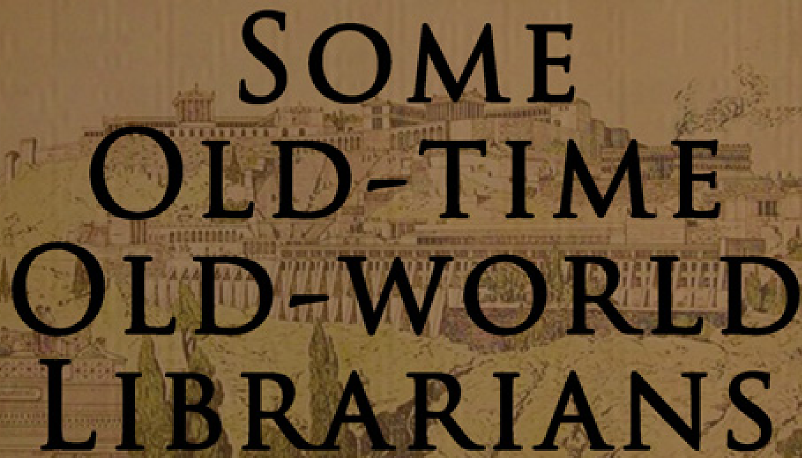

Some Old-time Old-world Librarians

Theodore W. Koch

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SOME OLD-TIME OLD-WORLD LIBRARIANS

BY

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SOME OLD-TIME OLD-WORLD LIBRARIANS

BY THEODORE W. KOCH

Mr. Herbert Putnam, in an address before the Ottawa meeting of the American Library Association, expressed a hope for a recognition, a re-cognition, in our library organization of that type which gave personality to the old-time libraries. However indifferent the old-time librarians may have been, or might be to-day, to the mere mechanism in our modern library organization, Mr. Putnam said,

> they succeeded in producing an atmosphere which had a potency of its own. It was that which at once took the visitor out of himself, away from affairs, and gave him touch with a different world, a sense of different values. Does he not miss it now? I think he does; and that, however he may respect the efficiency of the modern librarian as administrator, his really affectionate admiration turns back to the librarian of the old school, whose soul was lifted above mere administration or the method of the moment, or the manner of insistent service, and whose passionate regard was rather for the inside of a book than the outside of a reader—even the librarian to whom a reader seemed indeed but an interruption to an abstraction that was privileged.

The prevailing ideas concerning librarianship have changed so radically within the last generation or two that it may be worth while to study a few types of the old-fashioned librarian. The modern librarian has been so concerned with schemes of classification, card catalogues, and new methods of housing the present-day avalanche of books that he has not had time to familiarize himself with his forebears.

I must resist the temptation to go back to antiquity as a starting-point for our study, and simply allow myself one illustration to show that the ancients knew a good librarian when they saw him. For the library of Pergamos, Eumenes the Second tried to secure the services of Aristophanes of Byzantium, librarian to Ptolemy the Fifth. To assure his remaining in Alexandria the librarian was cast in prison, a simple device for keeping an efficient worker when he had a call elsewhere. But in this paper we can concern ourselves only with librarians who have come on to the scene since the invention of printing. In 1475 Pope Sixtus the Fourth made Platina librarian of the newly organized Vatican Library. Platina's account-book has been preserved and published, and from this can be seen the varied nature of his duties. The librarian had to attend to the purchase of books, send out

copyists, procure skins for binding, and supervise the making of books as well as their use. He had charge of the reading-room in which the books were chained to the desks, and was allowed discretionary power in the lending of books to high officials of the Church, to scholars, and even to strangers sojourning in Rome. His account-book shows that he looked very carefully after the comfort of the readers, and that he knew the men whom he could trust. Platina and his three pages slept in a room adjoining the library, and they were diligent in the use of juniper in fumigating the rooms, in sweeping the library with brooms, and dusting the books with foxtails. Montaigne, in the Journal of his travels in Italy in 1581, says that he inspected the Vatican Library without any difficulty. “Indeed,” he adds, “any one may visit it and make what extracts he likes; it is open almost every morning. I was taken to every part thereof by a gentleman who invited me to make use of it as often as I might desire.” Des Brosses, in his letters on Italy, published at the end of the eighteenth century, in writing of the Vatican Library says that “as Cardinal Quirini, the librarian, is also Bishop of Brescia, he is always away in his diocese. His portrait in the antechamber has to do duty instead.” The copyists, he added, are ignorant and dear.

