system was its built-in provision for libraries of different sizes, a feature that provided for it the name, the Expansive Classification. At first Cutter had considered having a total of five different expansions, the first for a library of 1,000 volumes, the second for 1,000-5,000 volumes, the third, 5,000-10,000 volumes, the fourth, 10,000-20,000 volumes, and the fifth for libraries of 20,000-100,000 volumes.² When he did begin to issue the scheme, it was planned for seven expansions, the schedules being not for libraries of particular sizes, but rather for relative sizes. The first was "For a very small library," the second, "For a library that has grown larger," the third through sixth expansions arranged with increasing complexity to be chosen by the individual librarian according to his


preferences. The seventh expansion was to be for the very
largest of libraries.

The expansions varied in how much detail was shown,
not only in the subclasses, but also in the main classes.
The first expansion listed only six main classes undivided,
and one that had a major subdivision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Works of Reference and General Works.</th>
<th>Sciences and Arts, both Useful &amp; Fine.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Philosophy and Religion.</td>
<td>X Language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Historical Sciences.</td>
<td>Y Literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Social Sciences.</td>
<td>YF Fiction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The books in each of the main classes were to be subarranged
in a single sequence alphabetically by author. Cutter
advised, however, that even in a library of such small size,
it would be better to break down class E into three parts:
E, Biography; F, History; and G, Geography and Travels. If
a library should grow in one particular subject area, Cutter
advised that one of the larger expansions be incorporated
for use in that section.

The second expansion added five more main classes
and subdivided geographically two of the previous ones;
namely, History and Geography. The third expansion had
twenty-seven major classes using twenty-five letters of the

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1 C. A. Cutter, *Expansive Classification*, [Part I: The First Six Classifications] (Boston: C. A. Cutter, 1891-93), pp. 17, 24, and passim. Cutter completed the first six expansions of his classification between 1891 and 1893. He published them together during the latter year. The individual schedules of the seventh expansion were issued in undated parts after 1893, and sometimes reissued, with revisions.

alphabet. The discrepancy in the number of main classes and letters occurred because of his use of BR and YF in the main sequence as if they were major classes by themselves, although schematically they belonged to the single letter classes that preceded them. Furthermore, History and Geography were now extensively subdivided, geographically.

The fourth expansion had no new classes, but instead had subject subdivisions for twelve of the main classes in addition to the use of the full geographical area list as another way to subdivide. The fifth expansion used all of the letters of the alphabet and added further subject subdivisions, while the sixth, the largest expansion before the full classification, added still more geographical and subject subdivisions. Occasionally the notation was extended to the fourth alphabetical place. The increase in the size of the schemes may be perhaps gained by a comparison of the number of pages of schedules in each: I, 2 pages; II, 3; III, 4; IV, 6; V, 22; and VI, 51 pages.

Cutter developed the first six expansions by proceeding backwards from the complex Boston Athenaeum scheme. For each he reduced the numbers of class marks according to what he thought would be applicable to libraries of different sizes. He tested the result by applying the scheme to the Cary Memorial Library in Lexington, Massachusetts, although which expansion he mainly used is not specified.
Cutter wrote the expansions separately so that a librarian could clearly see how to shift his way upward through the entire classification scheme as his library grew. He realized that some class marks would have to be changed, but perhaps his reasoning was based on the hope that major changes would be made only when the library was small and used the simpler expansions, for by the time the fifth was used, the first letters of the class mark were all used. He also noted that there would be changes in only a part of the classification inasmuch as the books in the classes already in use would remain the same. Nevertheless, a sizable amount of changing was unavoidable.¹

Shifting, even from the fifth to the sixth expansion, often meant not only the addition of extra letters, but changing the secondary letters of the class marks as well. Therefore, Cutter provided an index to the first six expansions, not only to give an alphabetical list of the subjects used, but also to show the changing marks as the schedules expanded. Its marks illustrate the problem very well. Some divisions remained much the same. For example, Encyclopedias received the class mark A for the first four expansions and AE for the fifth and sixth expansions. Others were more transient, particularly some sections of

Zoology. For example, the subject Proboscidia was classed in the first expansion as L (Sciences and Arts), in the second as M (Natural History), in the third and fourth as O (Zoology), in the fifth as PG (subclass Mammals), and in the sixth as PL (subclass Proboscidia of the subclass Mammals). Of course, it could be supposed that few small libraries would have such a developed collection that they would need to divide their science sections very often. And if that section of a library did grow rapidly, the genius of his classification idea was to use different level individual subject schedules from various expansions for the different subjects in the library.

The organization of the classification remained the same as that of the Athenaeum scheme. Cutter wanted to make an enumeration of the subjects of knowledge contained in books. The order of subjects was based on Cutter's sense of their practical connections. In practice that meant arranging books according to up-to-date schemes of the organization of intellectual disciplines as found in the most up-to-date books on the subjects. In 1892 he editorialized on classification in general, reaffirming that rationale.

The moral to be drawn from the progress of science is not that we should not classify at all; not that we should not classify with reasonable minuteness, but that we should make our schemes as logical, as scientific as possible, make them on principles and not by the rule of thumb and prejudice; make them in accordance with the most advanced knowledge, and not according to the knowledge of a generation or two ago.  

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1 C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVII (July, 1892), 227.
Beyond the issue of up-to-dateness lay the principle of 'natural order'. Richard Bliss, Cutter's aid in the effort, indicated more specifically that developmental principles were even more pervasive in the new scheme than in the old.

From this somewhat extended review it will be seen that Mr. Cutter's classification is based upon a philosophic principle which pervades the whole of it—not only in the main divisions, but in the subdivisions as well. This principle is that of evolution or development—a principle which it is now generally admitted pervades the whole plan of nature, and is applicable, not only to objective nature, but likewise to the mental and moral world.  

Cutter later expressed how the idea of development fit into various specific subject areas.

The expansive classification follows the evolutionary idea throughout, in natural history putting the parts of each subject in the order which that theory assigns to their appearance in creation. Its science proceeds from the molecular to the molar, from number and space, through matter and force, to matter and life; its botany going up from cryptogams to phanerogams; its zoology from the protozoa to the primates, ending with anthropology. The books arts follow the history of the book from its production (by authorship, writing, printing, and binding), through its distribution (by publishing and bookselling), to its storage and use in libraries public and private, ending with its description, that is, bibliography, suitably divided into general, national, subject and selective. Economics, too, have a natural order—population, production, distribution of the things produced, distribution of the returns, property, consumption. Fine arts are grouped into the arts of solid—the landscape gardening, architecture, sculpture, casting; and the arts of the plan—painting, engraving, etc.; and the mixed arts, being the smaller decorative and semi-industrial arts.

Similar examples of logical, or, if you please, natural arrangement, are: Putting Bible between Judaism—to which the first part, the Old Testament, belongs—

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1Richard Bliss, "Report on Classification," LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 244.
and Christianity, whose sacred book forms the second part; putting Church history between Christian theology and history; putting statistics between geography and economics, since it might have gone in either; putting music between the recreative arts and the fine arts. There are many such transitions, part of them, at least, novel in classification. They are not merely ingenuities pleasing only to their contriver; they have a certain practical value, since they bring books together which one may wish to use at the same time. 1

Cutter's method in constructing the schedules also remained much the same. He examined the largest libraries available to him in order to determine what kinds of books were to be included in any one subject field. He began with the three major Boston-area libraries: the Boston Athenæum, the Boston Public Library, and the Harvard College Library. When he made an extended trip to Europe from October 1893 to the summer of 1894, he used the occasion to visit several European libraries for the same purpose, particularly the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale. The results were not always productive of new material, but they helped him to confirm the order that he had already begun. Of the first of these two libraries, he wrote,

For the 'Expansive Classification,' I hoped to revise the parts not yet issued, to modify the order of the classification if it seemed advisable on seeing all together on the shelves a mass of books which, if it does not embrace all the works on each subject must at least have specimens of all the kinds of either. The result in both cases was almost negative. In the social schemes, at least—the only branch which I had the time to finish—I found no occasion for changing my order, and few additional subdivisions. 2

Of the Bibliothèque Nationale he related that the miles of shelves were at first bewildering. "Yet when one takes a single section and studies it, the helplessness vanishes; one sees that one can deal with these books, mentally arrange them, and even in a general way read them and get the good of them." 1

As he developed the schemes he put them into practice immediately in the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts, and through his friendship with William Stetson Merrill, in the Newberry Library at Chicago. And he elicited the help of various experts to work out some of the individual schedules. Besides Bliss, he was aided by George E. Wire for the classification of Medicine, a schedule which Wire had made while the medical librarian at the Newberry Library, and for the Law classification which Wire made for the Worcester County Law Library in Massachusetts. Professor H. N. Gardiner of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, supplied an alternative classification for Philosophy and Psychology, which was included with Cutter's own scheme. And Professor Gow, also of Smith College, helped on the music classification. Cutter also based the classification of International law on a scheme by Theodore F. Dwight, at one time the librarian of the Department of State.

The notation that Cutter used for the Expansive Classification was his greatest concern. It was more

1Ibid., p. 290.
homogeneous and less formidable in appearance than the one
he had used for the Athenaeum scheme and he used that im-
provement as a promotional point. It was based on the
principle of integrity in the use of kinds of symbols sug-
gested by Josephus N. Larned in 1884. That is, each kind
of symbol performed only a single function in the class
mark. Letters of the alphabet were used for classes and
subclasses alone. The numbers 1 to 9 were used for the
form subdivisions. And the numbers 11 to 99 or their dec-
imal extensions indicated geographical areas.

The class letters were combinations of the twenty-
six letters of the alphabet. The major classes were marked
as follows:

A  General works, covering several classes,
   Polygraphy.
B  Philosophy.
BR Religion.
C  Christianity and Judaism.
D  Ecclesiastical history.
E  Biography.
F  History.
G  Geography and Travels.
H  Social Sciences, including Statistics, Economics,
   and Political economy.
I  Demotics, Sociology, including Education.
J  Civics, Government, and Political science,
   including International law.
K  Legislation, Women.
L  Natural Sciences, including Mathematics, Physics,
   Chemistry, and Astronomy.
M  Natural history, including Microscopy, Geology,
   Paleontology, and Biology.
N  Botany.
O-PV  Zoology.
PW-Z  Anthropology and Ethnology.
Q  Medicine.
R  Technology, including Mining, Metalurgy, Agricul-
ture, Electric arts, and Chemical technology.
S  Engineering, Building, and Transportation.
T  Fabricative arts, Manufactures, and Handicrafts.
The notation was not expressive of the hierarchical order of the classification itself. Rather, it was sequential, only occasionally indicating hierarchy. Likewise, Cutter chose letters on the basis of mnemonic suggestiveness only occasionally, and then most likely in subject subdivisions. An example of the mixture of purposes occurs in class IK, Education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IKC</td>
<td>Classical education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKE</td>
<td>Home education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKF</td>
<td>Female education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKH</td>
<td>Early education in general, including infant education, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKI</td>
<td>Infant education; the mind of the infant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKM</td>
<td>Self-education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKP</td>
<td>Public education, Popular education, Compulsory education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKQ</td>
<td>Education versus want and crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKR</td>
<td>Religious education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKRB</td>
<td>The Bible in the public schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKS</td>
<td>Scientific education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKT</td>
<td>Technical, Industrial education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means of Education (1) Means other than schools and colleges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Mechanics' institutes, Mercantile associations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Reading clubs, Debating societies, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>Correspondence universities, Chautauqua societies, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>University extension.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The major class letters are taken from the printed schedules.
Means of Education (2) Teaching.

Pedagogics, Teaching (Classes IPC to IQT for subjects on teaching).

Means of Education (3) Schools (Classes IRA for subjects on school needs; e.g., IRF, Furniture, School).

Kindergartens, Object-teaching.

Kitchen gardens, i.e., household training for children.

Primary schools.

Secondary schools.

Private schools.

Academies, Gymnasia, Public schools like Eton, Rugby, etc.

Means of Education (4) Colleges and Special schools.

Universities and Colleges, with a special list of initials for specific schools.

Special schools; methods and history, with classes IYB to IYZ for special schools by type, e.g., IYQ, Medical schools. The special list follows the subjects of the classification scheme as a whole.

Classes of persons, in education.

Although the letters IK indicated Education, not all the subtopics of the class were subsumed under IK. Rather, the notation for the subject ran sequentially from IK to IZ. In fact, it would seem that Cutter literally ran out of room with the notation so that the last group of subtopics had to be given three letters in order to keep them from running into the next letter, J. Occasionally, he would indicate some subordination, as in IKR, IKRB, and in IS, ISK. And mnemonic correspondences occurred sporadically as in IKC to IKT.

1The Education schedule is summarized from the seventh expansion as printed in, Expansive Classification [Part II: The Seventh Classification]. Cutter had presented it in an earlier version in "Classification of Education,"
The numbers 1 to 9 after any main class and preceded by a dot (e.g., D•1, D•5, etc.) indicated the general form subdivisions. These were for the most part written into the schedules for only the most general classes. The meaning of the numbers was as follows:

1  Theory of the subject.
2  Bibliography of the subject.
3  Biography of the subject, i.e., lives of persons connected with it.
4  History of the subject.
5  Dictionaries of the subject.
6  Handbooks, etc., of the subject.
7  Periodicals limited to the subject.
8  Societies devoted to the subject.
9  Collections of works on the subject by several authors.¹

Perhaps the most pervasive change that Cutter made from his earlier scheme was a different arrangement of the geographical area list. In the older scheme he had used the notational base twice in order to list geographical units from each of the two hemispheres. Accordingly, he found it necessary to set aside two consecutive class symbols to use the lists. Because the list contained a sequence of both numbers and letters, when he combined those with the class mark, which also used the sequence of numbers and letters, the whole notation took on a sometimes strange appearance. In the Expansive Classification Cutter limited the geographical area list to the numbers 11 to 99, but in a decimal form so that he could subdivide any major area.

into its constituent parts. Thus 59 indicated Southeast
Europe, but by extension 595 indicated Rumania, 596,
Bulgaria, etc. Furthermore, because he had limited the
area list to one set of figures rather than two, the class
symbols needed in the overall classification notation for
subdivision by geographical area was reduced by one-half
and consequently the whole scheme was shortened.¹

Cutter considered the advantages of his Expansive
Classification to lie in three factors: the adaptability
and simplicity of its notation, the logical order inherent
in the classification schedules, and the flexibility avail­
able in using the system as a whole. Perhaps because the
development of a notation had been his first concern and
because the notation of the Athenaeum classification had
come under such severe criticism for its cabalistic appear­
ance, the restructuring of the notation for this system
seemed to be the feature of which Cutter was most proud.
In what had developed by the 1890's as a competition with
Dewey's Decimal Classification, he could point to his integ­

rient of symbol use, the general shortness of the class
marks in comparison to Dewey's system, and the large number
of subdivisions that also had occasional mnemonic likenesses
and correspondences with other sections, as the reasons why
his notation was far superior. And on top of those quali­
ties he could claim that library users and especially young
library assistants had found it simple to learn.

¹Ibid., "Local List."
In the same spirit he found that his system surpassed any others then extant because its logical order was adaptable to individual library needs.

I suppose it will not be urged here as I have heard it elsewhere that all this is of no account, that any broad common sense scheme will do, that the people do not care for fine distinctions, ingenious arrangements, symmetrical form, and that librarians are too busy in choosing books, elevating the taste of the public, pushing their relations with schools, conducting exhibitions and museums, to notice whether their classification is good or bad, or, if they do not like it, can yet get along with its infelicities and obstructions as they could with a slightly ill fitting coat or a slightly pinching shoe. I suppose this more or less true of town or city libraries, but surely the more leisurely reference librarian will not feel thus indifferent to ideal considerations.

But any librarian who admits the public to his shelves will find that they will get much more pleasure and profit from their privilege if the books are put on the shelves in an arrangement simple, rational, easily explicable, and suited in its degrees of minuteness to the size of his library at present or in a not too distant future.¹

Stressing his system's flexibility of use, he wrote to William S. Merrill of the Newberry Library,

I think that you and others do not quite understand the thought of the close classifiers, nor how to deal with a minute classification to the best advantage.

There are minute divisions in nature; i.e., in the nature of books. No classification can take account of them all. However minute it is there must be some grouping of different things under one heading. But libraries established for different purposes and managed by men with different prepossessions will not all group alike, ought not to in fact. If I were preparing a classification for one library I could make a selection (among all the possible sections) that would suit that library. When I am making a scheme for all libraries I must include a great many more divisions than this,--

not all that might be made—that is impossible—but many more than one library would care to use. For my own library I make a selection; other librarians must make their selection. The first six classifications have not allowed so much liberty of choice, but by the time a library is big enough to use the 7th classification it ought to have classifiers capable of drawing up their own scheme from the material which I furnish.¹

In other words, Cutter saw his role as a provider not of an inflexible single system, but of a set of alternatives that local librarians could tailor to their own needs. His system was, therefore, designed to be extensively manipulated.²

Some alternatives were matters of notation only. Cutter subdivided History by country, first according to the geographical area list and second by time periods. He affixed two notations to the schedules, however, one an area list number that included both facets by extending the number itself, and the other that used only the basic area list number but was extended by letters that represented the time periods. For example, the History of Greece (Class F32) bore notations that proceeded, F321, F322, etc., and F32A, F32B, etc. The second set of notations were shorter and thus appealed to some, but the mixture of letters and numbers, especially as they violated his basic desire for integrity of function, precluded their use by others, including Cutter who preferred the first alternative.

¹Letter, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, July 15, 1896, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.

²The adaptations mentioned hereafter are found in the seventh expansion schedules in their respective places.
Cutter subdivided Geography (Class G) by using only the area list mark, further subdividing by an alphabetical arrangement of the authors. He recognized, however, that some preferred to subdivide, as in History, first by country, second by time period, and only then by the authors. Consequently, Cutter supplied explanations for three alternative methods of marking by time subdivisions and then by author.

Other alternatives were related to the major class divisions and not simply to the notation within any one class. He recognized that some librarians preferred not to separate Geography (descriptive, not physical geography) from the history of a country. Therefore, he suggested six different ways of combining the two classes in order to achieve the desired effect. And for those who preferred to group a variety of subjects under one country, rather than to scatter the materials under their respective subjects, he demonstrated the reversibility of his notation. By placing the geographical area number first in the notation, a national collection could be shelved together. For example, instead of F32 and G32, the history and geography of Greece could be gathered together as 32F and 32G.

Cutter also provided a major alternative in the schedules for the arts of communication by language: Language, Literature, and the Book arts. The order that he preferred was Language (X), Literature (Y), and Book arts (Z), in which the Book arts were considered an appendix to
literature. But he realized that some thought of the Book arts as an introduction to literature and therefore he provided guidance for making the notation for the order, Language (X), Book arts (Y), and Literature (Z). He also gave extensive advice on the arrangement and notational correspondence of national literature, literary history, and national bibliography, in order that the subclasses of each would be the same. In addition to rearrangement possibilities, Cutter also provided many special schemes for particular topics, such as Woman (KW), and Children (KX), and authors such as Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Moliere, and Milton.

Cutter began formulating his new classification as early as 1886 or 1887. Unlike his earlier system which was constructed for the specific use of the Boston Athenaeum, his new system was intended for the library world at large as an alternative to other existing shelf classification systems, particularly Dewey's Decimal Classification. He planned from the very beginning to publish and promote it, and he began to circulate the smaller expansions by 1891. When the first announcement of their impending publication appeared in mid-1892, he could already claim fifty subscribers, although he was not able to release the schedules as a whole until April 1893. By October 1893 he was able to supply not only the first six expansions, but also the...
seventh expansion schedules for philosophy (B) and Religions (C and D), part of History (F), and the geographical area list. He reported optimistically at that time that his subscription list had surpassed 100 and that the remainder of the seventh expansion would be completed by the following spring.¹

An additional note in his October notice, however, was prophetically significant for the future of the scheme. Cutter explained that part of the fifth expansion was being reissued because of alterations in its notation "necessitated by changes made in the Sixth Classification after the Fifth was printed."² The coming decade would see Cutter make many changes in his scheme, sometimes before, sometimes after the schedules had gone to the printer. The changes in the first six expansions were for the most part not very involved because the smaller expansions were basically simple. The seventh expansion became much more complex. It represented Cutter's attempt to systematize all recorded knowledge, according to the most up-to-date views available. Its changes give evidence of an increasing awareness on Cutter's part of the difficulty of making a fully satisfying enumeration. He constantly expanded and reissued its individual sections, a task that proved to be enormous, perhaps more so than he had at first realized. Making the seventh

¹See note in "Cataloging and Classification," LJ, XVIII (October, 1893), 445.
²Ibid.
expansion was in actuality a life-time's work that he began only after he had passed fifty years of age. Furthermore, the work was hampered by the demands of developing the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts from its inception, from personal struggles that he encountered in the professional field, and from physical limitations such as near-sightedness and a sometimes frustrating absent-mindedness.

There was also a sense in which the task was one which Cutter by his very nature might well have been unable to complete even had he been considerably younger. He was a widely read, articulate scholar and at the same time a meticulous workman in the very best sense of the word. Often, as soon as he had completed a schedule, he would change it, adding more detail in order to be more complete or more orderly. He was attempting to climb a great mountain, and in the end the task proved to be more than a single man of his propensities could do. Despite the great success that he obtained in the parts that he did finish, at his death the seventh expansion remained incomplete.

His work plan at first was to proceed systematically through the schedules of the scheme.\(^1\) When Cutter returned from Europe in mid-1894, he was working on the history classes (E, F, and G) and on the social sciences (H through

\(^1\) The order in which Cutter took up the various schedules and the specific periods at which he was working on any particular one is taken from a composite view of the notes that appeared in the Library Journal and from the Merrill-Cutter correspondence in the Newberry Library.
That plan was altered in late 1894 when the Newberry Library in Chicago decided to reclassify its own collections using Cutter's as yet incomplete seventh expansion. William Stetson Merrill, who was deeply involved in that task, apparently corresponded with Cutter about unfinished schedules and as a result Cutter worked on schedules that they needed as well as on those in the basic order. Early 1895 saw him working not only on the history classes, but completing a classification for Music (VV) for the Newberry Library's use. He sent a draft of the schedule in early February but had to send corrections twice within the next four weeks. Later he described some of the problems that he had encountered. He found it necessary to determine the notation and the extent of subdivision reflected in it. He also found it necessary to draw up a list of instruments then in use and to group them according to classes. An even more basic consideration was the need to determine whether to gather the works of one composer in one place and subdivide these according to music form and instrument, or to first classify by the music form and instrument and only then arrange the works of individual composers in those categories. He at first allowed only the latter course, but shortly thereafter added the option of the former. But the best way to arrange could only be decided

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1 Letters, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, January 31, February 2 and 12, and March 11, 1895, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.
by actual practice because it was a function of the needs of the library users, and Cutter related seven years later,

The main question is, however, Which do those who use the library and go to the shelves want first and want most? In the Forbes Library six years' experience, half with each arrangement shows that our public ask for the forms much the more frequently. And it is not unfair to assume that this would be the case with many town libraries and some college libraries, for the Forbes enjoys the distinction of belonging to both classes.\(^1\)

The problems of making a classification were obviously fraught with both theoretical and practical questions that sometimes required both an enormous amount of labor and a considerable amount of time to solve. In order to help decide the issues in this case, Cutter elicited the aid of Professor Gow, then of the music department of Smith College. Gow evaluated the scheme and discussed at length with Cutter each point of the scheme. Cutter considered the final schedule a product of their combined judgment.

During the remainder of 1895 and 1896 Cutter continued to work on the history classes. He also was able to produce the class for Medicine by using the scheme previously developed by G. E. Wire for the Newberry Library. At the end of 1896 a request from Merrill set the direction

\(^{1}\)C. A. Cutter, "Shelf Classification of Music," LJ, XXVII (February, 1902), 69. Cutter wrote this article in response to one by Clarence W. Ayer entitled, "Shelf Classification of Music," LJ, XXVII (January, 1902), 5-11, in which Ayer described the classification used at Harvard. Ayer preferred that all the music by any one composer be grouped together. He also mentioned the work of Professor Gow of Smith College on Cutter's schedule, a fact also mentioned by Cutter to Merrill in the above cited letters.
for future developments. Merrill inquired whether or not Cutter would develop the schedules as the Newberry Library needed them, rather than alphabetically through the classification order. Of particular importance was their need after he had completed the social sciences for the classes V through Z, especially the language arts. The classes they least needed were the natural sciences and the useful arts (L to R). Consequently, Cutter developed his schedules according to that plan. Although he worked on the middle classes especially after 1900, he had not developed them to any great degree before his death in 1903, to the consternation of those librarians who were taking up his system.¹

He completed the history classes sometime in 1896 or 1897, working at the same time on the social sciences. A rather poignant letter written to Merrill in the summer of 1897 while he was preparing to travel to the 1897 international library conference held in London illustrates some of the factors with which he had to deal.

I believe you have had H to copy & not I, J, K. I could send you I & J. But in the final preparation for the printer & still more on the first proof I have made so many changes & little additions that it would be better for you to wait. H, I, & J will be printed in time for me to take them with me to England on the 25th. Of K, I lost my only copy. I shall leave the

¹Letter, W. S. Merrill to Cutter, October 15, 1896, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence. Cutter penciled in his replies to several specific questions and returned the original to Merrill.
final working out of this class till my return, when I shall have, I hope, a calmer mind.\footnote{1}{Letter, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, June 4, 1897, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.}

He had already written six months earlier, "Well, I suppose a man should not undertake to buy 20,000 vols. a year & run a library & do such [oppressive?] work at the same time."\footnote{2}{Letter, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, December 15, 1896, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.}

During the years 1897 to 1899 he completed the language arts schedules, publishing them in 1900. During the same period he finally completed a schedule for Law (K) and shortly thereafter worked out the schedule for Art (W). In the latter case he developed the schedule not only because Merrill was pressing him for it, but also because the Forbes Library was expanding its own art collections. Nevertheless, the same difficult labor was involved, and Cutter expressed to Merrill his exasperation and perhaps some resignation to the difficulties involved: "I enclose the results of my latest revisions of Art, W. There's no end to it. I shall have to crystallize it in print in self defence."\footnote{3}{Letter, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, August 7, 1902, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.}

During the last four years of his life he also actively pursued the schedules that Merrill at first said were not as important, the sciences and the useful arts. He wrote to Merrill in 1901 of having settled the outlines of the Fine arts, of having completed a draft of the technologies of schedule R, of partial work done in U and V,
and some revisions of the biological sciences. He also mentioned that he should have begun to print the natural sciences (M to P), but that he was holding them up because of the schedule for mathematics. "Mathematics bothers me. I've got to cram up the subject, for the classing of 1880 is entirely inadequate." 

In addition, one other kind of work on the classification also called for Cutter's attention. He knew that an adequate classification required an alphabetical index of subjects. He had supplied an index for the first six expansions when they were published. He was also able to provide over the years indexes for the classes B-K, Q, V-VS, W, and X-Z, and he planned to supply a combined index for the whole classification scheme when it was finally completed. But indexing also proved to be an arduous task. His idea for an index was not simply a list of terms used in the schedules, but a disciplined list of all the subject terms that he could locate that might be used to refer to the subject at hand. Therefore, he diligently searched for subject headings from any one of several sources in order to add them to his list and refer to the proper location in the schedules. For example, in making the index for history, he not only consulted printed library catalogs, but also the index to the Decimal Classification, the subject index to the Harvard Library catalog, Harper's Dictionary

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1 Letter, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, April 24, 1901, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.
of Dates, and New Book of Facts, as well as many other sources.  

When Cutter began issuing the Expansive Classification, he was in conscious competition with Dewey and the Decimal Classification. The latter had already gained an enormous popularity, particularly after its second edition in 1885. By 1893 Dewey had issued two more editions in recognition of the need to keep his system up-to-date and to expand it according to the needs of the generally increasing size of libraries. But even with the formidable nature of Dewey's accomplishment, the chances for Cutter's new system to gain a foothold in the field seemed good. Horace Kephart noted in his report to the World's Congress of Librarians at the Columbian Exposition in 1893 the preponderance of use of Dewey's scheme. But he also noted the optimism of librarians in looking forward to Cutter's new effort. And by 1904 Charles Martel could report that, although the proportionate number of libraries as a whole using the two systems had remained fairly constant, the percentage of those using Cutter's system had the greater increase.  

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1See notices of indexing for the classification in "Cataloging and Classification," LJ, XX (November, 1895), 406; XXIV (May, 1899), 232. See also Letters, Cutter to W. S. Merrill, December 12, 1895 and March 28, 1896, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence, for an indication of the sources in which Cutter searched for headings.

2Horace Kephart, "Classification," LJ, XVIII (July, 1893), 240; Charles Martel, "Classification: Present Tendencies," LJ, XXIX (Conference no., 1904), C133. See also George E. Wire, "Report on Classification and Cataloging,"
Cutter's promotion began with the American Library Association's model library exhibit at the Columbian Exposition. He pressed to have his system as well as Dewey's fully represented in the catalog to be provided. Dewey's original proposal to Mary Salome Cutler, the chairwoman of the Exhibit Committee, was to provide a two-part catalog, one a classed catalog based on the Decimal Classification combined with Cutter's author numbers; the other a dictionary catalog with both the Cutter and Dewey classification numbers combined with Cutter's author numbers. Cutter, however, expressed to Dewey his dissatisfaction with the plan.

I don't like your proposals in regard to the A.L.A. Exhibit Catalog at all & I have written to Miss Cutler to that effect. Taking it for granted that we wish to represent the D.C. & the E.C. equally well, the plan fails miserably. It is true that on the surface there is an appearance of equality but it doesn't go below the surface. . . . The Expansive Classification is left out entirely. Putting in the Cutter book numbers is no good; for they belong as much to the Dewey classification as to the Expansive. Nor does Miss Cutler's proposition--to substitute Cutter class numbers for Dewey cl. no's. in the Dict. catal. improve matters much; for it would not show the classification at all, but merely to a very slight degree the notation. Few people look at the class numbers in a Dict. catalog and fewer still study them.¹

He proposed instead to add a classified section based on his own system.

I think then the least that we should do would be to add to the complete Dewey classed catalog which the State Library will prepare & the Bureau of Education will print a partial Expansive classification, that is, one of the sections of the class-catalog of my part of

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, October 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
the Exhibit. This I will furnish the no's for to the printer. Of course even then D.C. and E.C. will not be on an equality but as I have no library, to furnish the no's, I must content myself with a brick from the house.1

As a result of his proposal, Cutter spent a great deal of time the following February, in conjunction with his lectures at Dewey's Albany Library School, in singlehandedly preparing his own system for the exhibit.2

An interesting sidelight of the competition was the adoption by users of the Decimal Classification of Cutter's author table numbers for use with that system. By the 1890's the demand for the author tables became so great, especially for a revised edition that would carry the original two-figures to three places and that would use only single letters for the vowels and letters, that Cutter made plans for an expanded table. He did not want to do the work himself, however, and arranged for Kate Sanborn to do it. Sanborn had been an Athenaeum assistant until 1892 when she left the institution to marry Gardner Jones, the librarian of the Salem, Massachusetts Public Library. The result of her work, not completed until 1896, was disappointing to Cutter. Instead of using the two-figure table as a basis from which to expand the original tables, Sanborn devised

1Ibid.

an entirely new base and as a result the two tables did not correspond and could not be used together. Cutter later explained that he printed the Cutter-Sanborn table anyway, because "I could not ask a volunteer to do her work over again, and so I printed them." But he added, "Experience has shown that this was a mistake." As a result, in 1899 Cutter arranged for two other persons to draw up a true expansion of the original two-figure table. It was subsequently published in 1902. Thus, there were by the latter date three separate tables of Cutter's author numbers.2

Besides Cutter's original efforts, there were also other ways that the Expansive Classification was promoted. In 1893 when the Library Bureau made its initial effort to supply to libraries printed catalog cards for new books, both the Decimal and Expansive class numbers were placed on the cards. Cutter also found a ready demand for his scheme as a teaching device in the library schools then springing up and he supplied copies of the various schedules as they became available at a reduced rate for students. He ran into difficulty, however, because of the incompleteness of

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1 C. A. Cutter, [Note on Author Tables], Public Libraries, V (May, 1900), 243. See also notes about the matter in "Cataloging and Classification," LJ, XVII (November, 1892), 468; XX (October, 1895), 363.

2 An advance notice of the three-figure tables appeared in LJ, XXIV (August, 1899), 501. See also, C. A. Cutter, Alphabetic-Order Table, Altered and Fitted with Three Figures, by Miss Kate E. Sanborn (Boston: Library Bureau, 1896); C. A. Cutter, Three-figure Alphabetic-order Table (Boston: Library Bureau, 1902).
the seventh expansion and because of his method of distribution. He supplied the schedules as they appeared, but only in the form of the octavo sheets that came from the printer. Because the separate schedules were individually paged and because of Cutter's propensity for making changes in parts of the schedules already issued (but without any marks to distinguish the editions), he could not always keep his records in order as to who had received what parts. Perhaps because of a successful presentation of the Expansive Classification at the 1897 international library conference held in London, Cutter made a special effort to straighten out his subscription records and to pursue a more orderly distribution plan. He also attempted

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1"Central Card Cataloging," LJ, XVIII (December, 1893), 509. After 1891, occasional notes that appeared in the Library Journal gave information on specific libraries and library schools that were using the Expansive Classification. Library schools tended to use both systems to teach classification systems comparatively. See, for example, Adelaide R. Hasse, "The Training of Library Employees--IV," LJ, XX (September, 1895), 303; Agnes Van Valkenburgh, "The State Normal Travelling Cataloger," LJ, XXI (April, 1896), 174; "Wisconsin Summer School of Library Science," LJ, XXI (April, 1896), 192; Katharine Sharpe, "University of Illinois State Library School," LJ, XXIII (Conference no., 1898), C65; [Notice of the Amherst Summer Session], LJ, XXVI (April, 1901), 220. An extensive correspondence with Katharine Sharpe from 1896 to 1900 reveals Cutter's discount prices to library school students and also the difficulty that he had with his records. University of Illinois Archives, Katharine L. Sharpe Papers.

2Cutter, "The Expansive Classification," pp. 84-87, and discussion of the paper, pp. 235-36. Cutter expressed to Mabel Winchell, his assistant at the Forbes Library, that the paper "excited some attention." He added, however, that he was in doubt whether or not it would be printed, "because the officials here have managed to lose it and I do not think that I have the original notes." Letter, Cutter to
at the same time to widen the distribution through the agency of the Newberry Library. He proposed to John Vance Cheney, the librarian, perhaps through the mediation of William S. Merrill, that the Newberry Library act as his distribution agent for the midwestern states. In exchange, Cutter agreed to place the notation of the Newberry Library on a new edition of those schedules already released as well as on new schedules produced. The plan never materialized, however. Cutter sensed that at best his classification work would be a losing proposition financially, and he seemingly resigned himself to that reality. But his belief in expending his money "for an idea" made him only all the more willing to "venture a little more to spread the idea further."  

Despite earlier enthusiasm throughout the library world, the practical success of the Expansive Classification faded away after the turn of the century. It had become

Mabel Winchell, July 27, 1897, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. It was eventually printed. He repeated much of the same material in his "Suitability of the Expansive Classification to College and Reference Libraries," a paper presented to the college and university section of the Association in 1899. On his straightening out of his subscription lists, especially those that obtained the Expansive Classification through the Library Bureau and through other booksellers, see C. A. Cutter, "Notice to Subscribers of the Expansive Classification," LJ, XXIII (June, 1898), 261. He may not have been too successful, however. William P. Cutter mentioned in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XXIX (December, 1904), C234, that the mailing list was "in very bad shape."

1Letter, Cutter to John Vance Cheney, April 7, 1898, Newberry Library, Merrill-Cutter Correspondence.
for Cutter a slow and painfully overbearing project, especially with regard to the completion of the sections for the sciences and the industrial arts. Cutter felt the pressures on him to bring the whole scheme to a conclusion, but those sections were also among the most rapidly changing fields of knowledge, and the attempt to pin them down into a usable scheme proved to be a frustrating task. After Cutter's death in 1903, his nephew and successor at the Forbes Library, William Parker Cutter, assured the library world that every effort would be made to complete the missing schedules. And, in fact, schedules were supplied during the following decade for most of those areas, through the efforts mainly of W. P. Cutter and Richard Bliss. But the posthumous work on the scheme, at times revised extensively from Cutter's original outlines, was never satisfactorily accepted and, in addition, was never indexed.¹

The reason for the demise of the scheme was, in part,

¹See the notice of the continuation of the Expansive Classification in LJ, XXVIII (October, 1903), 696; Also notices in "Cataloging and Classification," LJ, XXIX (October, 1904), 559-60; XXX (April, 1905), 244. See also William P. Cutter, "The Expansive Classification," A.L.A. Bulletin, V (May, 1911), 224-27. With regard to a general index for the whole scheme, W. P. Cutter wrote on page 227 of the preceding, "I can only say that a portion of such an index is compiled. I estimate that with the additions made necessary by the indexes to science such an index would require more pages than the whole Decimal Classification (three columns set close in the same type as the Decimal Classification Index). There are now 65,000 entries in the index, and none of the four hundred pages of science are indexed. The mere printing and composition would cost thousands of dollars, enough to make the Expansive cost over twenty thousand dollars from its inception." It was a very pessimistic prediction and suggested the future of the scheme, that it would be left unfinished.
the absence of the inspiration of the originator. But there was another more significant factor.

Just as the cataloging situation went through a great change during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, so also did the mood shift with regard to shelf classification. During the first fifteen years of the American Library Association, the battle had been between broad and minutely subdivided shelf classification. Cutter and Dewey effectively won their case and the superiority of minutely classed systems prevailed, but not only because of their arguments. They prevailed also because the increasing sizes of individual libraries demanded the more detailed subject arrangements. By the 1890's the question had become not whether there would be minute shelf classification, but whether there would be some system that would be a satisfactory enumeration of subjects first for the largest and most specialized of libraries—a generally accepted universal classification—and second, in a standardized way for even the very smallest or most general libraries. Cutter's solution for the first group was contained in his detailed seventh expansion and in great measure his accomplishment was praised as much superior to anything that had as yet been produced.

For the second group Cutter built a flexibility and adaptability into his system that he hoped would allow even the smallest and most diversified type of library to adopt it. He supplied the materials for manipulating the notation
and at times the schedules themselves. His notation was accordingly an ingenious structure of great complexity, although it also had inconsistencies. The mood of the times, however, demanded less adaptability and more simplicity and standardization. Cutter's system was simply too diverse to meet that requirement. His notation again came under criticism, this time not because of some sort of cabalistic appearance, but because it demanded too much effort on the part of the individual librarian to adapt. The most common criticism was that Cutter did not consistently follow either hierarchical or non-hierarchical order in the notation, but shifted back and forth between the two methods. Furthermore, he was also inconsistent in his use of mnemonic suggestiveness. In summary, Cutter had supplied a broader classification scheme than had ever before been provided, but his notation, made to adapt to different size libraries and bearing several inner inconsistencies, was still too complicated for the library world as a whole.1

Horace Kephart, the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library, expressed in 1893 the essence of the matter to Addison Van Name, the librarian of the Yale University Library.

As to the Cutter classification, I chose it (the 6th) for the following reasons.--

It was necessary that work should begin immediately upon a new classification of this library, and be carried on with all possible despatch. I had attempted a scheme of my own, but found the labor so great that it bid fair to take up all my time, unless I trifled with it, and that I would not do. I did carry the thing out far enough to see that it would be no great improvement over Cutter's and that settled it. I preferred Cutter's to any of the other printed schemes, and experience has justified me, to my own satisfaction.

The reason why my own scheme proved abortive was simply this.--I had fallen into the same trap that Dewey, Cutter, and most other classifiers were already occupying. I had made my classification the slave of its notation. This fundamental and irretrievable error is the source of nearly all the ills that classifiers are heir to.

Whenever you parcel out the arts and sciences by assigning a figure or letter to 9 or 26 of them, and then proceed to subdivide each of them into 9 or 26 groups, and so on ad infin., you sin against the first law of nature; and nature will be revenged upon you without mercy. A large "base" will not help matters, for the larger the base, the more complicated the symbol. Dewey's base is in reality much greater than 10, because of the point, and Cutter's is far greater than 26 because of both the point and the mixture of letters and figures. . . .

Both Dewey and Cutter have made a bad matter worse by fooling with mnemonics. The result is in some cases monstrous. . . . It is necessary to give a distinguishing mark to each of the grand divisions of knowledge; but anything more than this is a prodigality of fussiness and frills.¹

Kephart went on to describe his own procedure in developing a classification. He would have made his division of

¹Letter, H. Kephart to Addison Van Name, April 13, 1893, Yale University Library, Librarians' Correspondence.
knowledge first, based as in Cutter's on the principle of evolution. Only afterward would he have made a notation for the system. He then concluded with his resignation to use Cutter's scheme.

But I have no time for such work, and am well satisfied, as things are, with Cutter. The only class with which I have much fault to find is Sociology, which is not subdivided to suit me; and yet I have just finished that section in our library and find Cutter so vast an improvement over the old no-classification that it ill becomes me to pick flaws.¹

The destined end to Cutter's efforts seemed to come in the process that led eventually to still another scheme of shelf classification—the system adopted by the Library of Congress by J. C. M. Hanson and Charles Martel, its chief architects. When the need for a new shelf classification arose for that library with the completion of a new building and a change of administration in 1897, Hanson and Martel set about examining existing systems. Hanson had had first hand experience with the Expansive Classification when he used it at the University of Wisconsin during his four years there from 1893 to 1897. Both of them were enthusiastic over what they deemed as the superiority of Cutter's enumeration of knowledge. But they also found the notation less than desirable, especially Hanson, who had come to the kinds of conclusions listed above. In addition, Cutter's seventh expansion was far from being completed and they needed the most extensive system available immediately. They inquired of both Dewey and Cutter as to whether their

¹Ibid.
systems could be changed to meet the purposes of the Library of Congress. Cutter was more than willing, although he hoped for a while that the Library of Congress would adopt his system in toto. But by the time the serious effort to produce a shelf classification for the Library of Congress got underway after 1901, the incompleteness of Cutter's seventh expansion and the desirability for a different notation made it mandatory that they proceed to build their own system. They in large measure, however, worked from Cutter's completed schedules and the resulting Library of Congress Classification bore strong resemblances to the Expansive Classification, both in the arrangement of the main classes and in the enumeration of some of the individual subjects.¹

Cutter's legacy in the area of shelf classification was the presentation of an ideal rather than of a system for actual use. His own system was never completed and has subsequently all but passed out of existence in practice. The appearance of the Library of Congress Classification over the subsequent years, with its larger resources of experts and of facilities for keeping it up-to-date, in fact,

¹For the relationship of the Expansive Classification to the Library of Congress Classification, see La-montagne, American Library Classification, chs. XIII-XVI, passim.; A more detailed account including the correspondence between Cutter and the Library of Congress is given in Scott, "J. C. M. Hanson and his Contribution to Twentieth-century Cataloging," especially ch. IV, pp. 105-11, and chs. VI-VII; cf., also, James C. M. Hanson, "Library of Congress Classification for College Libraries," LJ, XLVI (February 15, 1921), 151-54.
made the completion of the Expansive Classification after Cutter's death a seemingly superfluous matter. But Cutter's effort took a supreme place among the other nineteenth century efforts at making a universal enumeration of knowledge.
CHAPTER VIII

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

At the same time that Charles Cutter pursued the systematization of libraries through bibliographic organization and efficient library management, he also participated intimately in the leadership of the American Library Association. He helped in its organization in 1876; he served on many of its most important committees, and served as its president from 1887 to 1889; and he provided in both the Nation and the Library Journal a continuous stream of opinion concerning the issues facing the profession. His total contribution reveals, therefore, not only his activities, but also his interpretation of the professional nature of the new organization.

