

# Pratt Institute Monthly

Volume VIII

DECEMBER, 1899

Number 2



## SOME EMINENT LIBRARIANS.

### PART III.

**I**T may seem to many other librarians as to the writer that Fumagalli's Rules have always been an authority on cataloguing; and they will probably be surprised as she was to learn that the author of them is only thirty-six years of age, having been born in Florence in 1863. He was very young when he entered as an apprentice the National Library at Florence, during the administration of Signor Sacconi. His advance since

then in his profession has been such that he is now chief librarian at the Brera, the National Library at Milan.

It will interest students of his Cataloguing Rules to know that these appeared in print in 1887, when the author was but twenty-four years of age, and that the work, the exact title of which was "Cataloghi di biblioteche e indici bibliografici," earned him a prize from the Ministry of Public Instruction. Another prize was gained by his "Bibliotheca bibliographica italica," written in collaboration with the late bibliographer Ottino, and published in Rome and Turin in 1889 and again in 1895. Signor Fumagalli then translated into Italian and edited the "Handbook of Greek and Latin Paleography" of E. Maunde Thompson, chief librarian of the British Museum. In quick succession he published "Della collocazione dei libri nelle pubbliche biblioteche," 1890, "La questione di Pamfilo Castaldi," 1891, "Bibliografia Etiopica," 1893, "Bibliografia degli scritti italiani o stampati in Italia sopra Cristoforo Colombo, la scoperta del Nuovo Mondo e i viaggi degli Italiani in America," 1893,—this last prepared for the Royal Commission appointed at the time of the Columbian Exposition,—"Antonio Blado, tipografo romano del Sec. XVI," 1893, and "Bibliografia delle opere concernenti Paolo Toscanelli ed Americo Vespucci," 1898, the latter

work a commission from the municipality of Florence.

So much for his strictly bibliographical work. Perhaps next to the Catalogue Rules the most familiar of his works to American readers is his little book of quotations entitled "Chi l'ha detto?" (Who said it?), which has reached a third edition. This is, as its title implies, a work giving the authorship of well-known quotations.

The recent labors of Signor Fumagalli have been in the field of iconography. Two works in this branch have appeared from his pen, "Saggio di una iconografia Leopardiana," 1898, and "L'Albo Pariniano," 1899, while he is now preparing works of greater scope. During all this period of writing, editing, and publishing, one project has been kept steadily in mind, with which all advocates of library-training must heartily sympathize,—the establishment at Milan, "the Leipsic of Italy," of a School of the Book. Here should be taught all the arts and crafts that combine for the production, illustration, and dissemination of books. In 1890 Fumagalli did found at Milan, with the help of the municipality, a school for the study of practical bibliography by booksellers' clerks; and this is still continued under the auspices of the *Associazione tipografico-libreria*. Now that he has been made president of the flourishing Professional School of Typography, the founding of this other school of which he has so long dreamed seems near, with the transformation of the institution just referred to into a School of the Book,

uniting in one chair practical bibliography with other subjects, and founding new professional chairs. The work of transformation is well under way, and the coming year may see the project fully carried out.

Signor Fumagalli was one of the founders of the Bibliographical Society of Italy in 1897, a society now claiming a membership of 500 persons. He drew up its constitution, was its first president, and as such called the first of its annual meetings, assembled at Milan in September, 1897. He is now vice-president, Senator Brambilla being president. The society has the beautiful and learned Queen Margherita for its patron, and for its official organ the *Rivista delle biblioteche*.

Having just recovered from a long illness, Signor Fumagalli writes from Vilminore in Val di Scalve, deprecating the honor of a biographical sketch, claiming only for his work that, while modest, it has been continuous and actuated by a love of the subject. We think that none could deny him this, and that his colleagues, fellow-countrymen or foreigners, will be inclined to give him much higher praise.



R. EDOUARD REYER\* is the son of one of the German exiles of 1848, and spent the first ten years of his life with his family in exile in Cairo, where his father was Director of Hospitals and physician to the Viceroy. The amnesty of 1859 per-

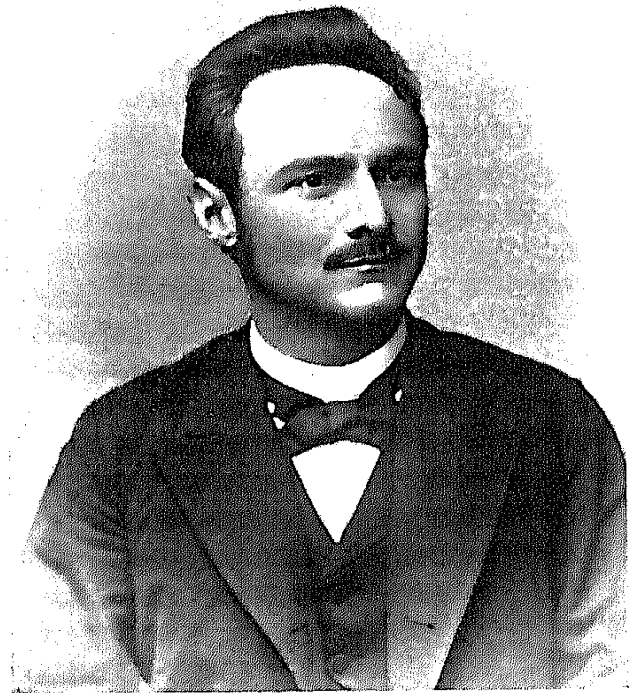
\* In order to have this sketch appear in its proper sequence, in a Library number of the MONTHLY, it is reprinted here from the Domestic Science number, 1898.

mitted a return to Germany. Here he studied law, obtaining his doctorate in 1871. During his law-course he also pursued with interest studies in physics, chemistry, and geology, finally turning definitely to scientific research as his field. In 1876-77 he published a monograph on the extinct volcano of Padua, and on the physics of volcanic eruptions. At that time he settled in Vienna as docent in Geology. Here he published a number of articles on mountains and volcanoes. At the same time, to use his own words, "Impressed with the conviction that a whole man must practise not only a one-sided calling but must co-operate in the culture development of mankind, I studied, during my law-course, the social and especially the educational strivings at home and abroad. My numerous travels were in pursuit not only of my geological researches, but also of my humanitarian object. Since 1870 I have followed the progress of library-science in America and England, and have imparted the knowledge gained to the German people in numerous published articles."