The most picturesque figure in the annals of Italian librarianship is undoubtedly Antonio Magliabecchi. While his official position as librarian to Cosmo III., Grand Duke of Tuscany, gave him considerable prominence, he is remembered more especially for his personal characteristics and his vast store of self-acquired learning. He has been described as a literary glutton, and the most rational of bibliomaniacs, inasmuch as he read everything he bought. His own library consisted of 40,000 books and 10,000 MSS. His house literally overflowed with books; the stairways were lined with them, and they even filled the front porch. Many stories are told of his marvelous memory that was “like wax to receive and marble to retain.” One of the best known of these stories is that when Cosmo asked him for an extremely rare book he replied, “Signore, there is but one copy of that book in the world; it is in the Grand Signore’s library at Constantinople, and is the eleventh book in the second shelf on the right hand as you go in.”

In worldly matters Magliabecchi was extremely negligent. He even forgot to draw his salary for over a year. He wore his clothes until they fell from him, and thought it a great waste of time to undress at night, “life being so short and books so plentiful.” He welcomed all inquiring scholars, provided they did not disturb him while at work. He had a hearty dislike for the Jesuits. One day in pointing out the Palazzo Riccardi to a stranger he said, “Here the new birth of learning took place,” and then turning to the College of Jesuits, “There they have come back to bury it.” The Jesuits, on

hearing of this, characterized him rather cruelly as "*Est doctor inter bibliothecarios, sed bibliothecarius inter doctores.*" Magliabecchi rejoined with this sally:

> Some say that, after all, his learning is not so great;
> The learned allow him but librarian's state;
> And yet in sober truth it must be said
> All go to him for flour to make their bread.

Unlike some scholarly librarians of the past, ever watchful and jealous of manuscript material, which they themselves planned to edit, Isaac Casaubon, the humanist, was only anxious to read the manuscripts under his charge. For the most part, he was ready to leave the printing to others. Casaubon, too poor to buy books of his own, said of his father-in-law, Henri Estienne, who jealously kept him from gaining access to his books and manuscripts, that he guarded them "as griffins in India do their gold."

When Casaubon visited the library of the learned historian De Thou, of which he had heard so much, he found it far surpassed his expectations, and his heart sank at the thought of the little that he knew. In 1604 Casaubon was appointed sub-librarian in the Royal Library under De Thou, with the title *garde de la librarie du Roi*. His years there were the happiest of his life; his ideal was to read from early morning till late at night. In his *Ephemerides*, a diary in which he recited the progress of his studies day by day, there are such entries as: "To-day I got six hours for study. When shall I get my whole day?" And again, "This morning not to my books till seven o'clock or after; alas me! and after that the whole morning lost—nay, the whole day." When he was able to have a whole day for his studies he gratefully recorded the fact in his diary in the words *Hodie vixi*. Frequently the only entry is: "My daily task, thanks be to God!" Not knowing how long he should remain in Paris, he early resolved to read all the books in the Royal Library which he might not be able to find elsewhere. Consequently he did nothing in the way of classifying or cataloguing the material under his charge. When any one asked for a particular book he tried to find it. In 1608, four years after Casaubon entered the library, Hoeschel wrote him, asking whether the library contained any manuscripts of Arrianus. Casaubon replied that he did not know, but would look, and upon searching found two. In reply to Scaliger's request for manuscript fragments of a chronological nature, he says that he will have a thorough search made through all the cases. No wonder that Mark Pattison in his life of Casaubon said that "the librarian who reads is lost."