Association Activities, 1875-1880

Cutter's participation in the formation of a librarians' professional organization began in that bustle of activity that resulted in the 1876 Special Report. General John Eaton, the United States Commissioner of Education, had initiated work on that project in late 1874 in an effort to encourage the usefulness of libraries in the cultural uplift of America. By the time of its publication in 1876,
Cutter had provided the largest contribution of any single person. ¹

The effort to produce the report was in many respects more significant than the resulting work itself, for it heralded the first national cooperative venture among American librarians since the ill-fated 1853 New York librarian's convention. General Eaton's office became at once a national point of contact among the leading librarians of the day and a symbol of their common professional interests. When talk of a second librarians' convention gained currency during late 1875 and early 1876, Eaton's office became an information clearinghouse available for the planners of the meeting that eventually took place. ²

The idea for the October 1876 meeting had seemingly arisen concurrently from different quarters. It had been suggested to Eaton as early as the spring of 1875 by Thomas Hale Williams, the librarian of the Minneapolis Athenaeum and a participant in the 1853 convention. Eaton subsequently circulated the suggestion among prominent librarians, including Cutter. At the same time, however, and apart from Williams' suggestion, Melvil Dewey also began to promote

¹With the exception of those articles attributed to the editors (which in many cases were so listed in order to preserve the anonymity of the individual authors), no other contributor wrote as much. Cutter's total contribution to both volumes of the report amounted to approximately 190 out of a total of 1,276 pages.

the same cause when he moved to Boston in the spring of 1876. The two streams of thought merged, for in the coming weeks Dewey was able to work through the agency of Eaton's office and its already developed communication channels in order to issue the call for the meeting.¹

Cutter's participation in the arrangements took two forms. First, he served as an advisor to Dewey as the latter developed the plans for the meeting. Dewey had visited Cutter immediately upon his arrival in Boston in April 1876 in order to secure Cutter's evaluation of his classification system. The two men built up an amiable friendship and Dewey spent many hours with the older man seeking his advice and support.² Cutter was enthusiastic and hopeful about Dewey's various professional projects. Others were not so inclined, however, a fact that Dewey related in 1880 as he recounted the first four years of the Association's history.³

Second, Cutter informed the readers of the Nation of the proposed meeting. The first such comment appeared in the April 20, 1876 issue, less than two weeks after

¹Ibid., pp. 36-37. See also the relevant correspondence in Dewey, [Diary], Bks. I-V. Unfortunately, Eaton's letter copy-book of the late spring and early summer of 1876 is missing. See also Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 7.

²An account of the meetings between the two men with regard to Dewey's Amherst classification scheme is given above, Ch. VII, pp. 492-93. The same diary entries also make note of the many meetings they had.

Dewey had first come to see him. A second item appeared at the beginning of June.\footnote{[Notices of a Proposed Library Convention], Nation, XXII (April 20, 1876), 264; (June 1, 1876), 350. The first two notes are not specifically attributed to Cutter in the Haskell index nor in any other place. Cutter was, however, a heavy contributor on libraries during this period and it may be that the brevity of the notes is the reason that they were omitted from the account book of the Nation for this period. The opinion in favor of Cutter's authorship is also supported by Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 24.} In a third item, appearing in the issue of July 27, 1876, Cutter spelled out his sentiments of the professional nature of librarianship and the value of such a convention in that regard.

A convention of librarians is likely to be held in Philadelphia next October. The profession is awaking to a sense that it is a profession, and beginning to feel that it has as much need of and as much right to an organization as the teachers, or doctors, or dentists, or firemen. Conventions may not produce any very startling results; the papers read may be empty, or dull, or wrong-headed; the few valuable essays may find a tired or inattentive audience; but good-fellowship is likely to be promoted and esprit de corps increased, and, in the present case, something will be gained by the public recognition of the existence of the occupation, as one having certain special duties, requiring peculiar aptitudes, and deserving to be entered by an apprenticeship. As long as the chief libraries were those of colleges or historical societies, used by comparatively few readers, of whom a large part might be expected to be trained in investigation and the use of books, it was natural and not objectionable that librarianship should be a refuge for those who had failed in other occupations. With the growth, however, of city and mercantile libraries, dealing with large numbers of borrowers, where promptitude and despatch were all-important, a new class of men were secured—men having if not business training, at least aptitude for business. And as the work possible to libraries has developed, and they have more and more come forward as companion educators to the public schools, it has further become evident that the man of business is not competent to do all that a librarian can do usefully. All librarians are more or less called on to assist
investigation; if not supposed to be omniscient, they
are at least expected to know where to look for any
bit of information that is wanted. But the town librar­
ian cannot be content with this; he must be qualified
to direct the reading of his clientage; he should be in
a way the literary pastor of the town; he must be able
to become familiar with his flock, especially with the
young, to gain their confidence, to select their read­
ing, and gradually to elevate their taste. Like a min­
ister, he must be content with slow progress and meagre
results. It is only by flowery paths and gentle ascents
that he can lead them from Braddon to Scott and from
Tupper to Tennyson. But he will keep his object always
in mind, and will never be satisfied but as he sees the
percentage of fiction read decreasing and the proportion
of travels, and history, and science, and philosophy
increasing. There are librarians who have effected
this, some by annotated catalogues, some by personal
intercourse (that is, as it were, by the sermon and by
the pastoral visit). If they can be brought together
and made to tell their methods, others will be moved to
imitate them. This, at least, was the result of the
Convention of 1853 at New York—a meeting which has
probably never been heard of by the greater part of
the present generation of librarians. Frequent con­
ventions may become wearisome but one every twenty­
three years can certainly be endured by the most indif­
erent of the profession.1

The comparison of librarianship with a pastoral calling, the
business aptitude needed, the relationship of the library
to the public schools, the role of the librarian in cultural
uplift, and even the praise of annotated catalogs were words
that Cutter would reiterate many times over during the com­
ing years.

1C. A. Cutter, "The Proposed Library Convention at
Philadelphia," Nation, XXIII (July 27, 1876), 59-60. A
fourth item by Cutter consisted of a post-conference report
and appeared as, "The Library Convention," Nation, XXIII
(November 2, 1876), 271-72.
conference would "afford opportunity for mutual consultation and practical co-operation."\(^1\) Cutter underlined the theme in his lead article in the first issue of the Library Journal in September 1876. He gave an account of the cooperative effort of the Société Franklin pour la Propagation des Bibliothèques Populaires to extend library privileges throughout France. The "Franklin Society" had supplied books to local libraries and, of particular interest to Cutter, had produced a catalog that at one stroke provided both ready-made access to the local collections and a book selection tool for local librarians, enabling them to expend their limited funds wisely. He suggested that similar cooperative goals were needed in America—"where the ability to read is so much more widely spread, and where libraries are at once so much more used,"—in order that this country would not be "backward in providing collections of books by which the education received in its public schools can be confirmed and continued."\(^2\)

When the October 1876 Philadelphia meeting was convened, Cutter continued his emphasis on cooperation in a paper on the cooperative acquisitions of pamphlets. Libraries, considered as a whole, were the collectors of the literature of a nation, and pamphlets would of necessity be needed for research relating to the nation. Cutter's

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\(^1\) "Call for a Library Conference," in Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 54.

\(^2\) C. A. Cutter, "The Franklin Society of Paris," LJ, I (September, 1876), 5.
resolution of the problem of the enormous numbers of pamphlets to be acquired was not to lay stress on various kinds of better storage, or on more efficient cataloging, or on a systematic program of disposal. Rather, he suggested that the bulk could best be handled if the work was shared through a cooperative plan of collecting in which libraries of different sizes and purposes would collect the materials most relevant to their collections.¹

As the meeting progressed, Cutter received committee appointments. The first was to the Committee on Order of Business with William F. Poole and William T. Peoples.² Next, Justin Winsor, who had been elected president, appointed him to the Committee on Sizes; and he was elected to the Committee on a New Edition of Poole's Index to Periodical Literature.³

The last two assignments above, both dealing with standardization in the area of cooperative cataloging, set the theme for the kind of initial professional involvement


²LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 95. William T. Peoples was the librarian of the New York City Mercantile Library Association.

³Dewey's motion that Winsor, Cutter and Poole be a committee on Poole's Index was passed unanimously, LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 116-17. Subsequently, Cutter reported the committee's work. Winsor appointed a committee on sizes during the third session of the conference. The committee reported to the conference during the seventh session on some general guidelines for making rules on sizes. Winsor subsequently appointed James L. Whitney (Boston Public Library), Dewey, and Cutter to the permanent committee, LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 109, 139-41.
that Cutter achieved. Between that first conference and 1885, he participated in every major cooperative cataloging project sponsored by the Association. The key to cooperative action was the appointment of a Cooperation Committee early in 1877 composed of Cutter, Frederick Jackson and Frederic B. Perkins, with Dewey, the secretary of the Association, serving as the committee's secretary. Its primary work was to recommend standardized library supplies and procedures to the Association's members and to function as a library supply department. In order to back up its work, it began a "bibliothecal museum"; that is, a library supply research center in which products and procedures were collected, compared, and evaluated.1

Cutter promptly became the chairman of the committee, a post that he held until 1885. During its early years, however, the innovative spirit and driving force of the committee was, in reality, Dewey. His early role in this respect was a fact often mentioned with great appreciation by other leaders in the Association.2 Dewey brought to the committee not only his experience as a librarian, but also his acute awareness that the library movement, along with the wider educational field, was an emerging

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1The appointments and an initial report of the work of the committee are given in, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, "Preliminary Report," LJ, I (April, 1877), 283-86.

2Tributes to Dewey's energy and enthusiasm were common, especially during the initial years of the Association. That did not mean, however, that everyone agreed with his solutions, a fact that became very apparent during the 1880's.
business front that could be developed only if standardization prevailed. For Dewey, libraries were in need of supplies and of sound practices, both of which would promote economy. But economy could come only through a standardization of the market, and standardization could come only by effective cooperation among librarians. In the work of the Cooperation Committee the cooperative goals of the library profession and Dewey's business sense merged.

Cutter's own propensity for deriving economy through labor-saving devices and procedures, already in evidence in his work at the Athenaeum, provided a basis for his hearty approval of Dewey's work and for his backing of the younger man in every way that he could. He served as Dewey's counselor (along with Justin Winsor and Richard R. Bowker) in order to temper with the wisdom of his own extended experience the younger man's fervent enthusiasm for cooperative projects. He brought his Athenaeum library into the work as an experimental laboratory in order to test some of the committee's findings. And he assisted Dewey in editing the fledgling Library Journal by supplying him not only with a steady stream of articles, but also by editing the technical and erudite "Bibliography" feature.1 With the

1Cutter's relationship with Dewey with regard to the Library Journal was purely of a 'down home' nature during this period. A general note, most likely Dewey's, suggests that spirit in pointing out Cutter's special bibliographical project on witchcraft and demonology: "Mr. Cutter, of the Boston Athenaeum, while contributing monthly to the Library Journal many pages of painstaking notes on current bibliography, is also, we understand, at work on the bibliography of the Devil (though he is perhaps the last
encouragement of Bowker, the liaison between the Association and Frederick Leypoldt, the publisher most singularly interested in professional library matters (and the publisher of the Library Journal), and Justin Winsor, the president of the Association and the most outstanding librarian of the day, the cooperative projects of the committee took initial form purposively and quickly. Cutter and Dewey, working very closely during this period, along with Jackson and Perkins, made the Cooperation Committee an active and aggressive force.

During 1877, Dewey recommended two far-reaching projects to the Association through the Cooperation Committee which were readily accepted. The first was to provide cooperative cataloging of new books. A committee on Publishers' Title-Slips was appointed to supervise the work. The plan called for publishers to send their forthcoming books to either the Boston Public Library or to the Boston Athenaeum in order to have them cataloged just before publication. In that way the publishers could print the cataloging information in the books themselves in the form of author, title and subject slips. When a librarian received the books, he would have only to remove the slips and paste them on catalog cards. In addition, Cutter was to add subject headings from his dictionary catalog system, while Dewey was to contribute the classification numbers from

man to whom it could be a labor of love)." LJ, IV (January, 1879), 25.
his Amherst classification system. The publishers were to be assessed a charge of one dollar per title in order to cover the costs. ¹

The second project was to produce a printed catalog of five or ten thousand book titles that would function both as a list of best books recommended by the Association (similar to the catalog of the Franklin Society) and as a basic collection and catalog for small libraries. The idea, presented by Dewey in an article entitled, "The Coming Catalogue," resulted in the appointment by the Cooperation Committee of a committee for its preparation, of which Cutter was a member. ²

The chief need for both projects was a uniform code of cataloging rules. Dewey had already made a preliminary

¹The printed title-slip project was initiated at the New York conference in September 1877 with Winsor's appointment of a committee consisting of himself, Bowker, and Dewey. The first report of the committee, A.L.A. Committee on Publishers' Title-Slips, [First Report], LJ, III (May, 1878), 113-15, and an advertisement of the project, LJ, III (August, 1878), 243, gave evidence of considerable initial enthusiasm, including the enrollment of thirteen publishers. The second report of the committee, A.L.A. Committee on Publishers' Title-Slips, [Second Report], LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 292, notes the use of Dewey's classification numbers.

²The committee members were Bowker, Winsor, Cutter, Perkins, and Jackson, which amounted to the Cooperation Committee, the president of the Association and Bowker, who was in control of the bibliographical apparatus of the Publishers' Weekly. Dewey was, of course, unofficially connected with it by virtue of his secretaryship of the Cooperation Committee. See, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, [Seventh Report], LJ, III (November, 1878), 331. See also above, Ch. VI, passim, especially pp. 427-29.
report on such a code in January 1877. Subsequently, a Committee on Uniform Title Entries was appointed at the September 1877 New York conference with Cutter serving as its chairman. The committee issued a report the following March, but because the Association held no meeting in 1878, official action could not be taken on it. As already pointed out, the problems of a uniform code were far more complex than had been supposed, and when Cutter gave the committee's report at the 1879 Boston conference (under the name, Cooperative Cataloging Committee), the lack of a definitive response by the members of the Association delayed its acceptance and the code was returned to the committee for additional work.¹

The 1879 conference produced one more cooperative venture that was intimately involved with the necessity for uniform cataloging. Richard Bowker delivered a paper on the need for a standardized list of subject headings that would incorporate the rigorous goals that Cutter had proposed in his Rules. The Association directed Justin Winsor to appoint still another committee, this one on the preparation of an index to subject headings. Cutter, who had been included on the committee, also assumed its leadership.²

¹See above, Ch. VI, pp. 448-57.
²See above, Ch. VI, pp. 441-45, where the work of the committee is discussed in detail.
Cutter and the Professional Ideals of the Early Association

During the period from 1876 to the end of 1879 the organization and growth of the American Library Association proceeded without difficulty. The leadership, though it officially included some librarians from other areas of the country (most notably, William F. Poole in Chicago and his protégé, Charles Evans in Indianapolis), was for the most part concentrated in the Boston area. The composition and activities of the Executive Board, which was elected at the annual meetings and which chose the Association's officers from among its own members, reflected the informal concentration of power. The Board had the authority to increase its own membership and exercised that right in appointing the Cooperation Committee. Accordingly, the Cooperation Committee met with the Board as full voting members.¹

Meetings of the Board were most often held in the offices of the Boston Public Library (afterwards at the Harvard College Library when Justin Winsor moved there in late 1877), at the Boston Athenaeum, or even in the parlor at Winsor's home. There was not any conscious policy of exclusion. Instead, the needs of the organization dictated using those who had the ability, resources, and geographical proximity to participate in the work. Boston made a natural starting point for the fledgling organization.

¹The authority for the Board to increase its own membership was specified in the constitution. See, A.L.A., "Constitution," LJ, I (March, 1877), 253. See also the committee's appointment, LJ, III (April, 1877), 283.
Efforts were made to broaden participation. Cutter's Committee on Uniform Title Slips included A. R. Spofford, librarian of the Library of Congress, and John Dyer, the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library. In 1877 when a party of American librarians attended an international library conference in London, all of those on the trip were invited to attend the meetings of the Executive Board held on board ship, both on the way over and on the way back. But the coterie of officers was obvious. It included the top leaders of the new association. They carried the business of the Association with them and used the occasion of the trip to plan future projects. The esprit de corps that they developed helped the Association through its initial years. Written accounts of the crossing, the conference meetings, and the various tours that occupied their spare moments, singularly emphasized the camaraderie that resulted.¹

Cutter's own relationship with Dewey became even stronger. In late 1878 when Dewey announced his impending marriage to Annie Godfrey, the only female librarian to go on the London trip, Cutter contributed to the general good will of the occasion by sending Dewey a letter of congratulations written facetiously in a mock form of reformed spelling:

¹The business meetings were noted in LJ, II (November/December, 1877), 221. For an extended treatment of the trip, see Budd Gambee, "The Great Junket: American Participation in the Conference of Librarians, London, 1877," Journal of Library History, II (January, 1967), 9-44.
My dear Dyi,

Accept this trifl from your frend and coadjytor. I lqv it to your injenyity to draw out the parallele bêtwn the voiag which we took together, with which it ma bè sen to hav a çertan connecjn and the voiag of lif upon a ny tak of which you ar about to enter.

Yours veri truli,
C: A. C.

Although the spirit of the leaders seemed cohesive, there was another side of the picture that suggests there was less unity than was apparent. Underneath the coopera-tive activities lay more serious differences of professional philosophy. On the one hand there was the youthful enthuziasm of Dewey and his business-like approach to library matters. His interest was more singularly in the structure of the professional organization itself in both its formal and informal aspects. That is to say, both formally and informally the growing professional organization needed to be unified in its work and goals. All library concerns could be reduced to matters of economy, including, one would suspect, even the more stately ideals upon which the move-ment was based. Because Dewey was forceful by nature, he continually attempted to direct the organizational power necessary to achieve reform and standardization, particu-larly through the projects that he conceived. During the first four years the organizational structure of the new association served this pattern admirably, not only be-cause of its concentration of organizational power, but

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1Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, undated but in a folder of letters of congratulations to Dewey and Annie Godfrey on the announcement of their marriage, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Their marriage took place on October 19, 1878.
because the other leaders were for the most part content to defer to Dewey in matters of planning and organization.

On the other hand, many of the older, more tempered leaders, who had obtained their education in the ante-bellum period, saw the library movement more in terms of its cultural role than in the structure of the professional organization. Their more passive, less bureaucratic, and more idealistic approach to the library movement arose in part out of earlier emphases in the changing American intellectual and cultural scene during the mid-nineteenth century. Northern, and especially New England, intellectuals, reacting to the boundless spirit of the Jacksonian period, called for consolidation and a renewal of the social order based on more established institutions and personal values. Although the expressions of what was needed varied according to the individuals involved, several themes recurred. The new order was to be a combination of genteel culture and democratic ideals that would result in an enlightened democracy. It could best be carried out by a corps of younger, elite leaders who embodied the ideals in their lives, and who incorporated a grasp of the emerging sciences (including evolutionary views) and a more disciplined approach to reform organization. The standards for personal and social ethics, especially among those who were older, were based on a conception of authority as it existed in small-town New England culture. As a result of the change in intellectual climate, professional organizations of
every sort sprung up in the years following the Civil War, all dedicated to defining goals and standards and to the establishment of authority in American intellectual life. The library association was no exception.¹

To the degree that the younger library leaders had been less exposed to the ante-bellum milieu, however, it seems obvious that their interest in the finer points of the cultural ideal was eclipsed by their increasing attention to the organization itself. They were part of a general shift in social thinking that attempted to deal with the growing complexities of urbanized America by recourse to the impersonal authority of more involved bureaucratic structures.² This is not to say that the ideals were missing, but rather that the sources of the ideals were less prominent. In contradistinction, those more directly heirs of the patrician background of the earlier movement were more interested in the authority of their persons and views than in bureaucracies involving power. Although they stressed a more scientific approach to organization, they also showed an aversion to centralization of power.³ They

¹This view of changes in American intellectual and cultural life is based primarily on the work of John Higham and George M. Fredrickson. See above, Ch. I, p. 37, footnote 1, for the references cited.


³See especially Tyack's description of the aversion to politics among Brahmins in George Ticknor, pp. 182-84.
saw themselves, instead, in a more passive role in which discussion of the issues of librarianship was to be preferred to a more rigid conformity of methods.

The various library leaders who responded to the need for a professional organization were doubtless mindful of the need for a sound managerial approach to librarianship. But they resisted in varying degrees the effort to take away the freedom that any one librarian had to do as he saw fit in his own library. They resisted, therefore, the moves of those such as Dewey to make rigid conformity to any particular aspect of library economy a mark of being a professional librarian. On one extreme, William F. Poole, a forceful leader in his own right, very early in the life of the organization spoke out against all librarians running their libraries in one prescribed manner, either in the processes involved or in the library equipment used. Of a more indulgent nature was Justin Winsor, more directly related to the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community, who, while he organized his own library work in his own individual way, was cognizant enough of the need for cooperation and standardization to give tacit approval and counsel to Dewey's ventures.¹

¹One of Poole's first extended comments on the matter is contained in the A.L.A. Conference Discussion on uniform title entries, LJ, II (September, 1877), 28-29. He said, "The Association ought not to prescribe any special rule in this matter, no more than it sought to say what kind of a necktie a man should wear." Winsor always counseled moderation, but the letters existent in Dewey's correspondence indicate time and again Winsor's support for the younger man during the early years. A view of Winsor's own library
Cutter occupied a slightly different position than that of Poole or Winsor during the same formative years of the Association. He included in his own philosophy of librarianship very strong elements from both ideological extremes but without any evidence of an irreconcilable conflict between them. On the one hand his work at the Athenaeum and his support of the cooperative projects and goals proposed by Dewey illustrated his own propensity for rigorous organizational practices. He expressed in his annual report to the trustees of the Athenaeum in 1880 his conception of the library as a system of processes governed by goals. To him the library could by analogy be considered a finely ordered machine all elements of which contributed to the overall product, efficiency in library use. He found himself more than once irritated by those at the Athenaeum who deprecated his efforts to systematize that library.

Moreover, he did not view his work as limited to the Athenaeum alone. In his systematizing efforts he saw a way to contribute to the professionalization of the library field as a whole. It was in this regard that he was most in touch with Dewey's efforts. He strove to make his own work


1Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879." It is noteworthy, however, that his expression was guarded, in order to offset any criticism that such a mechanized view might have provoked among the proprietors. See above, Ch. III, pp. 183-84.
on cataloging available to all and usable by even the least sophisticated. In the area of shelf classification he very early picked up Dewey's hope that a standard system might be produced that would benefit librarians everywhere.

On the other hand Cutter also vigorously stressed the ideals of the older generation. He had received his basic education at Harvard College during the ante-bellum period and doubtless experienced the tensions of mid-century America during that time. As early as 1869 in a review of Edward Edwards' Free Town Libraries, he echoed George Ticknor's views of the role of the library as an agent of cultural consolidation and control. With those sentiments he could only have responded enthusiastically to General Eaton's request for contributions for a volume on libraries. Eaton expressed quite freely to his contributors his conviction that libraries were "valuable auxiliaries to education and culture." The resulting two-volume work admirably illustrated such concerns.

Cutter, "A Librarian on Free Libraries," p. 234. See above, Ch. II, pp. 94-95, for a fuller treatment of the review.

Eaton's phrase recurs often in the letters he wrote to enlist writers for the project. Of particular note is his circular letter to educational journals seeking support for his education exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia. He stated that the exhibit would demonstrate "the primary and fundamental relation of education to all other interests of society, to Governments and their perpetuity." He concluded his circular appeal with the hope that the combined effort of "teachers and friends of education" would result in "a more universal recognition in public affairs, of education as the cause of all causes insuring the prosperity and perpetuity of our institutions." Letter, J. Eaton to T. W. Bicknell (editor of the New
After the American Library Association was formed, Cutter joined with Winsor in a concern that the wider public, especially those in the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community, be able to see the broad cultural base of the new professional organization, and lend their participation and support to it as a profession of high calling. During the second conference in New York in 1877, Winsor commented that he had heard that the directors of the Boston Athenaeum were pleased that Cutter, their librarian, should be going to the conference in New York and afterwards to London. He continued, "I think that class of people in Boston is heartily interested in the work of our Association."\(^1\) Later, Cutter conveniently summarized the spirit of the discussion in the Nation.

As soon as the friends of education, the believers in culture, the lovers of books can be made to feel that the Society is not devoted to dry details of management, but intends to take in hand the objects in which they are most interested, we fancy they will be ready enough to join and assist with purse and influence.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) A.L.A. Conference Discussion, \(\text{LJ, II (September, 1877), 36.}\)

\(^2\) C. A. Cutter, [New York Library Conference], Nation, XXV (October 11, 1877), 228. Two years later the hope for the support of the wider Boston-Cambridge intellectual community must have seemed close indeed. Participants in the 1879 Boston conference included, among others, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, James Freeman Clarke, and Charles Francis Adams, Jr.
Cutter's statement in the *Nation* reveals yet another point of contact between himself and the older, patrician ideals. His contributions to the *Nation*, many in the form of notices in the section entitled "Literary Notes," were typical of the rationale that the editors, Edwin L. Godkin and later, Wendell Phillips Garrison, sought to fulfill. The periodical was designed to provide an intellectual but realistic force of opinion upon the development of the national character, especially in the areas of politics and education. Its pages became a miniature university where the most eminent specialists in every field wrote their observations and opinions.¹

Cutter wrote as a specialist on library affairs and on European (especially French) cultural matters. The notice of his death years later stated,

He used to quote the saying that the librarian who reads is lost; but he both read and wrote admirably. His culture was very wide, and the evidences of it are embalmed in the *Nation*, to which he was a voluminous contributor (in the mass) for thirty-five years, with slight interruption. His odds and ends of leisure were naturally employed for "Notes" rather than for longer essays, which were, however, not wanting, in the shape of articles or book reviews, or, a few years ago, in a charming series of letters from England and France, in which his architectural interest was plainly revealed.²


²[Obituary on C. A. Cutter], *Nation*, LXXVII (September 17, 1903), 229. The last reference was to a chronicle of his travels in Europe during 1894 in which he described in detail the cathedrals and towns that he visited.
The most important material of this sort with respect to librarianship was Cutter's more than twenty years of reporting on American Library Association conferences beginning with the Philadelphia meeting. He regularly gave accounts of the main points of debate and often expanded on the remarks made in order to relate them to the values that the Nation represented. Because the conferences were not always held each year, he often gave résumés of what had been discussed at previous meetings. By doing so he was able to provide a sense of continuity to the discussions at hand and to show his own interpretation of how the profession was developing and fulfilling its broader cultural ideals.

The most obvious area of early controversy in which Cutter expressed his cultural overview was the issue of fiction in the public libraries. The existence of fiction, especially that which was light, popular and often written in a sensational manner, seemed to bely high cultural ideals. Nevertheless, such fiction had become increasingly popular in the United States. Librarians who felt deeply about the high purpose of the library found themselves in a quandary between several diverse purposes. The library collected all the literature of a nation, served the public at its own intellectual level, and yet attempted to provide only the best books to the public. In actual situations libraries tended to show a variety of policies on the matter ranging from purchasing no fiction at all, to purchasing
large amounts of popular fiction according to the public demand.¹

Cutter had already shown sensitivity to the problem in his praise of the printed catalog of the Quincy Public Library. That publication, prepared under the direction of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., a former trustee of the Athenaeum, included lengthy evaluative annotations after many of the entries. Comparing the annotations with those of the class-lists of the Boston Public Library, Cutter found them useful in "encouraging, directing and improving the taste for reading."² Moreover, though he had always enjoyed French culture and literature, Cutter was aware that some of the French novelists produced works that were questionable for the common reader. In his 1876 Association paper he repeated approvingly the opinion in the catalog of the Franklin Society, that the peasant would find much of the objectionable literature enjoyable, even though the literature was, not generally of the kind which it is well for anybody to read. The writers prefer to analyze abnormal characters, to depict objectionable morals, and the manners of the demi monde; they hold the mirror up only to the unpleasant side of nature.³

¹ An extensive discussion of this question can be found in Esther J. Carrier, Fiction in Public Libraries, 1876-1900 (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1965).

² C. A. Cutter, Review of Quincy, Mass., Public Library, Catalogue, in Nation, XXI (October 14, 1875), 251. Cutter's appreciation of the value of annotations was demonstrated in the Athenaeum's List of Additions which was begun in 1877 and intended for wide distribution.

American Library Association leaders generally chose a middle course between the extremes, following George Ticknor who had proposed that, regardless of ideals, the library must serve all of the citizens, no matter how poor their tastes. Therefore, some popular fiction ought to be purchased for those who could not read more serious works. Having some fiction, however, would likely provide a way to interest the common person in reading of a more substantial nature. With reading guidance the common reader could begin the ascent of a cultural ladder.

When the fiction collection of the Boston Public Library came under public scrutiny during 1877 with an eye towards reducing the annual expenditures, Cutter reiterated that fiction such as that of Mrs. Southworth, Mrs. Stephens, Horatio Alger, and Oliver Optic was justified for the common reader, because,

it gives them pleasure; does them at least no harm; and, being suited to them brings them a certain amount of intellectual profit and a kind of moral instruction; and finally, that attracts them to the library, where there is a chance that something better may get hold of them.¹

He added another aspect to the above 'ladder' theory, however. The librarian would have a chance to "raise by personal influence the character of the reading."² Referring to an

¹Cutter, "The Public Library and its Choice of Books," p. 73. See also his extract on the same theme from the 9th annual report of the trustees of the Watertown (Mass.) Free Public Library, in "Record of Recent Issues," LJ, I (March, 1877), 262.

address by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to the teachers of
the Quincy public schools in May 1876, he reiterated the
idea that the library and the librarian were intimately
connected with the total educational uplift of the citizenry.
Libraries were but an extension of the public school system.
The librarian functioned as a literary pastor and an intel-
lectual physician. He must not only know the qualities of
the books that he dispensed, but,

he must, too, have a quick discernment of character,
mental and moral, to know how far he can go and what to
say to each of his patients: for he is to be, in a
literary way, the city physician, and must be able to
administer from the bibliothecal dispensary just that
strengthening draught that will suit each case.  

In 1879 the Association dealt more directly with
the problem of the place of fiction in libraries by devoting

1Ibid. Cutter enthusiastically promoted Adams' view
of the relationship of the library to the public schools.
Adams' first such statement occurred as an address to the
Quincy teachers given on May 19, 1876, entitled, "The Pub-
lic Library and the Public Schools." After it appeared in
the Quincy Patriot the following February and in serial form
in the New England Journal of Education during March and
April, Cutter promised an extract of it for the Library
Journal readers as well. See "Bibliography," LJ, I (April,
1877), 298. In the August issue he gave not simply a few
extracts, but rather almost the entire article, beginning
with a statement of high praise. See LJ, I (August, 1877),
437-41. In 1879 Adams delivered an address at the Boston
A.L.A. meeting entitled "Fiction in Public Libraries, and
Educational Catalogues," LJ, IV (September/October, 1879),
330-38. He also published a book containing those two
addresses as well as another one entitled, "The New Depar-
ture in the Common Schools of Quincy." The latter was deliv-
ered in early 1879 and gave an account of the educational
reforms in Quincy led by Col. Francis Parker. See Charles
F. Adams, Jr., The New Departure in the Common Schools of
Quincy and Other Papers on Educational Topics (Boston: Estes
and Lauriat, 1879). Cutter, who thought highly of Adams' ideas,
gave notice of the latter publication in LJ, IV
(November, 1879), 421-22.
an entire session to the issue. Such notables as Adams, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and James Freeman Clarke, as well as various librarians, took part in the discussion. Cutter described in his Nation report of the conference three general types of solutions that had been presented. Adams had pressed for only educational fiction in libraries. Samuel S. Green, the librarian of the Worcester Free Public Library, advocated some lighter fiction and a belief in the 'ladder' theory. Mary Bean, the librarian of the Brookline Public Library, advocated some lighter fiction, but with strict enforcement of their limited circulation. Cutter, however, felt there was "no simple solution." The absence of all light fiction would make the public library unpopular. Young people could get around the circulation rules by passing books around among themselves. Moreover, the 'ladder' theory simply did not work by itself. Instead, what was needed was directed reading in which a librarian's personal influence came into play.¹

A renewal of the controversy over the fiction collection of the Boston Public Library in 1881 gave Cutter an opportunity more completely to express his sense of the complexity of the issue. As the controversy developed during the year, Cutter devoted several editorials in the Library Journal to it, and included elsewhere in the periodical as many of the various opinions as he could in order to keep

the readership informed. He doubted if the problem would ever be fully settled. The only answer was in his influence theory. On the one hand, even as historical research depended upon imagination, some novel reading, which also depended upon imagination, could do no harm. He went on, however:

But on the other hand, novel-reading undirected, accompanied by no thought of improvement, carried to excess, is in danger of doing more harm than good. And here comes in the new idea of the librarian, according to which he is not a mere perpetual writer, nor a book-watchman, or a registry clerk, but a professor of bibliografty, or better still, a teacher of reading, and, so far as he can be, an intellectual advisor, a mental doctor for his town.¹

In the middle of the year, when James M. Hubbard—a former staff member of the Boston Public Library and a leader of the attack on the Public Library's inclusive policy of fiction collecting—published a pamphlet listing one hundred objectionable novels that the Library owned with reviews from noted journals that pronounced many of them vulgar or grossly immoral, Cutter expressed cautious support for a more restricted view. He wrote in the Nation that although critics and librarians could not stand in the position of a moral judge over every book that was written, it still behooved librarians to exercise much greater care in their selection. He traced recent French influences in popular novels and continued,

It is never easy to trace the result of moral agency for either good or evil. But one thing is certain; if this stuff has no bad influence on the age, then the preaching of Christianity can have no good influence—the age must be utterly unimpressionable. It is incredible that so much pitch should not defile, that the tone of public feeling should not be in the end lowered by constant familiarity with such perverted thought.

We are not now speaking especially of the vulgarity and bad taste of these books, nor even of their occasional indecency; these are largely matters of convention, and, though they may offend, will not of necessity seriously hurt readers. Indeed, it may be well that these writers should display enough of both these qualities to drive away some readers in disgust. The real evil is the thoroughly unchristian, because selfish, spirit that is in them all; and the idea which pervades almost all that we have either read or read about, that passion is rightly lord of all. The very least the most indulgent critic can say is, that books saturated with this spirit will not have an elevating influence, and that it is not worth while to take any especial pains to put them within reach of everybody; that in doing it no institution does any good or deserves any praise; and that if any appreciable proportion of the fiction circulated by the Public Library, at an annual cost of $30,000 consists of such novels, the money could be better spent.¹

Cutter went on to suggest that after reading Hubbard's pamphlet, he could better understand the statement of the headmaster of one of Boston's schools, who claimed, "The Public Library is a curse to school children."² Cutter continued by stating that he reviewed Hubbard's pamphlet in order, to call to it the attention of the authorities of our city and town libraries. It may lead some who have been liberal or careless in their purchases of fiction to consider whether, after all, it is worth while to spend any considerable part of their limited funds in the purchase of such rubbish as is here characterized, and whether,

²Ibid.
again, the public as a whole really do "demand" such reading, and whether if it is necessary to furnish some, it is necessary to furnish so much.¹

In a small library, he surmised, there was no problem, for censorship got lost in small book budgets where elimination of poor fiction could be achieved without controversy. But in a large public library, where there was money to buy all such fiction, he suggested that Hubbard's pamphlet be kept on hand in order to be able to restrict the reading of such novels.

There were, of course, many other subjects discussed during the same period, including matters of such national scope as copyright laws, the need for a new national library building, library legislation, and civil service as it applied to libraries. Cutter was not the only library leader to express his views concerning them; but his own expressions bore the unique character of a combining position that included both the very business-like and the cultural elements. For that reason he seems to have functioned, especially during the early years of the Association, as a moderating influence between those such as Poole and Dewey who were the more visible leaders.

Cutter was not, as one writer has described him, simply the "quiet and gentle onlooker," whose conclusions were often accepted although they had gone unnoticed in public discussions.² While it is true that he was a shy

¹Ibid.
²Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 96. The
person in public and that he did not like to engage in public argumentation, he did not hesitate to state his opinions forcefully with both authority and wit. He was particularly effective in print where any public shyness was replaced by lucidity and aggressiveness in presenting his own more central position. He made perhaps the most engrossing expression of that position in a paper delivered before the Association's Buffalo meeting in 1883. He entitled his address, "The Buffalo Public Library in 1983." In the contemporary literary genre of utopian schemes, he attempted to show the extremes working together in one totally integrated library system. He incorporated in his utopian picture many of the most recently invented technical and mechanical devices (some of them surprisingly prophetical) in order to gain the best economy and uniformity of operation. But all of the devices were used as a way to achieve the library's wider cultural ideals.

picture drawn there is too passive and was most likely taken from only the reports of the Association's public discussions. When one takes into consideration Cutter's strong opinions in his writing and correspondence and the freedom he exercised in expressing himself in committee work, a much more aggressive picture results.

Twelve years after giving the paper, Cutter wrote to George Watson Cole about a similar paper Cole had just prepared. "I wondered if you enjoyed writing that last part as much as I did a somewhat similar paper which I read at the Buffalo convention. I have already seen some of my forecasts in that paper carried out in part. I wonder if you will see some of your suggestions put in practice a little earlier than the date you state. Possibly." Letter, Cutter to G. W. Cole, July 30, 1895, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
Cutter began by relating the occasion—a trip to Buffalo one hundred years in the future in order to see the public library. Buffalo was then an industrial city of two million inhabitants in which all industries from Niagara to Buffalo were supplied with electrical power from the Falls. In order to keep the ugliness of industrialization from disrupting the beauty of the area, the factories had been set back from the parks and recreational areas along the river.

The city of Buffalo was wealthy because of its industry, but true to the morality of wealth, had paid primary attention to the educational needs of the populace, "naturally" turning part of its commercial energy "into the channels of literature, art, and science." He went on,

The library, therefore, as being the very culmination of the educational system, had a high reputation both for its excellent management, for the extent to which it was used, and for the pride and affection with which it was regarded by the citizens.¹

The library building was near the center of the city, but set back from the busiest streets and separated from other buildings and businesses in a 'quiet' zone. It was being gradually built on a 200 foot square block, part of which was rented to small businesses until the land was needed. The rents were being accumulated for a building fund. The building itself was a utopian marvel of library architectural concepts and mechanical devices then being fervently discussed in the library profession. At its core

was an iron bookstack 150 feet square rising to a height of
eight, eight-foot levels. The stack was honeycombed with
passageways that extended its full width and made it acces-
sible from both sides. Along the sides of the stack area
were reading rooms, 150 feet long and twenty feet wide, one
room to each of two stack levels, so that from the desks
the passages into the stacks on any one floor looked like
"so many bird holes in a sandy river bank, sixty of them
leading off into the darkness."¹ Electric "glow lamps" were
placed strategically along the passage ways.

Architecturally neither the stacks nor the reading
rooms were adorned with niceties and indeed offered "as
little chance to the architect as any room you can imagine."²
But the stacks had a vast capacity and the long reading
rooms accommodated 100 readers each. The outside of the
building was pleasing, but "inside everything is sacrificed
to utility."³ The utility of the building helped to achieve
an economy of library process. It also served as a way to
insure against fire, for all in the building was functional
and made of fireproof materials.

The books were placed in the stacks in a relative
rather than a fixed location shelf classification scheme,
with the most used classes nearer the ground level floor.
The reading rooms corresponded to the books of the class
nearest at hand and subject specialist librarians were on
duty in each, "a scientific man for the sciences, an art

¹Ibid.  ²Ibid., p. 214.  ³Ibid.
lover for the art, an antiquarian for the history, and a traveller for the geography."¹ The specialist librarians developed their knowledge of their own subject areas and infused their attendants with the same enthusiasm.

On the one hand their knowledge of the shelves, volume by volume, on the other, their personal intercourse with the students enabled them to give every book to that reader to whom it will do most good,—as a skilful bookseller suits the tastes of his patrons,—and to answer every inquiry with the best work the library has on that matter, as the doctor prescribes the right medicines for his patient.²

The book retrieval system was by itself a complexity. A patron could call for a book at the delivery desk on the main floor or as he sat at his study desk in a reading room. If at a desk, the patron had only to punch the call number on a special keyboard. The number would light up on a large central board and a runner, wearing noiseless slippers, would quickly get the book and bring it to the patron’s desk. If the book was on another stack level, a system of elevators and book-lifts would speed it on the way.

The temperature of the building was controlled and the air constantly refreshed. Newspapers, kept in a special room, were therefore safe from deterioration. If a patron wanted material from a newspaper or a book held by another library across the country (for the job of collecting was divided among libraries), telephone communication would allow the needed passage to be read aloud, or if more

¹Ibid., p. 212. ²Ibid., p. 213.
extensive use was needed, a recording to be made and transmitted "on the foil." The patron was assessed a slight charge for the time involved.¹ In the words of the future Buffalo librarian,

>This exchange is going on all the time between different libraries. Of course, it is not exactly the same thing as having newspapers at hand, but in some respects it is better. The searchers become very acute in their scent, and will find things which the untrained inquirer would be sure to miss. The great advantage, however, is that it leads to a more thorough keeping of newspapers than would otherwise be possible.²

Cataloging procedures were also enhanced with various mechanical devices. The catalog cards, produced in multiple sets by a photographic process, included not only the cataloger's notes and headings, but also a picture of the title page. Production of the cards was achieved in an assembly-line process in which cameras and a conveyer line kept the process in a constant movement. The cards themselves were placed in book catalogs that had adjustable bindings.

It was with regard to the services of the library, however, that the merging of the purpose of the library and the economy of its operations was most obvious. There were branch libraries throughout the city connected to the main library by telephone in order to convey requests for needed books that were not in the smaller collections. Moreover, an all-city reading program was also relayed to the smaller units from the main building. Phonographic editions by the best readers were made of good books designed to elevate

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., pp. 213-14.
the literary taste of the public. On certain evenings, advertised beforehand in the local newspapers, patrons could go to any of the buildings of the library system in order to hear the books read. Novels, of course, drew the greatest crowds, but only a limited amount of fiction-reading was allowed. In the words of the future librarian,

In the circulation of books we have to follow the public taste, but in these listening-rooms we have the matter more in our control. Of course we must select bright books which the people will come to hear. Dull books must be rigidly excluded; but that is not difficult, because no dull book is published in reading-machine editions. Yes, I think a great deal of information is spread that way, and at any rate they are a valuable rival to the dram-shops, and keep many a young man out of bad places.¹

Certain other social conventions were also observed. The delivery room was divided into three areas; one for men, one for women, and a third for children. The air, being controlled, was kept fresh in order to keep people from going to sleep. Every person had to be allowed into the delivery room who desired to enter, of course, "but from the reading-rooms the great unwashed are shut out altogether or put in rooms by themselves. Luckily public opinion sustains us thoroughly in their exclusion or seclusion."²

A concerted effort was also made to reach children. Special classes for children on how to use the library were taught by specialists in the use of books. The emphasis was on developing a child's scholarly ability by leading him through the steps necessary to investigate subjects.