A year spent in America, six months of it in the East and the remaining six months in the West, as far as California, made Dr. Reyer ambitious to put into practice in his own country some of the innovations observed in American libraries. There being opposition to these in Vienna, he founded a library in Graz, a city of 100,000 inhabitants, where in two years the circulation has reached nearly 200,000. He introduced the book-card system, and the

delivery system between various libraries, drawing the Landesbibliothek into co-operation to furnish the standard works needed to supply the demand, while the folk-library supplied belles-lettres. Reading-rooms were opened; friends were found who gave money and bequeathed their private libraries to the work. A library association has been founded in Vienna, which is to establish a central library with branches in all the suburbs of the city. This year will see the opening of probably six branches, the establishment of the literary and scientific sections of the central library, and the organization of the delivery system between the libraries.

Hitherto the folk-libraries in Vienna have been open only for three



DR. EDOUARD REYER.

hours in the evening, and waited on by teachers; now women have been drafted into the work, and the hours are extended to nine per day. The employment of women as librarians and assistants has proved a success, their accuracy, despatch, and sympathetic treatment of the public being especially approved. The work has great attractions for educated women, to whom few careers are as yet open in German-speaking countries.

For the present, owing to the slight interest shown by the municipality, dependence for means of support must be placed on a small tax collected from the users of the library. Besides a fixed tax of 15–20 kreuzers per month from all readers, there is a charge of one kreuzer (one half-cent) for each volume of belles-lettres taken out, standard works being circulated free. With the help of this tax thirty to forty small libraries have already been established in Vienna, with a yearly circulation of about two million; and the institution has already made itself so necessary that the municipality will soon be compelled to recognize and assist its work.

“With a system thus corresponding to our circumstances, we are laying a basis on which the coming generation, under the impulse of a strong and steady social and humanitarian programme, will establish good *free* public libraries. This is my programme.”

Such results as these, from the earnest enthusiasm of one man seeing and meeting the needs of a whole community, must arouse our admiration and make the whole library profession in America his well-wishers.



PROBABLY there is not a librarian in the United States who is known by sight to so many of his colleagues and of the public in general as the subject of this sketch, Melvil Dewey; for the cause of public education has been so long and constantly first in his heart that he has lectured and spoken in its behalf all over the country and even abroad. He was born at Adams Centre, New York, in 1851, and graduated from Amherst College in 1874. From that time until 1889 library interests were first with him, while since that year they have formed one of his many interests as an educationist, to use his own term.

Mr. Dewey has been instrumental in the founding and editing of various periodicals, such as the *Library Journal*, *Library Notes*, *Metric Bulletin*, *Metric Advocate*, *Spelling Reform Bulletin*, and *Spelling*; he was prominent in the establishment of the *Library Bureau*, director of the “first Library School on the planet,” during his incumbency as librarian of Columbia College, and a leading member of the American Library Association, of which he was secretary for fifteen years; founder and first president of the New York Library Club, of the Association of State Librarians, and of the New York State Library Association.

During his six years' term at Columbia more volumes were added to the library than in the previous one hundred and thirty years of its existence.

In 1888 he was called to Albany as consulting librarian to consider the plans for the State Library in the



MELVIL DEWEY.

new Capitol building, and the next year he was unanimously elected by the regents the secretary, treasurer, and executive officer of the University of the State of New York and Director of the State Library.

The work he has done for the state in the past ten years is well known among educators and librarians. The reorganization of the University, the drafting and enacting of a new university law, the establishment of departments under the titles college department, high school department, home education department, etc., are but a part of what has been accomplished. The state has been covered with a network of travelling libraries and picture-collections, the State Library and State Museum have been modernized in scope and methods, and the whole public educational work of the state has been combined into a system

such as exists in no other state in such perfection of organization, though a great number of states have been led by it to adopt for their own systems many of its features.

Mr. Dewey's published writings in the shape of articles in professional papers and magazines are numerous and frequently unsigned; the chief works under his name being his Rules for accessions, shelf, and catalogue departments, the volume on library administration issued by the U. S. Bureau of Education in 1893, which was edited by him, and the "Decimal Classification and Relative Index," now in its sixth edition. We might enter upon a characterization of this last if we were writing for others than librarians, but to them its defects and qualities are so well known that that would be superfluous. If imitation is the best flattery, the "D. C.," as it is familiarly called, has had its share of flattery, since it is now used in more libraries, it is said, than all other systems combined. It has been adopted by the International Institute of Bibliography of Brussels as a working classification for its projected universal catalogue.

Like all men of strong individuality and determined will, Mr. Dewey has his critics and opponents; but the most hostile, the most critical, would not refuse him his reputation as one of the leading organizers of educational work in the country; and no one who has heard him speak on a topic near his heart will deny him the right to be called one of the most magnetic of public speakers.

*M. W. Plummer.*