

THE BRITISH MUSEUM  
READING ROOM

*WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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*WITH MR. QUINTIN WADDINGTON*

THE ENGLISH CATALOGUE OF BOOKS 1801-1836. [To be published at £4 4s. net.]  
*In preparation.*

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING ROOM

*A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS*

BY

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1801-1836"*

LONDON

GRAFTON AND CO., 69, GREAT RUSSELL ST.

1912

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,  
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.,  
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

## PREFACE

THIS book is revised and enlarged from my lecture, "How to use the Reading Room of the British Museum," delivered (by kind permission of the Trustees) at the British Museum on several occasions during the years 1911-1912. The manuscript, by permission of Sir Frederick Kenyon, was submitted to Mr. G. K. Fortescue, the Keeper of Printed Books, who was good enough to read it, and to whom I am indebted for several valuable notes.

R. A. PEDDIE.

*St. Bride Foundation,  
Bride Lane, E.C.*

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# THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING ROOM

## CHAPTER I

### THE LIBRARY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE collection of books forming the National Library of this country differs considerably from other great collections in Europe. Their basis has generally been monastic or scholastic, whereas the origin of the British Museum was of a much more general character. This difference is still manifest, as the method of acquiring books has been much more catholic in Bloomsbury than in many of the other great libraries of the world. Then, too, the British Museum has acquired very few special collections. The great collections of books, the King's

Library and the Grenville Library, were of quite general character, and Sir Joseph Banks's library, composed as it is, principally of works on natural science, is the one outstanding special collection.

The two great sources from which books have been received are, as regards modern English works, the Copyright Acts, and as regards foreign books, purchase. The amount available for purchase, although it has always been inadequate, has, nevertheless, sufficed for the gathering together of a mighty collection of books unequalled anywhere in the world. The collection of each country's literature on the shelves of the British Museum is finer and more complete than is to be found anywhere else outside the walls of its own national library.

A library, however, may possess vast stores of books and yet, without guides and catalogues, may be almost useless to



the reader. The British Museum makes no such error. It is the only library of first-class rank that possesses a complete printed catalogue of its treasures. This great printed catalogue and the *Subject Index of Books acquired by the British Museum since 1880*, which readers owe to the industry of Mr. G. K. Fortescue, Keeper of Printed Books, place the British Museum Library absolutely at the head of the great research libraries of the world.

Statistics of the number of volumes in such libraries as the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris are unreliable and of doubtful value ; but it may be taken for granted that there are between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000 volumes in the Bloomsbury establishment, and that, without doubt, it is the largest collection of books in existence, not even excepting the great library of the Rue Richelieu.

## CHAPTER II

### CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION TO THE READING ROOM

No person is admitted to study in the Reading Room of the British Museum without a ticket. The official regulations governing the issue of these tickets are as follows—

1. The use of the Reading Room is restricted to the purposes of research and reference. The room is kept open on every day of the week except Sunday, and except Good Friday, Christmas Day, and any Fast or Thanksgiving Day appointed by authority : except also the first four weekdays of March and September.

2. The hours are from nine in the

morning until seven in the evening throughout the year.<sup>1</sup>

3. Persons desiring to be admitted to the Reading Room must apply in writing to the Director, specifying their profession or business, their place of abode, and the *particular purpose* for which they seek admission.

4. Every such application must be made two days at least before admission is required, and must be accompanied by a written recommendation from a householder (whose address can be identified from the ordinary sources of reference, and who must also be a person of recog-

<sup>1</sup> Artificial light not being used in the Library, books cannot be supplied for the Reading Room service after 3.30 in January, February, November, and December ; 4.30 in March and October ; 5.30 in April and September ; 6.30 in May, June, July, and August ; but readers who cannot reach the Reading Room before the hours specified may apply to the Superintendent by letter, to be delivered some hours in advance, for books (not exceeding five in number) to be held ready for their use ; such application, when possible, to be accompanied by tickets duly filled up.

nised position), with full signature and address, stated to be given *on personal knowledge* of the applicant, and certifying that he or she will make proper use of the Reading Room.<sup>1</sup>

5. If such application or recommendation be unsatisfactory, the Director will either refuse admission or submit the case to the Trustees for their decision.

6. The tickets of admission (*a*) are not transferable; and (*b*) must be produced if required.

7. No person will be admitted for the purpose of preparing for examination, of writing prize essays, or of competing for prizes, unless on special reason being shown; or for the purpose of consulting current directories.

8. No person under twenty-one years of age is admissible, except under a special order from the Trustees.

<sup>1</sup> The Trustees cannot accept the recommendations of hotel keepers or of boarding-house or lodging house keepers in favour of their lodgers.

9. Readers may not write upon, damage, or make any mark upon any Printed Book, Manuscript, or Map, belonging to the Museum.

10. Readers may not lay the paper on which they are writing on any Book, Manuscript, or Map.

11. No tracing is allowed to be made without express permission from the Director.

12. Silence must be strictly observed in the Reading Room.

13. Readers are particularly requested to replace on the shelves of the Reading Room, as soon as done with, such books of reference as they may have had occasion to remove for the purpose of consultation.

14. Any reader taking a Book, Manuscript, Map, or other property of the Trustees, out of the Reading Room, will be dealt with according to law.

15. Readers, before leaving the Read-

ing Room, must restore to an attendant, at the centre counter, all Books, Manuscripts, or Maps, which they have received, and must reclaim and get back the tickets by which they obtained them. Readers are held responsible for such Books, Manuscripts, or Maps, until the tickets have been re-delivered to them.

