

**BULLETIN OF THE FREE LIBRARY  
OF PHILADELPHIA, NUMBER 1.  
DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF  
THE  
WRITINGS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT**

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**JOHN THOMSON**

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BY  
JOHN THOMSON



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## BULLETIN NUMBER 1

OF

# The Free Library of Philadelphia

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### PREFACE



HERE is no question connected with the building up and administration of a free library that is more difficult of solution than how to make the greatest number of books accessible to the general reader. A student or a bibliophile, by reason of the variety of his reading and the gradually developed habit of consulting books of reference, rarely fails to find in a library not only the works or volumes which will most aid him in the study on which he may be engaged at the time, but his very habit of browsing amongst books will assist him in discovering in the library (however large) the volumes which will most facilitate his pursuit of knowledge and give to him the greatest delight. There are, however, regular students and persistent readers in a library to whom the mere abundance of material which a large library affords proves a hindrance, from the want of a sufficient number of literary sign-posts indicating the road of knowledge over which certain sections of books will carry them. This leads to the thought that there are many sorts of catalogues which should be accessible in public libraries. Without a great dictionary catalogue covering the whole possessions of a library, the institution would be practically a tractless desert. This, therefore, is indispensable in every

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library ; but there are many by-roads of knowledge which require more detailed description than is possible to be found in the best prepared dictionary catalogue, however numerous the cross-references, or however careful the analytical work of the cataloguer. It is hoped that the preparation and issue from time to time of some descriptive catalogues of important series of works may prove of use, and by way of experiment it is proposed to publish as the BULLETIN OF THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, at irregular periods, a series of descriptive catalogues of collections of works such as have been published from time to time by important bibliographical societies, enterprising publishers, or book-loving collectors. There is no person who has been in the habit of using a public library who cannot speak with a certain amount of authority as to the value of the publications of the Roxburghe, Shakespeare, Cheetham, Scottish Text, Philobiblon, Surtees, and Early English Text, Societies. He will speak favourably of John Russell Smith's "Library of Old Authors," "The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages," published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls in England, the Vienna "Jahrbuch," and many similar works ; but who would say that the general reader in any free library had not much information to acquire which would be most useful to him if the contents of those works could be presented to him in an analytical form, readily accessible. It is proposed, therefore, to make an attempt to supply that want, and in order to render the FREE LIBRARY BULLETINS as generally useful as may be, they will be issued in parts, and an index added to each monograph. In this first number is given a descriptive catalogue of the writings of Sir Walter Scott, as published in that writer's "favourite edition," in ninety-eight volumes. While this author's poems and novels are familiar to every English-speaking person, there is a residuum of nearly fifty volumes of other writings by Sir Walter which are practically unknown to a majority of readers. In the second number the series of works described will be the "Library of Old Authors."

The mass of works published and known as "The Rolls Series" now numbers over two hundred and fifty volumes, and is being peri-

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odically continued. Without a general index and without the means of concentrating attention upon the contents of each particular volume by some such publication as the present, the works rescued from the manuscript rooms of the British Museum, the Bodleian and other great libraries of the world, become the working tools of only a very limited number of readers, and a mass of invaluable literary material, gathered together at great cost and with much labour, dealing with an infinite variety of subjects concerning different countries and far distant periods of time, is practically lost. The writer had occasion some years ago in pursuit of professional business to make a descriptive catalogue of about one hundred and fifty volumes of the Rolls Series. The notes describing them and those describing Sir Walter Scott's writings were originally drawn as a part of a proposed descriptive catalogue of the Irvington Library of the late Jay Gould, Esq. In undertaking the present BULLETIN it seemed a pity to lose the benefit of a long but pleasant labour, the full end of which was not obtained, owing to the death of Mr. Gould. Application was made to that gentleman's eldest daughter, Miss Helen Gould, and with great courtesy she placed at the disposal of the Trustees of the Free Library of Philadelphia the manuscript catalogue as far as it had been completed by the writer while he was engaged as private librarian to Mr. Gould. It is hoped that various notes describing other large series of works which form part of Mr. Gould's library, and copies of which have been acquired for the Free Library of Philadelphia, will from time to time be printed. The descriptive catalogue of "The Rolls Series" is nearly ready, and will form Number Three of the BULLETIN.