

**HINTS ON CATALOGUE
TITLES AND ON
INDEX ENTRIES**

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Hints on catalogue titles and on index entries by Charles F. Blackburn

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CHARLES F. BLACKBURN

**HINTS ON CATALOGUE
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INDEX ENTRIES**

HINTS ON
CATALOGUE TITLES

AND ON
INDEX ENTRIES,

WITH A ROUGH VOCABULARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CHIEFLY FROM CATALOGUES, AND SOME PASSAGES

FROM

JOURNEYING AMONG BOOKS.

BY

CHARLES F. BLACKBURN.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

ALLA GIORNATA.



Z695
P26

LIBRARY
SCHOOL

The vignette on the title-page is a copy in miniature of an engraving in "Picturesque Europe," which has been made by the kind permission of Messrs. Cassell and Co. Nominally a view from Milan Cathedral, under the artist's hand it has become an emblem of the journey of life.

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

PREFACE.

— Que viens tu faire ici ?
— Des recherches dans la bibliothèque.
— Bel emploi ! dit le dragon. Tu ne seras pas gêné par la foule des concurrents ; il n'y va pas trois personnes par jour, car nous n'avons pas de temps à perdre dans les études inutiles . . . les habitants de Longueville se pendraient plutôt que mettre le nez dans leur bouquins. Hier, mon propriétaire, qui est un des gros bourgeois de la ville, me disait avec émotion ; " Ah ! monsieur, tout le mal est venu des livres. Sans ces coquins de barbouilleurs de papier, nous vivrions bien tranquilles et nous toucherions nos revenus en dormant sur les deux oreilles ; mais l'auteur, voyez-vous, monsieur, et le papier, et la lettre menfée, sont les vraies inventions du diable ; et pour moi, quand je lis un journal, je crois voir la fourche et les cornes du traître. Voilà, mon cher ami, l'opinion qu'en a de ton métier. Tu juges si ces braves gens sont disposés à fréquenter un tel lieu de perdition. En revanche, ils jouent volontiers aux cartes et aux dominos, ce qui ne fatigue pas l'esprit et ne trouble ni la conscience ni la digestion."

UNE VILLE DE GARNISON.

In the present state of dependence upon books for nearly all our information, the importance of ready access to great collections need scarcely be insisted upon. Literature grows about us with an almost alarming rapidity, and minutes, as time goes on, seem fewer and more quickly gone.

Twenty years of aimless wandering and experiment at home and abroad—measured to an hour, without any knowledge of it at the time—have blindly prepared the ground for this book. The journeyings were preceded by years of apprenticeship in a foreign business, and followed by daily labour on catalogues in London houses of different lines in relation to books. Thus the writer has come to notice many ways in which catalogues might act more clearly and quickly. The book now before the reader is mainly occupied with an endeavour to show this. The examples are actual pieces of experience.

Books may be said to resolve themselves into three great divisions. There are books of reference, merely to be consulted ; books for sale, which are to be obtained ; and books which are possessed, and to be enjoyed. Thus there arise catalogues of reference, and the catalogues of publishers and booksellers ; while a private library, to be accessible, must also have its catalogue. Specimens of each kind are given. That of a private library catalogue I imagine to be a perfectly novel attempt. People have been known to play at doing work, but, in the "overtime" of constant employment—*aliter non fit, avite ! liber*—to work at, or to act, the part of a man who is amusing himself, and merely killing time, is not the easiest thing in the world.

It is, I believe, one of the laws of bibliography, that catalogue titles should be copies of the title-pages of books, except that for facility of reference the authors' names are written first. At page 48 is given an example of a title-page thus "faithfully" dealt with. But a title-page is a

form of words which is carefully prepared for a particular purpose. A title in a catalogue is a form of words destined for another purpose. What more can be said against mere copying?

Here is an instance of the difference between the letter and the spirit of a title-page. On the right hand is an endeavour to give instant perception of the nature of the book:—

SANSOM (A. Ernest) The Lettisonian Lectures on the Treatment of some of the Forms of Valvular Diseases of the Heart, delivered before the Medical Society of London. 1883

Sansom (A. Ernest) Valvular diseases of the heart, treatment of some forms. *Lettisonian Lectures*, 1883

It is too often the case that those who work in a library, or at a bookseller's, are allowed to find their own way in writing the titles of books. If any proof were wanted, I would cite the library catalogue of which an example is made at page 58.

The object throughout this book is to show those who are young in cataloguing the way to write concise and telling titles from the title-pages of books, or to prepare them from already printed matter with clearness and precision. The work is a bundle of hints on a species of craft, illustrated by examples of faulty workmanship, opposite which is a second series to show how the titles might have been more effectively given.