16. Any infringement of these Rules will render the privilege of admission liable to forfeiture.

17. Cases of incivility, of undue delay in supply of books, or other failure in the service, should be immediately reported to the Superintendent of the Reading Room.

18. The privilege of admission is granted upon the following conditions—

- (a) That it may be at any time suspended by the Director.
- (b) That it may be at any time withdrawn by the Trustees in their absolute discretion.

19. All communications respecting the use of the Reading Room must be addressed to—

“THE DIRECTOR,  
BRITISH MUSEUM, W.C.”

\* \* It is requested that any reader observing a defect in, or damage to, a Book, Manuscript, or Map, will point out the same to the Superintendent of the Reading Room.

BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES.

In the case of a ticket for the Reading Room having been applied for in accordance with the regulations, and the conditions having been complied with, a letter will be received by the student informing him that he can obtain the ticket required on application. This letter should be presented at the office in the corridor leading from the Main Hall to the Reading Room, and after signing the register a ticket will be issued.

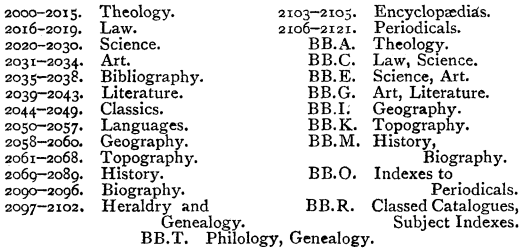
A ticket for a day or two will be issued on personal application at the Director's Office, but it is always advisable to make the formal application if possible.

A special ticket is issued to persons wishing to make temporary searches in London newspapers, which is only available in the Newspaper Room ; but the ordinary Reader's Ticket is also available for the Newspaper Room and for the Reading Room of the Department of Oriental Books and MSS.





### INDICATING ARRANGEMENT OF READING ROOM



## CHAPTER III

### THE READING ROOM

THE Reading Room, as will be seen from the annexed plan A, is circular. It may be compared to a wheel, the hub of which is formed by three concentric circles, the inner one being the desk where readers give up their books when done with, and where queries can be addressed to the Superintendent of the Reading Room, whose desk forms the centre. The second of the three circles is devoted to sundry catalogues, the use of which will be explained later, and the outer circle is occupied by the General Catalogue. From the hub the spokes of the wheel are formed by the readers' tables which radiate from the Catalogue Desk. These number nineteen, and

each is divided into spaces 3 ft. 6 in. wide, for the use of readers. Each person has in front of him a folding book desk adjustable to any angle, and a shelf, also folding, for additional volumes. He will also find ink and a penwiper and penrack in a recess in front. On the table should be found a blotting pad and a paper-knife. Red ink, gum, paste and additional pens can be obtained on application at the Centre Desk. On the upper rail of the desk will be seen the distinguishing mark of the seat composed of a letter and a number, as, for instance, A 14. This number should be noticed when the seat is taken, as it has to be placed on all tickets for books. There are additional tables placed between the long desks for use when the room is full. These are marked with a double letter, as, for instance, AA 4. These are flat, without partitions, and the larger ones lift up to form sloping desks on which

large volumes such as newspapers or an atlas can be placed.

Around the walls of the Reading Room will be found bookshelves holding some 20,000 reference books which are available for use without the formality of filling up a ticket.

Every alternate line of tables, viz. those lettered A, C, E, etc., have at the end nearest to the Catalogue Desk a small bookcase which is called BBA, BBC, etc., as the case may be. The books in these cases are also available for use without filling up tickets. The shelves under the General Catalogue are occupied by books, and the two sides of the service passage which runs from the centre of the room to the inner library are fitted with shelves and give room for a considerable number of reference books. These will be again referred to when the reference collection is dealt with in detail.

When books for which tickets have been handed in are done with it is necessary to take them to the Centre Desk. This, it will be noticed, is divided into three sections: A-G, H-O, and P-Z. According to the initial of the reader's surname the books are taken to one or other of these sections and handed to the attendant, who will return the tickets for them. Until these tickets are back in the possession of the reader he is held responsible for the books.

Should a reader require to consult the same books on consecutive days, it is advisable when giving up the books to put a slip of paper with his name written at the end in all books, and request that they may be kept for him. Slips for this purpose are provided at the Centre Desk. The books will then be reserved for him (unless required by another reader in the meantime) and they can be obtained the next day by placing the same tickets

as used on the previous day, with the seat mark corrected if necessary, in the box marked "Kept Books," which will be found on Bar A and Bar T (*see* plan B).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GENERAL CATALOGUE

THE General Catalogue, as arranged for the use of readers, is contained in about 1000 large folio guard books which occupy the upper shelf of the outer of the three concentric circles in the centre of the Reading Room. It is generally described as an Author Catalogue, but this is not quite accurate. It is an Alphabetical Catalogue in which the arrangement by authors' names predominates, and in which there are quite a number of subject headings under which anonymous works are grouped. It must always be recollected that the alphabetical arrangement of the letters I and J is as if they were one letter, and