Casaubon was forcibly reminded that he was the King's librarian, and as such shared the obligations which the court imposed on all its entourage. He was not permitted while librarian to write a critical review of the Annals of Baronius, for fear of offending the Church, and Roman influence was paramount at the French court. When Casaubon visited Oxford he was hospitably entertained, but he succeeded in reserving many hours of each day for his studies in the Bodleian, an over-indulgence for which he paid the penalty during the second week in a sudden sense of dizziness which seized him one day while on his way to the library. "None of the colleges have attracted me so much as the Bodleian, the work rather for a king than for a private man," said Casaubon. He describes his own feelings when he writes Saumaise, who was reveling in the treasures of the Palatine, that he "must be suffering the torment of Tantalus, not being able to read all the books at once."

A younger contemporary of Casaubon, Gabriel Naudé by name, was destined to build up for Cardinal Mazarin a library which outstripped the one belonging to the King. In 1642 Naudé was invited to return to his native city of Paris and begin the task of laying the foundations of a new public library. Naudé had previously catalogued the library of Descordes, a Canon of Limoges, who had died, leaving his collection of 6,000 volumes to be sold, and Naudé prevailed upon Mazarin to purchase the entire lot. Then all the bookshops of Paris and all the waste-paper dealers were canvassed for possible treasures. Naudé had been at his task but little more than a year when there was opened in the Mazarin Palace a public library larger than anything that had been seen before in the French capital. The reading-room was open once a week on Thursdays, from eight until eleven and from two until five. Naudé himself counted as many as from eighty to a hundred readers, among whom were such scholars as Hugo Grotius, Aubrey, the historian, and René Moreau, Professor of Medicine at the University of Paris. Before long the number of volumes reached the respectable total of twelve thousand, thus exceeding the royal collection at that time by approximately two thousand volumes. Naudé was still far from satisfied, and undertook a book-hunting journey in Flanders, which brought such good results that in April, 1645, he went to Italy in search of additional volumes. This last trip brought into the library fourteen thousand books. An Italian friend, Vittorio di Rossi, who met him in Rome on this trip, has left an account of Naudé's method of book-buying. According to this writer, Naudé would enter a bookshop with a foot-rule in hand, and without going too much into details about the titles, would ask the bookseller to name a price for certain piles of books. The bookseller, taken aback by this sudden influx

of wholesale business, would name a price at random, which Naudé would beat down by degrees, and eventually buy in the books at such a low figure that the bookseller, seeing too late how he had been duped, would regret that he had not sold the lot to a grocer or a butter-man, who would surely have given him a larger sum for so much paper. After a visit from Naudé, the bookshops, says di Rossi, appeared to have been swept by a hurricane rather than visited by a bibliophile, and when one met him with a smile of satisfaction beaming through the dust and cobwebs that covered him, his lean figure swelled by the volumes which filled his pockets, one might readily conjecture that he had just come from a particularly satisfactory victory. Naudé claimed that in book-collecting, as in love and war, all means were fair. He was famous for his ability in driving a hard bargain. There is on record, however, one instance of his having been outwitted in the buying of a book, but it will not be laid to his discredit when it is known that the other party to the transaction was a Scotchman.

Perhaps the most extraordinary librarianship was that enjoyed by Diderot, who about 1765 decided to sell his library in order to provide a dowry for his daughter. The Empress Catherine of Russia heard through Grimm of the straits to which Diderot had been reduced, and instructed her agent to buy in the library at the owner's valuation. In this way Diderot received not only sixteen thousand livres, but he was graciously requested to consider himself the librarian of the new purchase at a salary of one thousand livres a year. Moreover—and this begins to sound like a fairy tale—Diderot was paid the salary for fifty years in advance! Needless to say, this was only a pension in disguise. Catherine wrote to Madame du Deffand:

> I should never have expected that the purchase of a library would bring me so many fine compliments; all the world is bepraising me about M. Diderot's library. But now confess, you to whom humanity is indebted for the strong support that you have given to innocence and virtue in the person of Calas, that it would have been cruel and unjust to separate a student from his books!

