

**THE ART OF MAKING  
CATALOGUES OF LIBRARIES: OR,  
A METHOD TO OBTAIN IN A  
SHORT TIME A MOST PERFECT,  
COMPLETE, AND SATISFACTORY**

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The Art of Making Catalogues of Libraries: Or, a Method to Obtain in a Short Time a Most Perfect, complete, and satisfactory by A reader Therein

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**A READER THEREIN**

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THE ART OF MAKING

CATALOGUES

OF

LIBRARIES;

OR,

A METHOD TO OBTAIN IN A SHORT TIME A MOST  
PERFECT, COMPLETE, AND SATISFACTORY

Printed Catalogue

2

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY.

BY

A READER THEREIN.

LONDON:

Published and Sold by

THE LITERARY, SCIENTIFIC & ARTISTIC REFERENCE OFFICE,

No. 10, Brownlow Street, Holborn.

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## PREFACE.

The age in which we live is distinguished by vigorous and successful cultivation of the Arts, Literature, and Science. In every civilized country, men illustrious for talent, worth, and learning, are earnestly engaged in enlarging the boundaries of knowledge. But unfortunately, the vast and daily increasing results of their labour remain hidden and thus are of little or no service, from the want of some ready means of reference to them.

Several years have now elapsed since the complaints of the Public on the necessity of a Printed Catalogue of the British Museum Library aroused the attention of Parliament. Voluminous evidence was then taken; and all the witnesses that were examined, much as they differed in other points, were generally agreed as to the unlimited benefits that would result from a good Printed Catalogue. The sums so liberally voted year by year are a convincing proof that money is not wanting. Yet it has been concluded that grave impediments exist in the way of accomplishing this object.

On the Continent the same difficulty has been experienced, for there, it appears, Printed Catalogues of the large Libraries are either not extant, or, if commenced, have not been completed. For instance, the Imperial Library at Paris, consisting, it is said, of above 1,000,000 Printed Works and 100,000 MSS., has not a complete Catalogue although the Librarians have been engaged on one for more than a century.



At present the British Museum Library numbering some 800,000 volumes, after some 20 years of cataloguing at a cost that in 1853 amounted already to 100,000*l.* (vide Parliamentary Debates), has not yet published any such necessary auxiliary for the service of British intellect.

It is worthy of remark and also highly creditable to the Trustees of the British Museum, that they first originated and have persevered the longest in the desire of printing a Catalogue as indispensable for turning to proper account the treasures of the Library. When they desisted from urging that end, it was not from an insensibility to its advantages, but only from the pressure of the objections, and the adverse opinions of the Commission appointed to inquire respecting the Museum.

It is stated that the manuscript Catalogue, which is accessible to the frequenters of the Reading-room, if it is not satisfactory, is the best of all existing Catalogues; and that if the idea of its being improved and printed is all but abandoned, it is in consequence of the intrinsic difficulties which have been found to surround the formation of Catalogues of large Libraries.

The present Essay inquires what these difficulties are with a view to solve the problem of their removal. It will be a source of great satisfaction to the writer if the result of his labours shall be to further the accomplishment of the greatest boon that can be conferred on Literature—a really successful Printed Catalogue of its invaluable treasures.

LONDON:

*May*, 1856.

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