¹Ibid., p. 215. ²Ibid., p. 213.
There are great differences, of course, among the children. Some take to the exercise as ducks to water, some manifest the most perfect indifference. There is the same variety throughout education. But, on the whole, no part of our library work is more effective. I do not hesitate to say that the useful reading is quadrupled in any city where such a course is pursued, for the children with whom the method takes grow up as real inquirers instead of being desultory amusement seekers. The ordinary novel-reader is not done away with, though his tribe may be diminished. But novel-readers come from a different class, and read for a different object. We can never convert them, and often cannot intercept the taste in youth. Our chief work is to bring into the fold those who otherwise would not read books at all. It is not the novel but the newspaper reader we aim to catch.¹

The librarians who worked with the children were those who had caught the above spirit, and they not only helped children to get books, or imparted a love of reading, but they also imparted "some culture of heart and soul."²

Indeed, the rationale for all of the technical devices in combination with the efficiency of the library building and management, was the all-encompassing purpose of the library as an agency of cultural uplift. The library, is not a mere cemetery of dead books, but a living power, which supplies amusement for dull times, recreation for the tired, information for the curious, inspires the love of research in youth, and furnishes the materials for it in mature age, enables and induces the scholar not to let his study end with his school days. When he leaves the grammar school, it receives him into the people's university, taking also those who graduate from the university and giving them too more work to do. Its mottoes are always 'plus ultra' and 'excelsior'. There is not an institution in the country more democratic, not one which distributes its benefits more impartially to rich and poor, and not one, I believe, in which there is less taint of corruption and less self-seeking in those who administer it.³

¹Ibid., p. 216. ²Ibid., p. 217. ³Ibid.
With that statement Cutter brought his excursion to a close, admittedly, a "land of dreams." In his paper he had shown his conception of the marriage of technology and high cultural purpose. The members in the meeting too felt the generous nature of the vision and Cutter's address was received "with great applause" and with a special unanimous vote of thanks. The two ideological extremes were well enough stated so that even two years later, Frederick Jackson could suggest to Dewey himself that Cutter had made one of the best statements of overall goals to be sought.

Yet, however his statement of goals might have been received, Cutter did not address himself to the basic issue of the profession during the 1880's; that is, how was the American Library Association to define its own roll in achieving those goals. At first there was little difficulty, for with Melvil Dewey providing the impetus, the organizational leadership proceeded without any hesitation into projects that would help to achieve the various goals. In 1880, however, several events occurred that disrupted that initial harmony and threatened the future of the Association itself. Samuel S. Green, in his chronicle of the early years of the Association aptly entitled the period, "Depression in 1880."

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1 Ibid.
2 Reported in LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 276.
1880, The Year of Troubles

The prelude to the troubled year occurred with the establishment by Melvil Dewey in 1879 of the Readers and Writers Economy Company in order to provide library and educational supplies on a sound business footing. Funding was supplied by Frederick Jackson. Cutter and Frederick B. Perkins were made directors and Dewey was both president and treasurer. The American Library Association approved the transfer of the library supply department of the Association, previously an activity of the Cooperation Committee, to the new business with the understanding that the Cooperation Committee would serve as a policy board.¹

Soon after its establishment, however, Frederick Jackson found it necessary to move west for reasons of health. Perkins, who almost single-handedly was putting together the proposed A.L.A. Catalog, resigned his position at the Boston Public Library in 1880, and, after attempting to go into business as a library consultant, became the librarian of the San Francisco Free Public Library. Richard Bowker, who had served as an advisor to Dewey, took a position as an agent of Harper's in London in mid-1880. And

¹The official relationship of the Economy Company to the Cooperation Committee is recorded in, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, [Report], LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 286-87. It should be pointed out that although the Cooperation Committee was to serve as the policy board for the Economy Company, the Committee was not in reality a separate entity, for the individual members of the Committee comprised for the most part the board of directors of the Company. In addition they all had heavy financial interests in the business. See also above, Ch. III, pp. 187-90, for other details of Cutter's role in the company.
Cutter became extraordinarily busy with developments at the Athenaeum due to the receipt of two sizable bequests. Dewey found himself overworked, financially strapped, and in a struggle with Bowker over the Library Journal. The final blow came when a struggle for the control of the Economy Company itself, pitting Dewey against a small coterie of stockholders, broke into the open in October 1880 and caused the company's collapse in the following months.

The combination of troubles and removal of the key working members on the Cooperation Committee caused the discontinuance or delay of all of the cooperative projects directed by the committee. The A.L.A. Catalog was discontinued after Perkins left, and although officially turned over to Dewey by the Association in 1885, it was not completed until 1893. Likewise, work on an index to subject headings was also discontinued and not resumed until 1892. The publisher's title-slip project was permanently discontinued, and the completion of a uniform catalog code was delayed until 1883.

Cutter felt the collapse of the Economy Company more severely perhaps than anyone except Dewey. He suffered strained relations with Dewey because of the nature of the legal battle that ensued. Dewey lost the company but recouped almost all of his financial investment in an out-of-court settlement, although he claimed to have lost the promise and freshness of the new field in the process. He almost immediately began again, this time as the Library
Bureau. But Cutter strongly disapproved of Dewey's new venture for he apparently felt that Dewey had violated the terms of a settlement that placed some restrictions on Dewey's re-entering the same field. As a result of the debacle, the close working relationship between the two men was broken. During the ensuing months the first strong statements of competition with Dewey were made by Cutter with regard to their respective shelf classification systems. Nevertheless, the two men remained cordial and continued to confer with each other during their occasional luncheons, although Dewey mentioned to Bowker that they carefully avoided mentioning the Economy Company. Later, when Dewey was invited to accept the librarian's post at Columbia University, Cutter warmly encouraged him.¹ Thereafter, they continued their relationship through correspondence, but it was often limited to library business. Cutter remained responsive, however, to Dewey's enthusiasm, at least in part.

Although Dewey remained the secretary of the Association until 1890, well-after his year of troubles, the tone and the activities of the Association took a different course. In his drawing back and his subsequent removal to New York in 1883, other leaders with more patrician leanings

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¹The letter of encouragement from Cutter to Dewey is post-dated only "Apr. '83," CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The dating coincides with other replies dated late April 1883 in response to Dewey's request for advice on whether or not to accept the position. Cutter wrote, "My dear Dui, Of course you will accept. It's the place for you and you are the man for the place."
exercised a closer control over the organization. It was during this period that Cutter exercised most directly his own leadership within the Association.

**Association Activities, 1881-1892**

Justin Winsor remained the president of the Association until 1885, although his original interest in the organization waned in the face of his historical writing after 1880. ¹ He was followed by William F. Poole from 1885 to 1887, and by Cutter from 1887 to 1889. Thereafter the presidential term was limited by a provision that no person could succeed himself. Frederic Crunden of the St. Louis Public Library served for the year, 1889 to 1890. Dewey was elected next, but had to withdraw midway through the year because of illness. William I. Fletcher finished his term. Karl Linderfelt of the Milwaukee Public Library was elected in 1891 but resigned in the spring of 1892 when his embezzlement of public library funds was exposed. His public disgrace both shocked and embarrassed the profession. Finally, Dewey was elected in 1892 and served as the chief architect of the Association's extensive contribution to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

Cutter remained on the Executive Board during the entire period. At first he did so by virtue of his chairmanship of the Cooperation Committee. When the makeup of that committee was changed in 1885, he was appointed a

¹The Memorial History of Boston, 1630-1880, which Winsor edited, was published during 1880-1881.
vice-president, a position he held until 1887. He served on the committee to consider Dewey’s proposed library school (1883-1885), on the committee to make a standard table of transliterations for cataloging (1883-1885), and on the committee dealing with a revision of the constitution (1889-1893). In 1887 he was elected to the Executive Board of the newly-formed A.L.A. Publishing Section, serving in that position until 1892. Most important, he was chosen president in 1887, serving until 1889. In that position he became the last of the older style presidents who operated under an Executive Board composed for the most part of original members of the Association.

Cutter and the Library Journal

Beyond his actual organizational work, Cutter continued his own particular brand of leadership in the way that he was best equipped; that is, in his writing. His interest in the technical matters of cataloging and shelf classification not only found expression but also increased immensely in number. He also continued his regular reporting for the Nation. His most important post, however, was his editorship of the Library Journal from 1881 to 1893. In that position he became the chief publicist for the leadership of the 1880’s and produced a flood of editorials and editorial notes on current issues. When those are added to his Nation writings, they reveal what became his own evolved statement of the purpose of the professional organization.
The circumstances that led to his appointment went back to 1876. At that time he encouraged Dewey in the establishment of the periodical and became associated with it immediately as the editor of the "Bibliography" section. He worked closely with Dewey, who paid him directly for his contributions, and supplied the younger editor not only with the most substantial portions of some of the early issues, but regularly with articles as well.

The Bibliography section was itself a masterful monthly review of the state-of-the-art. After experimenting through several issues with how to arrange his material, he finally settled on a format that included two parts. First, he entered whatever reviews of books he might have gathered (some of which he wrote himself) in a section entitled "Notices." Second, he made a "List of Recent Publications" of interest to librarians, this section itself divided into: A. Library Economy and History and Library Reports; B. Catalogs of Libraries; C. Bibliography (i.e., published bibliographies in all fields); and sometimes, D. Indexes (i.e., published indexes in all fields). In each of the sections, and especially in section A where newspaper and magazine articles concerning current library issues were listed, he liberally added excerpts from the articles themselves, as well as editorial annotations. He often mentioned in the notices of articles from other publications his own anonymous notices in the Nation.
Working closely with Dewey was only part of Cutter's preparation. He also unavoidably worked closely with Frederick Leypoldt, the Journal's publisher, and with Richard R. Bowker, Leypoldt's agent. He was, therefore, in a unique position when trouble broke out between the publisher and Dewey in late 1878. Leypoldt had begun publishing the Journal as a secondary project during its early years, although his chief interest as a bibliographer lay in his American Catalogue. Because of the Journal's only minimal subscription list, it proved a losing venture through its early years. In late 1878 in an effort to raise more capital for his American Catalogue, he sold the Library Journal and the Publishers' Weekly to Bowker with the understanding that he would repurchase them when he was in a better financial position. He continued, however, as the actual publisher of the Journal.

Bowker found it necessary to reorganize the publishing arrangements of the Journal in order to put it on a sounder financial footing. That meant renegotiating Dewey's contract as editor with the intention of separating more completely Dewey's work for the periodical from his work in the library supply business, for the two aspects had become confusingly intermixed. Although a new contract was eventually agreed upon, editorial relations became strained in the process, partly because of the chaotic nature of Dewey's working habits, but also over a matter of personal pride; that is, a disagreement between the two over who had
been most responsible for bringing the periodical into existence in the first place.\(^1\) In one heated exchange, Dewey threatened not only to withdraw from the editorship, but also to begin a rival publication. He claimed that "the leading men" of the Association wanted him to follow such a course and claimed that Cutter himself would help put the rival publication on its feet with his own contributions.\(^2\) Cutter was not in actuality a party to the dispute, even though he had been implicated by Dewey. Bowker must have sensed the situation, for he immediately wrote to Cutter appealing to Cutter's "admirable ability as a diplomat" to help straighten the matter out.\(^3\) Cutter, and Winsor too in this instance, helped to settle the dispute and eventually the matter was resolved. But the financial condition of the publication continued to worsen. New subscriptions, the backbone of support in the face of low advertising revenue, failed to materialize and by the end of 1879 the publisher showed an accumulated loss of $2,400 for the first three years.

The situation remained unchanged for the first half of 1880 despite repeated appeals to Association members to

\(^1\) The details of the argument, preserved in the letterbook copies of correspondence from Bowker to Dewey, Cutter and Winsor, is reported in detail in Edward M. Fleming, R. R. Bowker, Militant Liberal (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 63-64.

\(^2\) Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter, January 3, 1879, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

\(^3\) Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter, January 10, 1879, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
help recruit new subscribers from among smaller libraries. Moreover, Dewey's own growing troubles with the Economy Company made it increasingly difficult for him to do his editorial work. As a result the publishers announced in June 1880 that the Library Journal would be suspended, with the provision that the regular features, such as the Bibliography section, would be included in the Publishers' Weekly, which would be sent to the subscribers instead. The decision was actually attributable to Bowker and his acute business sense.1

A wave of protest from loyal Association members and his own dissatisfaction at discontinuing the periodical in the middle of the year moved Leypoldt to reverse the decision. In the absence of Bowker, who had gone to England, he decided in August to continue the fifth volume by issuing double issues at two-month intervals.2 With Dewey increasingly preoccupied, Leypoldt sought and received help from Cutter who aided him in getting the periodical out and attempted to find a solution.3 In the double issue for September and October, Cutter presented to the subscribers a plan for continuing that became the basis for a new beginning in 1881. He proposed that the subscription price be

1 Editorial, LJ, V (June, 1880), 168-69.
2 Editorial, LJ, V (July/August, 1880), 207-08; Fleming, R. R. Bowker, pp. 64-66.
3 Letter, F. W. Leypoldt to R. R. Bowker, August 11, 1880, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
reduced from $5.00 to $2.00; that the total amount of subscription income at the beginning of the year be used to determine how many issues would be published; that economies of publishing be undertaken, such as reducing the physical size of the volume and using cheaper paper; that if necessary the issues be held to only eight pages bi-monthly; and finally that the Association pay entirely for the issue that included the annual conference proceedings. 1 Cutter's proposals were enthusiastically accepted in the response to a questionnaire and as a result the publication continued, although at a subscription price of three rather than two dollars. 2

Dewey, by then involved in his court suit, resigned his editorship effective at the end of the year, and Leyboldt offered the job to Cutter. Cutter, true to his cautious manner, made explicit his own conditions. He accepted the job on a six month trial basis and noted that his duties at the Boston Athenaeum would take precedence over the Journal in case of conflict. 3 His caution seems to have been unnecessary, for the periodical under his leadership gained a new lease on life and by the end of his trial


period he was happily able to report to Bowker that Leypoldt surmised that the Journal would pay for itself for that year. ¹

In some respects the general policies of the Journal remained the same under Cutter's editorship as they had been under Dewey. The periodical had from the beginning been designed to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas among librarians. ² It had also aimed to provide a forum for 'best' answers to the needs of librarians, thus becoming a continually revised manual of library economy. For that reason Cutter continued the regular feature, "Notes and Queries," a device that enabled librarians to share both their frustrations and solutions regarding library problems. So also, the "Bibliography" and "Pseudonyms and Anonyms" features were continued. The latter was a monthly list of the real names of anonymous and pseudonymous authors. In all three of the features, editorial comments were generously added as expressions of wise counsel. In addition, Cutter almost immediately added a section entitled "Library Purchase List." It followed the format of the Athenaeum's List of Additions and listed the best books for a local

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 12, 1881, NYPL, Bowker Papers. The same information was conveyed to Bowker in letters from Leypoldt, August 5, 1881, and from Adolf Growell, September 13, 1881. Growell was a member of the Publishers' Weekly staff. Perhaps it was a way to convince Bowker, who was in England, that the decision to continue the Journal had been a wise one.

²Cutter reiterated that basic purpose in an appeal for contributions, in Editorial, LJ, VI (August, 1881), 224.
library to buy, annotating the selections with comments from leading periodical reviews. By providing this information, Cutter attempted to fulfill the intention behind the then defunct A.L.A. Catalog project. In February 1883 he added a similar section entitled "Literature for the Young" which was compiled by Caroline Hewins of the Hartford Public Library.

In another respect Cutter changed the periodical by moving the editorial column to the beginning of the monthly issue, featuring not only the opinions stated there, but also correlating them closely with the material in the issue at hand. The change of position for the editorial matter tended to highlight even more the authoritative voice that the Journal had held. It was a self-conscious policy that arose when the Journal became the organ of the American Library Association soon after the Association began, and was continued for many years, especially with respect to book reviews. In 1892 the policy was very explicitly stated, when, in response to two authors whose books had been reviewed harshly, Cutter noted that their personal replies would not be printed because they were inadequate, they argued ad hominem, and they did not lessen the misleading qualities of their publications. He stated,

And though our reviews are generally initialed so as to make them the personal view of each writer, yet none are published which do not represent the opinion of the
Journal, and for which we accept the fullest responsibility.\(^1\)

The more important effect of the change in editorial position was to give prominence to Cutter's views, especially on the nature of the Association itself, an issue that became central in Association discussion in the succeeding years.

Cutter edited the literary contents of the *Library Journal* for twelve years until late 1893. Leypoldt took care of the business matters, but when he died suddenly in 1884, that aspect of the periodical returned to Bowker. Cutter's own propensity for some subjects was reflected in the publication, particularly his concern for the problems of shelf classification. Between 1881 and 1886 a large number of articles on that subject appeared.\(^2\) Although

\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, Editorial, *LJ*, XVII (May, 1892), 155.

The policy did not extend to all contributions. Since the eighth number of the first volume, a statement had been included on the editorial page that read, "The Editors of *Journal* are not responsible for the views expressed in contributed articles or communications." Nevertheless, there was an effort to present only the 'best' materials (for example, in the Bibliography section) and if the works were not of that quality, the editors were not at all hesitant in saying so.

\(^2\) The number of articles on classification had reached such proportions in 1886 that perhaps Bowker felt uneasy about them. By the fall of that year Cutter was already tiring of the classification debate, for it had produced little that was enlightening. In October he wrote a facetious note to Bowker on the problem: "I think you are mistaken in thinking that articles on classification are not welcome to the editor of the *Lib. jnl*. He has himself assured me that he thinks more of articles on that subject than on any other except perhaps cataloging. You were probably thinking of the publisher, but his opinion is of little value, as (between ourselves) he knows very little of the needs and likings of librarians." Someone, perhaps Bowker
Cutter had been happy about the fact that the publication had paid its own way in 1881, during the period it remained only barely self-supporting. The subscription price was again raised in 1883 to $4.00 and to $5.00 in 1885; and the problem of recruiting additional subscribers remained.

Older Leaders and 'Best' Solutions

The problem of support for the periodical was related to matters beyond simply those of its price. The Library Journal was the official organ of the Association and under Cutter's editorship gave decided support to the Association's leadership; but a librarian still had to subscribe to it apart from his association membership. Some librarians, especially those from smaller libraries, felt that neither the periodical nor the Association adequately expressed their own concerns, and consequently, they were not willing either to pay for it or to support the Association more than half-heartedly. It was that attitude that lay at the heart of a struggle over the control of the Association during the 1880's, an understanding of which is necessary in order to assess Cutter's position in the Association, both as the editor of the Journal and as an Association officer.

The leaders of the American Library Association of the 1880's, true to their more patrician leanings, were much

himself, penciled in on the postal the word, "joke". See letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, October 23, 1886, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
less aggressive in the exercise of the power that a professional organization could represent, than Dewey had been. The object of the Association as it had been originally framed was,

to promote the library interests of the country by exchanging views, reaching conclusions, and inducing co-operation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy; by disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries; and by cultivating goodwill among its own members.¹

As long as Dewey remained in his original position of influence, the problem of "reaching conclusions and inducing co-operation" had specific direction, for he proposed the projects that aimed at that goal and largely supplied the inspiration for them. While it is true that during this period he remained in the Association's executive councils, his influence had been lessened, not only because of the events of 1880 but also because of his move away from Boston.

In contradistinction, the leadership during this period was more concerned with discussing issues and encouraging each librarian to reach his own conclusions and to make his own choices of action, than with building an organizational structure that would bring to bear a uniformity through standardization. Some uniformity was desirable, of course, but it was necessarily to be an expression of measured deliberation rather than of organizational pronouncement; and it was to allow for differences of

opinion and practice. A greater concern for the leaders was that the Association should express the high cultural ideals that they had absorbed in their ante-bellum years. For this reason, perhaps in an unconscious way, they resisted efforts to democratize the leadership of the Association simply for its own sake. They viewed the possible solutions to the problems encountered by all libraries, large and small, in terms of the examples of the best library practice then extant. That attitude theoretically allowed for the opinions of all librarians who wished to speak, but in reality, gave a greater weight to the larger more elite Eastern libraries from which they themselves came.

When Cutter became the editor of the *Library Journal*, he inherited an organ that under Dewey had been intended for furthering the objects and activities of the Association as Dewey had conceived them. Cutter shaped the *Library Journal* as an authority of ideas rather than activities. It became under his leadership a forum for differing opinions of the best solutions and enlightened attitudes rather than a manual of final conclusions.

As a result of the change in the style of leadership, a power vacuum developed. No effective cooperative projects of the nature of those previously inspired by Dewey were developed. The new edition of Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature* was completed by 1882 and a continuing project was made of it. But it had been provided for
outside of Dewey's immediate control in 1876 and had, in the person of William I. Fletcher, an energy that insured its continuity. The only major projects that did resemble the earlier spirit--Dewey's School of Library Economy, the Library Bureau, and the American Library Association Publishing Section, either remained outside of direct control of the Association, as was the case with the first two, or was only a shadow of the ideal that Dewey had pursued, as was the case with the latter, which in its first years was hampered by a severe lack of funds.

Occasionally the Bureau of Education helped with publications, but the cooperative spirit that had taken place during 1876 was no longer in evidence, doubtless due to the Bureau's own busy efforts, but also because there was no single librarian who would take charge. When Eaton, the Commissioner of Education, appealed to librarians to prepare an exhibit for the New Orleans Exposition in 1884, only Dewey responded affirmatively. In addition to the above matters, the Executive Board seemed to be less interested in the formal continuity of the annual meetings and

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1 Mary S. Williams, "The Library Work of the Bureau of Education," LJ, XII (January/February, 1887), 66. Eaton had also promised in 1885 to print the A.L.A. Catalog, but Dewey was not able to get the work ready at that time. Cf., notes in LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 326; IX (April, 1884), 69.

in the structure of the Association itself. The 1884 meeting was cancelled by the Board over the question of when to meet and only an informal meeting was provided for in 1888 when similar scheduling problems arose.

Cutter encountered the problem of the nature of the Association almost immediately upon assuming his editorial post in 1881. The problem was expressed in the form of a criticism of that year's Washington conference. The meetings had been for the most part given over to discussions concerning shelf classification (Cutter had again raised the problem of fixed versus movable shelf location symbols), library architecture especially as it concerned the need for a new building for the Library of Congress, and the distribution and deposit of public documents. J. K. Hoyt, a correspondent for the Newark Daily Advertiser, reported in a somewhat caustic vein, that the leaders of the Association seemed intent on discussing the concerns of larger libraries rather than the concerns of smaller libraries, the librarians of which were struggling with "the adaptation of the library to the forwarding of technical or practical education."¹ Making a play on words, he asked whether the library leaders had found "the true hub around which to revolve." Instead, there was "an overpowering sense of Cambridge, Harvard, and Boston--a feeling among the inferior

¹J. K. Hoyt, "Washington Conference," Newark Daily Advertiser, February 12 and 15, 1881, as reported in LJ, VI (February, 1881), 30.
planets that they were revolving around the Hub."\(^1\) The larger libraries and their librarians presented their problems and their solutions as the only concerns that existed, rather than "how books can be brought within reach of the toiling masses who need them the most."\(^2\) Likewise, little was said to help the rural or the factory operative librarians. He concluded,

The value of such an association is undoubted; it has within it learning, sharpness of intellect, the elements of progress; but it would be well to remember that in this country it is the duty of intellect to grapple with ignorance, that intelligence must come down from its pedestal and lift the lowly up to its own level.\(^3\)

The fact that a sensitive nerve had been touched was evidenced both by Cutter's inclusion of Hoyt's remarks in the February issue and by his devoting an entire editorial to the problem that Hoyt had raised. He began by admitting that Hoyt was partly right. The practical (i.e., practical to the larger libraries) material--"semi-material" in Cutter's words--did in fact outweigh the intellectual and moral, and the three principal subjects discussed were in fact concerns of mainly the largest libraries. He wrote, "It is not the first time that the objection has been made; and now that it has found a public utterance, perhaps it will receive more attention."\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid. \(^3\)Ibid. \(^4\)C. A. Cutter, "Editorial," LJ, VI (February, 1881), 23.
Cutter went on to suggest, however, that Hoyt's analysis was also partly in error. There was in fact opportunity for the silent to speak and the subjects spoken of were in large part applicable to even the smallest library. He continued, "If the papers treated of these questions from the stand-point of large means and cultivated readers, it would have been very easy for any librarian to divert the current of debate into the channel he desired it to follow." He expressed the hope that the conference to be held in Cincinnati the following year would be better in that regard and that the Library Journal itself, which had also been criticized in the same way would be able to better represent the concerns of the smaller libraries. Using Hoyt's own words, Cutter wrote, "We earnestly request the librarians who are 'responsible for the mental nutriment of factory operatives and the laboring poor' to send us their experience, and to detail their difficulties and perplexities." He concluded that in the final analysis, the problems of all libraries were probably the same.

Although Cutter saw the issues of libraries of all sizes as being in essence the same, there is a sense in which he failed to grapple with the tenor of the objection. Hoyt had criticized what he felt was an elitist attitude on the part of Association leaders, who not only saw their own problems as the only important ones, but who also had little sympathy for the practical realities of life that

1 Ibid. 2 Ibid., p. 24.
less prominent librarians dealt with. They theorized about the masses and about cultural uplift, but without a corresponding first-hand experience of either the masses or what it really meant to serve them. Implicit in Hoyt's criticism was the idea that the leaders of the Association, prominent men in their own world, not only did not sympathize with the librarian who worked in a more restricted situation, but also kept the Association under their own control. Cutter's idea of the help that the Association might give was to provide a forum for what seemed to be the best solutions to library problems. The answers given were grand solutions to general problems, however, and they may not have seemed very practical. Cutter's answer to Hoyt's implicit criticism was to place the burden of participation on those who had not spoken up.

The conference at Cincinnati could not have helped the matter very much for it was held in a distant location and was poorly attended. In 1883, however, the Buffalo conference provided a wider coverage of librarians' concerns and Cutter editorialized,

Two or three years ago certain murmurs were heard that the small libraries did not get enough attention at our conferences. If we remember right it was not a librarian but a journalist who voiced the complaint, but he may have received a hint from some of the librarians who felt that their needs had been overlooked, but were too retiring to speak of it, and perhaps had not the means of getting the grievance into the public press. No one can read the report of the last conference and make the same complaint.1

1C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, IX (March, 1884), 39.
He continued by describing the papers on library service for the young and for adults and on libraries and schools (all, however, by librarians from what might be considered as larger or prominent libraries). He concluded by stating a truism.

But, after all, an example drawn from a small library is not necessarily the one which will do most good to another small library. The best work gives the best exemplar, and the best work will come, not from the best library, but from the best man wherever he happens to be.¹

His comments on the problem did not erase the reality, however, that there was a feeling of being left out on the part of smaller libraries. Seven years later, in discussing with Dewey the problem of the makeup of the executive board of the new Massachusetts Library Club of which he was the first president, Cutter wrote,

I didn't exclude anybody from Mass. Lib. Club. If I hadn't made a vigorous protest even trustees wd have been shut out... But I find there is among smaller libraries a very strong dislike and distrust of the A. L. A. For that reason it is a pity that the Exec. Board are all A. L. A. men. We must live it down.²

Dewey's Practical Solutions

The struggle that developed over the control of the Association did not come about simply because the problems existed, but because in the person of Melvil Dewey a contrasting alternative to the Association's approach to its purpose was offered, an alternative that Dewey did not

¹Ibid.

²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 19, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
hesitate to emphasize. When Dewey moved to Columbia University in 1883 he immediately set about to provide the kind of help that he felt the greater mass of librarians would appreciate. Much like the cooperative projects of the first years, his work remained intensely practical, simplified, and standardized. In 1885 he published a completely revised edition of his shelf classification that included the needs of larger libraries while at the same time retained its simplicity of use for small libraries that it had had from the beginning. In 1887, after having unsuccessfully bid for the Association's backing, he began a library school that would provide training for librarians that was both simple and yet thorough. He continued his Library Bureau and founded the New York Library Club, the first such local library organization and a prototype of other local organizations to come. His projects were outside the official control of the Association and served both as pre-eminent examples of his own ideals of uniformity and standardization, and as bases of operations from which to promulgate his views. There were some who could only look askance at his activity, considering it to be an expression of a desire for power. For that reason, his efforts to get his programs accepted in one way or another

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1Cutter was Dewey's chief competitor in classification. Cutter's scheme from the start was aimed primarily at large libraries while hopefully adaptable to smaller libraries. Dewey's scheme was just the opposite. In his second edition Dewey corrected the small library orientation by greatly enlarging the schedules.
by the Association met resistance that sometimes moderated or even blocked them. Others, however, applauded his efforts and provided him with the support he needed eventually to regain a position of power within the Association.

In 1886 he began a new publication entitled Library Notes. His announcement in the 1886 conference gave the essence of his concerns.

We of the A. L. A. are very proud of what we have done in ten years, and with good reason. But we must face the facts. Of the 5,000 public libraries in the U. S., how many are under our influence? How many have practical knowledge of the existence of the A. L. A. or its official organ, the Library Journal? It is rather startling to realize that we have never succeeded in reaching directly over one-tenth of our home field.1

He went on to give his opinion that the Library Journal was too expensive and that what was needed was a cheap quarterly that would sell at a dollar a year. If that were too expensive, the price should be lowered still more, even if that meant only twenty-five cents a year. The publication was not to be a cheap substitute for the Library Journal, but rather a beginner's tool. He added,

It [Library Notes] is rather a necessity for the present time to carry forward our work, and will deserve the hearty support, sympathy and cooperation of every believer in the modern library idea.2

Library Notes became both a complement to and a competitor with the Library Journal. Dewey was conscious of both aspects when he suggested to E. C. Thomas, the editor


2Ibid.
of the English publication, *Library Chronicle*, that each should promote the other's publication in their respective countries. He described how he did not wish to duplicate the standard features of the *Journal*, and therefore would act as a feeder to the older publication. The new periodical would, however, give the practical side of librarianship, and in England would complement the *Chronicle* just as it would the *Journal* in America.¹

Dewey's journalistic venture became in reality a continuing simplified and very practical manual of library procedures. Most of the articles in it were written by Dewey himself or by members of his library school team.² Cutter and Bowker felt the competitive spirit immediately. Cutter had already conducted a survey of his own concerning what readers wanted in the *Journal* and had reported his findings the previous year. A return of only thirty questionnaires, however, could not have clarified the matter to any degree, for the replies demonstrated for the most part a great deal of complacent satisfaction with the publication as it was. The two written statements that he did suggested, moreover, diametrically opposite opinions. And Cutter's use of them suggests his own growing awareness of


²Library Notes was published regularly for only about two years. It was finally discontinued in 1898, having by that time a total of only four volumes. Its irregularity did not, however, have any bearing on its initial impact, particularly its practical value for novice librarians.
the nature of the associational struggle. The first unnamed correspondent wanted the periodical to be completely "practical." The second wanted it to be more inspirational, but with the added quip,

When attending the convention I asked myself once or twice,--oftener, to be honest,--'Are librarians too busy to think of books in any other respect than commodities to be labelled and circulated?'¹

Cutter continued to seek an answer. Throughout the remainder of 1885 and during 1886 he encouraged librarians to send in reports of their practical experience, noting that every librarian should consider himself an assistant editor of the Journal.² Doubtless, the appearance of Library Notes was the reason that Bowker changed the format of the Journal in 1887. A more attractive type style was used. The succession of articles arguing the fine points of classification practice that had been a staple diet through 1886 ceased and many more items of the how-to-do-it variety began to appear. The new approach was described by Cutter in January 1887 as a "series of practical papers for the smaller and younger libraries, such as will form the

²Dewey's competition with the Library Journal was not all that overt. During the same meeting that Cutter discussed his survey, Dewey also emphasized the need for written contributions to the Journal. See A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 297. Perhaps by the following year, however, he was convinced that a more affirmative approach and action was needed.
material of a practical handbook of library administration."

The struggle over the types of solutions that the Association could offer to its members also affected the organization's public discussion over what it had in its power to do when faced with particular issues. Again, the chief impetus in the discussion came from Dewey in the form of a cooperative project. He proposed at the Buffalo conference in 1883 that the Association approve and lend its fullest support and guidance to his plan for a school of library economy to be established at Columbia University. He had had such a plan in mind since 1877 and had made it one of the conditions of his acceptance of the post of chief librarian at Columbia. He outlined the purpose and course of instruction that the school would follow, all of which was centered in the practical training necessary to run a library. He expressed his belief that if a student was trained briefly and systematically in the comparative merits of various library management techniques and library appliances, he would be much better equipped to step into a library and manage it efficiently, without having to spend years in haphazardly learning the same matters in an apprenticeship.2

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1 C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XII (January/February, 1887), 3. During the next three years a series of symposia appeared on such practical matters as the care of pamphlets, the collection of fines, the care of maps, and the care of rare books. Even so, the contributors tended to be from the large established libraries, the Athenaeum represented in almost every case.

2 Melvil Dewey, "School of Library Economy," in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883),
His plan provoked considerable discussion not only in terms of approval or disapproval of the basic idea, but over the question of what the Association had within its power to do. William F. Poole expressed his wariness of the project on the basis that apprenticeship in a major library comprised a much better educational environment. Lectures on subjects would never give a student the sort of experience he would need.\(^1\) Cutter spoke in favor of the basic idea because he felt that the traditional method of training librarians through apprenticeship, a method for which the Boston Athenaeum had already earned a considerable reputation under both Poole and himself, had inherent limitations. The staffs of good libraries often had large turnovers because trained persons were anxious to find a library of their own. The various levels of attainment reached by different trainees also led to oversized staffs. Moreover, the trainee's experience was often limited, either to a single department in the library or at best to a single library without the broadening effect of a wider exposure. He supported the idea of a regular school training for librarians, not as a substitute for practical experience,\(^2\) 285-88. Dewey inserted a bracketed editorial comment in the printed proceedings that most likely indicated his sense of the opposition to both his practicality and to his New York work. He wrote, "In saying this I do not raise the question of the merits of New York libraries on methods. Sometimes it is more useful to study the things to avoid than those to imitate."

\(^1\)William F. Poole, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 288-89.
but as a complement that would bring together both theory and practice. An added benefit was the known fact that "regularly educated men get the best positions and the best salaries."¹

Cutter, among others, was at a loss, however, as to how the Association could support Dewey's proposal, for Dewey had outlined little more than a proposed curriculum for his library school idea. Because the idea needed more deliberation, a committee was immediately appointed to study the proposal. Cutter reported its findings the next day, expressing the divided nature of their opinions. They could not agree on recommending participation because there was no actual plan to approve. For that reason, one member wished that no statement at all be made. The other four members desired to encourage Dewey, but for the same reason offered only a resolution which read,

That this Association desires to express its gratification that the trustees of Columbia College are considering the propriety of giving instruction in library work, and hopes that the experiment may be tried.²

A minority report to defer any further considerations including any resolutions at all was defeated by a special vote, and a new committee was appointed and ordered to report at

¹Ibid., p. 290. It should be noted, however, that Dewey had said very little about "theory."

²A.L.A. Committee on a School of Library Economy, [Report and Discussion], LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 293. The ad hoc committee consisted of Cutter, Henry J. Carr (Grand Rapids, Mich., Public Library), B. Pickman Mann (U. S. Department of Agriculture Library), Mellon Chamberlain (Boston Public Library), and Chester W. Merrill (Cincinnati Public Library).
the next meeting of the Association. When it did report in 1885 (there was no meeting in 1884), not only had the school itself not yet begun, but the committee itself had not met during the intervening period until five weeks before the Association meeting. The committee could subsequently come up with little more than a new resolution of gratitude and a deferral to still the next meeting.

The real question in the matter at hand was not, in reality, the question of a library school per se. Dewey had done little more than propose the idea of the school to the Association. What he really sought was the endorsement for another of his practical projects, the approval of which would have given him more control over the Association’s activities. By this time, however, the leadership of the Association would not go ahead with the project until it was more firmly developed. The opposition to taking votes of approval for a project or a standardized mode of practice was led by William F. Poole who considered the

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1 Ibid., pp. 293–94. Chamberlain was the dissenter. The original resolution was carried, but only after a heated debate in which Dewey accused Poole of being against the idea of the Association itself in 1876. For the ensuing exchange of correspondence between the two, see Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 94.

2 The new committee consisted of Cutter, W. E. Foster (Providence Public Library), Samuel S. Green (Worcester Public Library), Mary Bean (Brookline Public Library), and Hannah P. James (Newton Free Library). For its report, see A.L.A. Committee on a School of Library Economy, [Report], LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 291–94.
Association more a place to express one’s views than to gain authority for one’s "hobbies in methods of library work."

During the 1885 conference, when the Association balked at taking a vote on the matter of cataloging rules for transliterating, Dewey spoke out vehemently:

We have done nothing more practical in advancing library interests than in formulating our general opinions on various subjects. When we degenerate into a mere debating society in which to make speeches, and never dare to express our personal opinion, for fear that in the future we may learn more and wish to alter it, we shall take away the chief value to the libraries at large. The old and experienced libraries are not the ones to whom these meetings are most useful. Some of them will never alter the plans they used in their younger days, however great improvements may be made. But there are hundreds of the smaller libraries who wait to learn the result of these meetings, and they will be sorely disappointed to find that the net result is a series of speeches, with no means of knowing what the general judgment of the meeting is. It is folly for us to take time to record the individual opinion of each member when a vote will show so quickly the number favoring either side. I should favor recording the number voting each way; but we should remember that nine-tenths of the questions we have discussed, after they have been fully considered, have been voted unanimously one way, the results of those votes have been eminently satisfactory to the very large number who have been guided by them.

When the opinions of others were asked on the propriety of voting for one particular method of transliteration, Cutter replied,

I brought the question before the meeting to get an expression of opinion, such as we have had, and also

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to interest members in the question. I do not myself feel that I know anything about it. (Laughter) I do not think either that the Association knows anything about it. (Laughter) And I do not think that a definite vote at this time is desirable.\(^1\)

Cutter may well have felt himself to be in a difficult position. He had supported Dewey's ventures in the past, but the issue at hand was clearly a matter on which he felt the Association should not make an authoritative pronouncement, at least not at that point. By 1889 he made a more definite commitment to side with Poole's and Winsor's position that the Association was a deliberative, not a legislative, body. When a vote was called for on the matter of rules for abbreviations in cataloging, Cutter lined up against the move to place the authority of the Association behind a single solution to the problem. He appealed to the membership.

I protest against taking any vote. On a subject that requires such calm and careful consideration as this, an excited assembly, in a noisy, hot room, is not in a fit frame of mind even to grasp the question, much less to decide it. These things are hard to settle even in the quiet of one's study. They should not be sprung upon us here when we are at the mercy of any ready speaker. I doubt if half those who are present know what they are asked to vote on; and I am sure that in such matters we have no right to pass a resolution that shall in any way bind the Association, or be quoted hereafter in favor of any set of rules, or to choke off discussion. Our vote would be worthless. We have accepted the report; let us stop there.\(^2\)

When Dewey later complained that members would shift back

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\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 311. The insertions were added by the editor.

and forth between opinions like shuttlecocks and never reach a decision while later reading the conference reports, Cutter turned his words back on him.

We can just as well read both sides as hear both sides, and in reading we can carefully weigh arguments, which we cannot do in the hurry of a meeting where the breath of the speaker is—to adopt Mr. Dewey's simile—continually blowing the weathercock round.¹

Finally in 1892 in the committee deliberations for rewriting the constitution of the Association, Cutter specifically voted against Dewey's proposal that the 'objects' of the Association should include 'reaching conclusions'; that is, conclusions that would constitute single solutions to difficult practical problems. Cutter agreed with Winsor that the phrase was inappropriate.² Charles C. Soule, also a member of the committee and a close friend of Dewey's, sounded the two men out and advised Dewey that the two thought the terminology to be a "wild phrase." He thought that in order to keep from running into open opposition from them, it would be best to conciliate their view, at least at the outset, "by conceding,—not with the principle,—but the statement. After all, if we strike it out, making recommendations is not prohibited,—so it doesn't really much matter."³

¹Ibid., p. 277.

²[Draft copy of the new constitution], MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The draft copy was circulated early in 1892 to members of the committee and included both their votes and emendations concerning the different articles.

Cutter may have felt troubled about his opposition. During the deliberations in March he expressed in a note that in the light of Soule's distaste that the committee report be anything but unanimous, he would drop his opposition to Dewey's measures for constitutional changes; to everything, that is, except the direct method of electing the officers of the Association. Yet, one cannot help but suppose that Cutter's frame of mind was somewhat upset over the whole matter. Not only was he involved in a conflict with the Athenaeum trustees, but he was also facing an outbreak of scarlet fever in his household. Furthermore, he was in correspondence with Dewey, having already asked the younger man to be on the lookout for him for a new library position. In any case, Cutter must have felt a tension in being both in opposition and in debt to Dewey at the same time.  

Cutter's A.L.A. Philosophy—Inspiration and Common Sense

Cutter could not ultimately assent to the uniformity demanded by Dewey and others who saw the purpose of the Association in that light. He had already come to that conclusion with respect to cataloging rules and had expressed to

April 15, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

1 Letter, Cutter to [?], March 5, [1892], CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The note does not have an addressee, however, and it could be argued that it was not intended for Dewey. Moreover, Soule's letter to Dewey, already noted, suggests that by April Cutter resumed his opposition.
Dewey several years before the difficulty of trying to
demand uniformity at all costs. His note on the subject
turned the sense of the meaning of 'practical' around, by
making those who demanded uniformity at all costs the un-
practical ones. He wrote,

> You unpractical fellows who have never catalog'd seem to think that rules can cover all cases, & that uni-
formity is better than adaptation to circumstances. I no [sic] of no rules wh. will relieve a cataloger from
the necessity of using his judgment & studying many cases; if there are any such rules they are bad.¹

Later, at the end of his life, Cutter reiterated the same
theme in the statement, "The golden age of cataloging is
over." That is, cataloging rules in his view could not be
reduced to an ultimate code in which all the issues had been
settled simply because the Association had wished them to
be so. One senses in his statement the nostalgia for a day
when such issues could be left in a healthy suspension.²

Probably for the above reasons, Cutter began in the
mid-1880's to promote, along with his belief in the good
gained from learned discussions, the idea that the Associa-
tion's highest value lay in its ability to bring librarians
together for mutual encouragement. The source of Cutter's
emphasis may well have come from the Association's experience
at Lake George and Saratoga, New York, in 1885. Previously,
the conferences had been held in busy metropolitan areas,

¹ Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 22, 1883, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
² For a discussion of Cutter's phrase and the fourth edition of his Rules in which he stated it, see above, Ch. VI, pp. 474-78.
but the distractions of the cities proved a hindrance to the business of the meetings. Samuel S. Green related concerning the 1885 conference that for the first time the meeting was held in a summer resort where the members were free from such distractions. The spirit of fellowship prevailed. He wrote of that year that the librarians, were always together, and, attending sessions faithfully and mingling freely at other times in the midst of congenial surroundings, found that in a higher degree than usual they attained the objects which had brought them together. Much work was done, all members engaged in doing it; they became acquainted with one another and had an enjoyable time.¹

The next year at Milwaukee, the effort to promote such fellowship was extended to include an extensive post-conference excursion that included a trip to St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Ashland, Wisconsin. Afterwards, each of the conferences included such post-conference excursions and Cutter extended the fellowship purpose of the meetings especially to such trips.² By 1891 he was phrasing the experiences in terms of the religious calling of librarians that he had used a decade before. Not only were librarians the literary pastors of the people, but in their contacts with one another they were in the apostolic position of inspiring one another with high ideals, especially when "two or three are gathered together on the way to and from our annual conventions and in the intervals between the

¹Green, The Public Library Movement, p. 121.