Lessing may be taken to typify one class of old-fashioned librarians, the men of letters who regarded an appointment to a library position as a sinecure. Installed as librarian of the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel, Lessing took advantage of the privilege of the librarian of his day by substituting the writing of books for the less attractive duty of classifying and cataloguing them. His successor in office, Langer, was very bitter in his criticism of Lessing's administration, claiming that he had left much of his work undone. He even offered a reward to any one who could show him a trace of Lessing's handwriting in the library. To this day the only scrap of it is a note attached to a collection of engravings. Geissler wrote Langer in 1781, saying

"that Lessing left you far too much to do was natural, because he was a genius, and this class seldom do their duty, but always follow their inclinations." While Lessing was confessedly weak in matters of routine, he was strong where the general welfare of the library was concerned. He proposed a good plan for disposing of duplicates and filling the gaps in the library. It was also specified that "to the mere mechanical duties, the librarian was to attend to just as much or just as little as he pleased. For these he was to have two assistants and a man-servant. His main function would be to investigate thoroughly the library and to bring to light its chief treasures." This last was Lessing's principal concern. "A catalogue of treasures," said he, "is good enough, but it is no new treasure," which is a point hardly conceded by the librarian of to-day who is in the midst of making over an old card catalogue.

So much for the old-fashioned librarian on the Continent. Let us now look at a few of his class in Great Britain and gather some illustrations of early ideas of library management in that country. The Bishop of Worcester in 1464 stipulated that his librarian be a graduate in theology and a good preacher, and in addition he was expected to explain hard passages in the Bible, make lists of books in his keeping, and take an inventory of the library each year on the Friday after the Feast of Relics.

Sir Thomas Bodley, in the first draft of the Statutes which he drew up for the administration of the library founded by him, explicitly states that the keeper shall open and close the library doors at certain hours, varying with the season, and that

> at these prescribed hours he shall cause to be rung the warning bell of his ingress and egress, that men may shun the discommodities of repairing thither oversoon, or abiding there too long, which the difference of clocks may occasion very often, to the prejudice and hindrance of himself as well as others.

The keeper is to see that a register of gifts shall be kept,

> written with a special, fair, and pleasing hand; and withal to be exposed where it may be still in sight, for every man to view, as an eminent and endless token of our thankful acceptation of whatsoever hath been given, and as an excellent inducement for posterity to imitate these former good examples.

The founder ruled that before any graduate or any person of note would be given the privilege of the Bodleian Library he should appear before the Vice-Chancellor or his substitute, and there in the presence of the Library Keeper he should take the oath of fidelity to the library, which was to be administered with these words:

> You shall Promise and Swear in the Presence of Almighty God, That whensoever you shall repair to the Publik Library of this University, you will conform yourself to study with Modesty and Silence; and use, both the Books, and everything appertaining to their Furniture, with a careful Respect to their longest Conservation: And that neither your self in Person, nor any other whatsoever, by your Procurement or Privity, shall either openly or underhand, by way of embezzling, changing, razing, defacing, tearing, cutting, noting, interlining, or by voluntary corrupting, blotting, blurring, or any other manner of mangling or misusing, any one or more of the said Books, either wholly or in part, make any Alteration: But shall hinder and impeach, as much as lieth in you, all and every such Offender or Offenders, by detecting their Demeanour unto the Vice-Chancellor, or to his Deputy then in place, within the next Three Days after it shall come to your Knowledge: so help you God by Christ's Merits, according to the Doctrine of His Holy Evangelists.

King James I. was so appreciative of the work of Bodley that he granted letters patent the year after the library was opened, naming the library after the founder, whom he later knighted, and whose name, said he, should have been not Bodley, but Godley.