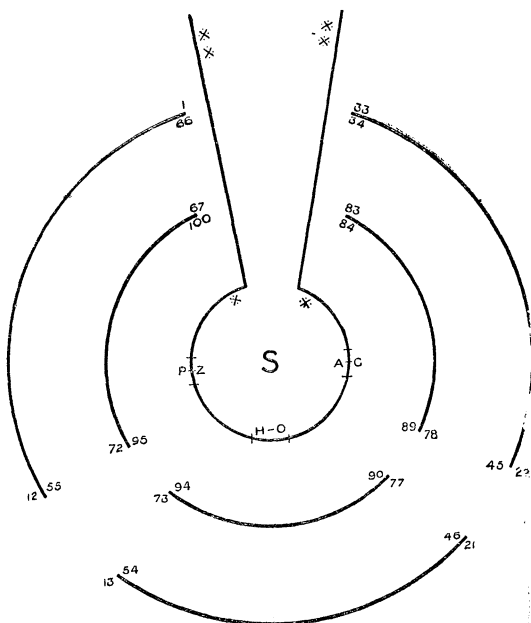


this applies also to the letters U and V.<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, a relic of the times when they were merely different forms of the same letter. It leads to many complications, but if readers once grasp the principle they will not make the mistake that new readers sometimes make and assert that there are no works by William Jones in the catalogue, because the name Jones has not been found in the place where they expected it would occur.

The annexed diagram of the Catalogue Desk indicates the approximate position of each letter of the alphabet. Each volume will be found to be plainly lettered with the contents. Each page of a volume of the catalogue when open contains on the left-hand side a column of the printed catalogue and, on the right, the additional entries of books which have been acquired since that section of

<sup>1</sup> It is understood that this arrangement is to be altered during the next few years.

# PLAN B INDICATING ARRANGEMENT OF CENTRE DESKS



## General Catalogue.

A-D. 1-12.  
D-H. 13-21.  
H-M. 22-33.  
M-P. 34-45.  
P-S. 46-54.  
S-Z. 55-66.

## Music Catalogue.

73-83.

\* Box for Book Tickets.

\*\* Box for Kept Book Tickets.

S. Superintendent.

the catalogue was printed. Care should be taken to examine both series of titles for the book wanted.

In searching for the works of a particular author it must be observed that the form of the name used by the Museum authorities, in cataloguing, is the full name of the author, not necessarily the name which appears on the title-page, so that if a book by John Smith is looked for, the possibility must be borne in mind that the full name of the author may be John William Arthur Smith, in which case his works would be found at some considerable distance from the place they would occupy were his name plain John Smith. No difficulty will be found in tracing the works of authors with ordinary names, but when it is required to find the works of a peer, say Lord Rosebery, it is necessary first to look up his title in the catalogue. Under the heading of *Rosebery* (Archibald Philip

Primrose), *Earl of*, will be found a reference as follows : *see* Primrose (Archibald Philip), *Earl of Rosebery*. This is called a cross-reference, and is found under all titles and other subsidiary names, and refers in each case to the full family name which is always the main entry in the catalogue. As regards English authors, the rule for finding their works in the catalogue is really quite simple. Princes of the Blood Royal are under their first Christian name, all other authors under their family name, whether they are peers, bishops or commoners.

With foreign authors the case is somewhat more complicated, but whatever form of the name is looked up first a cross-reference should be found pointing to the main entry.

Books written by authors who conceal their identity under pseudonyms are comparatively common. When the pseudonym is composed of one word,

such as *Cosmopolite*, *A Lady*, *An Indian*, *The Onlooker*, the work will be found under the pseudonym in the catalogue even when the real name of the author is known. Cross-references are made from the real names. This is very essential in the case of authors who have used many pseudonyms, such as Daniel Defoe, under whose name in the catalogue will be found cross-references to some of the pseudonyms used by that most prolific writer, and these must be looked up before the reader is able to get a complete list of the author's works. But there is another class of pseudonyms in which the author uses several words or a phrase as his disguise. Take, for instance, Defoe's famous title, "*A True-Born Englishman*." These pseudonyms are ignored by the Museum Catalogue and the works are treated as anonymous. This brings us to the treatment of anonymous literature. The method adopted

in the General Catalogue is to take the first important word as a heading. As in the case of pseudonymous literature a subsequently discovered author makes no difference to the position of the work. The early anonymous editions of "Waverley" are still to be found under the heading of "Waverley," while the later ones, which bear the name of the author on their title-pages, will be found under Scott.

The selection of the most important word for the catalogue heading appears occasionally somewhat arbitrary, but the practice becomes clear when examined. "An Essay on Knowledge," for instance, will be found under the word "Essay," but "An Essay on French Literature" must be looked for under the heading "French Literature." A proper name occurring in the title is always selected as the heading. A somewhat confusing practice is the placing of all anonymous

and official works dealing with England, Great Britain, or Great Britain and Ireland under the heading England. This, however, is a great saving of time, and it enables the reader to see the whole series of Proclamations (for instance) at once, without having to travel to other parts of the catalogue. It may be interesting to note here that this heading, England, has two indexes, one the usual index of sub-headings and the other an index by titles of all works catalogued under that heading. This is one of the most useful features of the catalogue. The heading is a very large one, but this title index enables the reader to find the smallest pamphlet as easily as the Statutes of the Realm.

It is always advisable, when searching for an anonymous or pseudonymous book, not to be disheartened at the first failure. It is quite possible that the main word or words have been overlooked

and that a further study of the title will suggest another heading under which the work might be found.