²Cf., C. A. Cutter, Editorials, LJ, XII (November, 1887), 503; XIII (September/October, 1888), 275; and XIV (July, 1889), 303.
meetings, and all the time during the post-conference excursions.1 During the conference that year he reviewed the history of the Association and related that the good of the meetings was not in hearing the papers offered, but was instead,

a great deal more in listening to the discussions which follow the papers, and more even than that in the little private conferences which are going on all the time on the street cars, in the railroad cars in which people come to the conference, in the hotel corridors, and elsewhere, in which the librarian privately gives his experience, his difficulties, and the way in which he has overcome them.2

In an implicit demonstration of his identification with an older, more genteel approach to the librarian's calling, Cutter devoted his presidential address in 1889 to an interpretation of the essence of librarianship. In contradistinction to his 1883 address at Buffalo in which he dwelled upon the working relationship between techniques and ideals in a library's operation, he spoke instead on the quality of judgment needed to do library work; a quality that he chose to call common sense. The common sense that he spoke of did not refer, however, to utilitarian practicality. It was, rather, an attribute of the enlightened character in which all the higher and lower faculties were balanced in harmony. His thoughts were specifically

1C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVI (July, 1891), 199; Cf., C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVII (April, 1892), 119. The phrase, "two or three . . ." is, of course, an allusion to Jesus' words to his disciples in Matthew 18:20.

directed, therefore, at those for whom librarianship was little more than a skilled trade concerned with mechanical devices and oversimplified solutions to complex problems. ¹

He began his speech with his typical display of wit, pointing out at the same time his own recognition of the individuality of people.

Common Sense—what is it? I hope no one will insist on a definition. . . . But if I must be explicit, I will say common sense is my sense; other people's sense, when it differs from mine, is little better than nonsense. ²

He protested against those who felt that such common sense was a rarity by pointing out how it was a natural quality of the American character that had come as a result of its frontier experience. With respect to libraries, he added,

So our libraries, begun modestly a century ago, by making the most of a little and by the use of mother wit, have, with the schools, opened up a great country of intellect, have extended themselves more than anywhere else on the globe, have become a necessity—at least wherever the New Englander goes—and, the era of luxury having come, one finds them on the frontier, or what was lately the frontier, at Minneapolis, at Denver, with all the perfections of material and personnel that the Library Bureau and the Library School can furnish. ³

He went on to suggest, however, that there was still much to desire in the way of improvement. "Even the most

¹Common sense as defined here is directly related to the faculty psychology inherent in Scottish common sense philosophy. Cutter would have been exposed to the latter at Harvard. See Howe, The Unitarian Conscience, Ch. II.


³Ibid.
practical people fall into most irrational acts."¹ Pointing out a series of examples taken from everyday experience, he defined common sense in terms of harmony and purpose.

As I came here I saw a country house on a lake bank, where there was a lovely view. A barn was planted between the dwelling and the lake, the house turning its back upon the water and facing a cabbage field. Was this sensible? Is it sensible to risk one's eyesight on the ill-printed newspaper in the vibrating car? . . . Is it sensible for men to "put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains?"²

He continued his list of examples but shifted to common library problems.

A great sum spent on a building, and none left to buy books; book funds bequeathed, and nothing to run the library; a librarian appointed because he is cousin of the wife of the president of the board of trustees, or an old classmate, or a union soldier, or because he is secretary of the Young Men's Democratic (or Republican) Club; . . . a new building made barely large enough to hold the books already belonging to the library; the reading-room which should be the quietest place in the building, made so magnificent as to attract crowds of sightseers; and so on, and so on.³

He then moved into the main part of his speech, a digest of current library practices, each held up to his measure of common sense. He took up in order, the problems of compiling library statistics, the employment of library assistants, library rules and their use, book selection, the treatment of fiction, collecting pamphlets, accepting gifts, weeding collections, cataloging, and classification. With each subject he emphasized the importance, not of learning a certain number of set solutions, but rather of developing those qualities of one's character that would enable a

¹Ibid., p. 148. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.
librarian to weigh all of the important factors and to produce a harmony of method and purpose.

His advice was pithy and aimed at those for whom librarianship was all mindless activity with no sense of the deeper values and goals involved. With regard to producing statistics he related,

There are persons who, like children, must pull up their plants to see if they are growing. And they want to know such details—how many bakers and how many candlestick makers use the library, what percentage of fiction and what percentage of theology is used, on what day in the year the most books were taken out and on what the fewest. Yes, it is all interesting; looks as if it ought to be useful; is sometimes needed as a defence against the attacks of the unfriendly; but one would like to know how often any practical measure is the result of the figures so laboriously got together. Perhaps it is enough that they sometimes prevent foolish measures being adopted.¹

He claimed that he did not decry statistics and gave some examples of his own use of them. He added, however, that once an investigation had been completed, it was best if it were terminated rather than continued without purpose year after year.

With regard to choosing library assistants, he again pointed to the quality of character needed.

In the selection he must justify his privilege. He should remember that he cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and he should not accept or should dismiss at once, not merely those whom he finds to be unfaithful shirks, but those whom he finds to be slow, stupid, clumsy, illiterate, especially illiterate. A man can hardly hand a book over a counter properly, a boy cannot get a book well from the shelves, to whom it is no more than a block of wood.²

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 149.
With regard to the librarian's relationship to the public, he suggested,

It goes without saying that every librarian should be above all suspicion of favoring any one. As librarian he has no dislikes, hatreds, jealousies; he is of no sect in religion, of no party in politics; he helps all alike, as the physician heals all alike. When he finds among his assistants one who is also impassionate and impartial, he may intrust him or her with the dispensing power.¹

His treatment of the problem of book selection also impinged on the breadth of the character of the individual librarian. "Rules for buying one can hardly give, yet there are certain general principles."² The principles he referred to were, however, matters of judgment. A librarian must be able to determine the dullness (in literature), inaccuracy (in science), and dullness and untrustworthiness (in history) of books if he intended to build a disciplined collection. He went on, "Of the causes for rejection I should say: Inaccuracy, evil intent, dullness; but the greatest of these is dullness."³ He was not willing, however, to exclude all worthless books. "A great library should contain monuments of human folly as well as of human wisdom."⁴

Cutter also applied the same canons to the treatment of fiction. A librarian should be able to discern the best from only the good, and both of those from the worst. The standard of judgment should be literary merit. There were situations, of course, where the librarian could not avoid

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 150. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
the dull book. But in those situations he should strive
to substitute novels that were a grade better than the ones
sought, and to reinforce his intentions by the personal
relations that he had with his patrons. He admitted that
it was more possible to influence reading habits in a small
town, but he called upon both the librarians and trustees
of the larger public libraries to,

wake up to the perception that in this supplementary
public school which we call public library, it is their
duty to provide teachers as well as text-books, the
attendants in the delivery-room need not all be merely
animated machines, with no higher ambition than to pass
over the counter 300 volumes an hour. If there are
several attendants, one at least will be competent to
give advice; if there is only one, he will have been
chosen because he had some knowledge of books—and of
human nature.¹

Only when those personal qualities of the librarian were
emphasized could good fiction become "one of the most power­
ful engines of civilization."²

After having emphasized in the various aspects of a
librarian's work the highest faculty, common sense, Cutter
closed by referring to the value of one's faculty of emotion
and imagination.

I have praised common sense. But the librarian is
no worse if he combines with it some grains of imagina­
tion and sentiment; if he is one whom the vast book­
rooms of the great European libraries would strike dumb;
if he feels an indescribable pleasure in hanging over
an old manuscript or one of the works of the first
printers, with its sturdy paper and honest ink, black
as when first struck off, and its curiously irregular
lines of type; if he prefers a quaint old binding to a
necklace of jewels; if the odor of a case of books just
come from abroad more delights him than a garden of

¹Ibid., p. 151. ²Ibid.
flowers; if to him his library is the pleasantest place on earth, and his work there the most engrossing, the most satisfactory, that he can imagine; if every detail is to him of pressing importance, and he longs to perfect every part as the poet polishes his verses, and the painter retouches his canvas; if, as he answers the innumerable questions of the ignorant—and the learned—he fancies himself like the guide on the Alps, the pilot in the harbor, the equal of the teachers in the schools, the professors in the colleges, yes, of the pastors in their parishes. All of these delusions—if delusions they are—will not harm him, for they are not inconsistent with common sense.¹

Elections and the Revision of the A.L.A. Constitution

The conflict over American Library Association leadership also surfaced in the problem of who should participate in the leadership ranks. As in the other aspects of the Association struggle, the problem was given force and articulation by Melvil Dewey. One source for broader participation occurred with the rise of local library clubs. The New York Library Club that Dewey began in 1885 was to become a prototype for other local groups. In Dewey's thinking, local clubs would not only give the opportunity for wider participation, but would also provide a way for the profession to reach local librarians with their influence. When the movement caught on all over the country after 1890, Cutter was one of the first to praise their usefulness, especially as a way for those who could never expect to become the head of a prominent library to obtain recognition.² Cutter saw the purpose of the local clubs

¹Ibid., p. 154.
²C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVI (March, 1891), 70.
much in the same manner as he saw the purpose of the parent organization; that is, as places of debate, mutual encouragement, and inspiration, rather than as a tool for recruiting librarians for an overall program of standardization. His statement in 1890, that diversity of opinion in the Association was a sign of its good health, revealed an attitude that he extended to the local clubs as well.¹

With regard to the breadth of leadership participation in the Association, Dewey exerted more explicit pressures to open up the leadership ranks. In two separate reports during the first session of the 1885 meeting at Lake George, he expressed his opinion that the organization needed to move more vigorously. With regard to the confusion about planning for the annual meetings, he related, "I wish to urge that the Association make up its mind to have an annual meeting, and do away with this jumping and jogging from spring to fall."² The cause of the meeting irregularities was, of course, due to the Executive Board. Consequently, in his report as secretary, he asked rhetorically if it was not time to rotate the officers of the Association after having "drifted along, electing the same officers year after year."³ He suggested that it was a way to break in new


²Melvil Dewey, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 301.

workers while at the same time keeping some of the older ones. He continued, "If this is the better plan, now, at the close of our first decade, is the fit time to begin the new system." The new system would, of course, also have provided a rationale for Dewey's election as president of the Association in the face of Winsor's decision to step down that same year.

The limited nature of Executive Board participation had arisen because of the electoral system used. The Board had always been elected as a slate of five members put forth by the nominating committee, the latter appointed by the Board and usually heavily composed of its own members. The newly elected Board then chose, almost always among themselves, the officers of the Association and the leading members of the standing committees. They had tended to rely upon a limited number of men to fill those positions.

When the nominating committee of the meeting that year reported later during the conference that they could not initiate rotations because of the constitutional method already used, Dewey spoke even more pointedly, although at the same time trying to allay any criticism about his proposal.

It looks a little queer that we should elect the same old committee in a routine way, and naturally, some are impressed with the view that it is time to change. My own notion would be to make a standing rule that officers should not be eligible for re-election. The matter should be decided in some way to show that the change is made not because of a lack of confidence in

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1 Ibid.
our old officers. ... I think we ought to rotate the officers, and should not get into the idea that if we drop a name on the list of officers it is because of lack of confidence.¹

A motion to effect Dewey's proposal was carried, but in no sense unanimously, and with a relatively small number of members voting.² The report of the nominating committee later in the conference expressed the wish that the list of names presented would be more representative, but the change that was made was in terms of geographical distribution rather than in terms of what Dewey seemed to have in mind. The concentration of the leadership in the Boston area had always existed as a vague tension. Although the tension was partially alleviated by the choice of William F. Poole as president in 1885 and by scheduling the 1886 meeting in Milwaukee, it remained an issue about which Cutter and others were sensitive. The 1887 meeting was held in New York State at the Thousand Islands resort town. The 1888 meeting was scheduled for St. Louis, but at the last minute was rescheduled for the spring of 1889 in order to accommodate the completion of the new building of the St. Louis Public Library. Because the new date was so early in the year, and the 1888 meeting had to be replanned, an autumn meeting in the East would have been a financial burden for the Westerners, and in Cutter's mind, "offensive" to the

¹Melvil Dewey, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 326.

²The vote was 22 to 12 and is given in LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 327.
St. Louis librarians. Consequently, when Cutter announced that a meeting would be held in the Catskills, he specifically noted that it would be informal and would not conduct official business.

The 1889 meeting was subsequently held in St. Louis as scheduled, but the problem of Westerner versus Easterner remained on Cutter's mind. Dewey was apparently aware of Cutter's feelings when in 1890 he wrote to him, seemingly in jest, of a proposal by Crunden that needed the approval of the Executive Board, "It is a little western in its flavor, but I can stand it if you can." Two years later, however, Cutter reiterated the same issue. In writing to Dewey about the coming conference, he stated, "By the way as it is a western year wouldn't it be better for Utley to preside at some of the sessions. The westerners won't like it if we have three eastern presidents in succession."

Dewey's attempt in 1885 to change the leadership did not accomplish as much as he would have perhaps desired. There was a general turnover in committee membership. For example, Cutter was not continued on the Cooperation Committee for the first time since it was formed. But Poole, who was appointed president and who served from 1885 until 1887,


2Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter, June 12, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

voiced outspoken opposition to the uniformity that Dewey wanted. Subsequently, the Executive Board itself introduced a resolution at the 1887 conference that the president could not succeed himself and that an informal vote be taken to see whom the Association members present desired for president. The motion was doubtless prompted by Dewey for he attempted to allay fears about circumventing the constitutional power of the Board by claiming that the informal ballot was little more than a straw vote. An informal secret ballot was taken, but without counting it, the tallies were turned over to the Board who did not report its totals.  

Cutter was elected to serve the following year. Dewey's design was further thwarted when only an informal meeting was held in 1888 and Cutter was obliged to continue for a second year.

In 1889 Dewey proposed a much more drastic change by making a motion to have the Executive Board itself elected more openly. He proposed that instead of the existing Board nominating a single slate for the new board, an informal ballot be taken and those with the highest votes be the slate. He expressed as his reason the desire to guard against,

any criticism in the future that the Board is a slate made up by the leading spirits and given to a nominating committee. We have thus far escaped such criticism, and had best change to a safer system before any feeling arises. This system gives every member an equal chance

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1 A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XII (September/October, 1887), 438, 441.
to express his preference for the government of the A. L. A. for the next year, and is all there is left to see of democracy in an election.¹

Dewey's proposal was approved, although the informal ballot taken probably resulted in the same members being elected to the Board for the following year as would have been selected for a slate under the old method. Nevertheless, besides the ten who received the highest number of votes and from whom the top five were chosen as the slate, twenty-two others also received votes. The resulting broad spectrum of candidates, the calling into question of the traditional election method, and the issue of taking votes of endorsement, became the occasion for a re-evaluation of the constitution itself. A committee, consisting of Cutter, Charles C. Soule, Melvil Dewey, William C. Lane, and William I. Fletcher, was appointed to review the constitution as a whole. During the ensuing year, however, it did no work on the problem and during the 1890 meeting it was dismissed and a new committee appointed in its place. Cutter was again included, this time joined by Justin Winsor.² By 1892 not only was the method of electing the Board coming under attack in favor of a more open policy, but the issue had been raised of whether or not all the officers themselves should be directly elected. At that point, Dewey, who had been


²See the A.L.A. Conference Discussions and reports in LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 287, and XV (December, 1890), 103.
elected president during that conference, drew back. He preferred only the direct election of the president. Otherwise, the Executive Board should elect the other officers. ¹ Cutter defended the older method in toto and both he and Winsor spoke out against any direct election process. Cutter was of the opinion that the Executive Board had always acted properly. Not only that, the person whom they had chosen among them annually had usually been the one who had received the highest number of votes for the board itself. ²

The constitution was approved in 1892 with the older method for the most part intact. In 1893, however, when the issue was again raised, the direct election process prevailed.

Upon completing his two-year presidency, Cutter felt a relief from the duties of the office. He wrote to Dewey, "I hav already dropped out of activ participation in A. L. A. I am an ex." ³ Except for the presidency of the Association, he had not really done so, of course, but there was good reason for him to feel the desire in the face of mounting pressures.

His duties as editor of the Library Journal were increasing despite a slightly enlarged editorial staff. Help had initially come in the person of Charles Alexander Nelson, a bibliographer at the Astor Library in New York

¹ A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVII (August, 1892), 54-60.
² Ibid., pp. 55-56.
City. From May 1887 to October 1888 Nelson wrote the notes about libraries that formed part of Cutter's feature, "Library Economy and History."¹ When Nelson assumed the librarianship of the Howard Memorial Library of New Orleans in November 1888, his place was taken by Paul Leicester Ford, also of New York City and also an accomplished bibliographer. In 1890, however, Bowker engaged Ford as his own assistant in order to relieve himself of some of the management duties in the New York office of the Journal and the Publishers' Weekly.² The job of collecting and editing the major portion of the materials remained, therefore, on Cutter's shoulders, although he received occasional materials from others for the increasing number of editorials that were appearing.

A particularly burdensome and growing part of the editorship consisted of preparing the papers and proceedings of the annual conferences. One aspect of that job entailed condensing recorded debates. Although the Executive Board had repeatedly given him the freedom to make the condensations as he saw fit, there were always some who wanted to emend their public statements, thereby causing delays. There was, of course, a decided difference between the

¹See the notice of Nelson's work in LJ, XIII (June, 1888), 171-72; See also, Letter, R. R. Bowker to C. A. Nelson, May 31, 1887, NYPL, Nelson Papers.

manuscript reports of the meetings and what finally appeared in print, a fact noted in 1889 by the Finance Committee while searching for possible unrecorded motions on membership rulings. In 1890 a stenographer was employed for the first time, but that not only made the job of condensation more involved, but also caused additional delays.¹

Another aspect of the problem concerned the relationship of the proceedings to the Library Journal. Delays of any sort made it difficult to give a consistent pagination to the Journal as a whole, for a regular issue was ordinarily devoted to the proceedings. When the material was late, Cutter could only guess at the numbering of the next monthly issue, that often came out prior to the issue with the proceedings. When he solved that problem in 1890 by giving the proceedings a separate pagination, he expressed privately to Dewey that it was an idea he felt "ashamed" not to have thought of previously.²

In addition, questions about the cost and distribution of the proceedings were continually raised, especially by the treasurer of the Association. One of the conditions that allowed the Journal to continue its existence in 1880 was the Association's assumption of the cost of the proceedings themselves. But the Association was not often in a


²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, October 9, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
good financial position during the decade and wanted the *Journal* to assume a larger portion of the expense. Cutter acted as an arbitrator between the Association and Bowker in the matter, but the problem was not easily resolved. The matter was made only more complicated by the need to determine just how many extra copies of the proceedings to print for the use of Association members who received them upon payment of their annual dues, when a number of members annually did not pay. The problem of non-dues-paying members sparked a continuing debate during the early 1890's as to who should or should not get copies and Cutter found himself in correspondence constantly trying to determine the correct number of copies to be printed. ¹

Besides the *Library Journal* and the increasing attention that it demanded, Cutter also felt other growing pressures. He found himself involved in the already mentioned struggle over administration policies at the Boston Athenaeum. He prepared a new edition of his *Rules* and in 1890 privately published Karl Linderfelt's *Eclectic Rules*. He was also busy making a new classification scheme as well as completing the one he had already begun for the Athenaeum.

The Change in Leadership

The heavy pressures, combined with the extensive changes taking place in the Association, could not but have

¹Many letters in the Dewey Papers at the Columbia University Library between Cutter, Dewey, and the treasurers of the Association, especially after 1890, attest to the problem.
caused Cutter to reflect on the nature of his own position in the profession as an authoritative spokesman. New libraries and librarians were increasing in number, not a few of the latter educated at Dewey's library school and loyal to his approach to the basic issues. The passing of many of the older leaders and the assumption of leadership by younger more organizationally inclined persons during the late 1880's and the early 1890's suggests in one sense the normal evolution of an organization. Yet, the change was far more profound and far more purposive than is evident on the surface, for it arose from both a conflict of philosophies and considerable maneuvering within the organization, especially on Dewey's part. As a result, the older leaders (and with them their general professional philosophy) were eclipsed, and perhaps, in a more realistic sense, even dispossessed of their leadership roles. The change of leadership was not expressed in open conflict on a personal level, however. The older leaders tended to ride above such open battles. With regard to the conflict between Dewey and Poole, Williamson has surmised, "The battle which was fought from 1876 to 1894 was one in which only Dewey was seriously engaged."¹ While that may have been true of Poole and Dewey, Cutter was too close to the struggle by virtue of his relationship with Dewey to have avoided its reality.

Another commentator on the scene and a close friend of Cutter's, Samuel S. Green, drew the same picture of

¹Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 103.
denouement, although seemingly without an awareness of the larger conflict of basic philosophies. His chronicle of the Association ended with the year 1893, although he himself continued in library work far beyond that time. He explained that from 1876 to 1893 he had been,

one of the inner circle of officers which guided the movements of the American Library Association and in constant and immediate association with the leading spirits who not only animated the action of that organization but were especially earnest and effective in bringing about library development in general.¹

He ended his story where he did because the older members of the organization were passing from the scene. He therefore added, without any sense of there having been a conflict,

After 1893 although I attended many conventions, wrote a number of papers and took a general interest in the library movement, I gradually ceased to keep in touch with the details of new propositions, relaxed somewhat intimacy with other librarians and failed to keep conversant with the inside knowledge of the workings of leaders which I had hitherto enjoyed.²

One could surmise from a surface view that Cutter's position in the Association and his relationship to Dewey had remained unchanged during the period. He had always been known as a shy, rather quiet person of great wisdom and optimism. One had to make it a point to get to know him, but once having done so, would be privy to his deeper thoughts on librarianship and life. He conscientiously carried out his own conviction that the annual conferences

¹ Green, The Public Library Movement, p. 302.
² Ibid.
were chiefly valuable because of the personal contacts they afforded. Thorvald Solberg, a younger librarian, illustrated the fact admirably at Cutter's death in the form of several vignettes. He related his first memorable experience of hiking and boating with Cutter during the 1886 Milwaukee conference, commenting on his gentlemanly qualities, his friendliness, and his modesty, and of how often Cutter was sought out by others. Of the relationships that resulted, Solberg wrote,

It was his intense love of nature which helped to make Mr. Cutter such a delightful companion. Walking, driving, cycling, boating, he was always alive to all that was fine and good, and while he said little—he was never gushing—you felt that nothing escaped him and that he was drawing in with every breath what there was of beauty in sky, earth, water, trees, flowers—color, form, fragrance—all appealed to him. We all of us know too how surely at the conferences Mr. Cutter was found thoroughly enjoying every innocent pleasure, and how many of us now feel, as I do, that to that trait of his we ourselves owe many an hour of happy enjoyment, the memory of which still lingers. It should not be left unsaid that in the same high degree he was appreciative of whatever was fine in human nature. He was never envious, always kindly. In the most intimate talks with him, while he was always frank and honest, he was never inconsiderate of others. I never knew him to say anything contemptuous of any other librarian or of any other man. He was not afraid of criticism and never resented it. He would say sometimes that if his work would not bear criticism he would better know it, and his willingness constantly to endeavor to improve his work was remarkable.¹

Cutter also greatly enjoyed the Association's social functions and more often than not took part in the levity of the occasion with his engaging sense of humor and his propensity for making subtle puns. At parties he gained a

reputation over the years as being an indefatigable dancer, although his nephew noted later that his dancing was more noted for its enthusiasm than for its accomplishment. The same attitudes were even more pronounced in his personal relationships with those with whom he worked most closely. His correspondence sparkles with his wit and offered much enjoyment for all.

Cutter's personal charm also made it possible for him to carry on a friendly relationship with Melvil Dewey when other older library leaders found it difficult. Dewey was the sort of person who seemed to force persons to choose up sides. Cutter was able, however, to incorporate both friendliness and criticism. For example, when Dewey found the opposition of the Columbia trustees to his library school to be too much, Cutter warmly recommended him for the position of New York State librarian at Albany. He wrote to Dewey, and noted, that while such a position no longer appealed to himself—although it would have ten years earlier—"You [Dewey] (to say nothing of your being a far abler man) are younger and just at that happy age when enthusiasm has not faded and experience enough has been gained to prevent any more serious mistakes." One can surmise a reflection in the latter phrase of the depressing events of 1880.

1W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 30.

2Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 28, 1888, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Along with his personal letter, Cutter also included a more formal recommendation for Dewey to use.
Despite their friendliness, however, there was an unmistakable cooling in their relationship from what it had been in earlier years. Dewey's star was rising. Cutter liked him and appreciated his inventiveness and enthusiasm, but he was also aware of the younger man's limitations. He opposed Dewey's approach to the purpose of the professional organization, not on a personal level, but rather on the simple basis of his differing philosophy of librarianship. During 1892, however, Cutter experienced a series of events that brought him face to face with Dewey's power.

Early in 1892 when the conflict with the Athenaeum's trustees broke into the open, Cutter declared his intention to his closest friends that he would continue there for only the remainder of the year. Because he needed another position, he appealed to Dewey, who had many contacts, to look out for him. ¹ Cutter's situation was unique. He was one of the best known and the most liked of the library leaders. His stature was such that only a few library positions would actually fit his talents. His one limiting factor, however, was the specialization of his experience, a fact noted by Dewey when he recommended Cutter to Massachusetts Governor John Brackett in 1890 for appointment to the newly created Free Library Commission. Dewey wrote,

C. A. Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum is one of the best known American librarians and all would expect his name on this board. He is shy and quiet but a man of great learning and modesty and though his library

¹Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 24, March 27, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
experience has all been in Harvard and the Athenaeum instead of public libraries, he has, as editor of the Library Journal, unusual knowledge of their workings.¹

Despite the fact that several prominent libraries needed librarians, the only help that Dewey could render was to ask Cutter if he would consider the post of librarian of the new University of Chicago, a position under Dewey's own direction.² Dewey's overall plan for heading the University of Chicago library system included a university extension department, the university library, and his library school. He wanted Cutter to oversee the day-to-day operations of the library because he [Dewey] was practically out of that more strictly librarian's work. With regard to "laying out the building, settling on methods, rules, etc.," however, Dewey expressed the necessity to have "a large finger in the pie; but he felt they would still work harmoniously because "our ideas are so nearly alike on most of these questions."³

He continued with the touchier matter of shelf classification schemes and revealed his determination that the decimal scheme would be the only one, a necessity in his thinking, in order to make the University of Chicago the "library center of the world." ⁴

¹Letter, M. Dewey to J. Brackett (Carbon copy), July 7, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Cutter was not subsequently appointed to the Commission.

²Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter (Carbon copy), April 6, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. See also above, Ch. IV, pp. 261-64.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
Dewey related the difficulty he would have in leaving the Albany position at once, and the possibility that Cutter might have to precede him, but only to suggest to Cutter that it would be with the idea of Dewey himself following. If Dewey changed his mind, Cutter could do as he pleased. But Dewey added,

In almost any other case I should say nothing about this, but I feel as if it was a matter of large importance for the plans I have at heart that the Chicago University library should be worked on thorough D.C. lines and be a great library center, and I would be unwilling to try to put any one in charge of it who would run off to some other line, for it should of course go on as it has been started and not be changed back and forth.¹

Dewey closed his letter with an appeal to Cutter to express his frank opinion and a request for Cutter to name the salary he would need. His letter, however, cast only a thin veil over his own aggressiveness and his almost total disregard for Cutter's own creative contributions to librarianship. He seemed insensitive to the room that such a creative person would need to operate. Cutter was to exercise his freedom only with regard to the everyday operations of the library. When it came to policy decisions, Dewey could justify his "finger in the pie" only with the covering statement that they would work together well because their views were alike, an opinion that belied the facts. Perhaps most blatently, he suggested that the greatness of the Chicago University library was totally dependent on its use of the Decimal Classification. Without

¹Ibid.
mentioning Cutter's Expansive Classification by name (the only viable alternative to the Decimal Classification at that time), Dewey suggested that if anyone "would run off to some other line," his goal would be subverted.

Dewey's letter to Cutter represented, in reality, much more than a simple job offer and indeed much more than a display of Dewey's own unabashed aggressiveness. It was a symbol of the meeting of the two sides that had been engaged in a struggle concerning both the authority and power over the young Association. Cutter found himself at a severe disadvantage, however. He was committed to leaving the Athenaeum and he needed a new position. He had been involved in the rewriting of the constitution and had taken a position in opposition to Dewey, so that Dewey's offer in a sense put Cutter in his debt.¹

¹The interrelationship between the job offer and the rewriting of the constitution is not entirely clear, especially because of the timing of the offer for the Chicago position. The committee had been meeting regularly during February, March and April in preparation for the 1892 A.L.A. conference at Lakewood. Soule kept Dewey closely informed of the committee's mood. On March 27 Cutter notified Dewey of his decision not to be a candidate for the Athenaeum librarianship the following year. On March 29, Soule, having heard rumors of Cutter's troubles, wrote to Dewey that if he, Dewey, did not want the position at Chicago, he might recommend Cutter. Dewey's proposal, barely a week later, coming when it did, may have been perfectly sincere, but his own letters to Harper at the end of January made it seem incongruous. Winsor, the other chief antagonist to Dewey on the committee, had also "heard" that Dewey was seriously reconsidering the move, an opinion attested to in a letter to Poole, April 8, 1892, Newberry Library, Poole Papers. But his information apparently came from Cutter after Dewey's proposal was made and received. Cutter must also have received some other information not contained in Dewey's April 6th letter for Winsor related that Cutter indicated
When Cutter wrote to Dewey concerning the position offered, he demonstrated an awareness of the implications of Dewey's terms. He first sent a short note stating that he needed more time to consider the offer. He continued, "I can only say now that I have no objection, consequential or otherwise, to using the D.C., tho I certainly believe the E.C. is better." As an afterthought, he wrote along the side of the sheet, "Your proposition has one good side. We have worked together in the past, & we have either agreed or differed amicably."¹

Six days later Cutter conveyed his feelings more directly. After mentioning some of the work he found it desirable to complete at the Athenaeum before leaving, he wrote,

Dewey was reconsidering on the basis of a better financial offer from Harper. The fact is that Harper resisted Dewey's demand for a larger salary.

It is not difficult to conclude, therefore, that Dewey's offer was dubious as well as demeaning. Although not supportable by available evidence, it might also be possible that Cutter's resumption of his opposition on the committee may have occurred as he realized the lack of substance in the proposal and could resume a serious consideration of the issues concerning the constitution, unhindered by any feelings of having to compromise his views for Dewey's sake. At any rate, the entire spring of 1892 seems to have been one of extreme tension for the A.L.A. leaders who faced Dewey's aggressive efforts to change things. To complicate matters even more, the president of the Association at the time, Klas Linderfelt of Milwaukee, was indicted at the end of April on charges of embezzlement of his own library's funds. His position as one of the older leaders may have made the other older leaders feel vulnerable in the face of Dewey's activities and may account for the harsh opinions expressed against him in the Library Journal and in private correspondence.

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 8, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The double underlining is Cutter's.
Nevertheless, for a very good position I would leave tomorrow. Yours is is [sic] not in all respects a very good position, tho it has some attractive features. You can understand that I should much prefer to be unrestrained in my library and that I am eager to put into practice the best classification and notation yet devised, tho I think you know me well enough to be sure that if I come to Chicago under your direction I shall carry out the Decimal Classification to the very best of my ability.¹

Regardless of this exchange of notes, and of what overtones may have been present, the possibilities of the Chicago arrangement failed to materialize.

During the remaining months of the year, Cutter became involved in one additional imbroglio related to the changing scene. It involved the make-up of the American Library Association exhibit committee for the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the nature of the exhibit itself. The make-up and activity of the committee exhibited how far Dewey had been able to re-establish his own influence in the Association. Dewey was elected president of the Association at the 1892 conference and consequently would preside over the meeting of librarians to be held at the World's Fair the next year. During the conference he pressed for and gained the acceptance of Mary Salome Cutler as the chairwoman of the exhibit committee. She was also the person in charge of Dewey's library school at Albany, although Dewey justified her choice as a "recognition of woman's part in American librarianship."²

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²Letter, Dewey to the members of the A.L.A. Columbian
Others, among them William F. Poole, were greatly disturbed at her appointment and persuaded Westin Flint, a member of the Bureau of Education, the sponsoring body for the library exhibit, to press for the appointment of Cutter or some other prominent librarian to the post instead. Cutter was already a regular member of the committee. There were still others, however, who supported Dewey's move and who felt that if Cutter was appointed chairman, he would not be as forceful as Miss Cutler or one of Dewey's proteges. Cutter himself would not accept the proposed change and threatened to resign from the committee altogether if it were made. He was simply unwilling to participate in that sort of politics. Miss Cutler therefore remained the chairwoman, and Cutter remained active on the committee.1

His private opinion may well have been that of Poole, whom Williamson describes as being shocked at the "steam-roller methods used by the library-school people to dominate the meeting at which Dewey was elected."2 Cutter's Nation report of the 1892 conference made only small reference to the

Exposition Committee, June 6, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

1Letters, Westin Flint to W. F. Poole, June 11, 1892; Cutter to [W. F. Poole] (fragment), undated but on the same issue, Newberry Library, Poole Papers; Cutter to M. Dewey, June 19, June 20, 1892; Frank P. Hill (Newark Public Library) to M. Dewey, June 16, 1892; and several letters from Frederick P. Crunden to M. Dewey, summer, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Hill and Crunden strongly supported Dewey and, in addition, Hill felt that he had a stronger claim to the chairmanship in case Cutler was ousted, than did Cutter. In any case, Cutter attempted to steer clear of the conflict as best he could.

2Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 103.
problem, but it was an old theme that showed the difference represented by the leadership style of the older members. In speaking of the crowded program and the fact that the coming library exhibit was little considered, he wrote,

With the feeling that a large body could not properly decide the details of an exhibit, the matter was referred to a committee with power to act, when a better course would have been to invite suggestions by a full discussion in committee of the whole, with the understanding that no vote should be taken.¹

With regard to the exhibit itself, Dewey's plan was for the library catalog section to fully display only his own Decimal Classification scheme. Cutter strongly expressed his sense of injustice over Dewey's intention and when the committee relented and allowed a partial display of the Expansive Classification, Cutter spend a considerable amount of time preparing it. He was at a disadvantage, for while Dewey had the staff of the library school available to do the work on his scheme, Cutter had only himself to do the work on his own.²

By 1892, therefore, the changeover to the leadership represented by Dewey and a younger generation was complete. Williamson has written a rather concise summary of the differences between the two approaches and the effects of Dewey's triumph in terms of the conflict between Dewey and Poole.

¹C. A. Cutter, [American Library Association's Meeting at Lakewood, Nation, LIV (May 26, 1892), 396.
²See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 602-04.
These disagreements were of much more than personal importance, for they reflected fundamental differences of approach to librarianship. In the long run, Dewey's influence—wielded through the machinery of the association, the pages of the Library Journal, and the classes of the Albany library school—prevailed. The resulting standardization of method conferred many benefits on American librarianship but also had its drawbacks in its rigidity and dogmatism. Dewey introduced system and order but often at the expense of life and creativity. American librarianship can thank Dewey for training scores of young librarians to work in the many new libraries of the country, but it can also call him to account for encouraging the bloodless slave to rules, whose public image was all too often not a caricature but a true portrait.¹

In the end, Cutter, who had participated so intimately in the leadership of the Association, found himself on the outside. At the end of April 1893, he also faced the depressing situation of having no library position.

¹Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 98-99.

Dewey's influence grew especially because of the many young librarians trained at his library school and through the multitude of special projects and publications that he was able to sponsor, not the least of which were his decimal classification and Library Notes.
CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DECADE

The last decade of Charles Cutter's life was both a segment that existed apart from what had gone before and a continuation of some previous themes. On the one hand he moved away from the immediate Boston area for the first time in his life and assumed the leadership of a public library. His professional contributions continued but with an emphasis on public library service. They also involved him in a greater range of local professional organizations rather than simply the national Association. On the other hand older themes of struggle continued, particularly with regard to his directing the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts, and his attempt to revise and complete his great accomplishments in cataloging and classification. By the end of the decade an exhausting schedule led to his untimely death and prevented their completion.

The World's Fair

In January 1893 the trustees of the Boston Athenaeum and Cutter agreed upon a severance date of approximately May first. The trustees immediately proceeded to find a new librarian. Cutter needed the time to tie up the various loose ends that were invariably part of the termination of
a long administration, but also found the date convenient because the renewal of the lease on his home in Winchester came due at that time.\(^1\) His original plans for after April were to give his annual lectures at Dewey's library school at Albany and from there to spend some time in Canada at the hunting grounds of a friend. Afterwards he planned to go to Chicago for the American Library Association meeting and thence to England for the autumn.\(^2\)

Cutter's prospects for a new position have been reviewed in Chapter IV. He could not have been very hopeful. The Lenox Library in New York City and the Crerar Library in Chicago remained only fair possibilities. His note to Bowker intimating an autumn trip to Europe captured the irony of the situation. Considering that he usually displayed a saving humor under trying conditions he wrote that he planned to stay beyond the autumn "as much longer as an unappreciative public shall not require my valuable services."\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 15, 1893; another undated letter from either late January or early February 1893 notes the termination of his lease. Still another undated letter, from Elliot Cabot for the Athenaeum's Subcommittee on the Choice of a New Librarian, copied by Cutter and sent by him to Bowker, shows that the Athenaeum's Library Committee had a new candidate in mind almost immediately, but desired Cutter to set a firm date for his termination so that they could proceed with negotiations. NYPL, Bowker Papers.

\(^2\)Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, [undated, but late January or early February, 1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers.

\(^3\)Ibid.
Cutter’s early plans were altered soon after making them. In February he combined his lectures at Albany with his preparation of the Expansive Classification portion of the American Library Association Library Exhibit being assembled there. By the beginning of March Cutter had made plans to travel to England during May and June, to return in order to attend the Chicago conference, and possibly to travel to Europe again in the autumn if no library position became available.¹ He informed Dewey of the change and withdrew his offer to prepare papers on cataloging and on proprietary libraries for the Association’s meetings, claiming that he would not have the necessary books at his disposal during his trip. He must have felt some misgivings over his decision, however, for the next day he wrote again to Dewey stating that he would do the paper on proprietary libraries, but only because he had conceived half of it during the early morning hours of that very day.²

During March he received a great number of letters sympathizing with his plight, but the writers were apparently unable to help him obtain another position. He worked

¹Letters, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, March 2 and 6, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

²Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 6 and 7, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Dewey apparently persisted in trying to get Cutter to do the paper on cataloging and classification for Cutter reiterated his intention not to do it in a letter dated March 23, 1893. Ultimately, William C. Lane, his successor at the Athenæum, presented the paper on cataloging and Horace Kephart, at that time the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, presented the paper on classification.
assiduously on the Expansive Classification which it would seem he hoped to have well out of the way by the time he left. On April 20th he turned his work at the Athenaeum over to William Coolidge Lane. Cutter had wanted to finish up for Lane as much as he could but he found himself unable to do so, even after working evenings and Sundays. He was sure that Lane might face even more restrictions than he had, a fact that he had mentioned to Dewey as early as the beginning of March. On April 24th he and his wife Sarah left for New York.¹ The finality of the situation was perhaps not better portrayed than in a letter to Dewey written the day before he left.

I am writing on a box in a nearly empty house (we have moved) on the only paper I can find. . . . No doubt I shall write from the other side. Will only say now that my paper (as yet unwritten) will probably be very short. I have not been able to find time to send out a circular of questions, so the paper will be unstatistical and uninstructive in the extreme. My farewell respects to yourself & Mrs. Dewey, & Miss Woodworth & Mr. Biscoe & friends at the State House.

Y. t. in a "tear"

C A C²

On April 26th Cutter and his wife sailed for England.

¹Letters, Cutter to Charles A. Nelson, April 1, 1893, Newberry Library, Poole Papers; Cutter to G. W. Cole, April 15, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers; Cutter to M. Dewey, March 1, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 23, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Florence Woodworth had been one of the first graduates of Dewey's library school in 1888 and during the early 1890's was both a cataloger at the New York State Library and an instructor of cataloging at the Albany Library School. Walter S. Biscoe was likewise an instructor at the School.
The Cutters spent the next two months in England. The only surviving indication of their activities is an article in the Nation describing the local color and excitement of "Racing Week at Chester." The somewhat tired view of civilization and several observations on the foibles of mankind indicate perhaps the state of mind that Cutter was in. What else they did or whom they might have visited is not known except that Richard Bowker had also traveled to England early in April in connection with his work for the Edison Illuminating Company, and it is possible that their paths may have crossed before Bowker returned. At any rate, the trip took Cutter away from a very depressing situation. He delayed completion of his promised paper for the upcoming conference. He and his wife did not return until the first week of July. As late as July 1 he had still failed to send the manuscript to Dewey. Louis Cutter answered Dewey's circular letter requesting completed manuscripts only with the expected arrival date of his parents on July 7th.

1C. A. Cutter, "Racing Week at Chester," Nation, LVI (June 1, 1893), 401.

2Cf., Fleming, R. R. Bowker, pp. 232-33, for details of Bowker's 1893 trip. One might suppose from that account that Bowker remained in Europe throughout the summer. A letter from the office of the Publishers' Weekly to Dewey dated April 12, 1893, stated that Bowker left April 8th and expected to return about June 1st, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Records of the A.L.A. meeting in Chicago indicate that Bowker attended the meetings. He also presented a paper at the World's Congress of Authors on July 11, 1893. Cf., "Congress of Authors," Dial, XV (July 16, 1893), 29.

The initial purpose of the Columbian Exposition was to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America by making a show of man's material progress. From the very beginning of the planning there were some who felt that the fair should demonstrate man's spiritual progress as well. For that purpose the World's Congress Auxiliary was organized. It worked closely with the Exposition organizers and arranged for a series of world's congresses composed of the leading spokesmen of various cultural and academic subject areas who would likely be attending the fair. Afterwards the papers of each congress were to be published as monuments of the efforts. The buildings for the Exposition were formally dedicated in October 1892 and the fair was opened officially in May 1893. The congresses also began to meet at the latter date and the two aspects of the Exposition continued in full force until the end of the following October.1

The congresses were arranged in a series of nineteen groupings. Those on the subject of literature were scheduled for July 10 through 22 and included, besides the World's Congress of Librarians, congresses on authorship, philology, history and folk-lore. The congress of librarians met for its first session in the new art building near

1A before and after view of the congresses is given in Charles C. Bonney, "The World's Congresses of 1893," in National Education Association, Proceedings, 1892 (New York, 1893), pp. 166-74; and in the summary article, "The World's Congress Auxiliary," Dial, XV (November 1, 1893), 251-52. Bonney was the president of the World's Congress Auxiliary.
downtown Chicago on the morning of Wednesday, July 12, and adjourned after a final meeting on Saturday morning, July 15. The congress committee was headed by F. W. Hild, librarian of the Chicago Public Library. With the added effort of Melvil Dewey, a great deal of energy was expended during late 1892 and early 1893 in obtaining promises of papers by an international array of eminent librarians. Although a list of topics was published in the Library Journal in June 1893, the actual list of speakers was not finalized until the papers were submitted immediately preceding the first day of the congress. The hoped-for international scope failed to materialize, however, for only three foreign librarians attended.  