Richard Bentley was an intellectual prodigy who in early life fell heir to the cloak of librarianship. He coupled with his genius for scholarship a large enthusiasm for the advancement of learnings and with a daring almost insolent he shook off the "clamors of the half-learned who are always noisy against their betters." This ever-pugnacious determination to carry all projects through a maze of falsities is seen even in his career as royal librarian. At thirty-one, already well on the highway of scholarly recognition, he was induced to take the vacant office of King's Librarian. His first step was characteristic. To such good use did he put the few months left before the evaded Licensing Act expired, that the significant record remains that he "exacted near a thousand volumes." Bentley's next step was to endeavor to secure some vacant rooms to relieve the cramped condition of his library at St. James's Palace. The Duke of Marlborough, his neighbor across the hall, with obliging diplomacy, undertook to plead his cause, with the result that the future hero of Blenheim "got the closets for himself." Not disheartened by this perfidy, the young librarian, after declaring that the royal library was "not fit to be seen," started on what Lord Evelyn warmly called his "glorious enterprise" of building a new library. The Treasury consented to the proposal, but the bill to Parliament was shelved, owing to the press of public business. In the mean time Bentley took the library's chief treasure, the Alexandrine MS. of the Greek Bible, to his own rooms in St. James's Palace in order that "persons might see it without seeing the library," thereby establishing a new and original precedent in library economy. Out of one incident in his early tenure of office grew a quarrel resulting in several curiosities of literature and one masterpiece of scientific

criticism. Dr. Aldrich, the dean of Christ Church, had induced a young Oxford man, the Honorable Charles Boyle, to edit the *Epistles of Phalaris*, and, in preparing his work for the printer, Boyle desired to consult a manuscript in the King's Library. Accordingly he wrote to a bookseller in London, asking him to have some one collate it for him.

When Bentley took charge of the library, in May, 1694, he granted the loan of the manuscript for the purpose, and allowed ample time for the work to be done, but the collator failed to complete his task before the expiration of the time of the loan. The bookseller then very unfairly represented to Boyle that Bentley had acted churlishly in the matter, and Boyle, without verifying the story, said in his preface: "I have also procured a collation as far as epistle No. 40 of a manuscript in the Royal Library; the librarian, with that courtesy which distinguishes him, refused me the further use of it." Bentley happened to see an early presentation copy before the bulk of the edition was issued, and he at once wrote to Boyle, saying that the statement was incorrect, and gave him the true facts. Boyle sent an evasive reply, but let the statement stand as written. While Bentley was urged to refute the slander, he remained silent. "Out of a natural aversion to all quarrels and broils," he wrote, with what later seemed refined irony, "and out of regard to the editor himself, I resolved to take no notice of it, but to let the matter drop." A few years later Bentley reviewed Boyle's work in a way that incited Boyle, with the aid of half a dozen Oxford wits, to publish, the book popularly known as *Boyle against Bentley*, in which insults were heaped upon the royal librarian.

In 1699 Bentley was appointed Head Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and, though still continuing to hold the office of King's Librarian, he removed to Cambridge. Here he continued the policy displayed in connection with the Alexandrine manuscript. When Dr. Conyers Middleton became librarian of Trinity College he published a plan for the classification of the books, and took occasion to attack Bentley for retaining some manuscripts, including the precious Codex Bezæ, in his own house. But Bentley was always able to fight his own battles, and he inaugurated, by what his enemies were pleased to call his "insolent erudition," that famous series of bitter college feuds which ended only with the death of their vigorous and valiant instigator. Even the admiring, kindly Pepys was brought to admit that "our friend's learning wants a little filing," while Bishop Stillingfleet was heard to agree that did his friend Richard but possess the "gift of humility he would indeed be the most extraordinary man in Europe."