Cataloguing is a handicraft just as much as any other mechanical trade; an art to be learned by attention and diligent practice. When amateurs get together and talk about catalogues, the question is sure to come up, "What arrangement do you prefer?" To discuss arrangement before you can prepare a title for a catalogue is as if you would be a colourist before you can draw an outline.

Cross references are a tremendous *cheval de bataille* with your amateur cataloguer. It is as if an embryo Macadam were to intersect the country with by-roads, cutting up the fields into little bits, instead of going direct to any point, merely in order to show that he could make a road. I have an idea that cross references may almost be dispensed with, and that if entries are made with care, "arrangement" may cease to be a matter for thought; that a child may almost make a catalogue of the manuscript. The old saying, "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves," is put in practice in another walk of life.

Among the privileges of an amateur is an "antique* disposition." Type which is in itself an anachronism, discoloured leaves, and jagged edges are among the outward signs. One might say to the bookbinder—

"Cui flavam religas comam.†
Simplex munditiis."

is, rather, the motto of a dreamer who has been beaten into practical ways by the necessity of earning his living; black and white his sober badge, so far as letterpress is concerned.

* Readers of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Transformation"—or the "Marble Faun," as he preferred to call it—will understand the relation of antique to the antique. Indeed, the two names of the book almost give you that without reading a line.

† *Avec la barbe* is a well-known term for unkempt and unshaven books.

In America, where everything is done on a larger scale, the "antic disposition" is carried into weightier matters than the mere "trappings and the suits" of books. The characteristic energy of the West—the land of the "free"—has found vent in hideous contortions of spelling—of which I need only instance the words "catalog" and "sudonym"—by which the very landmarks of our language, if one may speak of English as being common to both countries, are being removed. Such truncated words make one think of the senseless snout of a latter-day steamer which roots up the water, in place of the graceful stem and gracious figure-head that inclined to every wave as they flew over it. Reading an American printed book is to go through a kind of *inferno*, where mutilated forms and horrible grimaces confront you at every stop, and your flesh creeps as you dread to encounter some new form of ugliness. Mr. Grant White has earned the gratitude of all who value Shakespeare by not putting his language "to this purgation."

That nothing may be wanting, we owe to America the prettiest piece of satire on spelling reform. A periodical once bore conspicuously on its front the editor's name mangled out of all knowledge. Another periodical issuing from the same house of business had to make the name intelligible by means of the unregenerate spelling.

If backing about of familiar and time-honoured words, and improving the spelling of the great writers who have shaped the English language were the extent of the evil, one might have reason to be glad. But, unfortunately, the meaning of what is written on the other side of the Atlantic is not always clear to a dull-minded Britisher. Librarianship, and the mechanism of books, are in America pursued with a wonderful enthusiasm. We should derive encouragement from what is done, and great instruction from what is written in America on the best ways of cataloguing, if we were quite sure we knew what the writers meant.

A few years ago the United States put forth a catalogue in three volumes folio. Although it merely relates to a particular collection of books three thousand miles away, the writer of these lines is glad to have the catalogue always near him, because of its literary interest. He cannot be accused of any prejudice against the catalogue, for he once wrote a notice of it which the compilers thought worth printing among testimonials from professors and learned men. The notice was a cordial recognition of the loving pains which had been bestowed on the work. But, as a matter of business, the catalogue is grievously—I had almost said fatally—marred by what we should call complication or complexity of arrangement. The other day I read an American critique upon it, written by a gentleman who is not a romancer, that I am aware of. The following is an extract, intended, apparently, to describe the catalogue:—

"An index catalogue of authors, titles, and subjects, arranged in alphabetical order, in the simplest dictionary manner, with plenty of

cross references and duplicate entries, will make the best catalogue for readers and habitués of libraries."

On the left hand below, the reader has an example of the "simplest manner," on the right hand accurate information conveyed with less naiming of words, in less space.

GREVILLE.

GREVILLE (Charles C. F., *Clerk of the council to Geo. and Wm. IV.*) *Memoirs*. See *Biography*, p. 181; also *Qu. rev.*, 138, 1875. 1875

BIOGRAPHY (INDIVIDUAL).

GREVILLE (Charles Cavendish F., *Clerk of the council to Geo. IV. and Wm. IV.*, b. 1794, d. 1865.