The American Library Association also held its annual meeting at the same time in conjunction with, but separate from, the congress of librarians. Its first two meetings were held on Thursday and Saturday mornings, July 13 and 15, also in the art building and concurrent with the last two meetings of the congress of librarians. The remaining six meetings of the congress of librarians. The remaining six


2The overlapping nature of the two sets of meetings—the Congress of Librarians and the regular A.L.A. conference—resulted in some confusion in the Library Journal reports, apparently because American librarians, Dewey among them, tended to look upon both meetings as a single happening. The two meetings were, in fact, separate and close attention to the separate accounts of each is necessary in order to distinguish them.
meetings were held the following week at various other locations in Chicago in order to overcome the distractions of a railroad that ran immediately adjacent to the art building meeting room.

When Dewey was elected to the presidency of the Association in 1892, he immediately began to plan to make the 1893 meeting of the Association a show-place of library progress. The correlation of the Association's meetings with the library congress was arranged by early fall, 1892. When the idea of producing a handbook of library economy composed of the papers given at the Association meeting was raised by Dewey during the winter, it was heartily approved by the Executive Board of which Cutter was a member. In February Dewey communicated to the Association that he had presented that plan to Commissioner of Education, William T. Harris, with the hope that the Bureau of Education would print the volume as a part of the government sponsored volume already authorized for the congress committee. The idea was approved and in April he announced the plan of the volume to the membership.\(^1\) Cutter's editorial in the same issue of the *Library Journal* stated that Dewey's announcement was "undoubtedly the most important library announcement for the present year." Recalling the handbook nature of the 1876 *Special Report* published concurrently

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with the 1876 centennial celebration, Cutter echoed Dewey's desire that the new volume would become "a new handbook of library economy," and that it would demonstrate "the enormous development of theoretical and practical library administration of the last two decades."¹

Dewey outlined very carefully what he expected from the contributors to the new handbook. His plan was to have the volume present "the points of agreement to which we have generally attained in the 17 years since the organization at the Centennial, and also the points of difference on which our best thinkers are still divided." He went on to state carefully that the contributors "will therefore aim, no so much to contribute new material as to present a judicial digest of previous articles, papers, discussions, and specially of experience."² The papers were to be in two parts, the first a summary of opinions held and the second the points of the topic still under discussion towards which the 1893 meeting might contribute answers. Abstracts of the papers were to be printed in the July Library Journal and would be distributed to the conference participants at the beginning of the meetings. During the conference itself, the contributors were given five minutes to summarize the results of their findings in order to leave as much time as

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (April, 1893), 108.

²[Dewey], "Topics for Chicago Meeting," p. 123. Dewey later quoted these remarks in the introduction to the Congress volume.
possible for discussion. After the meeting the authors were to revise their papers in the light of the discussions at the conference so that the final product would "represent the position of the subject at the close instead of the beginning of the 1893 meeting."\(^1\)

Cutter's desire to drop his assignments for the meeting is understandable. He knew that they would not fulfill Dewey's intentions inasmuch as he would not have the opportunity to do the statistical work that was necessary. Despite that problem, he proceeded with the paper on proprietary libraries. An abstract of the paper appeared in the July issue of the \textit{Library Journal} and he gave a summary of the paper at the conference. The full paper was never printed, however, most likely because of the way Dewey compiled the final volume.

First, Dewey had to correspond with the contributors after the summer meetings in order to get the papers in final form; but Cutter was absent from the country at that time. Second, and perhaps most significant, Dewey's primary concern was that the government sponsored volume provide a new handbook of library economy and to that end he subjected the papers to a vigorous formula. The papers were not to present the authors' own views but rather a summary of the views of others. By being summaries, they would serve the

\(^1\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 124. See also remarks by R. R. Bowker, in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, \textit{LJ}, XVIII (September, 1893), C4, where he mentioned that he had brought for distribution extra copies of the July issue.
practical purpose of representing a basis for the kind of Association consensus that Dewey desired. As the editor, Dewey made the final selection of papers. He included not only those papers alone that met his standard, but for some reason also excluded the papers given at the World's Congress of Librarians, although the published volume bore the title, Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress. Perhaps the reason for the substitution was that many of the Congress papers were published in full in the *Library Journal* by the end of 1893. Moreover, the Congress papers had an international flavor and did not fulfill his design for an American library economy handbook. As a result, Cutter, who also spoke at the Congress, failed to have that paper published either.  

Cutter's Congress topic was entitled, "The Note of the American Public Library." He attempted to show in it the distinctiveness of the American public library movement.

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1 A comparison of the programs, the Congress volume, the A.L.A. proceedings, and the various papers published in the *Library Journal* reveals the substitution. The full citation reads, *American Library Association, Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress, Held at the Columbian Exposition, ed. by Melvil Dewey* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896). To add to the confusion, the Library of Congress later cataloged and listed the volume also as, *American Library Association, Papers Prepared for the A.L.A. for its Annual Meeting Held at the Columbian Exposition, 1893, ed. by Melvil Dewey* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), suggesting that there were two different volumes when there was in fact only one. The papers were originally Ch. 9 of Pt. II of the *Report of the Commissioner of Education* for 1892/93.

2 Cutter's topic was listed as early as June 1893 in, "The Congress of Librarians at Chicago," p. 191.
in contradistinction to the development of the more scholarly European libraries. A reporter of the meeting, Constantin Nörrenberg, the librarian of the University of Kiel, quoted him as saying,

It is true . . . that our libraries are young and small; that we can not as yet use them for profound scientific investigation; that in some of our libraries such investigation can scarcely be begun, and that comparatively modern and cheap books form their chief stock. But we have opened new ways and intend to offer to the public more than is offered in other countries. In our attempts to turn over and over a small stock, to have circulated frequently a small number of books, to place every atom of information and instruction in such a condition that it may be used, we have no superiors. Utilization and diffusion of knowledge are our leading ideas, and the highest mark in our testimonial.¹

Cutter's comments seem particularly relevant to his own growing interest in public libraries. Having already left the Athenaeum, he may have felt that only a large or promising public library could offer him a position commensurate with his stature. He emphasized a broad view of the total library resources of the nation and asserted his opinion that a public library by itself need not be considered of a lesser stature than a research library. Several days later at an Association session he continued on the same theme in his short remarks on the relationship between proprietary libraries and public libraries. In his view, the two institutions complemented each other.²

¹C. A. Cutter, as quoted in Nörrenberg, "The Congress and the Conference of Librarians in Chicago," p. 577. The quotation seems to be the only surviving part of Cutter's paper.

In addition to the papers he presented, Cutter also participated in the proceedings of the Association itself, although he did not seem to take part with the vigor of previous years. He made none of the summary statements of arguments for which he was noted. When the issue of the direct election of officers was again brought up for discussion, the printed proceedings record no comment from him. During the eighth session which Cutter chaired, when the discussion concerned topics upon which in previous years he had made his ideas explicit, he called instead for votes in order to see which view predominated. It may be that Cutter simply preferred to participate less, giving place to the new leadership and its insistence on 'reaching conclusions'. Because he was without a library and planning to go to Europe again, Cutter may also have felt that the wiser course was to defer to the fully active librarians in the profession. ¹ Only during the report of the Committee

¹For Cutter to call for votes of consensus, in the spirit of the new leadership, seems out of character considering his opinion of the practice. Perhaps some of his calls were a bit facetious. For example, on the issue of the worth of subject catalogs in comparison to printed subject bibliographies, Cutter not only called for a vote on the question of whether or not the day of the subject catalog was over, but also for a vote on whether "within a generation the subject catalog will prove to be useless, bibliographies taking its place." The first vote was requested by a speaker. The second vote was of Cutter's own doing. Neither question garnered any yea's, not even from B. P. Mann, who was an outspoken advocate of printed bibliographies. Cutter, however, phrased the second question in such a way as to make it unopposable. See, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVIII (September, 1893), C78-82. One problem that arises in evaluating Cutter's low profile during most of the meetings was that he again edited these
for an Index to Subject Headings during the same session did Cutter, who was not on the committee, raise his voice in protest. The committee had compiled a tentative list of subject headings, but in Cutter's mind more work was needed to make the list sound both in its choice of headings and in its basic principles. He was concerned that not only had the committee chosen to disregard one of the more basic directions of his *Rules*, but that they had avoided grappling with the basic principles of subject cataloging, preferring instead to compile an ad hoc list.¹

Dewey called for a finished product even though it would be imperfect. He added, "The old catalogers like Mr. Cutter and Mr. Lane could get along without it, but some of the younger librarians would be exceedingly grateful for anything."² Cutter appealed to the members present to delay printing the list and to submit the principles of the list to the Association for discussion in the *Library Journal*. The results of the discussion could then be incorporated into the finished product. His appeal was disregarded and

proceedings as he had edited the proceedings of previous years, a fact noted in his letter to Bowker, July 23, [1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers. He seems not to have removed his incisive opinions in the earlier years, however, and there is no reason to believe he altered his statements here.

¹A.L.A. Committee on an Index to Subject Headings, [Report and Discussion], *LJ*, XVIII (September, 1893), C79-82. The proceedings reported a "lively discussion."

²Ibid., p. C81.
put to a vote the matter of going ahead with the list, the vote was heavily in favor of printing.¹

During the remainder of the conference, Cutter gave the report of the Committee on the Place of the Next Meeting and, as was his usual practice, participated in the various social activities. He was also appointed to the continuing committee dealing with subject headings, but since he was in Europe for the coming year, it is unlikely that he took part in making the actual final product.²

Cutter subsequently published two reports of the meetings in both of which he made a point of affirming Dewey's work. In view of his natural tendency to mediation, the articles may perhaps be viewed as his own public statement of support for the new leadership despite his differences of opinion. In the Nation Cutter commended Dewey's "wise" leadership in planning for the volume of papers to be published and for the excellence of the American Library Association exhibit which was pre-eminently Dewey's creation. The exhibit provided not only a model library, but also a comparative showcase of library appliances that included everything from bookkeeping forms to classification systems and cataloging rules. Cutter expressed a mild hope.

No doubt the exhibit will bear fruit in the adoption of better methods throughout the country, and in a greater interest taken in the subject by the intelligent

¹Ibid. The vote was 41 for, 9 against.

²His appointment to the committee is reported in LJ, XVIII (December, 1893), 514. He eventually placed a minority report in the publication itself.
public; perhaps also it will lead to the founding of more libraries.¹

In a much more extensive and generous account in the Library Journal Cutter praised the exhibit for the enormous interest shown in it by spectators. Although he did not specify the source of the complaints, he also made a special point of denouncing the criticism that the comparative exhibit was a promotional device designed by Dewey and his library school supporters for his own methods. That opinion may have arisen because in each of the categories of materials, the library school contribution headed the list.

Cutter wrote,

Only a glance was needed to convince any one that the comparative exhibit of library appliances, though it bore most honorable testimony to the zeal, patience, industry, and devotion of the scholars and officers of the Library School, was in no sense a propaganda of Library School doctrines or methods. The utmost fairness was visible everywhere. Every side was exhibited as fully as the material supplied by the different libraries would allow. There had evidently never been any intention of doing otherwise.²

Perhaps Cutter intended to specifically gloss over the happenings of the previous autumn when he had to protest to get his Expansive Classification represented. On the other hand,

¹C. A. Cutter, "The Librarians at Chicago," Nation, LVII (August 31, 1893), 150.

²C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 277. Despite Cutter's words, it was not difficult to see the favored position of Dewey's library school in the exhibit. For example, in the comparative exhibit of cataloging rules, the Library School Rules headed each category with all other codes following those, although Cutter's Rules were by far the most used. See, Katharine L. Sharpe, "The American Library Association Library Exhibit at the World's Fair," p. 282.
it seems strange that he should even raise the issue at all, especially in terms of "doctrines" and "methods," unless there was either a considerable amount of opinion supporting the criticism or the criticism was in fact true.

His words also contained a hidden note of bitterness concerning his own place in the library showcase, however. He continued,

The only thing to be regretted was an occasional gap caused by the remissness or perverseness of libraries that should have contributed. One would fain have had so good an exhibition complete. ¹

The personal reason for his note of regret lay in the fact that the devices and forms sent by each library had been divided into categories and displayed under the labels of the contributing libraries and librarians. Much to Cutter's disappointment, he had had to report to the exhibit committee the previous April that the Athenaeum's trustees had declined to participate. Consequently, the Athenaeum's methods and devices, many of which he had developed over the previous twenty-four years, were not represented. Cutter's specific contributions to library practice were, therefore, invisible, existing solely in the forms adapted by and attributed to other librarians. ²

The Rudolph Indexer Company

During August and September Cutter continued to plan for an extended trip to Europe during the fall. Had he

¹Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 277.
²Letter, Cutter to Charles A. Nelson, April 10, 1893, NYPL, Nelson Papers. Nelson was a member of the exhibit committee.
secured an acceptable library position he would have proceeded directly to it; but the only offers he received he turned down, decisions on his part that were supported by his friend and advisor, Samuel S. Green, of Worcester.¹ Instead, Cutter seriously considered an offer to direct a new and novel cooperative cataloging program being planned by the Rudolph Indexer Company, named after its founder, Alexander Rudolph.

Cooperative cataloging had been an ideal of many librarians since Charles C. Jewett had proposed such a venture in 1851. His proposal had involved making the Smithsonian Institution the national library center. Stereotype plates made of baked clay would have made possible once-for-all cataloging of the nation's library resources in the form of printed entries for every library to use, with the possibility of cumulating the additions as years went by. His plan failed because he was not able to gain support for his projected role for the Smithsonian Institution and because the stereotype plates were not durable. Years later the plan was humorously labeled Jewett's mud-catalog. The idea persisted, however, and comments appeared sporadically concerning its desirability.²

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, July 23, [1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers.

²Jewett, On the Construction of Catalogues of Libraries, pp. 1-20; Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 18. Poole claimed the comment as his own. One can find repeated references to Jewett's abortive efforts throughout the early years of the Association, usually in conjunction with references to his code of cataloging rules.
Cooperative cataloging was one of the chief motivating factors of the early activities of the American Library Association, but when Dewey suffered his disastrous year in 1880, the cooperative cataloging project was disbanded. Although implementation of the idea had therefore failed a second time, the idea persisted throughout the 1880's, spurred by the development of a set of cooperative cataloging rules in 1883 and by the creation of the Association's Publishing Board in 1886.¹ The mechanics of actually cataloging the books and distributing the cards proved to be a difficult problem to solve, but the appearance of Alexander Rudolph on the scene during the period 1891 to 1893 brought the issue to a focus.

Alexander Rudolph, in 1890 an assistant to William Cheney, the librarian of the San Francisco Mercantile Library, had been intrigued with the idea of combining the best points of both card catalogs and printed book catalogs. A card catalog was most often praised for the ease of manipulating the units of entry. It was most often faulted for having soiled cards (a soilage that was passed on to others), for being restricted to a single copy, and for making the scanning of entries impossible. A printed book catalog was most often praised for its compactness, the ease of having multiple copies, and for the ability one

¹For a summary of the efforts at cooperative cataloging, taken from the Association's proceedings, see Velva J. Osborne, "A History of Cooperative Cataloging in the United States" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1944), passim.
had in scanning its entries. It was faulted for its inability to incorporate new material and especially for its expense.

Rudolph's invention was a combination of several mechanical features. He decided to make all catalog entries on small cards of two to four printed lines each. Making them on cards thus insured their ease of manipulation. He placed the cards not into a card tray, but into two different kinds of mechanical holders. The first was an expandable binder that had pages with special fasteners that would hold the slips securely, but could be loosened to allow the insertion of new cards when it was necessary. The second device, called the Rudolph Continuous Indexer, used the same type of mounting sheets, but connected the sheets to one another in the form of a linked belt. Each mounting sheet was sixteen inches long with room for 136 lines of entries in each of five columns. The belt of sheets was placed in a cabinet, forty-two inches high, and was drawn up over a drum to be viewed by the patron through a plate-glass cover. As the patron cranked the belt to the desired location, the unused sheets would pass over the drum to return to their hanging storage location in the compartment below.

Rudolph's invention was not a new way of cataloging, but it required cooperative cataloging to make it viable. Rudolph intended to market not only all of the equipment necessary (including the indexing books, machines, and even
a special device for cutting the cards), but also the printed cards themselves. In effect, he would have to begin a cataloging center for the production of printed catalog cards that would of necessity produce uniform cooperative cataloging for whatever libraries used his services.

He made the first announcement of his invention during the 1891 San Francisco library conference, speaking of his new device as a panacea for cataloging. By doing so he caused many librarians to be wary of his claims. Cutter wrote with that thought in mind in the *Nation*:

> The claims made for it are indeed startling. It almost does away with the use of the pen; card catalogues become a thing of the past; it solves the long-standing problem of a universal catalogue; it is speedy—books received in the morning, no matter how numerous, can be presented to the readers in a printed catalogue before night; it is cheap—what now costs $2 can be done for 25 cents. These statements were received with a little skepticism. The visiting librarians can understand how great mechanical improvements can be made; but as the chief expense in cataloguing is not for mechanical, but for intellectual work, they do not see how such saving is possible.¹

The announcement proved to be premature in 1891 for when the time came to display his invention, Rudolph could not show it because he claimed the patent had not been secured. His failure to make good his claims brought a good deal of ridicule. Nevertheless, because the announcement had caused much curiosity, when Rudolph finally did reveal his invention to the library world in 1893, it aroused an

enormous amount of excitement. The enthusiasm was mixed and provoked a conservative skepticism over whether or not the mechanical features would be as practical as claimed. The strong points of book and card catalog forms were joined together; but the disadvantages of a card catalog were also made more severe. Not only could only one person use the indexer machine at a time, but the number of entries tied up as one person used it was far greater than the number of cards in a single catalog drawer.

Cutter's role in the program would have been to add the one final need to complete the project; that is, to head the cataloging division that Rudolph found necessary. That was a position that Cutter would have found most intriguing, for it would have brought the dream of centralized cooperative cataloging to reality. In the same articles in which he reported the Chicago meetings, Cutter significantly gave an amount of space equal to all other aspects of the meetings to the ramifications of Rudolph's program. In both accounts he systematically listed the advantages to be gained. He also suggested a way to alleviate its disadvantages. Smaller libraries would do well to use only the indexer books but in multiple copies. Larger libraries could simply have more continuous indexer machines on hand.

Beyond the mechanical features, the more important matter for Cutter was the probability that cooperative cataloging appeared to be viable and was indeed at hand. In the Library Journal he wrote, "Cooperative cataloging, or
more correctly speaking, central cataloging is a consumma-
tion devoutly to be wished; but it has hitherto been looked
upon as a utopian vision."¹ In the Nation he devoted two
long paragraphs to the matter detailing Rudolph's plans.
New books would have cards made for them which would pos-
sibly include even descriptive notes and would certainly
include the classification numbers of both the Expansive
and Decimal systems. The Rudolph Company proposed, "with
most commendable liberality," in Cutter's words, to print
cards not only for the Rudolph system, but also for conven-
tional card catalogs. They also proposed to begin making
cards for older standard works, a boon especially for librar-
ies that were just beginning. He continued,

Large libraries no doubt will always keep their force
of cataloguers, for their work must be more elaborate
than this is intended to be; but when the Rudolph system
is in full operation, there seems to be no reason why,
in libraries of thirty thousand volumes or less, there
should be any cataloguers at all; or, if they should
still be found necessary, their work would be much sim-
plified and aided by the bureau.²

In words reminiscent of the exciting days just after the
beginning of the American Library Association, Cutter sur-
veyed the hopes of those days and the possibilities that the
Indexer Company seemed to promise, especially the prospects
of obtaining good cataloging in an expeditious and inex-
pensive manner.

¹Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 278.
²Cutter, "The Librarians at Chicago," p. 150.
Cutter was also aware that the new venture involved a risk. He wrote to Bowker at the beginning of August that he considered Rudolph's indexer "the most important exhibit in the A.L.A. corner," at the World's Fair. In his mind, the Rudolph scheme was the only viable plan available, even more so than that of the Library Bureau which had been talked about but never made operational. He noted confidentially that he had been asked to take charge, and went on,

They are getting estimates of cost now & if they find the cost far beyond the prospects of pay as Mr. Iles & you do for any card scheme of course they will not go on. They take till Oct. 1 to make up their mind. I take the same time to consider whether I will accept. Jones, Green, & Miss Cutler with whom I talked it over at Chicago are all against acceptance, believing that ultimate failure which they foresee from the slowness of libraries to respond to any such plans for their benefit would be an injury to my reputation. I talked to Mr. Carr (the Rudolph Indexer Co.) but his hopefulness and his willingness to put a great deal of money into it, (which after all is the main thing, because if it once gets going it will go on, it is merely a question of whether one can hold out to the turning point) have infected me.¹

Despite his excitement, Cutter remained cautious. He found himself in a quandary between accepting the challenge of an unproven venture and pursuing seriously another library position. He concluded,

What is the Lenox salary? I suppose I ought to make some account of that. My luxuries counsel Lenox; my desire to be of some use says Rudolph. Budge, says my conscience. Budge not, says the fiend. I doubt if I do either.²

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, August 4, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers. George Iles was a librarian who had only recently published an article outlining his own ideas for a cooperative cataloging program. Gardner Jones was the librarian of the Salem, Massachusetts, Public Library.

²Ibid.
Perhaps in order to convince Cutter to accept the position, Spencer Carr of the Indexer Company attempted to ascertain how much support their venture had among leading librarians. Early in September he sent a circular letter to three hundred librarians asking for their pointed replies to questions relating to the practical aspects of the plan, including its overall practicability and advisability, matters of cost, fullness of detail desired in cataloging, and whether regular catalog cards as well as the indexer cards should be produced.\(^1\) The replies that were received were very positive and were enough to bring Cutter to the brink of formal acceptance of the position. By the end of September he too was apparently writing to librarians not only inquiring of their interest but enlisting their support of the venture, of which he related, "I have nearly decided to take charge."\(^2\) The operations center was to be established in New York City and the program was to begin on January 1, 1894. Spencer Carr increased his promotional effort by sending out more literature, including a reprint of Cutter's remarks in the *Nation* and a long list of

\(^1\) [Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter (Woburn, Massachusetts), September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service. The September circular letter is also preserved in the Poole Papers in the Newberry Library.

\(^2\) Cutter's activity and the quotation are cited in Letter, A. W. Tyler, Wilmington (Delaware) Institute Library, to George W. Cole, October 6, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
testimonials gained from his September circular letter.\textsuperscript{1} Cutter planned to return to Europe but he intended to return to the United States by the projected starting date. He had an added incentive for the trip at that point, for he had wanted to visit the important libraries in Europe in order to try to complete his classification system which was to be used on the proposed cards. In his usual optimistic underestimate of how long it would take him to complete the scheme, he felt that he could finish the work during the fall. In his usual cautiousness about accepting a new position, he declined to make the decision to join the Indexer Company final before he sailed with his wife for Antwerp during the first week of October.

With regard to the actual acceptance among librarians of the Rudolph program, some librarians, while not enthusiastic over the actual equipment involved, felt hopeful about the general features of the cataloging operation. Any cooperative cataloging project was better than none. Arthur W. Tyler, who had recently assumed the librarianship of the Wilmington (Delaware) Institute Library, summed up such hopes in a letter to George Watson Cole.

\begin{quote}
I should like to see made successful a really good cataloging and classification bureau, for it would relieve us all of an imprecise amount of labor that is really needless, after one library has really done it well. We began to talk about this about 1877, and have
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1}See [Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter, September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service.
puttered long enuf. It is true that something was done, and this is the most promising thing that has yet appeared. As to the Rudolf (Jacquard) machine itself I have serious doubts, both on the score of utility and expense; but if our cataloging and classification can be done satisfactorily I am sure we shall all be rejoiced.¹

There were others who felt that the Rudolph venture was a direct pre-emption of the efforts of the Library Bureau to do the same thing, albeit unsuccessfully up to that time. The Bureau had been deferring its decision to continue its development of a similar program, but now obviously had to make a decision because of the competition that the Rudolph Company represented. Accordingly, shortly after Cutter made known his intentions that he was strongly considering joining the new venture, Dewey sent him a letter warning him not to get involved with Rudolph. The letter itself, which was delivered to Cutter as he boarded the European-bound steamer, has not survived, but Cutter later reiterated its intent in his reply.² The reason for Dewey's warning was that the Library Bureau was going to proceed with its own cooperative cataloging program, thus dividing up the potential market with the possibility that both ventures would fail. The implication was that if either company survived the fray, it would be the Library Bureau, for it was already firmly established as the main supplier

¹Letter, A. W. Tyler to G. W. Cole, October 6, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
of library supplies and of course had Dewey's backing and influence.

Sometime in October the Library Bureau sent out a circular letter giving the history of their efforts to perfect their own program and announcing that the Bureau was going to begin as soon as possible. Not only that, the letter gave firm price information for their service. The justification read:

After spending much time and money, we have succeeded in perfecting new machinery which overcame mechanical difficulties, and after consultation with leading librarians and publishers decided to begin the work in 1893. This was announced at the A.L.A. Lakewood meeting in 1892. Abundant notice was given because the sporadic attempts heretofore made had resulted only in loss of money and annoyance to all concerned. We have deferred action till we are able to guarantee our work to subscribers. Every detail has been carefully studied, and our experience in this kind of work has been so large, we have found publishers and librarians confident that when we did undertake it, it would be carried to a successful issue.¹

The circular closed with a request that subscriptions to the Library Bureau service be returned by November 1, 1893.

Nothing but a full conflict between the two companies seemed possible. William C. Lane expressed dismay at that possibility when he wrote at length to Dewey about the matter in mid-November in a tone protective of Cutter.

¹The printed circular letter mentioned is bound with [Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter, September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service. An identical copy, dated November 10, 1893, is preserved in the Poole Papers, Newberry Library. The circular also appeared as an advertisement in the October 1893 Library Journal.
I feel very sorry that both the Rudolph Co. & the Library Bureau should take up the printing of cards. The L. B. clearly has the field & their first cards it seems to me are admirable. They deserve the support of the libraries if they carry it on well & the chances are much in their favor as compared with the new company. They must find some way to avoid fighting each other. The Rudolph people I suspect have been too much encouraged by the replies they received. In looking over the printed extracts again today I noticed that many of the writers specified the cards as what they were interested in & I presume most of the rest had these rather than the Indexer slips in mind. Now if the L. B. does this business better than they can, most of their support is cut away from under them.

Do you know whether Mr. Cutter has put his own money into it at all? I surely hope not. I told him before he went back to England that I thought the money sunk in it would never come out again but of course did not like to question him on his own financial connection with it. I think he had supposed that the L. B. had dropped their plans, & was a good deal surprised when they announced their intention of going on.¹

Lane's letter may have suggested to Dewey a way to resolve the problem for two days later he wrote to Spencer Carr in Chicago. After commenting on an exchange of letters that they had already had, Dewey went on to assert the certainty that the Library Bureau could produce cards for new books much more cheaply than anyone else, even cheaper than Bowker could through the Publishers' Weekly. He went on,

I am gratified with your letter in its suggestion that your work would be rather the cataloging of old libraries than dependent on current issues. That seems to me more helpful, as you ought to be able to get a much larger price for the work, and where you can introduce at the same time your indexer the profit on that may carry the loss on printing the slips.²

¹Letter, W. C. Lane to M. Dewey, November 15, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
²Letter, M. Dewey to Spencer Carr (Carbon copy), November 17, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
He referred to Lane's letter quoted above and to a similar one from William I. Fletcher that suggested that financially the above course of action would be the best for the Rudolph Company to pursue. He also expressed his feeling that, since the Library Bureau had announced its intention to provide cards for current books as early as a year and a half before, that field rightly belonged to them. He then closed his letter with a specific proposal for the proper direction for each company.

I should think the best plan would be for you to secure all the libraries you can find to adopt the indexer, you furnishing printed titles of their old stock, and for you to catalog also all the new books on indexer slips, while the Bureau should print no indexer slips but confine its attention to the standard catalog cards which it has manufactured so largely. I feel so warm an interest in the whole subject of cooperative cataloging that I can but hope that the thing will come out better financially than my best judgment justifies me in believing.\(^1\)

Dewey might well have sounded presumptuous to Carr in counseling the Rudolph Company on its business interests. Although he was not officially connected with directing the activities of the Library Bureau, being simply a stockholder, and although he represented himself in this situation as a disinterested onlooker, he had long been associated with the Bureau and was in fact in constant communication with the company's directors giving counsel to their work.\(^2\) Whether that connection with the Bureau was

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Many letters in CUL, M. Dewey Papers, give evidence of Dewey's continuing relationship with the Library Bureau, especially his prognoses on particular business issues.
anything more than a disinterested friendship at this point, or whether Association members felt it to be any more than that is not known. In this situation, the forcefulness of his words to Carr and Cutter, although ostensibly based in a realistic view of the market, can also be construed as his direct effort to throw the weight of his reputation behind the Bureau's effort to outdo the competition, and it is unlikely that Carr could have missed that implication. The motives are consequently not entirely clear. It would seem likely that the effect of Dewey's words could only have caused Cutter to reminisce over the experiences of 1880 and to feel again the frustration of being on the wrong side. He finally answered Dewey on December 4th in words implying that he accepted Dewey's neutrality in the conflict. He also suggested that he was having second thoughts about his involvement with the Rudolph program.

Your letter warning me not to join the Indexer Company was given me just as the steamer sailed. I cannot remember whether I answered it before the pilot left the ship or nor nor [sic] whether I have answered it since. If I have not I am sorry, but I know you will forgive me, considering what a crowd of new scenes and experiences and ideas have been claiming my attention. After all there is little to say. I can only insist that I am more hopeful than you are of the ultimate success of the Company, that I think it will be able to tide over the trying time before the work begins to pay, and that I am as much convinced as you are of the importance of the plan to libraries.

I regret that the Library Bureau is also going to undertake this work, carrying out their long-talked-of scheme which we all thought had been abandoned. All the leading library people--including yourself--asked us to add the issue of cards to the issue of slips and our decision to do so has been confirmed a multitude of librarians [sic]. Of course the Library Bureau is not
to be blamed; but it is unfortunate that things have happened as they have.

As to my taking charge of the work, it may be that I am over sanguine, but it seems to me that in helping the enterprise on I shall be rendering as much service to the library cause as I could at the head of the best library in the United States.¹

The problem of two rival companies in the new field was given a more complete airing in the December issue of the Library Journal. Bowker editorialized on the problem in Cutter's absence, but could only say after regretting the conflict, "may the best win."² An unsigned article entitled, "Central Card Cataloging" gave details of the arrangements of each company and extensive examples of their products. The same article also announced that Cutter would return to the United States by January 1894 to assume the Rudolph position.³ Spencer Carr reiterated the same information as late as January 11, 1894 at a meeting of the New York Library Club in which he spoke on behalf of the Indexer Company's plans and William I. Fletcher spoke on behalf of the Library Bureau. Carr said that Cutter was expected in two more weeks. He felt compelled to add that even after Cutter had returned, final preparations would require "probably" two additional months.⁴


²Richard R. Bowker, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (December, 1893), 497. The editorial is signed, "Written in the absence of Mr. C. A. Cutter abroad--R. R. B."


Hedging on Cutter's delay in the venture would have suggested to all that Cutter was not yet ready to commit himself. Any such suspicion could only have been further strengthened when Cutter did not return at the time Carr had indicated. Just when Cutter made a decision on the matter is not known, but he ultimately declined the position and remained in Europe until the following summer.

Perhaps Dewey felt some misgivings about the forcefulness of his opposition to the Rudolph venture, especially with regard to the frustration of Cutter's role in it. He may also have felt that Cutter was not really convinced of his neutrality in the conflict. In February he wrote a long letter to Cutter apparently not knowing whether Cutter had yet made up his mind on the matter. The letter stands not only as an unsolicited defense of his course of action, but also apparently as the last important exchange of personal correspondence the two men had. For that reason it is repeated here in toto.

February 5, 1894

C: A. Cutter
Care Library Journal

My dear Cutter: I can not find out where you are but send this via L. j. office knowing it will reach you. I wanted to answer your note of December 4 from Paris and say two or three things about the R. I. and L. B. interests. I tried hard to convince Davidson and Parker that they might better give up the whole printed title business to the R. I. when they decided to enter the field. They overruled me, and I conclude now wisely, though I personally would have much preferred them to abandon the scheme. They had spent so much money in perfecting facilities, and had announced for years the fact that they were to do this work, that they felt they must do it even if at a considerable
loss. I sank some $25,000 in the first 15 years on these matters, and I should feel very sorry to have you lose any money by investing in the R. I. scheme. I do think however with you that a great good can come from cooperative cataloging and I hope you can build up a large and self sustaining business in this line.

I hope it is true that you are coming to New York and will close the Chicago office, for we want you to belong to the New York delegation and to have you nearer us. You know that everybody in the library school has the most friendly interest in you and your work, and I can see no earthly reason why this R. I. matter should at all complicate matters. I warned Parker and Davidson earnestly not to be betrayed into any feeling of rivalry or criticism of the R. I., and I was delighted to find that they had already instructed their agents in the same way. They have a feeling, which I share, that the chances are 99 in 100 that after an experience which must last some months or some years it will be found essential for maintenance that the R. I. schemes be merged into the L. B. organization. I am not optimist enough to expect that it will be possible for it to meet expenses otherwise. I therefore said to them that as this was the likely outcome they had a business interest as well as the friendship for you in avoiding anything that could put any stones in the way. I suggested to Mr. Carr (who by the way made very queer work in regard to putting an exhibit of the Rudolph devices in the library school) that it would be a good thing if you would push the re-cataloging of libraries rather than duplicate the work which the L. B. had espoused for years and had actually begun November 1. I was pained and annoyed to learn from people in Philadelphia that he had represented to them that I had written a letter "warning" the R. I. not to get on to the L. B. territory, etc. Nothing of the kind was justifiable from my letters, as you will find if you will read them. I never had any such thought, and if I had it would be ridiculous to suppose that I should send any such letter to a comparative stranger. Four or five of us were talking about the matter before the time that I wrote to you (I don't mean the L. B. people, but A. L. A. people, with no interest whatever in the L. B.) and all spoke of the almost certain financial failure of the R. I. scheme and expressed the hope that you would not become personally involved in it. I therefore wrote to you as I did an entirely personal letter. I say to you as I said before to Carr, that we should be very glad to place all the R. I. devices in the Library School museum and to make them just as prominent as those made by the L. B. or other people. I have a double reason for wishing this so that there shall be no appearance that the school is in any way
more favorable to the L. B. than to the R. I. But we did not like at all the correspondence with Mr. Carr on the subject. They first promised cordially and promptly to furnish these devices in Chicago, and then the letters went dodging about and they proposed sending an agent who should stop off a train and make a canvass of the school and then carry off his material. I wrote him plainly that this was not allowed on the part of anyone and if he did not care to carry out his arrangement we would no longer save the time for presenting the subject to the school. You see that it would be for the R. I. interests to have the scheme presented, and you shall have a fair opportunity if it can be done as we should require it from the L. B.; i.e. a permanent deposit of the devices in the school's museum.

I hope we shall have you here during the lecture term, and in any case that you will run up occasionally to see us. Let me know where you are to make headquarters.

Yours very truly,

Melvil Dewey

The Cutters in Europe

With the Rudolph business out of the way, the Cutters continued their travels in Europe. During the autumn they had spent their time in England where Cutter worked on his Expansive Classification at the British Museum. February found them in France, perhaps to visit Lyon where

1Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter (Carbon copy), February 5, 1894, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. W. E. Parker and Herbert E. Davidson were the active executives of the Library Bureau. The fact that the correspondence between Cutter and Dewey ended (and that this points to a termination of their previous relationship) is of course an argument from silence; that is, there is simply no more than a couple of insignificant items in the Dewey papers beyond this point. However, because the nature of the collection suggests that Dewey tended to keep almost everything, both good and bad, and because Cutter no longer referred to Dewey beyond formal recognition in his later years, the conclusion that their closer relationship ended at this point seems highly probable.
Sarah Cutter's cousin, Charles Appleton, taught law at the University of Lyon. Afterwards they remained for a while in Paris and then took a coaching trip through the cathedral towns of Ile de France and Picardy. They subsequently returned to Paris where, after some difficulty, Cutter obtained a 'reading right' to use the Bibliotheque Nationale. While there, Cutter "studied up" the tour they had taken and reported both the tour and his observations in a series of letters to the readers of the Nation. The series demonstrates Cutter's attitude toward the French culture that he had so long enjoyed in his reading and gives an insight into not only his appreciation of Gothic architecture but also into his attitudes towards contemporary civilization.

In one sense Cutter's tour and his articles bore a likeness to a similar trip that Henry Adams was to take a little more than a year later and with the book that Adams produced still ten years after that entitled, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres. Like Adams, Cutter spoke of the mystique and antiquity of the Gothic cathedrals and cathedral towns. He dwelled on the marvel that such beauty and magnificence could have arisen out of a medieval culture filled with harshness and brutality. He summarized his feelings of the grandeur in a description of the unfinished cathedral at Beauvais.

The cathedral is unique. Before the nave was begun, the political and religious movement that produced the great cathedrals of northern France was ebbing. It left at Beauvais only a transept and a choir. But such a choir! so light, so lofty; the Gothic idea of leading the eye upward carried to its extreme. Nowhere but at Saint-Chapelle in Paris is there such perpendicularity. Even the lofty nave of Saint Ouen at Rouen and the cathedral aisles, which in their narrowness seem still more lofty, do not affect one as does Beauvais. If the artist's conception could have been carried out, there would have been no nobler cathedral in France, and there would have been no need to say that he who should add to the choir of Beauvais the nave of Amiens, the portal of Reims, and the towers of Chartres, would have the finest church in the world. ¹

Perhaps like Adams, Cutter's discovery of the Gothic provided him with a world of beauty that allowed an escape from the harsh realities of the urbanized, industrialized and increasingly competitive American culture of which he was a part. Cutter's awareness of a variation in racial makeup of the inhabitants suggests Henry Cabot Lodge's connection of the Gothic style with Anglo-Saxon culture. The difference was evident to Cutter in the more Celtic or Flemish facial types represented in the cathedral carvings and in the people he observed while on tour.² He was aware of the growing refinement of the Gothic style the closer the construction of the cathedrals was in time to the Renaissance period. Of the cathedral at Laon he could encapsulate the whole of the experience one had of such a


structure by saying, "The product, therefore, of a time of emotion, the cathedral has in an unusual degree the highest quality of architecture--expression." He continued by showing the relationship of the result with the "stern, rugged force of the Laonnese," who built it. When one "learns the character of the men who reared it, he feels that they could not have built otherwise."¹ The overall effect was awe-inspiring and beyond words. He quoted an old canon who called the church at Reims, "l'estonnement de toute la chrestienté pour la structure et cimeltrie des bastiments en l'admirant se taisent plus tost que d'en parler."²

In another sense, rather than totally idealizing the past in terms of an idea in the way Adams would do, Cutter gave his sense of realism an equal emphasis. His use of French ecclesiastical history was everywhere apparent as he attempted to describe what political and social conditions surrounded the construction of the various cathedrals. He did not confine himself solely to cathedrals, either, but included castles and whole towns as well. He described the barbarism of the medieval times and what life for the common man must have been like under either duke or prince of the church. He described in great detail the massive castle at Coucy-La-Ville and wrote a step-by-step

¹ "Ile de France and Picardy--II," Nation, LVIII (May 17, 1894), 364.
² "Ile de France and Picardy--I," p. 344.
account of the measures necessary to capture it, given the violent realities of feudal warfare.¹

The descriptions that Cutter gave ultimately provided him with a forum to comment on political and social proprieties for his own day. The open market at Clermont drew his interest for it seemed to him that it was carried on day after day with little hope of selling the "rubbish"—by American standards—that had accumulated there. Once, he surmised, the provincial markets had been vital, but they had been destroyed by the "railroad, which sets up and abases as it will."²

The financial failure of the town of Noyen elicited from him both a moralism and a comparison.

There is no new lesson to be drawn from this sketch of the history of a pious town. These are old morals—that for power to be stable its basis must be broad, and that where authority has no check it is likely to have little duration. But it is interesting to find the troubles of the present day cropping out six centuries ago—a corrupt ring, a great debt, and a populus qui vult decipi. The financial failure of a medieval town, too, is perhaps something unusual. Is there any other example?³

In his last installment, Cutter traced some aspects of the social history of Beauvais. Among other things he praised the introduction of the metric system, "desired by reasonable Frenchmen," illustrating the confusion in commerce.

¹"Ile de France and Picardy—III," Nation, LVIII (May 31, 1894), 406.
³"Ile de France and Picardy—IV," Nation, LVIII (June 7, 1894), 425.
caused by the use of two and sometimes three different systems of weights and measures. It was a confusion comparable in his mind to that in America because of the "annoyances of travel in this country before we had our zone system of time." He praised, too, the effect of the French Revolution on the life of the town. Political and social changes, much more far-reaching than material changes, had destroyed at one blow "the whole complicated, cumbersome, annoying system of feudal institutions." He was not sure just how to measure the total improvement in the "happiness and morals of the people," but he implied that it had brought about a much more enlightened political situation in which change could indeed take place.1 His experience of a lively din- nertime political discussion in which several different views were held by the participants gave him the oppor- tunity to make a more general comment quite in line with the Nation's views.