The name of Bentley brings to mind that of a later classical scholar who was an interesting misfit in the library world of a century ago, Richard Porson. His professorship of Greek at Cambridge paid only forty pounds a year, and so he welcomed the additional appointment of librarian to the newly founded London Institution in 1806, at a salary of two hundred pounds per year, with a suite of apartments thrown in. "I am sincerely rejoiced," wrote Richard Sharp, one of the electors, in notifying Porson of the appointment, "in the prospect of those benefits which the institution is likely to derive from your reputation and talents, and of the comforts which I hope that you will find in your connection with us." To-day the only existing indications of his tenure of office are the acquisition during his time of some Greek and Latin classics, and some manuscript notes in a few volumes in the library. He made no attempt to catalogue the books. The managers of the Institution wrote him to the effect that "they only knew him to be their librarian by seeing his name attached to the receipts for his salary." He reciprocated by characterizing the managers as "mercantile and mean beyond merchandise and meanness." While Porson had three essentials of librarianship—a good memory, a knowledge of books, and imagination, and was always willing to dispense information to such as called upon him for it—yet he was lacking in methodical attention to work. Dr. Parr once remarked that "if the Duke of Brunswick at the head of his Huns and Vandals were to burn every book of every library in Cambridge, Porson, being as Longinus was said to be, a living library, would make the University hear without books more than they are likely to read with books."

In 1752 David Hume was appointed librarian of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh. Hume described it as "a petty office of forty or fifty guineas a year," and again as a "genteel office." He accepted it because it gave him "the command of a large library." A member of the Faculty was a candidate at the same time, but Hume got the majority of votes. "Then," says Hume, "came the violent cry of Deism, atheism, and skepticism. 'Twas represented that my election would be giving the sanction of the greatest and most learned body in this country to my profane and irreligious principles." The ladies sided with Hume, and one of them broke with her lover because he voted against the philosopher-historian. After he had been in office two years, Hume was censured by three of the curators of the library for buying the *Contes* of La Fontaine, Bussy-Rabutin's *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, and Crébillon's *L'écumoire*, deemed indecent and "unworthy of a place in a learned library." The absurdity of the resolution of censure is shown by the fact that these works are now in almost every library which makes any pretension of being classed among the learned. Hume wrote to Lord

Advocate Dundas, claiming that in his opinion the impropriety did not matter if it were executed with decency and ingenuity! “Being equally unwilling to lose the use of the books, and to bear an indignity, I retain the office, but have given Blacklock, our blind poet, a bond of annuity for the salary. I have now put it out of these malicious fellows’ power to offer me any indignity, while my motive for remaining in this office is so apparent.” The assistant librarian, Goodall, who was seldom sober, was busied with his *Vindication* of Mary, Queen of Scots, while Hume was writing his history of England, and the library was left to run itself.

The director of the British Museum formerly had only the title of Principal Librarian, which was, to a certain extent, a misnomer, as he has always had as much to do with the antiquities as with the books. To him is intrusted the custody of the entire museum, his duty being to look after the welfare of the whole institution and to see that the respective duties of the various officers and subordinates are properly performed. The Principal Librarian, as housekeeper, had also the nomination of the housemaids, until the doubtful privilege passed, in Sir Henry Ellis’s day, to the principal trustees.

The head of each department is called its “Keeper,” and in most departments there is also an Assistant Keeper. These titles are reminiscent of the prime duty of the old-time librarian. One of them once consulted the trustees on the question of the acceptance by the Museum of a certain anti-Christian manuscript by a learned Jew—which he argued would not be pernicious, as the ignorant would not read it, and the souls of the learned were of little importance.

Dr. Templeman, the first superintendent of the Reading Room, seems to have found his duties rather onerous. After occupying the position eight months he asks to be relieved from what he considers the excessive attendance of six hours each day, as this “is more than he is able to bear.” Under date of March 18, 1760, it is recorded that “last Tuesday, no company coming to the reading-room, Dr. Templeman ventured to go away about two o’clock.” Twenty readers per month during the first few months was a high average, and after the novelty had worn off the average dropped to ten or twelve.

The early librarians at the British Museum were little more than guides appointed to show visitors around the institution. In 1802, three attendants were appointed to relieve the “Under and Assistant Librarians from the daily duty of showing the Museum,” and they were given an increase in pay. As late as 1837 no less a person than the Rev. Henry Francis Cary, Keeper of

Printed Books, gave poor health as an argument for his promotion to the Principal Librarianship, which, as he said, would give him less to do.