— Greville *Memoirs*: reigns of George IV. and William IV. Ed. by H. Reeve. 2 v. New York, 1875. 12^o. 3072.23

— — Same. [Abridged] By R. H. Stoddard. New York, 1875. 16^o. [Bric-a-brac ser. v. 5.] 3072.24

Reviewed in *Fortnightly rev.*, Dec., 1874 (by C. L. Stanley); and *Macmillan*, v. 31, 1875 (2 art. by A. G. Stapleton).

GREVILLE.

Greville (Charles C. F.) *Journal of the reigns of George IV. and William IV.*, edited by H. Reeve, 3 vols. London, 1874 — *Memoirs*, abridged by R. H. Stoddard. *Bric-a-brac series*, (N. Y.) 1875

See *Fortnightly Review*, Dec., 1874, *Macmillan and Quarterly*, Jan., 1875, *ibid.* Mr. Greville was Clerk of the Privy Council for many years.

Mr. Henry Reeve did not edit Mr. Greville's "Memoirs." Mr. Charles Greville was in the habit of "booking up" his contemporaries in a "Journal," portions of which were published in 1874. This book has a most cunningly devised title-page, admirable for the catalogner who has a "feeling of his business," but a trap for the unwary. Above the real title, and divided from it by a thin line, is what builders would call a "temporary" title suited for colloquial use, and for circulating library catalogues. In the hands of one who is preparing a catalogue of permanent reference, the temporary title "comes away;" it disappears. At page 81 I have ventured to show the best use of such a title as that of the "Greville Memoirs"—familiarily speaking.

The American catalogue just quoted is an elaborate and beautiful piece of work, but it is not simple, as English people understand the word; we appear to be dealing with a foreign language which must be translated into English. An instance familiar to all will show that this may be no vain imagining. In England "superior" means higher, better; we say superior in station, or superior in education. But the expression Lake Superior* does not mean that a particular lake is more highly placed than others, or that its waters are better than all the waters of America; it only means that the volume (sticking to our shop) of it is greater.

Some day, when cataloguing has become a recognised art, the proper medium between too fine theory and too coarse practice may be hit upon.

About a tenth part of the volume before the reader is occupied with the treatment of books from the private or possessor's point of view. Bearing in mind that every man may be said to own a library according to his means, this is well within the proportion. Very likely the space thus

* SUPERIOR (LAKE) The largest sheet of fresh water on the face of the globe, and the most remarkable of the great American lakes, not only from its magnitude, &c.—AMERICAN GAZETTEER.

devoted will not seem to have any practical value. But an endeavour has been made that it shall be interesting apart from any possible value. Indeed, if the reader could know the pains which have been taken to render this section of "Catalogue titles" attractive, he would be amused. However, the writer has some confidence that the fun, the strange interest, the historical value, the beauty, the power—nay, even the pathos, of which the passages laid before the reader are turn by turn the vehicle, will form an oasis amid the dry places about it. At all events, culling these garnishings to "a private library catalogue" has been to the writer that kind of refuge from maddening detail, and an opportunity of shadowing forth a theory of book illustration, that books may brighten one another by association, as people in company do. There has been especial pleasure in seizing upon pieces which minister to a love of one's country and to pride in its heroes.

Besides mere literary illustration, the writer has sought to fling about the private library catalogue a kind of humanity that shall in some sort clothe the bare bones of titles.

Our American cousins have brought a great amount of mechanism and invention to bear on getting people to "read," as if mere reading, any more than mere eating, would do people good, or as if inert or sluggish bodies could be galvanised into communion with immortal spirits. Indeed, one may be met, at any moment, by the question, "What is the good of books?" The British Working Man will tell you, that in towns where Free Libraries exist, women sit over the fire reading novels instead of doing their work. In the matter of science it may be objected that books do but show us the way to heal diseases which are the product of a bookish era. And, it is quite possible that the two or three inches of the book now before the reader which are given to a way of counteracting the evils of sedentary life, may be found more useful than all the rest of the letterpress, dealing as it does with an occupation which is among the most sedentary. It is a condition of the "treatment" that all books, newspapers, and writing shall be abstained from, and English companionship abjured.

A cataloguer never knows for whom he may have to work, what kind of work he will have to do, or the style in which the work may have to be done. Set rules are of little use. Printed suggestions will no more make a craftsman than a book will make a swimmer of one who contents himself with going through his exercises on the dry land, instead of throwing himself into the water—or than a book will teach a language, that being the province of a master, or of any human being. If you will depend upon books, you get a dead language, as you find when brought into contact with the living. There is no doubt, of course, as to an Englishman's preference for lay figures of speech. The reason, I take it, that the progress of culture is so ludicrously out of proportion to the amount of appliances, that books are our masters rather than our servants. What we want is that the mind should be above and not below its instru-