Each entry in the General Catalogue looks somewhat like this—

**FORSHAW** (CHARLES FREDERICK). Pearls of Poesy. A biographical birthday book of popular poets of the period at the time of the coronation of King George and Queen Mary. Edited by C. F. Forshaw. (Foreword. By Anna Comtesse de Brémont.) pp. 382. *Elliot Stock: London*, 1911. 8°. **11604. ff. 14.**

First, the author's name in heavy black type, then the title of the work, followed by the place of publication, the date, and the size. At the end of the entry is the pressmark in black type. This is a combination of figures and letters which indicate the position of the book on the shelves.

Having found the required work in the General Catalogue, the next step is to fill up a ticket, a supply of which will be found in boxes on top of the Catalogue



Desks. A reduced reproduction of the ticket is given on pages 28 and 29.

The necessary particulars should be copied from the catalogue on to the ticket, taking care that the items are placed in their right compartments, and especial care being taken to write clearly. The pressmark, in particular, must be quite plain. Then the reader's name and seat mark must be placed on the lines provided at the top of the ticket and the date added on the left. The ticket must then be placed in one of the boxes at the ends of the Centre Desk (marked on the plan \*), and the reader should then return to his seat and wait for the books.

If he has filled up his ticket correctly the books will arrive in due course, but if not, he will receive his ticket back with a gummed slip fastened to it marked "See Catalogue." The ticket should then be compared with the cata-

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature).

\_\_\_\_\_ (Number of the Reader's Seat).

Permission to use the Reading-Room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write or make marks on any part of a Printed Book, Manuscript, or Map belonging to the Museum.

Readers are not, under any circumstances, to take a Book, Manuscript, or Map out of the Reading-Room.

Before leaving the Room, Readers are particularly requested to return Books, for which they have given Tickets, to an attendant at the centre counter, and to reclaim the Tickets.

**READERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOOKS SO LONG AS THE TICKETS REMAIN UNCANCELLED**

Press Mark.	Name of Author, or other Heading of Work, as in Catalogue.	Date of Publication.
This space for official use only.	_____ Title of Work. _____	

**PLEASE TO RESTORE EACH VOLUME OF THE CATALOGUE TO ITS PLACE, AS SOON AS DONE WITH.**

READERS ARE *PARTICULARLY* REQUIRED

1. Not to ask for more than *one work* on the same ticket.
2. To transcribe from the Catalogues all the particulars necessary for the identification of the Work wanted.
3. To write in plain, clear hand, in order to avoid delay and mistakes.
4. To indicate in the proper place on each ticket the number of the seat occupied.
5. To bear in mind that no Books will be left at the seat indicated on the ticket unless the Reader who asks for them is there to receive them.
6. When any cause for complaint arises, to apply at once to the Superintendent.
7. To replace on the shelves of the Reading-Room, as soon as done with, such Books of Reference as they may have had occasion to remove for the purpose of consultation.

logue and corrected. If, however, it appears to be correct, it should be taken to the Centre Desk and handed to an attendant with that explanation. Other messages that may come explain themselves: "In use," "Mislaid," and "At Binders," for instance.

Sometimes when the reader has asked for a specially rare work or for a series of loose plates or maps, a message will be returned with the ticket: "To be seen in Large Room." The Large Room is an auxiliary Reading Room, where this class of work is consulted, and is at the time of writing in temporary quarters at the end of the King's Library, where a door which is marked "Private," but has a bell for use of readers, gives access to it. It must not be forgotten that the book ticket must be taken to the Large Room.

When it appears to be certain that the book required is not in the catalogue, and

the reader is of opinion that a copy should be in the Library, the title may be entered in the Suggestion Book, which will be found at the end of the inner circle near Bar T. It must be noted that recently-published books should not be put down, and this may be held to apply to books published within the previous twelve months. Any entries made in this book should be signed by the reader, and as many particulars as possible given of the book required. Before finally deciding that a book is not in the catalogue, reference should be made to the Accessions Catalogue, the recent parts of which will be found on a reading stand at the end of the Catalogue Desk facing Bar A. These parts are published fortnightly, and each contain about 1,500 entries. A separate part is issued for the works in Russian, Hungarian, and other Eastern European languages.

## CHAPTER V

### SPECIAL DIVISIONS OF THE GENERAL CATALOGUE

THERE are several headings in the alphabetical sequence of the General Catalogue which to all appearances are not in accord with the general scheme. These are "Academies," "Periodical Publications," "Ephemerides," "Catalogues," "Liturgies," "Directories," "Encyclopædias." The heading "Academies" includes all societies of literary or scientific character as well as universities. They are arranged under the name of the town where they have their headquarters. There is an index of the titles of the societies which refers to the place under which they are catalogued and the

page of the catalogue on which their publications will be found. In addition to this index each society or institution will be found indexed in its alphabetical place in the General Catalogue with a cross-reference to the heading "Academies."

For instance, if the "Royal Society" is required it can be looked up either in the General Catalogue under "Royal Society," where a cross-reference will be found to "Academies: London," or in the Index to Academies, where the reader is referred to "London" and the number of the page is given. It is necessary to observe here that there are many societies which are not considered to be academical in their character, and these are placed under the heading of the town which is their headquarters in the General Catalogue. Political societies and friendly societies and trades unions come into this category, so that the Fabian Society

will be found under "London" — not under "Academies."