Sir Henry Ellis, when he was Principal Librarian, defended the closing of the Museum for three weeks each autumn, and argued that if that were not done the place would become "unwholesome," and that to open it during the Easter holidays would be dangerous, as "the most mischievous portion of the population is abroad and about at such a time." He further argued for the closing of the institution on public holidays, on the ground that "people of a higher grade would hardly wish to come to the Museum at the same time with sailors from the dockyards and the girls whom they might bring with them." From this it can be clearly seen that he was not in touch with the growing liberality in the administration of public institutions and the influx of democratic ideas.

In the opinion of many, modern librarianship begins with Sir Anthony Panizzi's administration of the British Museum. An Italian carbonaro, under indictment for the publication of a pamphlet attacking the judicial system of Modena, he escaped to London, where, in 1831, he had an opportunity to enter the service of the Museum. The administration was then at its lowest ebb. The Elgin marbles and the King's Library had just been acquired, but the régime was antiquated and the policy very narrow. Panizzi was put to work at cataloguing the pamphlets in the King's Library. Owing to dissatisfaction with the progress of the subject catalogue, the trustees, in 1834, outlined a plan for an alphabetical catalogue. The plan was an unsatisfactory one, but Panizzi was put in charge of the work. As he did more work than any two of his colleagues, the trustees raised his salary, and when there was an investigation of the administration of the British Museum it was Panizzi who contributed the most important evidence. Valuable reforms were introduced, and Panizzi became Keeper of Printed Books in 1837. This appointment brought out a certain British anti-foreign prejudice against Panizzi which pursued him throughout his official career. There were meetings held to arouse sentiment against the promotion of this "foreigner," and a speaker on one of these occasions made an open statement that Panizzi had been seen on the streets of London selling white mice! At the time of his appointment, the collections were just being removed from Montague House to the new quarters, serious attempts were being made to fill the gaps in the collections, and the catalogue was being attacked in real earnest. The transfer of the collection was accomplished with remarkable expedition, but the progress of the catalogue was less satisfactory. The responsibility for accepting or rejecting the supervision of this work was left by the trustees to Panizzi, and with his usual courage he decided to undertake the task. With

the assistance of Jones, Watts, and others, he framed a set of catalogue rules which in many respects have never been superseded. An insufficient staff and an unfortunate decision of the trustees (overruling Panizzi's advice) to proceed in strict alphabetical order, occasioned a good deal of trouble and criticism. The attempt to print one portion of the catalogue while another part was in preparation, before it had been definitely decided as to what the main entry for many items would be, was responsible for the breakdown of the scheme. After the publication of one volume in 1841, the decision to print the catalogue was abandoned, and Panizzi persuaded the trustees to engage an efficient staff of transcribers to copy the titles on slips, and he was thus enabled to put before the public a plan for a comprehensive catalogue. He failed to see the advantage of a printed catalogue over the slip catalogue, and was more concerned in supplying the deficiencies of the library, a task in which he had no rivals. By submitting a list of the needs in nearly every branch of literature, he procured, in 1845, an annual grant of ten thousand pounds, and through the judicious administration of this fund the Museum rose in rank from the sixth or seventh to the second, if not the first, place among the libraries of the world. In 1848 dissatisfaction with conditions in the Museum, due to lack of space, was so great that a royal commission of inquiry was instituted, and as a result of Panizzi's success, the administration of the Museum was put into his hands.

In temperament Panizzi was strong and masterful, but his nature was warm and generous. "He governed his library as his friend Cavour governed his country," said Dr. Garnett, "perfecting its internal organization with one hand while he extended its frontiers with the other." When traveling abroad he always rushed to visit the chief libraries first. At Bologna he found a manuscript catalogue so carefully made that he at once asked whose work it was, and when told that it had all been done by one man who had written every title with his own hand, Panizzi insisted upon seeing him. A tall, thin-faced, threadbare individual appeared whom Panizzi plied with questions, and then, to the astonishment of the attendants, Panizzi in an outburst of Italian enthusiasm hugged and kissed the timid cataloguer on both cheeks.