It [the debate] showed—what too many scenes in the Chamber of Deputies might sometimes lead one to doubt—that there are Frenchmen who can engage in a warm dis- cussion without losing their heads. The future of the nation depends on whether there are enough of that sort.2

The Cutters spent the remainder of their time in France, the bulk of it in Paris where Cutter was able to continue refining his Expansive Classification by using the collections of the Bibliotheque Nationale. Despite the fact that he approached his project seriously as a "literary

1"Ile de France and Picardy--V," p. 25.
2Ibid.
worker," he had very definitely gone to Europe for purposes other than library-related work. He later wrote of his trip, "My theory of foreign travel is that one takes it to see what one cannot see in one's own country. So I went to Europe to get away from libraries, not to visit them, to forget, not to investigate them."¹

He was not able to entirely eradicate from the trip his professional library concerns and he recounted an old theme in two articles in the Nation and the Library Journal. He was concerned over the state of the catalog of the Bibliothèque Nationale. He felt that the entries in the 900 volumes of special binders could be better kept in a card catalog, in a pasted slip catalog such as the British Museum used, or even in Rudolph Indexer books or machines. He was pleased with the decision of the committee of the library to print the catalog, but took exception to their entry of titles by striking words, rather than by the first word, not an article. The distinction was one that Cutter, a pioneer catalog rules-maker, had long championed.² He also took time to review a pamphlet published in 1894 entitled, The All-Time Library, which told of an effort to make a reference library of selections of writings. Cutter


had not seen the actual library, but found the description of the subject classification woefully inadequate.\(^1\)

### Preparing for the Forbes Library

Cutter's extended European trip provided him with the change of pace he had needed. The trip also provided him the opportunity to take a new library position. The trustees of the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts secured his help, probably sometime during the spring of 1894, in purchasing books for their new, soon-to-be-opened, library then under construction. He pursued the task vigorously, first in Paris during June and afterwards during July in Geneva, Switzerland. During those two months he bought over 3,000 volumes of French fine arts and literature. A happy result of the contact was the trustees offer of the post of librarian, to become effective August 1st, an invitation which Cutter apparently felt little hesitancy in accepting. He had not been the first they had asked, but their chances of getting someone of his reputation at the low salary of $2,000 per year would have been ordinarily impossible.\(^2\) It is, therefore, understandable, that trustee William M. Gaylord, in his remarks at the dedication of

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2. Forbes Library, Northampton, Massachusetts, First Annual Report, 1894/95 (Northampton, 1895), pp. 9, 14. (Hereafter cited by number and year only). See also Cutter's remarks, summarized in "Forbes Library," *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, October 24, 1894, p. 1. Exactly who made the first contact with the Forbes trustees or when it was made is not known. W. P. Cutter, in *Charles Ammi Cutter*, p. 34, plainly
the library later in the year, could couple his statement that the Forbes Library "can be, should be, and must be the most important public library in the Connecticut valley," with his introduction of Charles Ammi Cutter, noting without further comment that the new librarian had spent twenty-four years of his thirty-four years of library work at the famed Boston Athenaeum. The latter institution stood, of course, for the idea of excellence.1

For Cutter the opportunity that the Forbes afforded was a hopeful one and for that reason it overshadowed, at least at that point, the reality of a drastic reduction in salary. His nephew later summarized,

Here was an opportunity for which he had been waiting. All his pet schemes, long in abeyance, now could be

states that Cutter was offered the Forbes post, "when he was leaving the Athenaeum," Foster wrote in "Charles Ammi Cutter: A Memorial Sketch," p. 700, only that the 1893-94 trip to Europe was "largely in the interests" of the Forbes. It is quite probable, however, that initial contact was made in early 1894 by letter. Cutter reported in his first annual report cited above that he himself had "proposed" the idea of buying books in Europe to the trustees. It suggests either that a third party, aware of the needs of the Forbes and the fact that Cutter was in Europe, might have brought the two parties together with Cutter making the proposal, or simply, that Cutter initiated the correspondence. Frank P. Hill, the librarian at that time of the Newark Public Library, was interviewed for the job early in 1894. That, plus the fact that the book buying did not take place until June, suggests that the trustees were probably not yet in contact with Cutter before the spring. Hill's own words were, "The Northampton affair, from which I hoped much (as I was invited to visit them in Jany last) has fallen through owing to the fact that the city council took the matter away from the trustees & fixed the salary of the libn at $2000." See Letter, F. P. Hill to M. Dewey, March 5, 1894, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The action of the city council was reported in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, February 17, 1894.

1Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 8.
tried. A book collection could be made de novo; he could finish the classification, apply his rules without criticism, and, above all, develop his ideas as to how a library should serve the public. . . .

So Charles Cutter accepted. . . . There have been few such opportunities. There was no book committee, no faculty, no school committee to interfere with him. The trustees had the then unusual idea that they hired a librarian to make a library. (The three men who formed the board were the salt of the earth.) And the new librarian had the almost unique idea that books were for people to use. 1

Cutter understandably began his return trip to America with a renewed optimism. He purchased an additional 500 volumes for the library in London and when he arrived in Boston he continued his purchasing there. The Cutters arrived in Northampton late in August and during September Cutter went about drawing up plans for the library's administration. 2 He also submitted to the Library Journal in September an article describing in some detail his experiences in visiting European libraries. Although he gave particular attention to his work on the Expansive Classification at both the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale, one can also sense the tone of the new beginning in his retrospective view of his travels. He again reiterated the problem of an insufficient catalog at the French library, but now he gave more emphasis to his ideal of library service. He stressed his conviction that

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1 W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 34. Although W. P. Cutter's opinion about the uniqueness of Cutter's views should be tempered, still, the happy circumstance of the meeting of the forward views of both trustees and librarian was a significant happening for that period.

only through a complete catalog could a library make its books most useful to the patrons. He stressed the need to lower the expense of searching time to both patron and staff. In support of his belief that adequate shelf classification was a necessity, he described the wasted searching time needed to find twenty-six randomly chosen works on the British Museum's broadly classed shelves. As a specific example of the difficulties encountered in inadequate shelf arrangement, he cited the problem of getting books from the British Museum's 37,000 volume biography section. He felt that the collection, arranged alphabetically by author, could be arranged more efficiently by subject categories. On the subject of other smaller libraries that he had visited, his enthusiasm was also very evident. He wrote,

If I had known that before the year was out I should be put in charge of a city library doubled with a college library, I should have carefully visited such specimens of both classes as came in my way.1

With respect to those public libraries that he did visit, he turned his critical eye on their inadequate service and restrictive proprietary attitudes and reiterated his library ideal of full service.

From September 17 to 22 Cutter attended the American Library Association conference held at Lake Placid, New York. Given the events of the preceding weeks, he

1"European Libraries--The Bibliotheque Nationale and the British Museum," p. 289. It should be noted that Smith College was located immediately across the street from the Forbes Library and made heavy use of the new facility, especially during the library's first decade.
doubtless carried with him a mood of triumph. The mood was reinforced by the comments of Association leaders. Secretary Frank P. Hill noted specifically that Cutter was "once more a full fledged librarian," and Frederick Crunden included Cutter among six leading library pioneers for the work they had done in "creating a science on which our profession was based." The comment with perhaps the most satisfying ring was made by Dewey, who stated in the midst of a tribute to the recently deceased William F. Poole,

The one man who from the first, through the whole history of the Association, has always had faith, and not only said, "I think it can be done," but also "I will help," and did help, was Charles A. Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum. The other librarians were often in doubt, but Mr. Cutter never failed to join heartily in every advance movement.2

During the social activities of the conference Cutter took his turn at the bonfire party by entertaining the group while his own fagot of pine branches burned, and certainly enjoyed the debate—with Dewey taking the negative and William I. Fletcher the positive—on the facetious question, "Did Mr. Cutter Ascend Whiteface?" He also contributed his own witty speech among others at the annual dinner that was highlighted by menus written in both Decimal and Expansive

1A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XIX (December, 1894), C110, C172.

Classification numbers.¹ Cutter later pronounced the conference to be "most profitable," not only because of the library business it contained, but especially for the "inspiration and energy" provided.²

The Forbes Library and Northampton

Northampton had a long and varied local history.³ It had been the starting point for Jonathan Edwards' New England revival efforts. It had also borne the marks of staunch Yankee convictions narrowed to bigotry when two Catholic Irish immigrants, Dominic Daley and James Halligan, were mistakenly condemned and hung in 1806 for the murder of a local inhabitant. Throughout the nineteenth century, Northampton intimately reflected the changing character of American social and cultural life. During the ante-bellum period, it witnessed its share of social reform efforts, including the short-lived Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a reform community, water-cure establishments, and the dietary and health lectures of Dr. Sylvester Graham, after whom the 'graham cracker' was named.

The size and character of the river town had been typically affected by the economic currents of the late

¹"The Social Side of the Conference," LJ, XIX (December, 1894), C176-77.
²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 15.
³The points in Northampton's social history that follow are taken from the tercentenary history of the town, The Northampton Book; Chapters from 300 Years in the Life of a New England Town, 1654-1954 (Northampton, Mass.: The Tercentenary Committee, 1954).
nineteenth century, notably with a solid growth of industry. During Cutter's tenure there, the population rose from about fifteen to nineteen thousand inhabitants. A wide variety of foreign-born moving into the community throughout the century comprised approximately one-fourth of the city's population (the state average was thirty per cent) during the same period. The heaviest representation were the Irish and French-Canadian, but during the period there was a heavy influx of hard working Slavs, people who eventually came to own many of the previously Yankee farms in the region. Still, one writer comments that the atmosphere of the region with regard to the immigrant seems to have been "comparatively tolerant." His summary of the reasons are thoughtful.

Foremost seems to have been an unusually cosmopolitan local tradition that made for tolerance that was rare indeed in most communities of the size of Northampton. Secondly, the town seems during the 19th century to have experienced a chronic shortage of labor, so that economic competition with the lowest stratum of the native community, a repeatedly recognized concomitant of minority discrimination, was minimized. Thirdly, Northampton was a river town and, having from early times been in the path of a natural movement of population, it had developed the type of open-ended society which is characteristic of such towns and is relatively congenial for the migrant.¹

Charles Edward Forbes was born in Bridgewater in 1795 and practiced law in Northampton from 1818 until his retirement in 1865.² His prominence in both the community


²Biographical information on the life of Judge Charles E. Forbes is taken from Florence B. Adams, "Forbes
and the state was highlighted by several public offices including a period on the state's Supreme Judicial Court from 1848 to 1849. He was a man of considerable intellect and strong convictions who early developed a bias against organized religion—particularly Roman Catholic—which he felt most often followed too narrow a path to develop "enlightened freemen."¹ Through the influence of the examples of Oliver Smith, the founder of the unique and humanitarian Smith Charities and of Sophia Smith, the benefactress of Smith College, of whose will he was executor, he determined to found a library for Northampton. His will stated,

It has been my aim to place within reach of the inhabitants of a town, in which I have lived long and pleasantly, the means of learning, if they are disposed to learn, the marvelous development of modern thought, and to enable them to judge the destiny of the race on scientific evidence, rather than on metaphysical evidence alone. The importance of the education of the people cannot be overrated.²

The terms of the will, promulgated at his death in 1881, were generous at a time when library philanthropy was just coming into prominence, but they also set the scene


¹Charles E. Forbes, "The Will of Charles E. Forbes," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 3. Forbes' will is also included as an appendix in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, although in a slightly abbreviated form.

²Ibid.
for a variety of struggles. A total of $220,000 was to be divided into three separate funds: $50,000 for a building; $20,000 for administration (the Aid fund); and $150,000 for a Book fund. The investment income from the latter two funds were to provide for those needs. If the building fund proved to be insufficient, the whole amount was to be invested and allowed to accumulate for approximately ten years at the end of which the three funds would again be separated. That course of action enabled the trustees eventually to turn over to the city in 1894, an Aid fund of $20,000 with accumulated interest of $2,858, a building that cost $134,529, and a book fund of $294,000 with accumulated interest of $40,042.

The first problem related to the will arose out of the basic purpose of the bequest. Northampton already had a public library. A small private library, begun in 1826, had been given to the city in 1860 and supplied with a building through the $40,000 benefaction of John Clarke in 1867. The John Clarke Library was subsequently opened in the city's Memorial Hall building in 1871. In searching for a lot on which to build the new Forbes Library, one faction felt that the best move would be to build next to the Clarke Library and make a single public library.

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1This account of the problems engendered by the terms of the will is primarily based on the thorough discussion given in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 1-16.

Another faction sought to keep the two separate and proposed a location on the Turner property two long blocks away, but across the street from Smith College. When the first faction suggested that such a location would place the library under the influence of the college rather than making it attentive to the city's needs, President L. Clarke Seelye of the college revealed that Forbes had privately hoped for the library to include the college in its purview. The problem was finally solved when it was noted that the will called for a fireproof structure, completely separate from older buildings. As a result, the Turner lot was purchased.

The second problem arose out of the tone of Judge Forbes' indictment of organized religion. The passage from the will quoted above went on to make an almost scurrilous attack on Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, Forbes was very explicit that the book collection itself was to avoid sectarian works of religion as far as possible.

It is my design to form a library of works of science and the arts, in their broadest acceptation, of ancient and modern history, and of the literature of our own and other nations; but as theological works cannot be wholly excluded, in the selection of these latter works no preference shall be given to any sect or system of theologic inquiry, but strict impartiality is to be extended to all of them. Histories of different religions may find an appropriate place in this department.

It has been asserted that there are between two and three thousand different systems of religion in existence. But as a general rule these are the inventions of cunning men or the vagaries of semi-lunatics, speaking boldly and impudently in the name of God, of whose decrees and purposes they know as little as the most ignorant of their victims. The result is seldom
doubtful. It is wealth and power on the part of the prophets, ignorance and poverty on the part of the disciples.\textsuperscript{1}

In addition to the above, Forbes also directed that no clergyman would be allowed employment in the library, or any part in the administration of the library. It has since been pointed out that Cutter narrowly avoided this stricture, for although he had trained for the ministry, he had never been ordained. Finally, Forbes buttressed the open nature of the book collection that he desired by providing that any citizen might request in writing any book to be bought or placed in the library, and if the trustees declined, their decision must also be in writing, "in order that the rights of the parties, if desired, may be determined at law."\textsuperscript{2}

Despite criticism of Forbes' views, little could be done about them. Besides, the breadth of what Judge Forbes did consider to be proper for the collection was generous enough to suggest that he had only the best intentions, rather than any narrow view. He considered the book fund to be the "mainspring of the institution," applicable to,

the purchase and repair of books, pamphlets, manuscripts and papers of a literary or scientific character, and the binding of the same. Maps and charts, and to a limited extent, statuary, paintings, engravings and photographs, may be purchased as ornaments to the library and aids to scientific inquiry.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Forbes, "Will," p. 3. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid. \textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
A third problem arose with Forbes' allocation of the funds themselves, a problem that would plague the library throughout Cutter's administration and for some years afterward. Forbes deliberately kept the Aid fund small in comparison to the Book fund and denied any use of the Book fund for administrative purposes. He required that if the city accepted the benefaction, it would itself supplement the funds for administration. Although it was not uncommon for benefactors to neglect the administration of a library in their wills, the usual practice was to give their money for a building. In this case, Forbes provided for both a building and an enormous yearly acquisition of books; but at the same time he gave little help in dealing with the acquisitions when they came in. The situation was only partially alleviated when, in 1892, Dr. Pliny Earle, for twenty-four years the director of the Northampton Lunatic Hospital, left $50,000 to the city, the income of which was to be used for the library's administrative expenses. The total yearly investment still remained inadequate, however.\footnote{For the Earle bequest, see sections, "Dr. Pliny Earle, One of the Donors," and "The Will of Pliny Earle," in "Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, pp. 1 and 3. As a result of Earle's bequest, the library was sometimes called the Forbes-Earle Library, although most of the time the name Earle was omitted.}

The city itself had to make up the difference between the yearly investment income and the money needed to operate the library. But even before the library was
opened, the imbalance spelled trouble. An article that appeared in the local newspaper in February 1894 outlining the proposed administrative expenses of the new library was perhaps indicative of what was to come. It was entitled, "The Library Elephant; A Glimpse of What Lies Before Us," and it suggested that a year's operating expenses would require between $9,500 and $10,000, the city's part amounting to $6,000. Considering that 1894 was a time of general economic depression from which Northampton had not escaped, the budget must have appeared ominous.¹

From the very beginning the town kept the administrative total at a minimum, despite what was needed to keep up with acquisitions and services; and sometimes they did not always provide even that minimum. Salaries and number of staff were restricted with the librarian to receive no more than $2,000 a year. They could not have expected to find a prominent librarian to work for such a low sum, so that it was fortunate for them that Cutter was both available and open to accepting the appointment.

The first two of the above problems became public issues during the decade of the 1880's, but were settled by the time the building site was settled upon and actual construction began. The issue of the administrative expenses of the library came to a head only after the library

was opened in 1895 and the operation of the library made the needs apparent. The building itself was designed by William C. Brocklesby, a Hartford architect, and was of unmistakable H. H. Richardson style, incorporating among other things a typical cavernous round arch for the entranceway. It was constructed of Longmeadow brownstone and, following the prescription of the will that it be fireproof, was built without structural steel, except for the roof which was a marvel of iron-work and slate. The building was made for adaptability and permanence. Cutter later said of it:

The Forbes building has contributed to the success of that library. Well placed in the centre of ample grounds, substantially built in an agreeable semi-romanesque style, it is unlike other libraries in that its whole lower story, 100 feet square, is a single room broken only by the pillars and arches that sustain the second floor. Older libraries look confined, dingy, and gloomy compared with this new, bright, open, cheerful building, and many of later date are not as home-like and comfortable.

The First Year, 1894-1895

On the fourth of October 1894 Cutter took active charge of a library staff that consisted of himself, a janitor and three assistants. The newly completed building had

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1 A description of the architectural style of the building is given in Karl S. Putnam, "Northampton Architecture: a Sequence," in The Northampton Book, pp. 157-58. Floor plans and photographs can be found in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 72-77.

no furniture, and together they faced the unpacked boxes of 3,500 books which he had purchased during the previous months.\textsuperscript{1} That vignette was from Cutter's own hand and provides one theme that constantly resounded during his tenure there. That is, the library, despite its auspicious and wealthy beginning, would always be understaffed and the staff would always be behind in what could only be considered a mountain of work.

The other theme had to do with the library's purpose. It was delineated by Cutter at the dedication of the library late in October 1894. President Seelye of Smith College and Melvil Dewey both spoke of the idea that the library would be an auxiliary to the public school system. As such it was a people's university.\textsuperscript{2} Cutter spoke more specifically, however, of the lines along which the library would be run. He summarized his administrative philosophy in the four words, liberality, simplicity, elasticity, and utility. Simplicity was his word for an economical approach to library operations. He echoed his philosophy of earlier years that library techniques and appliances should always be tailored to the appropriate goals. Economy was "always desirable in the management of a library," but in this case the reality of the situation would drive them to it. He added therefore, that because

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\textsuperscript{2}The remarks of Seelye and Dewey are summarized in, "Forbes Library," \textit{Daily Hampshire Gazette}, October 24, 1894, p. 1.
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of the library's financial limitations, "we shall not be able to buy much red tape." 1

Liberality, elasticity, and utility were more directly applicable to his sense of library service. Every effort would be made to provide the library needs of all the various kinds of patrons, not simply to the Smith College community, "but to everyone in the town, from the gray-beard to the smallest child who can read, or indeed can enjoy looking at pictures." 2 Service would subsequently become Cutter's most urgent quest and in order to achieve it he placed all other concerns—including those of cataloging and classification—in a secondary position. Circulation privileges would be developed carefully with due regard to the capabilities of the collection, but every borrower who was interested in special subjects would be aided in every way possible. All such liberal ideals of service would be developed in the context of limits, however.

Libraries, like states, flourish best with the greatest allowable liberty, but in a library as in a state, it must be liberty under law not license without law. We wish to allow every man all the privileges that we can up to the point where his privileges would interfere with the rights of someone else. 3

Just as the development of the collection had occupied Cutter's initial relationship to the library, so it

1Cutter's remarks, summarized in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, are recorded more fully in, Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, pp. 16-17.

2Ibid. 3Ibid.
continued to be the most important activity of his first few months. Two days after he assumed charge he wrote to the American Antiquarian Society with regard to collecting Northamptoniana. In March the following year he began a correspondence with Samuel S. Green of Worcester about exchanging duplicate copies of books and about jointly ordering foreign books—a correspondence that was to last more than three years. 1 Exchanging duplicates was a policy made necessary by the large volume of purchasing done with a small staff. Cutter reported in his first annual report that in the first place he kept no accession book, but rather kept the bills as records of purchase in order by date. He reasoned that "the questions that this method leaves unanswered are questions whose answers are not worth their cost." 2 Second, he kept no lists of books on order other than marked catalogs, trusting his memory to avoid duplication as much as possible. Since some duplication was unavoidable, he carried on an exchange program to offset the procedure. 3 Such simplified methods, while not perhaps foolproof over a long term, enabled Cutter to build a large collection very quickly, but with a minimum of staff.

1 Evidence of Cutter's duplicate exchange activity can be found in the American Antiquarian Society, Librarians' Correspondence; in the Worcester Public Library, Letter copy-books of Samuel S. Green, March, 1895 to March, 1898; and in the Springfield City Library, Correspondence files of John C. Dana, 1897-1901.


3 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
He had hoped to begin the collection by purchasing the American Library Association's 1893 Columbian Exposition exhibit library of 5,000 volumes. He very quickly determined, however, that four-fifths of the model library were already held by the Clarke Library and, because he did not wish to duplicate the resources of the older institution, he searched out only those books that the Clarke Library lacked, as well as standard dictionaries and encyclopedias.  

His philosophy of collection building drew upon all of his ability as a bibliographer. He assumed that the library's primary responsibility was neither for amusement nor for any form of specialized research, but rather for supplying any patron with something, at least, on any subject. That did not mean that he did not later develop special areas, but in the beginning he purchased a broad range of materials that demonstrated his own grasp of overall bibliography. Special groups such as the Smith College community would be served in somewhat greater depth, but only in relation to the primary goal. The Daily Hampshire Gazette reported in that regard, that when Cutter received requests from some of the professors for books in their own special areas of interest, he simply commented that "he had purchased a few such as he thought would be useful for general reading by the public."  

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1 Ibid., pp. 18-20.
By purchasing books with that broad base in mind and with little initial restriction on total expenditures, Cutter was able to accumulate 13,000 volumes by January 1895 and nearly 28,000 volumes by the time the library opened in July of that year. He made his own casual statement of his engrossing effort to his old friend, Richard Bowker, in January 1895 when he wrote, "One of these days I want to renew relations with the L. J. but now I am too much absorbed in trying to get all the good books for half their cost and to reduce them to order when I get them."¹

Cutter's monumental efforts at building a collection de novo necessitated, as he stated, that he impose some "order" on the books. The trustees allowed from the beginning that the catalog would be a dictionary type of authors, titles, and subjects arranged in one alphabet. In addition, they designated that the catalog would be placed in Rudolph Indexer books. Their decision was doubtless based on Cutter's promotion of the devices, for as if to prove their worth, he took special pains to explain in his first report their special merits.²

Another experiment was not so successful. Cutter had recommended and the trustees had proposed to the city council that a special appropriation be made for making a collection of entries with linotype castings. They reasoned

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 6, 1895, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, pp. 10 and 23.
that by 1900 a catalog of the entries for some 60,000 volumes could then be easily printed, with the added possibility of making special lists upon demand. The proposal was not approved, however, and the entries that were made by that method, apparently done in hopes that the project would be approved, had to be redone.¹

Once the books were cataloged, they were prepared as simply as possible for the shelves, and arranged according to the seventh expansion of Cutter's Expansive Classification. Because that expansion was not complete, however, Cutter found himself pressed to work on those schedules that were most needed. During 1895 he worked out the last of the schedules for Biography (Class E), History (Class F), and Geography and Travels (Class G). It was perhaps in that regard that he also made a preliminary schedule for Music (Class Vv-Vz), although the Newberry Library in Chicago was also interested in that schedule.²

The amount of work that Cutter accomplished during the first few months was enormous, but not unexpected of him. He had always been most content when there was a monumental job to be done to which he could apply his penchant for organization. At the same time the library was woefully understaffed. During the month of September 1894 he had hired the first four assistants, among them Miss

¹Ibid., p. 10.
²Ibid., p. 22; "Forbes-Earle Library," p. 4; See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 597-98.
Mabel Winchell, who was to act as his trusted and chief assistant until the end of 1901. Still, the helpers that he had were not sufficient to do the amount of work that was necessary to open the library for actual use in a short time.¹ In the above mentioned letter to Bowker, Cutter went on to say that in addition to library work, he was also busy "in getting the new city council to give us enough to run the library on, or to speak more accurately, to get our trustees & treasurer to be courageous enough to ask for all we want."² With respect to an opening date, Cutter publicly suggested that perhaps by June 1895 or even by January 1896 the library would be ready. One of the problems was that by January 1895 when he made the statement, only 2,000 of the 13,000 volumes acquired by then had been cataloged.³ The trustees had different ideas. They had originally wanted to open by January 1, 1895. The date was put off to April 4th and finally to July 1st, but only with the compromise that the books would not be completely cataloged. Cutter later suggested that with the staff available, the mass of incoming books could not have been ready even for a July 1, 1896 opening.⁴

¹Wikander, Disposed to Learn, p. 12; "Northampton (Mass.) Forbes L.," LJ, XX (July, 1895), 251-52.
²Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 6, 1895, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
Because the trustees insisted upon the July opening date, Cutter had to resort to even more economy measures. Uncataloged books received very simplified processing and were arranged on the shelves according to the broad subject divisions of the second or third expansions of his classification system. The shelves were then closed for browsing, except for teachers or those who had a specific subject in mind. In addition, 1,000 volumes were placed in the delivery room for general reading. When the library was opened on July 1, 1895, of the approximately 28,000 volumes collected, only about one-third had been entered in the catalog.\(^1\)

A provisional list of rules and regulations for circulation was approved by the trustees in their June 1895 meeting. The rules were, in their words, "as liberal as they thought possible to get the best use of the books."\(^2\) Among the provisions were registration rights for any inhabitant of Northampton twelve years old or older, for visitors in Northampton, and for college students in Northampton or neighboring towns. Special provisions made it possible for teachers to check out six or more books at a time for use in their teaching and for books to be placed on reserve in the library for use by college students. Borrowing was limited to one book in English for a two-week period, or two, if one was fiction. A patron was allowed, however, to

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 22, 25-26; "Northampton (Mass.) Forbes L.,” pp. 251-52.

\(^2\)Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 11.
check out, at the same time, magazines, books in other languages, or additional English language books for research in special subjects.¹

Circulation control was accomplished by using the Browne system of charging in combination with book-cards of the type that Cutter had used at the Boston Athenaeum. A borrower was given at the time of his registration a Manila card pocket with his name on it. When he found a book that he wanted to take out, the book's card was placed in the pocket and the resulting packet was placed in a file arranged by circulation date. Since only one card could be put in a borrower's card pocket at a time, additional pockets were issued for the different classes of materials allowed to circulate. Typical practice in libraries of that time was to keep two kinds of circulation files, one by circulation date, and a second by patrons' names. Cutter reported that he had limited the records to only the first kind in order to keep the work at a minimum and because a file by patron, while useful, was more than the library could afford.²

During the first five months after the library opened, nearly 1,500 persons registered as borrowers. The additional work quickly became burdensome for the already


²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 23. The most important element was the date a book was due. Cutter kept a separate filing sequence for each day's circulation.
severely taxed staff. As a result Cutter found himself unable to attend the American Library Association annual conference held that year in Denver during the middle of August. It was the first time he had missed an annual meeting since the organization was founded; but he doubtless felt a justifiable pride in the work he was accomplishing. He suggested as much in an affable letter to his fellow librarian, George Watson Cole, at the end of July, when he concluded with the ironic line, "Are you like the rest of us lazy easterners going to shirk Denver?"¹

By the time of the first annual report at the end of November 1895, the statistics of the overall amount of work accomplished were even more impressive. He had acquired 31,027 volumes of which 28,425 non-gift items had cost a total of $33,050.07, or, $1.162 per volume. The latter type of figure was one that Cutter perhaps felt was necessary owing to the large sums being expended. In addition, 2,632 pamphlets, 28 maps, 85 engravings, 174 chromoliths, 1,423 photographs, 55 manuscripts, and 12 water-colors had also been added. Circulation for the short period totaled 2,115 volumes used in the building, and 8,924 volumes outside. Cutter reported 9,215 volumes cataloged, although he also noted that 5,611 of them, cataloged in linotype, would have to be redone. As if the amount of work was insufficient, Cutter outlined what he felt the future

¹Letter, Cutter to G. W. Cole, July 30, 1895, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
demanded. The people of the community needed to be made aware of the presence of the library. Study clubs needed to be encouraged. Finally, more literature had to be purchased, especially for the French-Canadian population of the area. ¹

Administration of the Forbes Library, 1895-1903

Acquisitions and Collection Growth

The number of acquisitions of the first year did not repeat itself during the succeeding years of Cutter's administration, but the rate of acquisition remained high. ² During the second year, 13,000 new volumes were brought in. During the following years the yearly rate dropped steadily, from a high of 9,278 volumes in the third year to a low of 5,619 volumes in 1903. Even so, the total number of volumes acquired by 1903 was nearly 97,000. Books were not the only kinds of materials collected. Besides the special collections treated below, Cutter also reported during the same period the acquisition of 14,000 pamphlets, more than 600 maps, including some in relief, 188 manuscripts, and a large number of newspapers. The total effort rivaled even that of Cutter's former example, John Langdon Sibley of Harvard.


² The acquisition statistics here are taken from the second through ninth annual reports of the library, 1895/96 to 1902/03. The report year was from December 1st to November 30th, so that the ninth annual report extended three months beyond Cutter's death.
Cutter was careful to show the purposefulness of his collecting activities. A local newspaper article in November 1896 spoke of the Forbes policy on buying books of rare value. The article first gave a picture of the cutthroat market for original imprints, but then went on to state explicitly, "The Forbes library does not lavish its money on any such curiosities, but it looks out for opportunities of procuring the same historical matter in adequate reprints."\(^1\) Cutter was also aware of the diverse backgrounds of his patrons and purchased books with the differences in mind. Besides the typical breakdown between children and adults, such variations included ethnic differences. In 1902 he enumerated the latter, which included French-Canadians, Germans, Poles, Hebrews, Swedes, Bohemians, Hungarians, and Lithuanians. He compiled that list in the same year that he made a point of noting his special purchases in Yiddish literature.\(^2\)

His awareness as a bibliographer was demonstrated not only in the excellence of his selection, but also in his awareness of what not to buy. One such instance of his watchfulness occurred in 1900 when he discovered that a twenty-volume literature anthology had been published in both English and American editions, but under different editors' names. Cutter had ordered them both, thinking


them different. The problem was further compounded when
the American publisher announced its intention to publish
still another set that incorporated all of the first edi-
tion but with an additional ten volumes of material. Cut-
ter found the whole matter irritating and strongly cautioned
librarians in a sardonic letter to the Library Journal.
Privately he thought it no less than intent to "defraud"
and a "cheat."¹

Still another of his concerns had to do with the
purchase and circulation of fiction. Just as years before
he had felt it to be the librarian's duty to exercise care
and taste in selecting only the best in fiction, so he
continued his efforts in that direction, both at the Forbes
and in professional circles. He participated in a reading
program during 1895 and 1896 sponsored by the Massachusetts
Library Club in which the volunteers read two novels a week
for a year in order both to review them and to develop their
own critical abilities in distinguishing the more worth-
while from the less worthwhile.

When he participated in a discussion on the A.L.A.
Catalog--Supplement at the Cleveland American Library Asso-
ciation conference in September 1896, he related his expe-
rience in the program by beginning,

¹"Changed Titles--A Peculiar Case," LJ, XV (May,
1900), 218. The matter dragged on for a year and included
a public defense by the publisher. The private remark is
contained in a letter, Cutter to J. C. Dana, April 13, 1901,
a response to Dana's letter of March 14, 1901, Springfield
Public Library, Librarians' Correspondence.
What is there more important for us than the choice of books, the selection of those tools with which we are to work upon the public, the selection of what will in the end determine whether the public will come to our libraries at all and what influence we shall have on them?¹

The question demonstrated his concern for the influential role of the library on the reading public. In that sense his views remained the same as in earlier years.

Early in 1898 he described at two professional meetings his practice (while still at the Boston Athenaeum) of reading with his youngest son.² His description was well-received and suggests that the Association as a whole felt the concern deeply. But his earlier view in which he displayed a considerable Brahmin-type hesitancy toward poor quality books also seems to have become modified, perhaps as a result of his reading program, and certainly because of his intensive public library work. In place of his rigid canon of selection by taste and good literary expression, he asked in 1901, "Should libraries buy only the best books or the best books that people will read?" He thought the question answered itself, for, "of course, we are to buy the best books." But he qualified the idea of "best" with his newly acquired appreciation of the wide range of any

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C134. See also the report of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXI (October, 1896), 464.

²See reports of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXIII (January, 1898, 28, and of the joint meeting of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey library associations, LJ, XXIII (April, 1898), 155.
particular library's clientele. The librarian was to select the best books not for,

the librarian, nor for the book committee, nor for the self-elected book committee outside the library, nor for the shelves (to keep them warm by never leaving them); but the best books to satisfy the just demands of our clients for amusement and knowledge and mental stimulus and spiritual inspiration. The library should be a practical thing to be used, not an ideal to be admired.  

That attitude still did not speak to the problem of the poor taste of many uncultured readers, but Cutter sensed that the problem of influencing the reading public was much more complicated than it had perhaps been conceived of previously. He went on to state what he felt was a change in the position of the library in society.

The whole history of libraries in the past century may almost be condensed into one sentence: They were the libraries of the one fit reader; they are the libraries of the million unfit as well as the one fit.  

His observation also suggests that he was thinking in terms far less exclusive than when he was at the Athenaeum. He continued by drawing a picture of the sensitivity that the librarian should have.

I think many most excellent persons do not really enter into the state of mind of those who are at a stage of culture or mental ability or aesthetic taste which they have passed beyond. If they could, they would know that there are men of a certain rigidity of mind

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1 "Should Libraries Buy Only the Best Books or the Best Books that People Will Read?," LJ, XXVI (February, 1901), 70. The paper was originally read before the Western Massachusetts Library Club on January 23, 1901. It was also reported at length in "What Books Will People Read? A Problem for Public Libraries," Springfield Republican, February 7, 1901, p. 5.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 71.
to whom a book which is two degrees above is as much a sealed book as if written in Chinese. Sometimes it need not even be above a man to be lost to him. A book on his level, if it be a little aside from his ordinary range, is as if it did not exist.\(^1\)

He described what a librarian could do given this real situation. First, he ought to have a wider range of books on hand than simply those that fit the present needs of his patrons. In that way he could introduce variety into his patrons' intellectual diets as the occasion allowed. Second, he ought to resist attempts rigidly to define the "best" books, but rather allow the idea a wide range of interpretation according to the intellectual and spiritual development of the individual patrons. Last, he ought to select books wisely with that wide range of patrons in mind.

Drawing on literary and architectural allusions, Cutter pictured the ideally balanced library.

Select your library, then, as Shakespeare wrote his plays, the highest poetry, the deepest tragedy side by side with the comic and the vulgar. Do not make the regularity, balance of parts, dignity of expression, of the French classic drama your model or you will have only a succès d'estime. Imitate a Gothic cathedral. Do not fancy that libraries can be Grecian temples, made by rule, all just alike wherever they are, perfect in form, suited to one limited use.\(^2\)

He admitted that his approach was "discouraging" to any who wanted a "royal road to learning."\(^3\) His newer view did not negate the educational work of the librarian, but it did show that the work was much more strenuous than had previously been supposed, although the work retained its pastoral character. He concluded,

\(^1\)Ibid.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 72.  \(^3\)Ibid.
The natural inclination to better one's self must be gently and unobtrusively assisted. Here, as in all pastoral work, success comes from sympathy. He can best minister to another's wants who can put himself into another's place, enter into his mind, and so feel those wants himself. As the librarian will do injustice to the scholar unless he has himself felt the sacred thirst for knowledge; as he will not, indeed, cannot supply the demand for the beautiful unless he has himself felt the artistic thrill, so he will fail in properly providing for many of his people unless he remembers the gradual opening of his own mind or is able to recreate his forgotten state of ignorance and inability.  

The enormous number of purchases caused a strain on all the internal processing arrangements of the library. With regard to physical facilities, they prompted Cutter to call as early as 1896 for the construction of a two-story iron stack that had been part of the original building plans. His plea went unheeded at that time and in 1899, when the collection had passed 77,000 volumes, he repeated it, only at that time almost as an ultimatum. He expressed his opinion that the only alternative he had was to put books on the floor. Despite his plea, however, the stack was not built during his administration.  

Special Materials

Besides the accumulation of regular library materials, Cutter was also active in collecting several kinds of special materials; namely, music, medical literature, and art reproductions. Cutter might well have purchased some printed music as early as 1895, for early that year

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1 Ibid.

he attempted to complete a new schedule for his classification of music. Active purchasing did not begin until late 1896 when the complete works of Beethoven, Chopin, and other composers, in Breitkopf and Hartel editions, and the Bach and Handel Societies' editions of those masters were added. The approximately 430 quarto volumes costing about $900 were looked upon as the "foundation" of a "music department." A promise was made to buy the works of other composers, "if it is found that there is any call for these."¹ In the annual report for that year, Cutter more explicitly related that the policy had been inspired by the practice of the Brooklyn Public Library and would include extensive circulation of the materials. By 1899 the first mention was made of the purchasing of sheet music. Totals given the next year showed nearly 1,500 items of sheet music. By 1903 that total had increased to nearly 4,300.² As the number of music materials increased, Cutter found it necessary to wrestle with the nature of his music shelf classification once again. He had at first arranged the materials strictly by composer. Later, he settled upon a preliminary arrangement by subject or instrumental grouping and subarranged these by composer.³

¹[Note], Daily Hampshire Gazette, November 20, 1896, p. 5.


³See his, "Shelf Classification of Music," pp. 68-72. See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 597-98.
The medical collection was established as a result of an initial agreement made with the Hampshire District Medical Society in 1897 to provide more efficient services for the area's doctors. The following year the Society's own collection of 615 volumes were placed in a special room in the library and the library itself not only processed them as a special group, but also began to make its own purchases to expand the collection. By 1901 the Society began to meet at the library in the room set aside for the collection. An intimation of the interest that Cutter's efforts in this respect may have generated is contained in a letter from John C. Dana, the librarian of the Springfield City Library. Dana sought information from Cutter for a similar situation in Springfield. 1

The most extensive special materials were art reproductions. They represented one of Cutter's abiding interests and were a manifestation of his belief that the library had a role to play as an agent of cultural uplift. He had gained extensive experience with the place of art reproductions in the library of the Boston Athenaeum where the collection of such materials had become a partial surrogate for the exhibits of original art works that had been transferred to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1876.

The Forbes trustees were receptive to the same spirit of representing art in the library and directed Cutter while he was still in Europe in 1894 to purchase books in the fine arts. Cutter was careful to note at various times that in doing so he was avoiding the overly expensive editions of such works. By the end of the library's first year, Cutter had added to the collection, in addition to books, a great number of other types of materials. These included photographs, engravings, casts, water-colors, and chromolithographs. During the second year he increased the number of such materials with the addition of many more of the same as well as with posters and drawings.

During 1896 Cutter's interest in this area of library service expanded still further. In February he published a review of the catalog of the Avery Architectural Library of Columbia University, "a collection to make the mouth of the country architect water and his heart contract with envy at the superior privileges of his fellows in New York." In March he brought the first photography exhibit to the library. While at the annual meeting of the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston, he had learned that the Club owned a large collection of photographs taken by Antonio Sella,
an Italian wool manufacturer and an avid mountain climber. The mountain scenes were of the Alps and the Caucasus and, though available in print, were difficult to find. The Club was willing to lend them to any institution for an exhibit provided all costs involved were cared for by the borrowing institution. Cutter arranged to cover the costs by selling the catalog of the exhibit. For Cutter, an enthusiastic hiker and New England mountain climber in his own right, the exhibit was of great interest on its own merits. It also became for him an important method by which to draw people to the library. He stated at the Cleveland American Library Association conference in September,

> Everything is of importance which makes the library the intellectual centre of the town; everything is of importance which brings people to the building and lets them see that there is a library and leads them to think of taking out books.¹

He followed the mountain photograph exhibit with one prepared by a professional photography company from Boston, and with another composed of photographs and curiosities gathered by a local citizen while in residence in the Far East. In June 1896 Cutter himself prepared an exhibit of photo-lithographs of the Arundell Society and other book illustrations, for the meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club held at the Forbes. In reporting his work to the Association, he described his experiences with

¹C. A. Cutter, "Exhibitions of Engravings and Pictures," LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C115. See also his summarized remarks in the report of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXI (May, 1896), 235.
the mechanics of setting up an exhibit and encouraged other librarians to do the same. He felt that room should be made for the exhibits even at the expense of co-opting the reading room.1 He elaborated in his annual report for that year the reasoning behind the displays.

A public library should be the center of culture of its town. It should promote knowledge, literature, and art, by every means in its power. . . . Those [exhibitions] which we have held have, I am sure, not only given pleasure, which in itself would be a sufficient justification, but have broadened their visitors' minds, have supplied some of the advantages of travel to those who could not leave home, have renewed the impressions of those who have been abroad; have increased the knowledge of art and educated the taste of all who saw them.2

During 1897 the Forbes Library joined in a league of twenty Massachusetts libraries for the preparation of traveling exhibits that would remain in each library for two weeks.3 Cutter again purchased photographs of the collections of great European galleries from the Braun company in Paris, just as he had done at the Boston Athenaeum. During the next three years his purchasing of reproductions continued unabated. By 1901 he reported an art collection of some 44,000 items, although he noted that there were comparatively few in color and even fewer originals. His report for the following year noted that the exhibits themselves were less visited, but that the

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circulation of photographs had exceeded 11,000 items. By 1903 the reproduction collection was nearing 50,000 items.

Cutter's efforts in professional library circles at promoting the use of fine arts materials also continued unabated. Early in 1897 he reviewed the literature of the fine arts at the New York Library Club meeting, subsequently publishing his remarks in the *Library Journal*. Of various categories of the literature that he noted, he emphasized that the books on principles, aesthetics and criticism, and art histories should be collected assiduously; not simply any that were available, but especially those of "power," such as Santayana's *Sense of Beauty*. He stated that, although the latter would doubtless be difficult for the learner, it would reward the effort to read it. He added a note that characterized his interest in the Gothic: "The paragraph, for instance, on the part which the flying buttress plays in charm of the Gothic cathedral is the best on the matter that I have ever met with."

In April Cutter further generalized on his own experience in a review of George Iles' *Annotated Bibliography of Fine Art*.

No public library can afford to neglect art nowadays, and therefore few can dispense with this list. In old times I have seen more than one small library that had not a single book on art. Probably it would be impossible to find such now. Everywhere a class of readers interested in the subject is springing up, a state of

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things due outside of the large cities in part to European travel, but in greater measure to Harper's, Century, and other illustrated magazines.  

Early 1899 saw Cutter supplying the Springfield City Library with a photograph exhibit of old masters. Cooperation on such matters with John C. Dana, the librarian there, continued until Dana left the area two years later.  

During the Montreal conference of the American Library Association in June 1900, Cutter recounted his own extensive experience of obtaining and making use of photographs and photoprints of all kinds. His later enlargement of the presentation constituted a small manual of the techniques he had learned. He divided his practical advice according to the catchy phrases, Getting, Keeping, and Using, and included among other matters a classification scheme for the arrangement of a library's art reproductions. He also expanded the rationale for his activities to include aid for art study clubs and the preparation of patrons for foreign travel.  

In 1903 Cutter presented his various ideas

1 C. A. Cutter, Review of Annotated Bibliography of Fine Art, ed. by George Iles, in LJ, XXII (April, 1897), 211.

2 Letters, J. C. Dana to Cutter (Letter-book copy), March 3, 1899; Cutter to J. C. Dana, March 10, 1899, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence. Other correspondence between that date and 1901 attest to the cooperative exhibit activity between the two libraries.