The next special heading is "Periodical Publications." This heading includes general periodicals but excludes London and provincial newspapers. Periodicals issued by societies will not be found here but must be looked for in accordance with the rules mentioned in the last paragraph. The heading is arranged similarly to "Academies" by places of publication. An index of titles is added, and each periodical appears in its alphabetical place in the General Catalogue with the cross-reference *see* P. P. and the place of publication. If it is the *Strand Magazine* that is wanted it may be looked up in the General Catalogue under "Strand," where a cross-reference will be found to P.P. London, or it may be looked for in the title index to "Periodical Publications," where the reader will be referred to the place of publication and the page



of the catalogue. It must be recollected that it is the first place of publication which is taken as the sub-heading, so that if a journal was issued first at Manchester and afterwards at London, the catalogue entry would remain at Manchester, although there might be a cross-reference made from London.

The heading "Ephemerides" is used for assembling almanacks and minor year-books. They are arranged alphabetically by their titles. No search for a work coming under this description is complete without making sure that the work is not included in "Periodical Publications."

"Catalogues," a heading which has been much revised during recent years, is now restricted to anonymous catalogues of books, pictures, etc., which are arranged chronologically. The heading is unsatisfactory and still needs considerable revision. If a bookseller's catalogue

is required it must not be forgotten that it may have been treated as anonymous and placed under this heading, the book-seller not being considered as the author but merely as the publisher.

The heading "Liturgies" explains itself. The official service books of all Christian sects will be found here with indexes of titles.

"Directories" brings together all the general and special directories, the special arranged by professions and trades and the general directories by places.

The heading "Encyclopædias" is limited to works published anonymously, and these are arranged according to the subjects dealt with.

## CHAPTER VI

### SPECIAL CATALOGUES

THERE are several collections which are catalogued apart from the General Catalogue. London Newspapers, Provincial Newspapers, Music and Maps, are among these. The London Newspapers have a reading room to themselves—the Newspaper Room, which is situated at the end of the Grenville Library. The catalogue, a copy of which is in the Reading Room, is a simple alphabetical list with the barest particulars of date. The tickets to be filled up in calling for London newspapers will be found at the desk in the Newspaper Room. This section will be dealt with more at length in the chapter on the Newspaper Room.

Provincial Newspapers, which are not stored in the Museum itself, but in a building at Hendon, will also be found to have a special catalogue in which they are arranged under the places of publication. Separate volumes relate to Scottish and to Irish newspapers. These catalogues of newspapers will be found at the Catalogue Desk on the shelf underneath the volumes devoted to *Periodical Publications*, to which they form a supplement. When it is necessary to consult a provincial newspaper an ordinary ticket should be filled up and handed in. The volumes are only sent from Hendon once a week, on Wednesdays, and tickets must be put in not later than the previous Monday. For special researches extending over a large number of volumes it is possible to obtain permission to see the volumes required at Hendon, but there are few facilities for this, and it is rarely necessary.

The Catalogue of Music will be found on the outer side of the inner circle, facing the inner side of the General Catalogue. It is similar in appearance to the General Catalogue, but has not been printed.<sup>1</sup> The accessions to the music collection have been printed and inserted in the catalogue in their proper places. The arrangement is by names of composers. There is an index of names of authors of words, but this is not kept up to date, and is only of use for the older works. Recent music-hall songs and other ephemeral music, including band parts, all of which come into the Museum by virtue of the Copyright Act, are not included in the catalogue, but can be seen on application. It should be noted that the proper ticket to be filled up in applying for music will be found in the boxes on the top of the Music Catalogue Desk,

<sup>1</sup> A complete catalogue of printed music to the end of the year 1800 will be published shortly.

and is on bright blue paper headed *Music*. It is important also to recollect that the pressmark must be copied exactly as it appears in the catalogue, small letters not being used for capitals or *vice versa*.

The Map Catalogue will be found on the shelf under the General Catalogue at the letter R. It is arranged by the subjects of the maps with cross-references from the designers, engravers, etc. The catalogue not only includes atlases and maps published separately and in the Map Department, but an attempt has been made during recent years to catalogue maps in books in the General Library, and this has added very considerably to the value of the catalogue. Plans and views are also included in the catalogue to the extent of the collection in the department.

There has recently been printed a special catalogue of the State Papers of

European Countries in the Library. This gives under each country the different series of documents issued by authority. It also includes many foreign municipal documents, principally statistical in their nature, under the names of the towns. Official papers issued by the Indian Government will be found catalogued in a special volume. This was compiled by the late Rev. Frank Campbell when in charge of these documents in the Museum, and his catalogue is a very valuable help in using a rather complicated series.

The official documents of the United States, of which the Museum possesses an enormous quantity, in fact nearly a complete set, are best referred to by using the official indexes published by the United States Government. These will be found in the Reading Room at Bar T, and when a document has been identified by their use it is simply

necessary to fill up a ticket with the particulars obtained, no pressmark being required.

Another special catalogue is that of books printed in Iceland, compiled by Lidderdale, and published in 1882.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE BOOKS IN THE READING ROOM