Panizzi was one of the most conscientious of officials and was rarely absent from his post. Sydney Smith wrote him several times inviting him to dinner on a certain date. "Receiving no answer," the wit wrote later, "I concluded you were dead, and I invited your executors. News, however, came that you were out of town. I should as soon have thought of St. Paul's or the Monument being out of town, but as it was positively asserted, I have filled up your place."

Next to Panizzi, the most attractive personality in the annals of the British Museum, to us at least, is Richard Garnett. Like another native of Lichfield, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Garnett will be remembered more for what he was than for what he wrote. To carry the comparison still further, both were interpreters and left volumes of critical biography, both were poets of no mean order, both were story-tellers and entertainers of repute, famed alike for their friendships, their love of learning, and their erudition. While Dr. Johnson's most enduring monument is his famous dictionary, Dr. Garnett left behind a printed catalogue of the British Museum containing four and a half million entries, thereby earning the gratitude of scholars throughout the world. The British public never quite forgave Panizzi for claiming that a printed catalogue of their national library was too big a task to undertake.

Richard Garnett may be said to have spent his whole life in the British Museum. His father was an assistant keeper, and at the age of sixteen the young man was made an assistant in the Printed Book Department. Promotions came rapidly until in 1875 he was made Assistant Keeper and superintendent of the reading-room. Garnett's work as "placer" or classifier, combined with his rare memory, gave him a remarkable command of the resources of the library. There seemed to be nothing that he had not read and few subjects that he had not studied intimately. Few men of his time knew both the inside and outside of books as he did. Whatever the subject, he gave the impression that his knowledge of it was fresh and waiting for use. Only one fall from grace is recorded. Mrs. Garnett had brought home, after a country holiday, what she believed to be a squirrel's nest which she placed on the drawing-room table to show her friends. A dispute arose as to whether squirrels made nests. Mrs. Garnett appealed to her husband. "Richard, do squirrels build nests?" He hesitated, then replied: "I really do not know; I do not think so. I must look it up."

Dr. Garnett was so endowed with a sense of good humor that he was never perturbed by the chronic fussers who frequented the place. A blank-book in which the public can jot down suggestions for the improvement of the service or of titles recommended for purchase has for years been found to ease the public mind. The authorities make a practice of entering in the margin a reply to each suggestion made. When a reader entered a request that somebody's life of Satan be obtained, the official comment read: "Purchase not thought necessary." Another suggestion was: "Best sixpenny cookery by Josiah Oldfield does not appear in the catalogue, but should, I think, be procured, as it is a useful vegetarian work." This was applied for on December 26th—note the date—and was promptly ordered. There is a class of beings to whom it is a great joy to discover a book title that is not in

the British Museum, or, if there, cannot be found for the time being, or is wrongly described, as they think, in the catalogue. "So you see, sir," said Dr. Johnson on an occasion of this kind, "when it was lost it was of immense consequence, and when found it was no matter at all."

Garnett's administration of the reading-room was characterized by a large increase in the number of readers, the placing of special bibliographies in the room to supply as far as possible the want of a subject catalogue, the formation of a second library of reference in the gallery in the reading-room, and the introduction of electric light. The mere mention of electric light shows that we have come down to our own day, and we must take leave of the old-time librarian. Naturally the atmosphere of the modern public library, with its rush and hustle, proved uncongenial to the old-fashioned librarian. The less rapidly changing college and university libraries harbored him much longer, but with modern efficiency tests I suppose that he, too, is to be driven even from that last resort. The following has been suggested as an appropriate epitaph for him:

"He loved his library and his books more than the service of his fellow-men."

Upon the librarian of to-day devolves many problems not dreamed of by his forerunners. But the success of the library and its utility always have been and always must be measured, to quote Lord Goschen, largely by the "affability and competence of the librarian." What is wanted, according to this wise old statesman, is a librarian who will suffer fools gladly and who, when asked foolish questions, will guide the questioners aright.

THEODORE W. KOCH.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Book name and author have been added to the original book cover, overlaying an image of the ancient library of Pergamos.

[The end of *Some Old-Time, Old-World Librarians* by Theodore W. Koch]