3 C. A. Cutter, "Photographs and Photoprints," LJ, XXV (October, 1900), 619-25. He had originally wanted only to lead a discussion on the subject, but he could not get any others to participate with him. Most of those he contacted pled lack of experience. He finally gave up the idea of a discussion, stating to President Henry J. Carr, "I fear I must hoe this row alone." Letter, Cutter to H. J. Carr, May 26, 1900, American Library Association Archives,
on the same matters to the New York State Library School in a series of lectures. These were issued as a pamphlet in 1905.  

**Extension of Services**

All of Cutter's efforts at building the Forbes collections were aimed at making the library as useful as possible to the greatest number of persons and at bringing the library a pre-eminent standing in the library world. Going hand-in-hand with his collection building, therefore, were his efforts toward the extension of regular library privileges. By the end of the second year, registration of patrons totaled nearly 2,700 persons above twelve years of age. Circulation, recorded both within and outside the library, climbed to 7,729 and 40,675 volumes respectively. Cutter's concern for recording in-library use was most likely prompted by the heavy use of the library by Smith College students.  

During 1897 he made the first major changes in library privileges by opening a children's room in the library and by providing the children with circulation rights. In his annual report for that year, Cutter reviewed how lending privileges had at first been limited to those of Carr Papers. Other correspondence in the same collection reveals his efforts at recruiting participants.  


2The statistics are from the annual reports.
twelve years of age or more, a practice common among older libraries and always the case in Northampton. He went on to make the observation, "that children should be drawn to the library much earlier in order to get the reading-habit well established before they go to work, or form less desirable habits." Some libraries had lowered the age limit and others had removed it entirely. Cutter approved the latter course but with restrictions. He wanted to guard against an opposite extreme in which children might "bury themselves in books and lose the benefits of outdoor play," or "read, when they ought to be pursuing their school studies." He concluded that since it was not the province of the library to decide such matters, parental permission forms were needed.

During 1896 the library's open hours were extended to Saturday afternoons. Cutter was not satisfied, however, that the library was reaching those who would not ordinarily come in anyway. Early in 1897 he proposed that the daily hours should be extended into the weekday evenings. They were subsequently extended but it is likely that part of the justification was the accommodation of Smith College students. In fact, the use of the library by the students, especially for reserved books, provided a bone of contention for some who thought that the library was more interested

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in the students than in the townspeople. Cutter was very sensitive to such criticism, for it did not rightly represent his feelings about the total clientele of the library. He helped to alleviate the problem of crowding by college students anxious to obtain books, by having a special check-out window made for them. The problem did not begin to abate, however, until 1900 when he reported that the College was simply using the library less. The decline continued until 1902 when it leveled off. Still, he did not wish to discount the College's presence, for it too was part of the great variety of patrons that the Forbes served. Its presence gave justification for the expansion of the total book collection into the theological, historical, and social sciences areas, more so than if it had not been there. He wrote in 1902,

_The result of the mixture is that the library must be ready to supply at once not only the amusement and general information that are expected of the ordinary town library, but also opportunities for more varied and deeper study such as are usually looked for in college libraries and a few of the larger city libraries._ 3

Circulation outside the library increased all throughout Cutter's administration. During 1897 a twenty-two per cent jump was recorded, but Cutter could happily


3Cutter, _Library Facilities of Northampton_, p. 2.
announce at the same time that fiction accounted for only forty-five per cent of the total. The total increased to over 100,000 items by 1903, but this was due in part to the large circulation of photographs and sheet music which themselves amounted to about 12,000 items. The growth in circulation was also due to an increasingly liberal loan policy over the years. At first, patrons were limited to one non-fiction book in English and one novel for a two week period. But very soon after circulation began, the privilege extended to extra materials of all sorts, including "for study, any number of books up to 100," which could be kept until someone else wanted them. The only restriction was that at the end of six months the borrower had to return those which he was done with and after one year he had to renew the remainder.

Despite the increases in local circulation, Cutter became convinced that the library could do still more to reach the people. During 1899, two events occurred that illustrated his overall concern. First, he arranged for delivery stations for regular circulation in outlying areas. Second, he arranged with the Clarke Library in Northampton to cooperate on interlibrary registration. Cutter had envisioned the extension of services to the outlying areas

1 Forbes Library, Third Annual Report, 1896/97, p. 8; Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 3.
2 Ibid.
as early as his first annual report but was delayed in implementing the idea. The first arrangements were made for a delivery station at Florence, Massachusetts, by loaning supplementary books to the small Lilly Library there. The Lilly librarian would come to the Forbes and select books to take to Florence. By 1901, 100 books a month were being used and smaller deliveries were being made to Loudville, Pine Grove, Smith's Ferry, and West Farms, to be loaned by teachers to students and families.¹

In December 1899 the first regular branch library manned by Forbes employees was begun at Bay State, Massachusetts, when fifty books were taken to a store in the town for circulating purposes. Miss Dorcas Tracy, a Forbes assistant, later described to the Bay Path (Massachusetts) Library Club the initial experience in such a way as to highlight the difficulties encountered.

The people there were much pleased with the books, but disliked to register, and only seven books were given out the first night. The branch was an experiment. The people had expressed no desire for books, and would never have gone to a big library building. They like good literature, and have said many times they didn't want to read anything unless it would do them good. They dislike the modern novel exceedingly. They like simple love stories for their fiction, good histories and magazines. The men like Hugo, Dumas, Weyman, and detective stories. In fact, we take a little of everything out in our basket—music, picture books for the very young, stories for all ages, and nature books.²

¹Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 3.
²Dorcas Tracy, "The Branch Work of Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 29, 1902, p. 6. The meeting at which Miss Tracy spoke was held at Palmer, Massachusetts, October 28, 1902.
Eventually the idea of the branch station took hold among the people and the circulation for the second year rose to more than 6,400 volumes.\(^1\) A similar station was set up at Leeds in 1902, the books initially being sent by express at the request of local teachers on behalf of their students. Afterwards, a library employee made the trip there just as at Bay State. In both operations, the library assistants practiced what Cutter referred to as "library spade husbandry." The assistants "learn the wants and taste of their clients, bring them the books which will suit them, and with their consent, often at their demand, advise them what to read."\(^2\)

The idea of branches led Cutter to still another idea for extension of services. In November 1902 he sent to Andrew Carnegie what he described as "a long and as I thought convincing letter" appealing for funds to support "a scheme for traveling libraries in Western Massachusetts, especially among the little and poor hill towns." Carnegie did not answer the query, however, and Cutter abandoned the plan, for, in his words, "nothing can be done without money."\(^3\)

Cooperation with the Clarke library began with cross registration of patrons in 1899; but a more serious question

\(^1\)Ibid.


\(^3\)See Cutter's words about his letter to Carnegie in, Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 9, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
remained for Cutter. He had long considered any local library a part of the total library resources of a town, or of a region, and in the broader framework, of the nation. Cooperation was a way to increase the total effect of all the libraries together, and it troubled him that any particular library should consider its own interests without that wider view. Of the three libraries in Northampton (the Forbes, the Clarke, and the Lilly, in Florence), he wondered why they were separate at all, considering that two of them were only two long blocks from each other. Together, the two libraries provided the town with what Cutter calculated was the largest per capita circulation figures of any town of comparable size in the state, and perhaps of any in the nation.¹

With regard to the still wider relations of the Forbes with other libraries, he reported in 1899 that interlibrary loans were being made with the Boston Athenaeum and the Boston Public Library. By 1902 loans from the Forbes to other libraries outside the city listed 260 different persons as borrowers. He related, "Books and photographs go in all directions, and the warm thanks received show that the practice is justified by the good it does."² He had an even more inclusive scheme that made the

¹Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 4. Cutter often gave per capita circulation figures for the Forbes and Clarke libraries in his annual reports.

Forbes not the library of Northampton only, but also a regional center for western Massachusetts, much as he supposed the Worcester Public Library could serve the central part of the state and the Boston Public Library both the eastern area and the state as a whole. He emphasized in an area meeting the willingness of the Forbes to help the various smaller libraries in the western area, and he "deprecate[d] the narrow spirit which would not allow a library outside the town to enjoy the privileges of the town."¹ At about the same time he confidently wrote, "The Forbes especially has the power to perform this service without interference with its original and proper function, and power to do good carries with it the obligation."² His regional plan was not one that he was to see fulfilled.

There were also other more strictly operational matters having to do with the library's extension of services that Cutter had to deal with over the years. He retained a very fluid attitude in his adaptation of methods to accomplish the best service possible. An example of his attitude appears in a letter to Katharine L. Sharpe in 1896 in answer to her request for a description of his circulation record system. He sent the description but also appended the words,

I send a condensed statement of our charging system showing its present state; but I introduce improvements

¹Reported in a meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXVI (June, 1901), 344-45.
²Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 4.
whenever I see the need of one; so that this description may not be correct next month.¹

In this case the method remained the same for another seven years. Then Cutter made a change that he freely admitted he was "ashamed" of not thinking of before then. Instead of keeping a separate filing sequence for each day's circulation, he put all circulation records in a single sequence arranged by author but with cardboard tabs showing the due dates. In that way he was able to cut down the time needed to find out when a book that was out was supposed to be returned. Previously, the search involved checking thirteen filing sequences representing each day of a circulation period and all those that were overdue.²

At the same time Cutter tempered his fluidity with a sensitivity to the patrons and to how the library appeared. When President Dana asked Cutter in an American Library Association discussion whether or not he had installed a "fence" between the patrons and the charging records, Cutter replied that he had, but only in order to prevent the patrons from handling the circulation files.

¹Letter, Cutter to K. L. Sharpe, March 7, 1896, University of Illinois Archives, Sharpe Papers. Miss Sharpe was the director of the Armour Institute Library School, afterwards the University of Illinois Library School.

²Cutter, "Charging Simplified--Abolition of the Two-Weeks File," LJ, XXVIII (September, 1903), 664. Apparently, however, there was yet no thought of a double card system in which circulation records were kept both by bibliographical order (author or call number) and by circulation period.
When Dana pressed him further as to whether he approved of such fences for any purpose, Cutter replied with words that illustrate his sensitivity and his picture of the personal nature of the library.

I do not like them. I would not have had that fence if I could avoid it, but a year's experience showed that it was absolutely necessary to prevent not so much intentional as idle meddling. I want the whole library to be and to appear as free as possible, with no marks of separation between the force and the public, and as few notices about keeping quiet and not doing this and that and the other as possible. I wish my library to appear like a home, but open fireplaces, flowering plants, pictures, statues will miss their effect if they are accompanied with the marks of the office and the prison.¹

With regard to open stacks in libraries, Cutter continued to favor the practice, although the Forbes' collections were restricted due to the incompleteness of their cataloging and classification. He also favored the practice of circulating almost every type of material that a library had, except, that is, items that could not be replaced, such as manuscripts, unique books, and local materials. His freedom in this practice was reflected particularly in the large circulation of the Forbes' music and art materials.²

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion on "Library Furniture, Fixtures, and Appliances," LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C128. A "fence" referred to a grating similar to that found in front of a teller's cage in a bank.

²A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XXV (August, 1900), C154. See also Cutter's opinions reported at a meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXVI (January, 1901), 25.
Finally, with regard to circulation rules, he favored at the same time both a loose and a strict practice; loose in the sense of great liberality, but strict, in the attempt to protect the rights of the modest patron. He wrote,

All library rules should be made for the sole purpose of ensuring a just and equal distribution of the privileges of the library, to protect those who want only their rights and might yield them too easily against those who take all they can get and keep all they can hold, to protect ordinary persons against their more energetic, hustling, selfish neighbors.¹

A particular application of the above attitude was displayed in his collection of fines for overdue books. He felt that liberality in the reduction of fines must always be practiced while at the same time a firmness should be shown that made clear the axiom, "The way of the transgressor is hard."² Such a practice was in the end for the good of all involved. At the same time he felt that the rules should be made in the beginning so that only few fines would be incurred. His goal depended on the idea that the successful operation of a library would only be achieved as the librarian and the people joined forces in a common reasonable effort to benefit one another.³

Staffing Problems

Although Cutter's ideals of what the library movement entailed were broadly based, energetic, and laced with

¹C. A. Cutter, "Library Discipline: Rules Affecting the Public," LJ, XXVIII (February, 1903), 65.
²Ibid., p. 67. ³Ibid.
common-sense reasonableness, in practice he often found himself unable to adequately fulfill them because of a staff that was small in size and funding that kept it that way. It has already been mentioned that funding problems were apparent as early as the beginning of library operations in 1894. The succeeding years saw the problems become more and more compounded with little relief. Consequently, when Cutter had to make a choice as to what administrative operations would be favored, he chose over and over to assign the staff to the public's service, rather than to internal operations such as cataloging and classification, matters that had occupied him so intensely during previous years at the Athenaeum. Doubtless, such decisions caused him continual frustration, but he kept his optimism, particularly because of the exceptional record of public service that his library was forging.¹

Recruiting and keeping a well-trained staff became an increasingly vexatious problem for him. First, the pay was low (in John C. Dana's words, it was "almost nothing")²

¹Cutter's frustrations often surfaced in his annual reports of the cataloging backlog. As early as December 1896, Sarah Cutter confided to R. R. Bowker that the Forbes was "depressing and discouraging," although she quickly added that her husband was still both happy and enthusiastic concerning the work. Letter, Sarah Cutter to R. R. Bowker, December 4, [1896], NYPL, Bowker Papers. The date of the letter is established by reference to the trying times of three years before that.

²Letter, J. C. Dana to Harry L. Koopman (Letterbook copy), March 29, 1899, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence. Koopman was the librarian of Brown University and had written to Dana in search for a job for his half-brother. Dana stated, "Mr. Cutter wants
both during a probationary period and after the assistant had worked there for a period of time. The Northampton City Council offered a good deal of resistance to contributing to any increase in the basic allocation for administrative expenses even though it had agreed to support that aspect of the institution. Understandably, the depression of the mid-1890's, which Northampton did not escape, must have caused much of the hesitance. Equally important was the enormous size of the Forbes bequest with respect to building a collection, far beyond what a typical library in a town of Northampton's size might ever be responsible for. By the time the lean years were ending, the administrative needs had so increased that too sudden an increase in administrative funds still seemed out of the question.

Cutter was personally affected by the problem. Although he had been hired at an annual salary of $2,000, he received less than that most of the time. In 1897 the reduction could perhaps be explained as a decision by the trustees to allow him only a leave of absence without pay for the long European trip that he and his wife took that year. From 1900 until his death, Cutter received an annual salary of only $1,800.\footnote{Cutter's salary was reported regularly in the annual reports.} Considering the fact that he had been earning $3,500 a year at the Boston Athenaeum, besides his income from the Library Journal, and that he had

help badly; but has very little money to pay. He usually takes young women who work for almost nothing."

\footnote{Cutter's salary was reported regularly in the annual reports.}
suggested to Dewey that he could not consider less than $5,000 a year for the proposed University of Chicago position, one cannot help but suppose that the matter of salary was an irritation to the Cutters. Added to their financial situation was the fact that the Cutter household always included other relatives. An indication of their feelings may be seen in the gift of Sarah Cutter to the Forbes Library in 1904 of a $5,000 endowment to help raise the salary of the next librarian.¹

Because the low administrative funding precluded the hiring of specially trained persons, Cutter resorted to special methods to deal with the assistants that he did find. These were almost always young single women, untrained and often out of high school, who lived at home and perhaps cared for an elderly parent. Cutter's practice was to hire them for a probationary period during which he trained them himself. A related problem was that the assistants frequently left the employ of the library, if not through marriage, then because they could easily find a better paying job elsewhere with the worthy recommendation of an apprenticeship served under Cutter himself, an acknowledged master teacher. Cutter frequently referred in his annual reports to that sort of occurrence, but the worst period seems to have been during 1900 when he reported that seven

¹Note on the appointment of William Parker Cutter to the Forbes librarianship, LJ, XXIX (May, 1904), 270; Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
assistants, including his best cataloger, left during a period of six months.¹

When assistants remained, they did so out of a deep sense of devotion. One such assistant who fit that picture was Mabel Winchell who began with Cutter in October 1894. She became so proficient that Cutter early placed her second in command and left the day-to-day operation of the library in her hands during his absence, although he kept in contact through correspondence during the longer periods. By 1900 she had also become Cutter's aid in representing the Forbes in the professional meetings of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. But even she could not resist the attractiveness of a better paying position and left the Forbes at the end of 1901 for the position of head librarian of the Manchester, New Hampshire Public Library. When she was approached to consider the position, Cutter attempted to retain her by trying to get the trustees to raise her salary.² Because she was by then disposed to take the position anyway, Cutter, who touted her work "unreservedly," could only watch her leave also, recommending to her new employers that she be allowed to be "practically supreme," in her freedom to operate.


²Letters, Cutter to Judge N. P. Hunt, Manchester, New Hampshire, November 5 and 11, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. Cutter found out about her consideration of the new position immediately upon his return from a trip to Europe.
That had been the kind of situation in which she had been trained.¹

As a result of the problem of keeping trained assistants, Cutter had resorted as early as 1896 to another method of recruitment. He took in pupil assistants, often not yet out of school, but paid them no salary. Instead, they simply had the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of library work as an apprentice at the Forbes, perhaps in preparation for some day becoming librarians. He could not have been very enthusiastic about staffing his library in that manner. As late as 1893 he had remarked in a discussion at the Massachusetts Library Club that at the Boston Athenaeum he had quit taking no-pay assistants because he had found "work done for nothing dear work, unless the assistant when trained became part of the library force."² Regardless of the difficulties involved, the annual reports noted a steady stream of pupil assistants throughout his administration.

The Forbes assistants doubtless found their employment in Cutter's ranks of great benefit; for having found the daily routines of library work insufficient for instruction, Cutter gave them special training. He began a weekly class, the first exercises being practice in cataloging and

¹ Letter, Cutter to Judge N. P. Hunt, Manchester, New Hampshire, December 6, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

² Massachusetts Library Club, [Report], LJ, XVIII (March, 1893), 85.
classifying books, in which the work of each student was discussed by the group as a whole. In later describing his initial effort, Cutter went on to show how his classes went beyond training exercises and became what now would be called an incipient form of participatory management.

We were not only without books and trained assistants, but we were also without rules and without a policy. So that a great many questions came up. Gradually our class in cataloging and classification developed into a library council in which every question of proposed change of rule that came up was considered, and I found this of great assistance in setting the library in motion. The discussions instructed the assistants; they also instructed the librarian; and they provided us with a much better policy and body of rules than we should otherwise have had.¹

Formal classes were not the only manner of instruction. Cutter also encouraged his assistants to attend area professional meetings, especially after the Western Massachusetts Library Club was formed in 1898. During 1901 and 1902 the names of Forbes employees occur rather frequently in the discussions, the presentations of papers, and participation in library work institutes in the area. Finally, despite the constant shuffling of staff, one senses that staff morale was consistently high. Certainly that was in part due to Cutter's own encouragement of "fellowship" among librarians. It may also have resulted from Cutter's indulgent attitude towards having parties. Lawrence Wikander's short history of the Forbes suggests the latter with its inclusion of several photographs of social times.

during Cutter's administration. That same spirit was evident in the holding of a facetious professional organization among the library assistants during 1901 entitled the "Corner's Club." ¹

Cataloging and Classification

The most serious effect of inadequate administrative funding and staffing occurred in the realm of cataloging and classification. By the end of the second year of operation, Cutter could report only 13,000 volumes processed in the complete manner that he felt essential. Increasing circulation had used up any additional staff time. To make matters even worse, more than 5,500 of those volumes made with linotype entries during the first year had to be redone. The recataloging was not completed until 1899.²

During the third year of operations, regular cataloging for the Rudolph Indexer books was suspended altogether in favor of brief author slips pasted in a binder.³ By 1898 Cutter was even more exasperated over the matter. He appealed to the trustees to give priority to finishing the cataloging and classifying with the statement,

I do not know of any other library which circulates all of its books while four-fifths of them are

¹Wikander, Disposed to Learn, photographs; Program of the "Corner's Club" and letter, Miss Cy Peters to J. C. Dana, ca., February, 1901, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence.


uncataloged. I am certain that no library which tried the experiment would doubt the utility and economy of a catalog. Similarly, many cataloged libraries get along without classification or with a very crude classification; but no one who has been in a well classified library will willingly dispense with full and careful classing.¹

He then referred to John Fiske's 1876 article entitled, "The Librarian's Work," in which Fiske noted that for 14,000 volumes acquired by the Harvard library that year, seventeen catalogers had been employed. He went on to show that in comparison, the Forbes had been adding books at a rate of 15,000 volumes a year but had had at the most only two catalogers. He argued for an additional appropriation for three additional catalogers.

Cutter had been intimately acquainted with the Harvard situation and perhaps he felt that his use of the statistics might have made his request appear reasonable and perhaps even conservative. The only kind of response that the annual report, which came out near the end of 1898, seemed to have engendered, however, was a controversy over the propriety of his methods. Articles in both the Springfield Union and the Northampton Daily Herald expressed negative opinions about Cutter's system of cataloging books. The first stated that the public disapproved of it because of its obscurity, and implied that because of the method, library assistants did not "seem to know just what books are in the library."² The second article, appealing to unnamed

²Quoted in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, p. 13.
critics, stated that the system was "very intricate, puzzling, and clumsy. It differs radically from the systems used by the largest and most modern libraries, and, it is said that one Boston library which adopted it several years ago is now replacing it with another system."¹ Both articles implied that the cause of the high costs of the library, especially in cataloging and classification, was to be laid at Cutter's feet rather than at the feet of the City Council. Cutter was attempting, in effect, to foist on the city an unnecessary expense based on his own private and complicated way of doing things.

Cutter replied to the charges in a letter to the editor of the Daily Herald, a letter that he subsequently quoted in his annual report for 1899. He first gave an account of the influence of his cataloging rules, repeating the phrase used in the Nation in 1890, that his rules were "The Cataloger's Bible." He reported that besides having been adopted by the best British librarians, "No library that I ever heard of, either in Boston or elsewhere, having adopted it, has ever given it up."²

He then pointed out a major confusion in the articles—that they made no distinction between cataloging and classification—in such a way as to suggest the ignorance of those who wrote the articles.

¹Ibid.
But as most persons, knowing nothing about cataloging and shelf classification, are not aware that they are two entirely different things, it may be that the writer of the article meant to object to the shelf classification adopted in the Forbes Library—the so called Cutter's Expansive system.¹

He defended his system by noting that any such system gained acceptance only slowly; but that the Expansive system had already achieved such recognition. He included a long paragraph of the same encomiums that he had used before the American Library Association during the previous year and reported that John C. Dana of the Springfield City Library had also decided to adopt it.

Finally, Cutter answered the implied charge that, because the books were not wholly classified on the shelves, they were therefore lost to the public. He showed that on the contrary, more than 40,000 of the 55,000 items circulated the previous year had been from the unclassified section. He concluded,

> It is not true that a large collection of books cannot be "a public library till it is properly indexed and cataloged." It cannot reach its full usefulness; its readers will be constantly annoyed, hampered, delayed by its want of a proper equipment; it will cost much more to run it; but it is still a public library, capable of doing much good.²

A few days later a more measured article in the Springfield Republican put its finger on the roots of the problem. The time for annual appropriations was facing the Northampton city leaders including money for the management of the Forbes Library. The massive appropriation of the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 9.
Forbes will for books had made a continuing problem of keeping the processing of the books at the same pace. At the same time, "To provide for it adequately would be a great burden on the city, and this no one desires." The real problem lay in the will itself. Judge Forbes, the article suggested, had certainly never intended that his bequest provide the city with a "white elephant." The only reasonable solution would be for the trustees to attempt to have the provisions of the will altered so that they could transfer some of the book fund into the administration fund, even if it meant going to the state supreme court. The article went on to express an attendant issue, one that would smolder for another six years before being resolved. It pointed out that for all the benefits that Smith College received from the existence of the library, it had not contributed to the administrative support of the library in nearly an adequate proportion. A partial solution to the administrative funds problem would be, therefore, for Smith College immediately to contribute directly to the fund. Such a solution could hardly have appealed to the officers of a college that had its own financial burdens, and it is perhaps significant that by the following year the use of the library by Smith College students


2Ibid.
began to decrease. The College eventually did make a special contribution of $500 toward the fund, but not until 1902.¹

To state the outcome of the controversy plainly, despite the flurry of emotions, business continued as usual. The city continued to supplement the inadequate administrative funds of the Forbes bequest with its own inadequate appropriations and Cutter remained stymied, despite his later calls for the town to fulfill its part of the agreement. Cutter continued to insist upon the need for both complete cataloging and for the use of his own shelf classification system. With regard to the latter, he had good reason to do so. Professional interest in classification, which had lain relatively dormant for the previous few years, had come alive again with the appointment of a new librarian of Congress in 1897 and with his desire to provide the national library with a new shelf classification that could prove to be the system adopted nationally. Interest in the Expansive Classification system had also reached a new peak particularly through Cutter's own promotional efforts, even though the system was incomplete. He defended it before the membership of the American Library

¹Forbes Library, Sixth Annual Report, 1899/1900, p. 10. The use of books within the library dropped by twelve per cent that year, although book circulation outside the library increased by almost twenty-six per cent. The drop continued until 1902 when it leveled off. See also, "Smith College to Forbes Library; A Gift of $500 in Recognition of the Aid Afforded Students by Use of Books," Daily Hampshire Gazette, November 26, 1902, p. 1.
Association. Dana’s adoption of it at the Springfield City Library was a great encouragement. Cutter also made it available to the students at the library schools then coming into existence. He could only have been deeply pleased when the Librarian of Congress himself, through the prompting of one of his assistant librarians who had used the system previously, wrote to him in 1897 requesting copies for the national library’s use. Finally in early May 1901, Cutter received a visit from a specially appointed Library of Congress fact-finding committee that included among others, William Parker Cutter, Cutter’s nephew. The purpose of the visit was to ascertain the extent that Cutter would allow the Library of Congress to alter his system for their own purposes.¹

Some relief from the cataloging problem was offered in 1901 when the Library of Congress began to issue printed cards of its own holdings. Cutter grasped at the occasion as a way to supply not only a catalog, but one with complete printed entries. He convinced the trustees that a catalog was possible by adopting the Library of Congress cards and

¹See above, Ch. VII, pp. 612-13. Continuing correspondence between 1899 and 1901 on the use of the classification at the Springfield library is preserved in the Springfield City Library, Librarians’ Correspondence. See also Scott, "James C. M. Hanson and his Contribution to Twentieth-century Cataloging," chs. VI-VII, passim., for details of the use of the Expansive Classification by the Library of Congress. When Herbert Putnam arranged with Cutter for the visit in 1901, Cutter apparently wrote to Dana about the news. See Letter, J. C. Dana to Cutter (Letter-book copy), April 16, 1901, Springfield City Library, Librarians’ Correspondence.
any of those produced by the Library Bureau that could be used. In June 1902 Cutter reported in the Library Journal,

> We have no catalog. The Library of Congress cards offer us a chance of cataloging slowly but well a library holding at present 87,000 volumes and growing at the rate of six or seven thousand a year. So far, since we resolved to catalog in this way, we have been largely occupied in certain preliminary work and have ordered only about 5000 cards, of which we have not been able to incorporate in our catalog as yet more than half. This is barely keeping up with current additions; but we see that when we have finished all the preliminary work we shall be able to make an effective attack upon the 87,000 volumes, the accumulations of the past seven years. The cards are very accurate. We have found only two errors, I believe. The style is excellent, and will be improved. The service is remarkably prompt, and there is an evident desire on the part of the Librarian of Congress and his assistants in this department to accommodate the libraries of the country as far as possible.¹

A year and a half later, that number had grown to more than 30,000 cards from the Library of Congress and nearly 10,000 from the Library Bureau. Even at that rate, however, the effort to supply a complete catalog for the library continued to elude Cutter, and at his death in 1903 the catalog was still a long way from completion. In the end, complete catalog access to the collections was achieved under William Parker Cutter, but only by reverting to simplified cataloging of the type that his uncle had tried to avoid.²


²Statistics for the acquisition of printed cards are taken from the annual reports. The information on W. P. Cutter's work on the catalog is taken from Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 18 and 22.
Professional and Social Life

The building up of the Forbes Library provided Cutter with both triumph and frustration; perhaps just enough of the former to offset the latter. His struggle to make the best of the situation did not hinder him from a new surge of professional activity during the same period, although in a much broader range than in previous years. His activities in this regard appeared frequently in a schedule already very full.

Cutter continued to participate in the American Library Association annual conferences although not with the same consistency as he had during its earlier years. Besides the 1895 meeting in Denver, Cutter also missed the 1897 meeting in Philadelphia and the 1901 meeting in Waukesha, Wisconsin. When he did attend, he took part in the conference discussions as he had done before, but now in the role of an elder statesman of librarianship with a specially developed interest in public library service extension. His only major Association appointment during this period was in 1900 to the Advisory Committee on Cataloging Rules, chaired by James C. M. Hanson of the Library of Congress. Cutter faithfully attended the committee meetings and vigorously represented his own views on cataloging in the general meetings of the Association. The work of the committee was time-consuming, although not without reward. During one marathon series of sessions of twelve meetings in five days, Cutter alternately expressed
to friends both the tedium—"Rules Committee work drags"—and the inspiration of the occasion.

We finished all we could finish & I, at least, feel well repaid for coming as it is not a little thing to get the point of view of 6 experts in cataloging. I am sure my Rules will profit by it. I am eager to get to work upon them.  

Cutter also participated in the professional library scene by continuing his writing. Besides his already mentioned spate of articles on public library concerns and upon cataloging and classification, he also wrote several book reviews, two memorial sketches of noted librarians (one, a lengthy Nation review of the library work of Justin Winsor), and Nation reports of the 1900 and 1902 Association conferences. He also continued his practice of promoting the work of younger librarians, particularly those in his own region. One such example occurred in 1901 when he sent several letters of appeal to Henry J. Carr, at that time the president of the American Library Association, in an effort to obtain national exposure for what he felt was a charming paper read by a young librarian at the February

1Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, March 25, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

2Letter, Cutter to Henry J. Carr, March 26, 1901, American Library Association Archives, Carr Papers.

3"Justin Winsor," Nation, LXV (October 28, 1897), 335; "Louisa Cutler—In Memorium," LJ, XX (September, 1895), 310-11; "The Librarians at Montreal," Nation, LXX (June 28, 1900), 492; "Meeting of the American Library Association," Nation, LXXV (July 3, 1902), 7-8. Of the various reviews, perhaps the closest to his chief interests was his review of Classification of Books in the Library, by Joseph C. Rowell, in LJ, XX (June, 1895), 214-15.
meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. The paper was eventually published later that year in the Library Journal.¹

Cutter continued to participate in Massachusetts library organizations. He continued his association with the Massachusetts Library Club that he had helped to found in 1890 and of which served as the first president. His activity in that organization lessened after the fall of 1898 when he helped to found and served as the first president of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. It was patterned after the statewide organization and met at different libraries for monthly meetings as well as holding a larger annual meeting. A summary of his comments at the first annual meeting reported Cutter's sense of the changes coming over the profession as a whole. It stated that Cutter, was especially struck with the difference between the subjects discussed by the early A.L.A. conferences and those of today. Details and technicalities have given place on the program to the broader subjects of library extension, the evolution of books, etc.²

In one sense Cutter's comments indicated his own change of interest, especially his deep involvement in the public library scene. In another sense the observation was not as much an indication of changes of topics—the subject

¹See the correspondence between Cutter and Henry J. Carr for March and April, 1901, American Library Association Archives, Carr Papers. See also the reports of the Western Massachusetts Library Club after 1900 in the Library Journal for Cutter's promotion of training institutes for librarians at local libraries.

²Western Massachusetts Library Club, [Report of the 1st Annual Meeting], LJ, XXIV (August, 1899), 487.
of library extension was discussed in the early meetings—as much as a change in the structure of the Association itself. General meetings of the American Library Association and the smaller local clubs emphasized the general problems of public libraries. Special sections and divisions were coming into existence during the 1890's to care for the technical matters that had previously been given the limelight under such earlier leaders as Cutter and Dewey.

In addition to his participation in the above organizations, Cutter also became increasingly involved in other library organizations and in education for librarianship. At first his participation involved attendance at such events as the union meeting of the library associations of New England, held at Hartford, Connecticut, in February 1897, the joint meetings of the New Jersey and the Pennsylvania library associations in 1898 and 1899, and the annual dinners of the New York Library Club which he attended almost without exception throughout the period. As often as not he would be called upon to contribute to the discussion at hand or to make general observations on the development of the library profession gained out of his long experience.¹

Later in the period his participation came to include increased activity among Eastern library schools. He

¹See the reports of these meetings in the Library Journal. See also his correspondence with Charles A. Nelson, then at the Columbia University Library, for his acceptance of invitations to attend the New York Library Club annual dinners, NYPL, Nelson Papers.
had previously lectured annually at Dewey's library school and he continued that practice until his death. By 1900, however, he began to give lectures also at the Pratt Library Institute in Brooklyn and at the Drexel Library School in Philadelphia. He most often lectured on the Expansive Classification but occasionally he would speak on other subjects, such as, for example, his lectures on fine arts materials and the library given as the New York State Library School's alumni lectures in 1903. Whether he traveled to a library school to speak, supplied the students with his classification system by mail, read the reports of the use of his classification and cataloging systems in the many schools springing up, or spoke to groups of library students on tours of libraries, Cutter must have become increasingly aware that his work towards the systematization of library science was everywhere present.

His total schedule of activities, usually heaviest in the spring of the year, became increasingly full and most likely very wearing. The year 1901 provides a striking example: On January 9th he attended the Somerville meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club; January 29th, the Springfield meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club; in March, a joint meeting of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey library associations; March 22 to 26, the

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1See the reports of those three schools in the Library Journal. Also, in his varied correspondence, Cutter would occasionally mention that he had recently been at one or another of them.
meetings of the Advisory Committee on a new Catalog Code in Atlantic City; March 27th, lectures at Drexel; afterwards back to Boston and a stop at the Boston Athenaeum for a couple of days; from there to Albany, New York for a week of lectures at the New York State Library School. During May and June he received a visit from the special committee of the Library of Congress sent to investigate his classification system and attended another meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. At the same time he was also working steadily on the seventh expansion of his classification system and was beginning work on a new and greatly revised edition of his Rules for a Dictionary Catalog. It is perhaps no wonder that from the end of June until October he and his wife took an extended European vacation trip for a rest. He must have been disappointed, however, to have to face the news upon his return that his first assistant, Mabel Winchell, was to leave the Forbes by the end of that year.

For occasional relaxation Cutter continued to enjoy the social life of the professional meetings, especially the dancing. His enjoyment of the latter must have been infectious, for when he was absent from such an occasion, his absence was noted. 1 An indication of his tenacity with

1For example, Julia T. Rankin wrote in "The Social Side of the Waukesha Conference," LJ, XXVI (August, 1901), C209, "Although Mr. Cutter was absent the dancing contingent was ably represented, and a delightful evening was enjoyed." See also, W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 30.
regard to dancing appears in a letter to Mabel Winchell soon after she had left the Forbes. After mentioning the trouble he had had with his knee the previous fall, he added, "The knee isn't painless, but I managed to dance 16 of the 19 dances at the party given to Miss Saxe." ¹

Cutter also took occasional trips to the White mountains of New Hampshire and retreated at other times to a camp at Pendleton near Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire. Of the latter, Cutter's nephew later described,

Mr. Cutter always entertained at his own expense a group of the girl assistants from the Forbes Library. There were canoe parties on the lake, songs around the evening campfire, and, always, poetry or charades. These "girls" are gray-haired now, well up in the library world, or happy mothers; but they all look back on the Pendleton camp with fond memory.²

Cutter also enjoyed the theater and concerts. Again his nephew reported in retrospect that "he frequently provided some of his library staff with tickets and, on various occasions, took several to Springfield to see a production which was too important to include Northampton in its itinerary."³ On the other hand the Cutters also faced times of sorrow, such as in 1895 when Cutter's aunt, Cordelia, died, the last of the three who had taken care of him in his youth, or in 1898 when the Cutter's youngest son, Gerald, died of typhoid fever.⁴

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¹ Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, March 24, 1902, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.
² W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 55.
³ Ibid., p. 56.
⁴ Gerald C. Cutter's date of death is given on his
Interspersed with Cutter's other activities over the period were two European trips. The first of these came in 1897 on the occasion of the Second International Library Conference that met from July 13 to 16. It was similar to the London conference of 1877 only this time the American group included more than sixty members. Cutter was elected an honorary vice-president and took an active part in the discussions. He presented a paper explaining his Expansive Classification and displayed copies of the printed schedules he had completed up to that point. He doubtless also took the opportunity to attend the receptions that had been scheduled at many of the London libraries and to go on the tours provided. One of the highlights of the tours was a two-day trip to Stratford with a stop along the way at the Warwick Castle.¹

After remaining in England for an additional two weeks, he traveled to Brussels, Belgium with Charles H. Gould, the librarian of the McGill University Library in Montreal, where they attended a meeting of the Institut gravestone as October 15, 1898. A phrase in the second report of the Western Massachusetts Library Club extended the members' sympathies to Cutter "in his recent bereavement." See LJ, XXIII (November, 1898), 629. The information about the cause of his death was supplied by R. Ammi Cutter, Charles Cutter's grandson.

¹For an account of the trip, see Budd Gambee, "The Role of American Librarians at the Second International Library Conference, London, 1897," in Library History Seminar No. 4, Proceedings, 1971 (Tallahassee: Library School, Florida State University, 1972), pp. 52-84.
Internationale de Bibliographie held from August 2 to 4. In a letter to Mabel Winchell he compared the two conferences.

We were very busy at Brussels, not so much feted as at London, not hobnobbing with marquisses & presided over by an earl or a 'Sir'. But our president and secretary were senators. At the dinner I sat between a senator and a general and every moment was occupied.

For the first time in my life I addressed a public meeting in French. It is not so very difficult when one knows what one wants to say.¹

He then went on to speak of the toasts raised to Paul Otlet, "the Melvil Dewey of Belgium."²

Cutter also took the occasion of the Brussels conference to deliver yet another paper on his classification system. Directing his remarks to the international orientation of the organization, he spoke on the subject, "Reasons for Using the Expansive Classification in an International Bibliography."³ Unfortunately for Cutter, the founders of the Institut had two years previously made an agreement with Melvil Dewey to use the Decimal Classification as the basis for their documentation work. Following the Brussels meeting, Cutter toured Belgium, Holland, and Northern France.⁴

¹Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8, 1897, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

²Ibid. By address he apparently meant a 'toast'.

³The title of his paper was listed in a note on the papers of the conference in LJ, XXIII (February, 1898), 57. Otlet and Henri LaFontaine were the founders.

⁴Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8, 1897, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. He also stated that he considered traveling to Denmark and Sweden, but it is not certain whether or not he did so.
Cutter took the second of the trips in 1901 with his wife. Although he kept up a constant correspondence with Mabel Winchell, answering her queries about administrative matters at the Forbes and directing her in matters pertaining to the on-going printing of the Expansive Classification, he was also intent on resting as much as possible from library labors. His letters portray in a unique way his deep enjoyment of touring and his penchant for detailed observation. For example, he wrote on June 29, 1901,

Our windows look upon a narrow lane, a thickly bushed garden running down to the River Dee (i.e. I believe black--Dee, the Scottish Dhee) a brawling salmon stream, fordable anywhere where it is not dammed, like Mill River, then more trees through which run the funny little trains, another treed bank perhaps 50ft. high & the canal, with diminutive boats (canal 7? ft. wide) then the slope of Crow Castle, Castell Dinas Bran, 950 ft. high, which we shall climb this afternoon.

Everything is as green as possible & in the evening mists, for we are in a river valley, as fragrant as possible. I went round Castell D. B. day before yesterday, climbing a hill about 1400 ft. high, the height of Chesterfield. But yesterday I was weaker than a wet rag with another attack of malaria, yielding now to vigorous administration of quinine.

I am subscribing to a circulating library here, which I did before I knew there was a "Public Library and Newsroom," Sir Theodore Martin, K. C. B. (Author of Life of the Prince Consort) President. Annual subscriptions, 2s., 5s., 10s. Visitors tickets 6 d. a week, 1s. a month. Probably only one book allowed at a time. I fancy the two book system is unknown in this country. Miss Bessie Brown, Berwyn Road, is the librarian, & she attends every day from 3.30 to 4, to exchange books, & on Thursdays & Tuesdays from 6.30 - 7, and on Saturdays from 6.30 to 7.30 (!!). The newsroom is open all the time, without a keeper, but each time that one uses it one is expected to put a penny in the slot.¹

¹Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, June 29, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. Other details of the trip are preserved in other letters in the same collection.
July and most of August were spent in England where the Cutters inspected a large number of churches for their architecture. His reports of several humorous occasions included visiting a cathedral,

remarkable for a verger who says his patter at a tremendous rate, like a rector gabbling the service, and yet never fails to prefix an h to an accented vowel & to leave it off from an unaccented one. He told us, for instance of the 'Eye Halter' and of something that was erected in 'hayteen forty hate'. "1

Cutter added, without breaking his descriptive stride, "But it is also noteworthy for the most perfect Norman chapter house in England a marvel of rich and varied ornament." 2

While in England Cutter ordered some books for the Forbes and on one occasion met the widow and son-in-law of the late Justin Winsor. They were also on tour. At the end of August the Cutters traveled to France where in Paris they dined with a cousin, attended the French theatre---Cutter mentioned having seen Comedie française three times---and searched for photographs for the Forbes collection. Finally, after returning to England, they sailed for America on October 7th. 3

The Last Year

Upon returning from his trip, Cutter immediately plunged back into the same busy schedule that he had

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1 Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, July 14, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

2 Ibid.

3 Letters, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8 and September 19, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.
previously pursued. The loss to the Forbes of Mabel Winchell prompted him in January 1902 to reorganize completely the administration of the library into separate art, music, and children's departments with an assistant responsible for each. In the spring of 1902 and again in 1903 he gave library school lectures, and in April 1903 received an intriguing offer from Frank P. Hill, then at the Brooklyn Public Library, to head the large reference department there. His schedule was overbearing, however, and as a result of the exhaustion of it he contracted an almost fatal case of pneumonia.

Recovery was slow but was helped by the interest of his friends, a fact that he mentioned in a warm circular letter that was printed in the Library Journal. The letter showed that he had not lost his sense of humor, an ever present quality of his in times of crisis.

I am sure you will be glad to learn that I am emerging from the two-dimensional into the three-dimensional state. For four weeks I have been either a line as I lay on one or the other side, or a plane when I was flat on my back. Now they are raising me each day a little higher with a view to ultimate sitting up when I shall have assumed the dignity of the solid.

There are some compensations in sickness to make up for the loss of time which it entails. One of them is finding out how many friends one has. During the days of danger there was a constant stream of inquiries from most unexpected persons. In convalescence one of the trustees is anxious to know when I can eat trout that he may go and catch some for me. And the stable keeper who boards my horse has made the same offer. My room is fragrant with the perfume of flowers, some of which were sent from distant Newport by a former assistant.¹

¹C. A. Cutter, [Circular Letter, May 19, 1903], LJ, XXVIII (June, 1903), 319.
Although his recovery at that time seemed assured, the illness pointed out to both Cutter and his wife a harsh reality. Cutter had clearly overworked himself with library and professional activities, and to continue the same pace might well bring his life to an end without completing his two most important projects, a new edition of the Rules for a Dictionary Catalog and his Expansive Classification.