THE Reading Room contains on its shelves some 60,000 volumes. These are divided between the Reference Library on the ground floor and the contents of the two galleries. The whole are to be found catalogued by authors, with a subject index added, in the Catalogue of Books in the Reading Room, mounted copies of which will be found on reading stands on the Catalogue Desk. When consulting this catalogue it must be recollected that the pressmarks 2200, etc., R.Ac. and R.PP. relate to books in the galleries, and tickets have to be filled up for these books in the same manner

as for books in the Inner Library. All other pressmarks refer to books on the ground floor, which can be used by readers without any formality at all. The main series of pressmarks include the numbers 2000-2121; these relate to the presses round the walls. The numbers start under the clock and proceed to the reader's right. Large figures, which can be easily seen from the centre of the room, are attached to the presses and indicate to which part of the room the reader must go to find the pressmark he requires. There may also be found a pressmark BB followed by a capital letter, a small letter and a number. This relates to the small bookcases at the top of each alternate row of seats. The bookcases are called BB because they contain Bibliographies, and they also bear the letter of the row of seats which they head. The small letter indicates the shelf and the number the position of the book

required: so that BB.E. c. 12 is the twelfth book on the third shelf of Bibliographies case E. Another pressmark is Circ. with a number and letter added. This refers to the Catalogue Desk and the inner circle. The numbers will be found on labels on the top of the desks. The numbers proceed consecutively round the two circles, the letter *a* or *b* referring to the top or bottom shelf, as the case may be. Another location for reference books in the Reading Room is marked Bar A and Bar T, with a number. This refers to shelves on either side of the official passage leading to the Inner Library, Bar A being on the side next to the seats marked A. Finally, it may be noted that occasionally the only pressmark one finds is the mystic word CENTRE. This means that the book is kept at the Centre Desk, and may be seen on application to the attendants there.

The books on the open shelves form a collection of some 20,000 volumes of reference books. The folding table gives the location of the principal subjects and classes.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SUBJECT INDEXES AND OTHER BIBLIOGRAPHIES

HAVING now described the method of hunting down a particular book by its author or other heading in the General Catalogue, it is necessary to explain the method to be adopted when searching for information on any special subject. The Library of the British Museum has no Subject Catalogue to the whole of its contents, but for the books acquired since the year 1880 we have the Subject Indexes of Mr. G. K. Fortescue, the Keeper of the Department of Printed Books. These Indexes contain the titles (slightly abbreviated from the full titles of the General Catalogue) arranged under

subject headings, which in turn are arranged alphabetically. The period 1880-1900 is dealt with in one alphabet occupying three volumes, and the years 1901-1905 form a supplementary volume. A fifth volume covers the period 1906-1910. The prefaces to these volumes should be read with care, as they indicate the method adopted in arranging the subject headings. Copies of these Indexes will be found on the shelves on the inner side of the inner circle. When the reader discovers his subject in the Subject Index and finds several titles of books given, tickets should be filled up in the ordinary way, but reference should be made in each case to the General Catalogue to check the pressmark. It must not be forgotten that single biographies will not be found in the Subject Indexes. These must be searched for in the General Catalogue under the name of the subject of the biography, where

# TABLE OF SUBJECTS OF THE REFERENCE BOOKS ON THE OPEN SHELVES IN THE READING ROOM, WITH THEIR PRESSMARKS.

## ART, 2031-2034.

Includes Painting, Sculpture, Music, Architecture, Archæology and Numismatics.

## ATLASES, 2059-2060.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, 2035-2038.

This section, which includes also Palæography and Catalogues of MSS. (2038), is further supplemented by the BB. Cases.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CASES :—

- BB.A. Theology.
- BB.C. Law, Science.
- BB.E. Science, Art.
- BB.G. Art, Literature.
- BB.I. Geography.
- BB.K. Topography.
- BB.M. History, Biography.
- BB.O. Indexes to Periodicals.
- BB.R. Classed Catalogues, Subject Indexes.
- BB.T. Philology, Genealogy.

## BIOGRAPHY, 2090-2096.

This section is very little subdivided, but the general and national biographical dictionaries are for the most part in 2090-4, and 2095 contains principally biographical collections relating to particular callings. With a very few exceptions, single lives have not been placed on the Ground Floor.

## BOOK PRICES CURRENT. Bar T.

## CALENDARS OF INSTITUTIONS. Circle 69.

## CATALOGUES OF LIBRARIES. Circle 88-89.

## CLASSICS, LATIN AND GREEK, 2044-2049.

Includes texts and commentaries. In this section is the Bibliotheca Teubneriana (2046-49), arranged in alphabetical order of authors.

## DICTIONARIES, 2050-2057.

- Technological, 2054.
- New English Dictionary. Circle 72.

## DIRECTORIES. Circle 70-71.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA. Circle 34-36.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIAS, 2103-2105.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIAS, FRENCH. Circle 61-64.

## GENEALOGY, *see* HERALDRY.

## GAZETTEERS, 2059-2060.

## GEOGRAPHY, 2058-2060.

## HERALDRY AND GENEALOGY, 2097-2102.

Including Siebmacher (2097), Harleian Society (2099), Index Library (2100), Peerages and Baronetages (2101-2).

## HISTORY, 2069-2089.

Order :—General and Ancient History (2069-71), including Oncken (2069), Corpus Scriptorum Hist. Byzant. (2070), Story of the Nations (2071); Sources of English History (2072-82), including Hearne (2072). Chronicles and Memorials (2073-76), Calendars of State Papers (2076-80); English Histories (2083-4); Histories of other Countries (2085-87); Chronology (2088); Monumenta Germaniæ Historica (2089).

## INDEXES TO PERIODICALS. Circle 94 and B.B.O.

## LANGUAGES, 2050-2057.

Includes Grammars, Dictionaries, &c. arranged in the following order :—General and Comparative (2050), Greek and Latin (2050-1), English and Celtic (2052), French and German (2053-4), Technological (2054), other European Languages (2055), Oriental (2056-7).