Sarah Cutter felt that the only alternative was to convince her husband to retire from the Forbes Library and to concentrate wholly on his projects. She also felt that she could not by herself convince him of that necessity. Accordingly, not having broached the subject with her husband and aware that he would not approve of her action, she wrote to their long-time friend, Richard Bowker, to help her in the task. Her letter revealed her sense of urgency.

One thing, however, was plainly prescribed to me while his life was in instant danger, and that is that it is my duty to urge him to give up the care of the Forbes Library and to devote his faculties and strength to the completion of the two works which he would be very sorry to leave undone. The principal of these is the Expansive Classification.

And if you agree with me that this is much more important a work than that of conducting the library, will you aid me in convincing my husband of it?¹

Bowker quickly responded with a warm and persuasive letter to his old friend, tactfully using his own semi-

¹Letter, Sarah Cutter to R. R. Bowker, May 30, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers. The letter came to Bowker's New York City office and was forwarded to Bowker by Helen E. Haines, Cutter's successor as editor of the Library Journal. She appended another note by Cutter's wife that stated that she had not yet discussed the matter of retirement with her husband. Letter, Helen E. Haines to R. R. Bowker, June 1, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
retirement as an example and dwelling on the need for Cutter to consider how best to complete his classification.

I did not appreciate until Miss Haines showed me that delightful letter "to a few friends" that you had been dwelling so near the borderland in your recent illness, or indeed I should have made haste to assure you of my sympathy and hopes. Now that you are again on the full road to health let me bring you, in sending congratulations, the tribute of my reverent appreciation for you, with my hopes for many years of fruitfulness before you. I use the phrase advisedly, for I think we should all reverence a life so well lived, so fruitful, as your own, although it is hard for me to believe that so many years have passed over your head as the biographical authorities would make out. I hope the future years will indeed bring increasing fruition.

I suppose on the whole no one is so well fitted as yourself, at least from the library point of view, to run down the details of specific subjects in your larger scheme of the Expansive Classification, and if this should be specifically the best service to which you can put your long years of library training, I trust that you will not hesitate to do that best thing if you can afford to do so. I do not think any wholesomely busy man, at any age, with so much youth and work left in him as you have, can break off from life relationships and retire into "innocuous desuetude." I am trying in this country retirement to reach the happy mean by keeping busy, in fact the more busy at real things, in this less crowded and rushing environment, while going to New York from week to week or fortnight to fortnight as needs bring me--and I commend to you my admirable example. You have earned leisure, but I know you still want to work, and I hope that work may be both of the most fruition for the profession of which you are now the Dean, and with the utmost possible comfort to yourself.  

Cutter's long reply to Bowker, written over a period of six weeks, showed both his struggle over what to do and his estimate of his own life. To him the question was not at all whether to retire, but rather, where he could

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1 Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter (Carbon copy), June 2, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
do library work and still have the leisure to work on the projects close to his heart. He wrote,

July 1903

My Dear Bowker,

I thank you heartily for your cordial letter. It came at a time when joy at the consciousness of return-strength was contending with impatience at the slowness of the gain and a fear that never again should I be able to do what I had done. It helped the better side. Kind words of appreciation always cheer one, even if one fears that they are unmerited. If I had more of life left such friendliness might help me to try to deserve the good words.

Written June 3. Like the rest of my race I am not generally so ready to accept advice as praise. But in this case since it coincides with the advice of others, with the wishes of my wife, with common sense and in some slight degree with my own inclinations, I shall seriously considered [sic] it. One thing at least is sure: I go on no more lecturing tours. Pneumonia is too high a price to pay for the pleasure of having an audience. I may indeed do a little missionary work for the E. C. and Pratt, but I would not again go through the worry and strain of preparing talks on a subject that is too much for me for either money or lore.

Some time ago Dana advised me to give up the details of library work to the first assistant and the stenographer and spend my time in finishing the E. C. A former assistant told me yesterday (June 2) that when she heard I was sick she trembled for the E. C.; Mr. Thomas Aaland, libn of a pub. lib. in the borough of Southwark, has been objurating me in true English style, but no more than I deserved, for not sending him the promised Useful Arts. Miss Haines, Parker, and my coadjutor Richard Bliss all urge what you urge. So plainly I must reform. But not by giving up library work. No more dances, novels, theatres for me; no more writing letters to friends or articles in the Library Journal. All these pleasures must be sternly set aside. Hereafter nothing but a steady grind. But in that case library interests will be necessary as a distraction. I never could work long at one thing; still less is it possible now.

June 9. The problem is not as simple as you suppose. Is it not the mistake of reformers to suppose the problem simpler than anything ever is in this world, at least in the social world? It is true the E. C. ought to be finished and shall be if I get another presidential term of life. But what of the 4th edition of the Rules for cataloging promised for the last three years and loudly demanded by as many
as clamor for the E. C.? What of the new catalog of the Forbes Library, which with perplexities of its own is dependent upon the completion of the Rules as much as on that of the E. C.? Nor am I quite ready to limit my chance of doing good (library good, I attempt no other) to Cataloging and Classification. I hope for instance that setting an unexampled example of liberality will not be without its effects not merely on the few libraries that have friends enough to follow it but also on others, who may be led to do what they can. Then I am not content with what we have done in our children's room & I have found an assistant who I hope will push the good work there. Our branches too could do better. . . . There are other things to be done and even if there were not something new is always coming up in library opportunity & I should hate to be out of it all.

But now comes a proposition that would take me away from Western Massachusetts. I should like to know what you think of it.

Hill wants me to come to him in Brooklyn, to develop the reference and study departments. I would go without hesitation if only he had money enough at his command to do there what we have done in Northampton. How would you like to see 600,000 borrowers registered in Brooklyn, 60,000 of them taking out pieces of music, 50,000 of them using works of art, a total circulation of thirteen million volumes, half of it "serious reading"? That would be a proportionate result for that population. There is a disposition just now to decry large circulations because the recreative part of the reading is said to be profitless and some of it may be injurious. But serious reading is generally allowed to be on the whole desirable; and if so, plainly the issue of six million serious books is better than the issue of a million or the half million which I believe is Brooklyn's present limit.

Of course, if we think that recreative reading is on the whole a bad thing it may be that the evil over-balances the good coming from the other half of the circulation. In that case we should not only look with disfavor on any increase in the circulation but should even abolish public libraries as at present conducted. This is not a purely academic discussion in this case; for tho Hill has not money enough to develop a Northampton circulation, he has enough to largely increase the present efficiency of his library if it is spent rightly. The question is Shall I go and help him or shall I let him find somebody else to do it?

Yours truly,

C: A. Cutter

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1Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 3 to July 16,
Because Bowker had recently become a trustee of the Brooklyn Public Library, he was able to reply to Cutter with information on the financial situation of the Brooklyn situation. He emphasized, however, that the most important thing for Cutter to consider was not how much work he could do in any position, but rather whether he would have the leisure to complete his work on the Expansive Classification and the Rules. He encouraged him to accept the position, supposing that would be the case and also stating that the Brooklyn work was at any rate more important than finishing the Forbes catalog. Perhaps he felt that once Cutter had come to Brooklyn the efforts of Hill and himself could keep Cutter from overexerting himself in library work. He was aware at the same time of Cutter's indomitable spirit and closed his letter with a friendly indication of it.

I have just been advocating the appointment of a college professor who graduated fifty years ago to be Vice-president of our College because of his abiding and inherent youth, and I should be prepared to give you the same recommendation for juvenility—even should you leave off dancing. ¹

In order to go over the details of the Brooklyn offer, Cutter traveled to Boston for a conference with Frank P. Hill, the Brooklyn librarian. William Parker Cutter, who recorded a letter of Cutter's that described his

¹Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter (Carbon copy), July 17, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
two days of activities in connection with the trip, rightly suggests that it seemed to be rather strenuous activity for one who was recovering from a serious illness. Cutter wrote,

I came up Wednesday, lunched with him [Mr. Frank P. Hill, the Brooklyn librarian] at the University Club on the low roof garden overlooking the Charles (it was high tide), and we spent the afternoon in exhaustive discussion. The result was that I said No.... Of course I should like the opportunities which the Br. Lib. presented, but some of them were problematical & all meant an amount of hard work for which I am hardly capable now. I am feeling very well. Wednesday I supported a six hours railway ride, a long conference in the afternoon & a visit to Salem (Ammi is a dear) without feeling at all used up. Today I have interviewed all old friends at the B. A., bought or rather refused to buy books at Clark's, visited Harv. Coll. Libr. and exhausted their catalog hdgs on music and art, had a long discussion with Miss Browne on arrangement and dined at Marliave's with Roland, and am no worse. A great but short thunder storm just as dinner was over. After lunch at Cambridge I took an open car trolley ride to Waverly. Pleasant route. Lunched with the summer school at the Dunster's cafe, a cheap and clean place on Dunster St. Had a pleasant talk with one of the scholars, who complains that they have nearly worked her into a nervous prostration in 4 weeks. Themes daily, on such subjects as "Compare Swift and Goldsmith." Hard work for hot weather. Thermom. here 93 today. Wish I were in Charlemont. Shall go back to Northampton after seeing dentist tomorrow. ....

Cutter's decision to remain at the Forbes was noted in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, which concluded with the remark, "but he has at last decided to remain at the Forbes library, to finish or at least to bring nearer to completion the work which he has begun there." His decision was fateful. Not being one who could rest when there was work to


do, and yet not really fully recovered, he went back to work. But a renewed attack of illness set him back again, and he went with his wife to New Hampshire for another period of rest at the end of August. A week later a telegram from Sarah Cutter to the home of trustee Arthur Watson communicated the sad news that her husband had died suddenly at Walpole, New Hampshire on September 6th.¹

¹The details mentioned here of his final illness are recorded in "City Suffers a Great Loss," Daily Hampshire Gazette, September 8, 1903, p. 1. The newspaper account surmised that he died of heart failure because of his weakened condition.
CONCLUSION

Apparently on the road to recovery from a serious illness, Cutter was still a professional force in 1903 when he died suddenly in his sixty-sixth year. Left unfinished at his death were what he felt to be his greatest contributions to the library world— a new edition of his Rules and his Expansive Classification. His long career included a significant number of accomplishments. He forged the principles and outline of his system of bibliographical organization during his years at the Harvard College Library under the inspiration of John Langdon Sibley, one of the Library's greatest collectors, and under the rigorous method of Ezra Abbot. He applied those principles at the Boston Athenaeum and produced while there one of the monumental printed dictionary catalogs of the nineteenth century. In conjunction with the catalog he wrote a manual of cataloging rules that went through four editions and became the theoretical basis for the dictionary catalog in the twentieth century. He completed one shelf classification system specifically for the Athenaeum and the greater portion of a second for libraries in general. He also made numerous practical applications in the area of library management and participated in the organization and development of the American Library Association. At the Forbes
Library during his last decade, while still working on his bibliographical systems, he built a collection from its inception and gave full expression to his growing sense of the service aspects of a public library.

A listing of Cutter's professional accomplishments is impressive. It does not by itself serve, however, as an adequate estimation of the man. This is suggested by the memorials to him at his death. On the one hand, Cutter was eulogized for his accomplishments listed above, especially for his work in cataloging and classification. In that light he is pictured as an erudite scholar of great imagination and tenacity. On the other hand, his eulogizers found it necessary to explain what for some seemed aloofness, creating for them difficulty in approaching him. The memorial articles emphasized that he was not unapproachable. In fact, as they suggested, he was quite the opposite. When an effort to overcome his shyness was made, he was found to be not only charming and thoughtful, but even quite playful. Such comments strongly intimate that despite his accomplishments, Cutter lived somewhat under a veil of personal obscurity. He was in fact a very private person and rarely spoke of his personal motivations and struggles. In those self-references that have been preserved, typically found in short notes to his closest friends, Cutter usually displayed a strong sense of humorous irony concerning himself. Few autobiographical comments exist. Yet, one can still ascertain from his activities
and writings a more complete estimate. This can be done by considering his training; how he conducted himself in his dealings with others; and the major themes expressed in his work, especially as they give evidence of a gradual evolution.

Cutter came from a modest but comfortable commercial-class New England background. Placed in a strongly Unitarian religious environment early in his life, he was encouraged and rewarded for his scholarly capacities. He received a sound classical preparation for Harvard in the Hopkins Classical School when the latter was at its best. Harvard College and Divinity School further developed his scholarly propensities and gave to him a moral and philosophical outlook on life that remained with him until the end of his days. Overtones of that outlook reappear in various forms, for example, in his perception of the purpose of libraries and in his appreciation of the ideal of harmony in the universe. The ideal of harmony played a strong role in his demand for system in making recorded knowledge accessible and in library administration.

Cutter also developed striking work habits. From an early age he became an industrious and tenacious worker at any task he undertook. He applied that same energy to the emerging field of librarianship. In this he was doubtless influenced by the example of Ezra Abbot. He, however, may have been simply expressing the broader motivation of his intellectual and religious training. The library good
that he accomplished was his moral and religious contribution to the cultural development of the nation. Consequently, Cutter sometimes spoke of the work of a librarian in language that had overtones of religious and moral fervor.

Cutter's manner of working with other persons was developed early and remained constant throughout his life. For whatever the causes, Cutter was a retiring and shy person. He seemed to gain his most intense satisfaction from the authority of his ideas and from his ability to work rigorously, rather than from the limelight of personal leadership. Although he contributed an enormous amount of work to the profession throughout his life, much of it was anonymous—perhaps because of his shyness. He was not diffident, however, about arguing a case in the appropriate forum. He was aggressive and forceful in presenting his views and did not hesitate to present in both his signed and unsigned articles harsh, incisive criticism of views that he felt to be wrong. His self-confidence showed itself in a broad philosophy of the librarian's work, in his ability to quickly get to the core of problems being discussed, and in his remarkable ability to state precisely both the problems and their possible solutions. These attributes made him an imposing and perhaps even threatening figure to those whose grasp of library matters was neither as comprehensive nor as exact.

His manner of work also may have given the same impression. Guided by very high standards, in many respects
he worked best by himself. Likewise, he was never content to allow the work of others to escape the same examination. As an administrator he supervised his employees closely and frequently revised their work procedures because he saw opportunity for improvement. Although he had a prophetic grasp of library goals and tasks, he seems not to have been very successful in apportioning work, or in keeping the processes as simple as might have been warranted. In some cases he seems to have been more disposed to do the job himself. In working with others in the profession (many of whom desired more expeditious handling of library matters even at the risk of being less thorough), he must have appeared as a difficult, albeit authoritative, colleague.

As imposing as this side of Cutter may have been, it was balanced by a warmth and an understanding that caused many librarians to seek his advice and counsel, and others, who were close to him, especially to mourn him at his death. His playful spirit, reserved for those who knew him best, was most evident in his personal correspondence and in those social occasions at the annual conferences in which he could exercise his subtle humor, especially in making puns.

Taken together, Cutter's intellectual and personal qualities suggest an almost childlike sincerity in his approach to life. He looked for ultimate explanations in library matters and acted without pretense in all serious
concerns. He seems to have expected the same of others and poked fun at himself and others when any signs of pretentiousness did appear. He was not of a political nature and declined to follow such a course in his personal relationships. For that reason he seems to have been somewhat vulnerable to such approaches on the part of others. As a result of the widespread confidence in his sincerity, he was able to serve as a mediator between others within the library profession who were more volatile.

At the time of Cutter's graduation from the Harvard Divinity School, the basic course of his life's work seems already to have been set. Despite his training for the ministry, he seems to have developed by that time a great interest in bibliography. He delighted during his early years as a librarian in listing the best of the intellectual resources of man, especially in the areas of literature, history, and theology. This effort doubtless was spurred by the examples of Sibley and Abbot. It became for him a high art in which he could not only exercise his adeptness at finding and accurately describing materials, but also show his awareness of the contents of the works themselves. During the 1860's, Cutter gave expression to this interest by his participation in several bibliographical ventures, including the beginning volumes of Sabin's Dictionary of Books Relating to America. This interest continued to the end of his life and was demonstrated in his last years in his building the collections of the Forbes Library.
His work at Harvard extended his bibliographical interests to the practical organization of knowledge in order to make it accessible to others. This concern first showed itself in making library catalogs. Although he had gained his first experience in cataloging while a student in the Divinity School, the product of his work at that time was rudimentary in comparison to his later efforts. Under the tutelage of Ezra Abbot, he began to formulate a systematic approach to the problem. He not only sharpened his descriptive, bibliographical method, but, more important, was exposed to the complex problems of subject access in catalogs. His interest in that aspect led him to synthesize questions of the classification of knowledge, the habits of inquirers in searching for information, and the possible formats of the catalog. By 1871 he had worked out the main outlines of a systematic approach, and by 1876 he published one of the most complete systems of catalog access ever devised. Despite changes made by him in later years to accommodate the changing emphases and techniques in the library world, the basic structure and idea of his system remained the same. It has, ever since, provided the conceptual basis for the dictionary catalog.

He did not limit his interest and involvement in providing subject access to systematic cataloging. When Melvil Dewey introduced the Amherst shelf classification to the library world in 1876, Cutter turned his attention to classification as another viable approach to subject
access. In going beyond Dewey's initial scheme, he developed an enumeration of knowledge for the arrangement of books that became a model for its comprehensiveness. This work occupied him to the end of his life.

Cutter's bibliographical interests and his quest for system in making recorded knowledge accessible were the underpinnings of his life and work. One can measure his intellectual breadth by the scope of the bibliographical tools that he developed, and his zeal by the diligence with which he went about his work. He took the whole universe of man's knowledge as his province. He has been aptly described as, "an able, energetic, learned, ingenious scholar devoting himself to making the knowledge available in books useful to his contemporaries."¹

Another theme, destined to modify and embellish Cutter's fundamental quest, was a growing appreciation of the library's public and of the library as a social agency. Cutter's patrons at Harvard and at the Boston Athenaeum were, for the most part, of the highest intellectual and cultural attainments. It was natural for him to find among them support and encouragement in his work of systematizing libraries. But with his participation in the founding of the American Library Association and in the advancement of the professional library movement, Cutter encountered a much wider variety of opinion as to the nature of the

library and of the profession of librarianship. He at first participated in efforts to standardize the methods, techniques, and equipment of libraries and to build an organization that would promote standardization. His participation was not accomplished without tension. Although he advocated 'cooperation' throughout his life, when the enthusiasm of the initial years of the Association had passed, he found himself increasingly troubled with the total compliance that the movement seemed to presuppose. He came to place more emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual library and librarian.

Of far greater importance was his exposure to a broader library public. Although he had given tacit recognition to a wide spectrum of users when he first devised his cataloging system, Cutter's experience with patrons was actually much more limited. The Harvard and Athenaeum patrons represented too narrow and cohesive a group to provide the broadest base for his work. This base was somewhat extended by the representations of other librarians. In his work at the Forbes Library after 1893, Cutter encountered an even greater range of patrons. As his experience broadened, he moved toward greater simplicity for the sake of the user and he incorporated concessions to users' limitations. As a result, his systems for the access of recorded knowledge became less rigid.

The changes in his systematizing work were not as great as the changes that occurred in his actual library
work with patrons. He had always conceived of the library as an agency of cultural uplift for the populace in general. His earlier comments on that purpose suggest that those persons whom the library would serve and who most needed its influence were at some distance from his actual experience. For example, during the 1880's his opinions on the place of fiction in the library displayed a cautious, perhaps even grudging, assent to stocking poor quality but popular works in the library. His description of the common users of the library in his 1883 address at the Buffalo convention of the Association exhibited something of a condescending attitude toward them. He described the library's purpose as the work, as much as possible, of turning out scholars who could appreciate the whole realm of knowledge, a purpose that was consonant with his own intellectual breadth.

His entrance directly into public library work brought greater depth to his understanding of the purpose of the library. He enthusiastically experimented with practical programs of cultural enrichment, especially in the realm of fine arts appreciation. He spoke of the necessity that librarians truly empathize with patrons at their own cultural level. He did not relinquish his ideal that the library should help people to appreciate knowledge in the way he did, but he expressed more readily the limitations of that goal. He was able to say with great fervor towards the end of his career, "The whole history of
libraries in the past century may almost be condensed into one sentence: They were the libraries of the one fit reader; they are the libraries of the million unfit as well as the one fit.\(^1\)

Perhaps the statement most descriptive of his developing concern was made in 1900 in an article which surveyed the development of libraries in the nineteenth century. It is as well a statement of his own professional interests given almost at the close of his life. He first described how the library profession had moved beyond developing the techniques and devices of library organization. That observation fitly reflects his own pattern of development. In his view the library movement as a whole was progressing towards higher purposes. But rather than stressing some absolute cultural achievement that the library might help to obtain, he emphasized instead the more relative but deeply humanistic goal of helping persons to fulfill their own human potential.

From time to time someone is alarmed at the extension of library activity, and cries "panem et circenses." But the circenses, which being interpreted is novels, are so inextricably bound up with the educational work of the library, being the inducement to many to come and be taught, and they are as now written so largely educational themselves, that their supply will stand or fall with the libraries. For the panem, the solid work of the library, whose paying for out of the public pocket seems to certain theorists of dangerous tendency, only to be justified on socialistic grounds, the extremist individualist admits the necessity of combining for the public defence, and it is abundantly

\(^1\)Cutter, "Should Libraries Buy only the Best Books," pp. 70-71. The underscoring is Cutter's.
clear that general ignorance menaces an attack not merely on the republic but on civilisation. Moreover, it is the Anglo-Saxon way—and we are still largely Anglo-Saxon—to make theories after trying experiments. We are at present thoroughly committed to the experiment of universal education. We are hoping to find that it not only imparts information and sharpens intellects, but counteracts temptations and lessens crime, increases the earning power of the individual and the effective force of the nation. Few things can be made certain in sociology, but if after a time the prophylactic power of education appears probable the existence of libraries is justified, for there is no doubt that they are educative. They take up the work where the schools are compelled to lay it down for the majority of the community, and they carry it on through life; they are doing this with greater and greater effect as the schools succeed more and more fully in giving to their pupils their best gift—the power of self-education.¹

Cutter may well have shown more optimism than was merited not only for the library movement but for education in general. These closing words of his do, however, show his own strong concerns and demonstrate his own development. As such they provide a final brush stroke in a portrait of the man himself.

APPENDIX

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

The following genealogical tables for the Cutter and Appleton families are selected and include only the basic family lines and those other names that appear in the text or are immediately relevant to Charles Ammi Cutter. The two basic sources used are: Benjamin Cutter, The Cutter Family of New England, Revised and enlarged by William Richard Cutter, and William S. Appleton, A genealogy of the Appleton Family.

Cutter Family

I. The Cutter Family Line.

Elizabeth Cutter ( ? -1663?)

Richard (1621?-1693)

William (1649-1723)

John (1690-1776)
5th child of William

Ammi (1733-1795)
10th child of John

Ammi RuhamahI (1705-1746)
10th child of William

Ammi RuhamahII (1735-1820)
1st child of Ammi RuhamahI

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II. The Children of Ammi (1777-1850) ¹

1. Caleb Champney (1800-187?)
   (See below, Pt. III)
5. Catharine (1807-1858) Raised C. A. Cutter as a
7. Charlotte (1810-1886) youth. Lived in his house-
9. Cordelia (1814-1895) hold until their deaths.
10. Ammi Winship (1816-1869)
    Businessman, Buffalo, N. Y.
    Issue: 8 children, cousins of C. A. Cutter
11. Harriet Louisa (1822- )
    m. B. F. Atkins in 1848. Lived in England dur-
    ing the 1870's and was likely visited by C. A.
    Cutter in 1877.

III. Caleb Champney Cutter (1800-187?)
   m. (1st) Hannah Biglow ( April 1837)
   m. (2d) Frances Clark of Milton, 4 September 1838
   Issue:
2. Marianna Davenport (1824- )
   m. C. E. Trott. Liven in New York City during
   the 1870's.
3. Clarence Henry (1830-1873)
   Served in Civil War, 95th Regiment, New York
   Volunteers. Lived afterward in Washington, D.C.
   Issue: William Parker Cutter (1867- )
   Librarian. Author of Charles Ammi Cutter.
4. CHARLES AMMI C UTTER (1837-1903)
   (See below, Pt. IV)

¹The numbers preceding the names of the children indicate their order of birth. Numbers omitted represent children who died in infancy or childhood.
5. Francis Edward (1839- )
   Served in Civil War, New England Guards. Moved to the West sometime after 1875.
6. Caroline (1842-1848)
7. Helen Maria (1843-1853)

IV. CHARLES AMMI CUTTER (14 March 1837-6 September 1903)
   m. Sarah Fayerweather Appleton, 21 May 1863
   Issue:
   1. Louis Fayerweather (30 June 1864-1945)
      Issue: 3 children, among them, The Honorable Richard Ammi Cutter, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
   2. Philip Champney (3 November 1866-28 April 1883)
   3. Roland Norcross (29 July 1868-1944)
   4. Gerald C. (July 1880-15 October 1898)

   **Appleton Family**

I. The Appleton Family Line

Samuel Appleton (1586- ? )

John₁ (1622-1699)

John₂ (1652-1739)

Nathaniel₃ (1693-1784)
   6th child of John₂. Minister of First Church, Cambridge.

Nathaniel₄ (1721-1798)
   2d child of Nathaniel₃.
   m. Sarah Fayerweather
   Issue:
   1. John James (1792-1864)
      Issue: Charles Louis (1846- )
         3d child of John James. Professor of Law, University of Lyons. Visited by the Charles Cutters in 1894 and 1901.
   2. Charles John (1795-1843)
      Officer in Brazilian navy.
      m. Sophia Haven of Portsmouth, N. H.
      Issue: (See below, Pt. II)
II. The Children of Charles John Appleton (1795-1843)

1. Sophia Louisa (1836-1932)
   b. Portsmouth, N. H.
   Worked in Harvard College Library in late 1850's.
   Worked at Boston Athenaeum, 1892-1904.
   m. Charles W. Bradbury, 4 June 1864
   Lived in C. A. Cutter household.

2. SARAH FAYERWEATHER (1839-1933)
   b. Cambridge, Massachusetts.
   Worked in Harvard College Library in late 1850's.
   m. CHARLES AMMI CUTTER, 21 May 1863

3. Augusta Isabella (1841- )
   b. Portsmouth, N. H.
   Editor of American Catalogue (1881-85), under direction of R. R. Bowker.
   Worked in Boston Athenaeum, 1872-1889.
   Lived in C. A. Cutter household at various times.
Introduction

The following bibliography contains with some exceptions only those published items that were deemed of special significance. Letter, reports, and other documents available only in manuscript form are usually cited (according to their depository locations) only in the footnotes. A few such documents from the Boston Athenaeum have proved to be of such high value, however, that they have been included here in a special section, arranged chronologically. A complete list of depositories is included in the Preface. American Library Association conference discussions are omitted. Because of their great number, the fact that most of them are cited only once, and their lack of distinctiveness unless titles were supplied, it has been deemed sufficient to cite them only in the footnotes with a full reference to their Library Journal location in each instance. Other items, cited only because of their usefulness in corroborating Cutter's activities, are also omitted.

With regard to published items, four factors should be taken into account. First, they are arranged in two general divisions: Works by Charles Ammi Cutter, and Works by Other Authors. The works by Cutter are themselves
subarranged in four divisions: (1) Items in which Cutter is listed as the editor, compiler or translator after a main entry consisting of another person or institution. (2) Items written in collaboration with other authors. (3) Articles, books, notes, notices, reports and reviews written by Cutter himself. (4) *Library Journal* editorials written by Cutter and cited in this study.

Second, anyone attempting to list Cutter's works has to contend with a problem of anonymity. Almost all of Cutter's contributions to the *Nation* are unsigned. The problem of identifying them has been partially resolved by the use of Daniel Haskell's *The Nation: Volumes 1-105, 1865-1917. Indexes of Titles and Contributors* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1951). In the present bibliography, Cutter's *Nation* items not otherwise annotated should be understood to be listed in the Haskell work. But Haskell's list, based on the account books of the *Nation*, is not all-inclusive, particularly for the years before 1873 and after 1883. His list of eighty-seven items attributable to Cutter does not do justice to what amounted to almost thirty-five years of continuous library reporting on Cutter's part (ca. 1868-1903).

Fortunately, some help in identifying other Cutter contributions to the Nation has come from the *Library Journal*. Cutter was responsible for the library bibliographies and the indexing in the *Library Journal* from 1876 to 1893. Sometimes he wrote notices of his anonymous
Nation contributions and cited them as his own in the Library Journal indexes to individual volumes. Nation items confirmed as his in this manner are followed by the symbol (LJ). In the same manner, Nation items confirmed by index entries in Poole's Index to Periodical Literature are followed by the symbol (PI) with the year of its coverage (e.g., PI-1882). In addition, one item has been confirmed through a reference in a personal letter. Finally, four items, not absolutely identified but highly probable as Cutter's, are also included, the evidence given in the footnotes when cited.

Cutter's Library Journal editorials are also unsigned. Because Richard R. Bowker is listed as the general editor during the years of Cutter's editorship (1881-1893), one might assume that the editorials came from his hand. Other evidence, both internal and external, points, however, to Cutter's authorship. Editorials by their nature deal with the issues of the day and especially with matters contained in the current issues of the periodical. The subject matter, point of view, and writing style of the editorials during Cutter's years all point to his authorship. Point of view and style are especially indicative when one compares the editorials as a group with Cutter's other confirmed articles, both in the Library Journal and in the Nation. External evidence also leads one to the same conclusion. Letters between Richard R. Bowker and Cutter in the Bowker Papers at the New York Public Library
and between Melvil Dewey and Cutter in the Dewey Papers at Columbia University constantly reiterate Cutter's role as the editor of the literary contents of the periodical. Bowker did contribute occasional editorials, but his are signed, leading one to believe that he did so to demonstrate that his contributions were the exception rather than the rule. The profession as a whole seems to have been aware of this difference. In addition, Bowker, busy in a great many other ventures and not so close to the library field as the editorial content demanded, was often absent from his office on extended trips. One could suppose that he would not himself have been either willing or able to write on the wide variety of topics that are represented in the editorials with an ease and facility of expression that are otherwise Cutter's trademark.

Finally, when Cutter did absent himself in 1893 during the periods April-June and October-December, his correspondence with Bowker shows that he was careful to get much of the material to Bowker in advance. When he failed to do so, Bowker seems to have been somewhat at a loss.

There is also a problem of anonymity in Cutter's contributions to American Library Association committee reports. Cutter chaired a significant number of committees, especially between 1876 and 1885. Although it is quite likely that he by himself wrote a large portion of the reports, because of the corporate nature of the committee work, these have been listed in Works by Other Authors
under their appropriate headings for the American Library Association. His relationship to the committees and the particular reports is given in the text and the footnotes.

A third factor to be noted, also having to do with Cutter's works, concerns completeness. The list contains, of course, only those works cited in this study. It approaches completeness only in that all of Cutter's major writings in book form and most of his major articles and communications in the Library Journal are listed. Citations from the Nation come from thirty-two items, most of those concerning library matters and only a few on other literary topics. This represents only a small percentage of his total contribution there. Also, the majority of Cutter's many editorial insertions at the ends of other authors' articles or in the Bibliography section of the Library Journal have been omitted from this list unless especially significant. This has been done for the same reasons as those given above concerning American Library Association conference discussions.

A fourth and final factor concerning the total list is that many of the short periodical items by Cutter and other authors have no titles. They often appeared as running comments in larger sections. For example, many of Cutter's Nation items are simply long paragraphs in the general section entitled "Literary Notices." Therefore, when necessary for distinctiveness, titles have been supplied and placed in brackets in this list.
Boston Athenaeum Manuscripts

Letter, Charles A. Cutter to Charles Deane, November 21, 1868.
Cutter’s letter of acceptance of the Athenaeum librarianship; the most important single document for information on Cutter’s pre-Athenaeum library activities and early thoughts on librarianship.

Abbot, Ezra. "To the Trustees of the Boston Athenaeum, January 4, 1868."
Abbot’s analysis of the state of the catalog project, done as a consultant, late 1867.

"Librarian's Report on the Best Method Of Copying Mr. Lowell's Catalogue," April 12, 1869.
Cutter’s initial report on the catalog project given barely four months after assuming his post.

"Report of the Librarian on Printing the Catalogue," [March, 1870?].
Cutter’s second report on the catalog project, in which he gave an explicit list of matters remaining to be completed and a timetable for doing them. As a result, Cutter was placed in direct charge of the project.

"To the Library Committee," December 18, 1871.
Cutter’s report on his progress toward printing the catalog and his reasons why it would be delayed. The report has special significance in that at this point Cutter still hoped to include specific-to-general cross-references in the subject system. The report appears to lack some pages, but that does not diminish its importance in explaining Cutter’s earlier thinking on the dictionary catalog subject system.

"Decennial Report of the Librarian, January, 1879."
A review of ten years of progress at the Athenaeum. Published in the Boston Daily Advertiser, January 16, 1879 under the title, "Boston Athenaeum; A Review of the Past Decade."

"Report of the Librarian for 1879." [January, 1880].
Having set a precedent with his first extensive report the previous year, Cutter apparently thought to continue the practice. In this report he discussed how the two sizable bequests of 1879 could be used and explained the extensive changes taking place at the Athenaeum with respect to circulation procedures and shelf classification. The date in brackets is the month in which he delivered the report to the Library.
Committee, just prior to the annual meeting of the proprietors. This report was published as "The Boston Athenaeum; its Present Condition . . . " Boston Daily Advertiser, January 24, 1880, and abstracted in the Library Journal, V (February, 1880), 46-47, under the title, "Progress at the Boston Athenaeum."

"Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1880]."

"Annual Report of the Librarian [for 1881]."
Cutter's fourth and final annual report, submitted in February, 1882. Beginning in 1882 the annual meeting of the proprietors was moved to February. The shortness of this report is probably because first, he had little new to report except the completion of the catalog; second, he was very busy with reclassification and the Library Journal; and third, changes slowly overtaking the Trustee Board and Library Committee made his report less desirable. At any rate, he subsequently made no more reports.

Works by Charles Ammi Cutter

Works Edited, Compiled or Translated


———. List of Additions. Second Series, September 1, 1877 - March 2, 1896. [Boston, 1877-1896]


Winchester (Mass.) Town Library. Class and Author Lists. n.p., 1879.

———. First Supplement. n.p., 1882.
Works Written in Collaboration


Articles, Books, Notes, etc.


*Alfabetic Order Table*. Boston: Library Bureau, 1887.

*Alfabetic-order Table, Altered and Fitted with Three Figures by Miss Kate E. Sanborn*. Boston: Library Bureau, 1896.

*Three-figure Alfabetic-order Table*. Boston: Library Bureau, 1902.

[American Library Association's Meeting at Lakewood].

*Nation*, LIV (May 26, 1892), 396.

Confirmed as Cutter's in Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, June 3, 1892, CUL, Dewey Papers.

[American Library Association's St. Louis Meeting].

*Nation*, XLVIII (June 13, 1889), 490.

Cutter's authorship is not certain, but highly probable.


"The Arrangement of the Parts of the United States in a Historical and Geografical System of Classification." Library Journal, VIII (September/October, 1883), 205-08.


"Author-tables for Greek and Latin Authors." Library Journal, XI (August/September, 1886), 280-89.

[The Boston Athenaeum Classification, Boston, 1879-?]. Much of the Boston Athenaeum shelf classification was printed and distributed by Cutter in sheets as offprints, although few of these have survived. One can tell the difference between these schedules and those of the Expansive Classification by the notation.


"The Boston Athenaeum; its Present Condition . . ." Boston Daily Advertiser, January 24, 1880. This article, which for the most part follows exactly Cutter's Librarian's report for 1879 for the Boston Athenaeum, appears in abstracted form in "Progress at the Boston Athenaeum," Library Journal, V (February, 1880), 46-47.


"The Buffalo Public Library in 1883." Library Journal, VIII (September/October, 1883), 211-17.

"The Cataloguer's Work." Nation, XXIV (February 8, 1877), 86-88.

"Changed Titles--A Peculiar Case." Library Journal, XXV (May, 1900), 218.

"Charging Simplified--Abolition of the Two-Weeks File." Library Journal, XXVIII (September, 1903), 664.

[Circular Letter, May 19, 1903]. Library Journal, XXVIII (June, 1903), 319.


"Classification on the Shelves." Library Journal, VI (April, 1881), 64-69.


[Comment on A Rational Classification of Literature, by Frederic B. Perkins]. Library Journal, X (June, 1885), 139.

[Comment on Colored Book Cards]. Library Journal, III (June, 1878), 164.

[Comment on Dividers]. Library Journal, VI (February, 1881), 34.

"Communication." Library Journal, III (April, 1878), 79.


"Crocker Book-Supports." Library Journal, XII (January/February, 1887), 85.


_______. [Part II: The Seventh Classification.] n.p., 1893-

The seventh expansion appeared in sheets as individual schedules were completed. These schedules were re-issued at various times, sometimes with changes.


"Fine Art." Library Journal, XXII (February, 1897), 87-88.

"The Franklin Society of Paris." Library Journal, I (September, 1876), 3-5.


"How to Use Cutter's Decimal Author Table." Library Journal, XII (July, 1887), 251-52.


"How We Protect Rare and Illustrated Books . . . Boston Athenaeum." Library Journal, XV (May, 1890), 133.

"Ile de France and Picardy--I." Nation, LVIII (May 10, 1894), 343-44.

--II." Nation, LVIII (May 17, 1894), 364-65.

--III." Nation, LVIII (May 31, 1894), 405-06.

--IV." Nation, LVIII (June 7, 1894), 425.

--V." Nation, LIX (July 12, 1894), 24-26.

"Justin Winsor." Nation, LXV (October 28, 1897), 335.


"The Librarians at Chicago." Nation, LVII (August 31, 1893), 150.

"The Librarians at Montreal." Nation, LXX (June 28, 1900), 492.

"Librarians at San Francisco." Nation, LIII (October 29, 1891), 329-30.


"Librarians in Convention." Nation, LI (October 9, 1890), 282. (LJ)

[Library Architecture]. Nation, XL (January 8, 1885), 36. (LJ)


"The Library Convention." Nation, XXIII (November 2, 1876), 271-72.

[Library Delivery Company]. Nation, XXIX (July 24, 1879), 60.
"Library Development." The Nineteenth Century: A Review of Progress During the Past One Hundred Years in the Chief Departments of Human Activity. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901.


"Lift for Call Slips." Library Journal, XIV (August, 1899), 359.

"Louisa Cutler--In Memorium." Library Journal, XX (September, 1895), 310-11.


"Meeting of the American Library Association." Nation, LXXV (July 3, 1902), 7-8.

"Mr. Cutter Continues." Library Journal, IV (March, 1879), 88-90.


"Mr. Cutter's Charging System." Library Journal, IV (December, 1879), 445-46.

"Mr. Garnett on 'Public Libraries and Their Catalogues.'" Library Journal, IV (December, 1879), 452-54.


[Murphy Book-Sale]. Nation, XXXVIII (January 31, 1884), 99-100.

Cutter's authorship is not certain, but highly probable.


[New York Library Conference]. Nation, XXV (October 11, 1877), 228.


[Note on Author Tables]. Public Libraries, V (May, 1900), 243.


Abstracted in Library Journal, IV (November, 1879), 424.

"Note on Mr. Schwartz's Classification and Notation." Library Journal, XI (January, 1886), 8.


"Notes on the Bibliotheque Nationale." Library Journal, XIX (June, 1894), 193-94.

[Notice of a Proposed Library Convention]. Nation, XXII (April 20, 1876), 264.

Nation, XXII (June 1, 1876), 350.

Cutter's authorship of these two items is not certain, but highly probable.

"Notice to Subscribers to the Expansive Classification." Library Journal, XXIII (June, 1898), 261.

[On Jacob Schwartz's Plan for a Catalog]. Nation, XX (March 4, 1875), 151.


"Photographs and Photoprints." Library Journal, XXV (October, 1900), 619-25.

"The Place of Folk-lore in a Classification; a Problem." Library Journal, IX (August, 1884), 136.


"Practical Notes." Library Journal, XII (May, 1887), 206.


"The Public Library and Its Choice of Books." Boston Daily Advertiser, February 12, 1878, as abstracted in Library Journal, III (April, 1878), 73.

"Racing Week at Chester." Nation, LVI (June 1, 1893), 401.


"Remarks on Mr. Adams's Paper." Library Journal, XXIII (February, 1898), 55-56.


Three-figure Alphabetic-order Table. See Alfabetic-order Table.


Library Journal Editorials by Cutter

VI (February, 1881), 23-24.
VI (March, 1881), 39-40.
VI (May, 1881), 155.
VI (August, 1881), 223-24.
VI (September/October, 1881), 255-56.
VII (January, 1882), 3.
VII (March, 1882), 43.
VII (May, 1882), 79.
VIII (February, 1883), 23-24.
VIII (March/April, 1883), 47-48.
IX (February, 1884), 23.
IX (March, 1884), 39.
IX (April, 1884), 59-61.
IX (July, 1884), 115-16.
XI (January, 1886), 3.
XI (February, 1886), 35-36.
XI (December, 1886), 467-68.
XII (January/February, 1887), 3-4.
XII (November, 1887), 503.
XIII (July, 1888), 203-04.
XIII (September/October, 1888), 275-76.
XIV (July, 1889), 303-04.
XV (February, 1890), 35-36.
XV (August, 1890), 227-28.
XV (October, 1890), 291-92.
XVI (March, 1891), 69-70.
XVI (July, 1891), 199-200.
XVII (January, 1892), 3-4.
XVII (April, 1892), 119.
XVII (May, 1892), 155-56.
XVII (July, 1892), 227-28.
XVIII (April, 1893), 107-08.
XVIII (August, 1893), 277-79.

Works By Other Authors


- List of Subject Headings for Use in Dictionary Catalogs. Boston, 1895.


  Originally published as Ch. 9, of Pt. II of the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1892/93. Another title sometimes used is Papers Prepared for the A.L.A. for its Annual Meeting, Held at the Columbian Exposition, 1893.


- [Committee on a School of Library Economy. Report and Discussion]. Library Journal, VIII (September/October, 1883), 293-94.

- [Report]. Library Journal, X (September/October, 1885), 291-94.

[Report and Discussion]. Library Journal, XVIII (September, 1893), C79-82.


[Report]. Library Journal, VIII (September/October, 1883), 263-64.


"As it Was in the Beginning." Public Libraries, XXIX (May, 1924), 236-40.

Athenaeum Centenary; the Influence and History of the Boston Athenaeum, from 1807 to 1907. Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1907.


Biscoe, Walter S. "Chronological Classification on the Shelves." Library Journal, X (September/October, 1885), 246-47.


———. "Logical Classification." Library Journal, VII (October, 1882), 251.


Bowditch, Charles P. An Account of the Trust Administered by the Trustees of the Charity of Edward Hopkins. n.p.: Privately Printed, 1889.


Bowker, Richard R. "On a Co-operative Scheme of Subject-entry, With a Key to Catalog Headings." Library Journal, III (November, 1878), 326-29.

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