## LAW, 2016-2019.

## LAW REPORTS. Bar A.

## LITERATURE, 2039-2043.

Includes Literary and Dramatic History and Criticism (2039), Dictionaries of Quotations, Allusions, &c. (2040), Collected Works of Poets, and other Writers (2041-2043).

## MANUSCRIPTS.

Catalogues of Department of MSS. Circle 84-87.

## MANUSCRIPTS (HISTORICAL) COMMISSION. Bar T.

## MANUSCRIPTS IN FRENCH LIBRARIES. Catalogues. Bar T.

## MANUSCRIPTS. Other Catalogues. 2038.

## ORIENTAL BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS. Catalogues.

Circle 85-86 : 93.

## PERIODICALS, 2106-2121.

This includes Publications of Learned Societies, Académie des Sciences (2106, 2109), Royal Society (2111 and 2113), Archæologia

(2111), Archæologia Cambrensis (2112), and others. Of Periodicals, many current magazines are represented only by a shelf of the most recent volumes, but in the case of some of the more important, the entire set will be found. Among these are Athenæum (2107), Notes and Queries (2115), London Magazine, 1820-29 (2116), European Magazine, 1782-1826 (2117), Gentleman's Magazine 1731-1868, with indexes (2117-18), Annual Register (2119), Quarterly Review (2120), Edinburgh Review (2121). A few Periodicals, &c., are in the Science Section.

## SCIENCE, 2020-<sup>20</sup>~~30~~.

Includes Economics (2020), Mathematics and Astronomy (2022), Mental and Moral Philosophy (2023), Medicine (2024-5), Zoology (2026-9), Botany (2029), Geology (2030).

## SUBJECT INDEXES. 1881-1910. Fortescue.

Circle 96-97.

## THEOLOGY, 2000-2015.

This section includes Bibles and Commentaries (2008-9), Fathers (Migne's Patrologia, 2000-3), Liturgies and Liturgiology (2010-11), Church History (2011-13).

## TOPOGRAPHY, BRITISH, 2061-~~2068~~.

The order is :—General, British Isles (2061-2), including Domesday Facsimile (2062.d.), County Histories, &c. (2062-5), London and its neighbourhood (2065), Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Man and Channel Isles (2066), Victoria County Histories (2067-8). Owing to the peculiar sizes of some of the books it has not been possible to keep quite exactly to this classification.

## YEAR BOOKS. Circle 67-68.





reference will be found to the author. Literature, again, is left out, with the exception of works on literature. Poetry, Novels, Drama, all have to be looked for in the General Catalogue under the name of the author.

When it is required to consult books published before 1880 on a definite subject, the Subject Indexes are, of course, useless. Recourse must now be had to special bibliographies, or lists of books on special topics. There are many thousands of these, and it is almost certain that whatever the subject may be some one has compiled a list of books dealing with it. The first step is to find out whether there is such a bibliography in the Reading Room available for instant reference. The Subject Catalogue of the Books in the Reading Room (*see* Chap. VII) should be consulted. Under each topic bibliographies are always placed first, so that it can

easily be seen whether anything of the kind is at hand. If not, the next best thing to do is to refer to the Subject Indexes (*see* above) and see whether a bibliography is given there. If this fails, reference should be made to Courtney's *Register of National Bibliography*, which, in spite of its name, is a general list of bibliographies, English and foreign. The arrangement is alphabetical by subjects. If there does not appear to be a bibliography of the subject, search will have to be made in the special bibliographies of books published in the principal countries. These will be found in the Reading Room Subject Catalogue under the heading of English Literature, French Literature, etc., and a full list of all national bibliographies has been compiled by the author of this work.<sup>1</sup>

Having discovered a bibliography or

<sup>1</sup> *National Bibliographies*. By R. A. Peddie. 1912.

a list of books published in England, France, or elsewhere on the subject, the books must be looked for in the General Catalogue, and written for in the usual way. But even if an effective bibliography is found it may only apply to books and ignore the equally large and, in some cases, more valuable literature to be found in periodicals. For these, reference must be made to Indexes to Periodical Literature. The most famous of these, dealing with English and American journals, is Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature*. This, with its five-yearly supplements and the *Annual Library Index*, which brings it up to date, will be found on the inner side of the inner circle facing the desk where books have to be given up. These indexes are arranged by subjects, and each reference gives the page and number of the volume of the periodical indexed. For German periodicals reference should be made to

Dietrich's *Bibliographie der deutschen Zeitschriftenlitteratur* — published annually. It will be found in the Reading Room Catalogue. There exist many special indexes, and these can be found by reference to the Reading Room Catalogue, Fortescue's Subject Indexes, or to Courtney's Register.

## CHAPTER IX

### RARE AND VALUABLE BOOKS

THERE are several collections in the British Museum Library which are composed of such valuable works that special arrangements are necessary when readers desire to consult them. The principal of these are the Grenville Library, the collection of incunabula or fifteenth century books, and the Cracherode collection of books in specially fine bindings. These are generally described as "case books," as they are kept in locked cases instead of being placed on the ordinary shelves. They are distinguished in the General Catalogue by various press-marks, such as G for the Grenville books, IA, IB, or IC for the incunabula, and C for special case books. When there are

two copies of a book in the catalogue and one is marked with one of these special pressmarks, it is always desirable to write for the other copy, as the "case" copy is not issued without special permission. If the "case" copy is particularly required, the ticket should be handed in personally with that explanation, and thus considerable delay will be avoided.

Books of this character are not sent into the Reading Room, but the reader will receive the ticket back with a label bearing the inscription, "To be seen in Large Room." For a note on this room *see* p. 30.

Sometimes it will be found that a book of this class is in a showcase forming part of the permanent exhibition in the King's Library. In this case search should be made for another copy of the work, but if it is the only copy in the Library and is specially wanted, permission to use the book can generally be obtained.

## CHAPTER X

### THE NEWSPAPER ROOM

THE collection of London newspapers is referred to in Chapter VI, where the catalogue is mentioned. As a general rule newspapers are not available for at least a year after publication, as they are not issued to readers until bound. For newspapers before 1800 reference must be made to the Burney collection, which is a separate collection of early newspapers and has a separate catalogue arranged in chronological order. The newspapers of the period of the Civil War will be found catalogued in the Periodical Publications section of the General Catalogue.

*The Times* is the only English daily

paper which has an index, and this index may be referred to both in the Newspaper Room and the Reading Room.

The Newspaper Room also holds the great collection of Parliamentary Papers. These are the documents issued by authority of the two Houses of Parliament. There are indexes of subjects covering lengthy periods and an annual index. The volumes for the last three or four years are available in the room without any formality, but older papers must be applied for.

The collection of auction sale catalogues of books are also stored here. These are priced copies supplied by the auctioneers themselves, and are therefore very valuable. They are only sent to the Museum at the end of every ten years, however, and, consequently, recent information must be searched for elsewhere.

Sets of Directories and Year-books are



also relegated to the Newspaper Room. Such sets are indicated in the General Catalogue by the pressmark JR, or NR, and when that is seen the reader can go at once to the Newspaper Room.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE DEPARTMENT OF ORIENTAL BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

THE Reading Room of this department, admission to which is governed by similar rules to those in force with respect to the Printed Books, is situated to the left of the Manuscript Exhibition Saloon and just before the reader comes to the entrance to the Newspaper Room. A special ticket is required by readers in this department. Many books in the General Catalogue are located in this department, as, for instance, the editions of Omar Khayyam, as they belong to Oriental literature. But the great bulk of the Oriental collection is composed of works written or printed in one or other of the Oriental languages.

Catalogues have been printed of the collections relating to many of these languages. The following is a list of these printed catalogues. Under each language appears, first, the catalogue of the MSS. and then the catalogue of the printed books with their dates of publication. The pressmark of the copy in the General Reading Room is added. Catalogues of recent accessions and of works in the minor languages must be inquired for in the Departmental Reading Room.

## ARABIC.

MSS. 1871, fol., Circ. 87b. Supp. 1894, fol., Circ. 85b.

PRINTED BOOKS. 2 vols., 1894-1901, 4to., Circ. 93a.

## ASSAMESE AND ORIYA.

MSS. *See* MARATHI.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1894, 4to., Circ. 93a.

BADAGA. *See* KANNADA.

## BENGALI.

MSS. *See* MARATHI.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1886, 4to. Supp. 1910, 4to., Circ. 93a.

## CHINESE.

MSS. and PRINTED BOOKS. 1877, 4to. Supp. 1903, 4to., Circ. 93a.

## COPTIC.

MSS. 1905, 4to., Circ. 84b.

## ETHIOPIC.

MSS. 1847, fol. Supp. 1877, 4to., Circ. 85b.

GUJARATI. *See* MARATHI.

## HEBREW.

MSS. 2 vols., 1899-1905, etc., 4to. In progress,  
Circ. 86b.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1867, 4to. Supp. 1894, 4to., Circ.  
93a.

## HINDI, PANJABI, SINDH AND PUSHTU.

MSS. (with Hindustani). 1899, 4to., Circ. 85b.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1893, 4to., Circ. 93a.

## HINDUSTANI.

MSS. *See* HINDI.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1889, 4to. Supp. 1909, 4to., Circ.  
93a.

## JAPANESE.

MSS. and PRINTED BOOKS. 1898, 4to. Supp. 1904,  
4to., Circ. 93a.

## KANNADA, BADAGA AND KURG.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1910, 4to., Circ. 93a.

KARSHUNI. *See* SYRIAC.

KURG. *See* KANNADA.

## MARATHI AND GUJARATI.

MSS. (with Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Pushtu and  
Sindh). 1905, 4to., Circ. 85b.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1892, 4to., Circ. 93a.

ORIYA. *See* ASSAMESE.

PALI. *See* SANSKRIT.

PANJABI. *See* HINDI.

PERSIAN.

MSS. 4 vols., 1879-1895, 4to., Circ. 85b.

PRAKRIT. *See* SANSKRIT.

PUSHTU. *See* HINDI, MARATHI, SANSKRIT.

SANSKRIT.

MSS. 1902, 4to., Circ. 85b.

PRINTED BOOKS (with Pali and Prakrit). 1893, 4to.  
Supp. 1908, 4to., Circ. 93a.

SINDH. *See* HINDI, MARATHI.

SINHALESE.

MSS. 1900, 4to., Circ. 85b.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1901, 4to., Circ. 93a.

SYRIAC AND KARSHUNI.

MSS. 1838, fol., Circ. 85b. Supp. 3 parts, 1870-1872  
4to., Circ. 87b. Supp. 1899, 8vo., Circ. 87a.

TAMIL.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1909, 4to., Circ. 93a.

TELUGU.

PRINTED BOOKS. 1912, 4to., Circ. 93a.

TURKISH.

PRINTED BOOKS. In press.

MSS. Circ. 85b, 1888, 4to.