CHAPTER VIII

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

At the same time that Charles Cutter pursued the systematization of libraries through bibliographic organization and efficient library management, he also participated intimately in the leadership of the American Library Association. He helped in its organization in 1876; he served on many of its most important committees, and served as its president from 1887 to 1889; and he provided in both the Nation and the Library Journal a continuous stream of opinion concerning the issues facing the profession. His total contribution reveals, therefore, not only his activities, but also his interpretation of the professional nature of the new organization.

Association Activities, 1875-1880

Cutter's participation in the formation of a librarians' professional organization began in that bustle of activity that resulted in the 1876 Special Report. General John Eaton, the United States Commissioner of Education, had initiated work on that project in late 1874 in an effort to encourage the usefulness of libraries in the cultural uplift of America. By the time of its publication in 1876,
Cutter had provided the largest contribution of any single person.\(^1\)

The effort to produce the report was in many respects more significant than the resulting work itself, for it heralded the first national cooperative venture among American librarians since the ill-fated 1853 New York librarian's convention. General Eaton's office became at once a national point of contact among the leading librarians of the day and a symbol of their common professional interests. When talk of a second librarians' convention gained currency during late 1875 and early 1876, Eaton's office became an information clearinghouse available for the planners of the meeting that eventually took place.\(^2\)

The idea for the October 1876 meeting had seemingly arisen concurrently from different quarters. It had been suggested to Eaton as early as the spring of 1875 by Thomas Hale Williams, the librarian of the Minneapolis Athenaeum and a participant in the 1853 convention. Eaton subsequently circulated the suggestion among prominent librarians, including Cutter. At the same time, however, and apart from Williams' suggestion, Melvil Dewey also began to promote

\(^1\)With the exception of those articles attributed to the editors (which in many cases were so listed in order to preserve the anonymity of the individual authors), no other contributor wrote as much. Cutter's total contribution to both volumes of the report amounted to approximately 190 out of a total of 1,276 pages.

the same cause when he moved to Boston in the spring of 1876. The two streams of thought merged, for in the coming weeks Dewey was able to work through the agency of Eaton's office and its already developed communication channels in order to issue the call for the meeting.¹

Cutter's participation in the arrangements took two forms. First, he served as an advisor to Dewey as the latter developed the plans for the meeting. Dewey had visited Cutter immediately upon his arrival in Boston in April 1876 in order to secure Cutter's evaluation of his classification system. The two men built up an amiable friendship and Dewey spent many hours with the older man seeking his advice and support.² Cutter was enthusiastic and hopeful about Dewey's various professional projects. Others were not so inclined, however, a fact that Dewey related in 1880 as he recounted the first four years of the Association's history.³

Second, Cutter informed the readers of the Nation of the proposed meeting. The first such comment appeared in the April 20, 1876 issue, less than two weeks after

¹Ibid., pp. 36-37. See also the relevant correspondence in Dewey, [Diary], Bks. I-V. Unfortunately, Eaton's letter copy-book of the late spring and early summer of 1876 is missing. See also Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 7.

²An account of the meetings between the two men with regard to Dewey's Amherst classification scheme is given above, Ch. VII, pp. 492-93. The same diary entries also make note of the many meetings they had.

Dewey had first come to see him. A second item appeared at the beginning of June.¹ In a third item, appearing in the issue of July 27, 1876, Cutter spelled out his sentiments of the professional nature of librarianship and the value of such a convention in that regard.

A convention of librarians is likely to be held in Philadelphia next October. The profession is awaking to a sense that it is a profession, and beginning to feel that it has as much need of and as much right to an organization as the teachers, or doctors, or dentists, or firemen. Conventions may not produce any very startling results; the papers read may be empty, or dull, or wrong-headed; the few valuable essays may find a tired or inattentive audience; but good-fellowship is likely to be promoted and esprit de corps increased, and, in the present case, something will be gained by the public recognition of the existence of the occupation, as one having certain special duties, requiring peculiar aptitudes, and deserving to be entered by an apprenticeship. As long as the chief libraries were those of colleges or historical societies, used by comparatively few readers, of whom a large part might be expected to be trained in investigation and the use of books, it was natural and not objectionable that librarianship should be a refuge for those who had failed in other occupations. With the growth, however, of city and mercantile libraries, dealing with large numbers of borrowers, where promptitude and despatch were all-important, a new class of men were secured—men having if not business training, at least aptitude for business. And as the work possible to libraries has developed, and they have more and more come forward as companion educators to the public schools, it has further become evident that the man of business is not competent to do all that a librarian can do usefully. All librarians are more or less called on to assist

¹[Notices of a Proposed Library Convention], Nation, XXII (April 20, 1876), 264; (June 1, 1876), 350. The first two notes are not specifically attributed to Cutter in the Haskell index nor in any other place. Cutter was, however, a heavy contributor on libraries during this period and it may be that the brevity of the notes is the reason that they were omitted from the account book of the Nation for this period. The opinion in favor of Cutter's authorship is also supported by Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 24.
investigation; if not supposed to be omniscient, they are at least expected to know where to look for any bit of information that is wanted. But the town librarian cannot be content with this; he must be qualified to direct the reading of his clientage; he should be in a way the literary pastor of the town; he must be able to become familiar with his flock, especially with the young, to gain their confidence, to select their reading, and gradually to elevate their taste. Like a minister, he must be content with slow progress and meagre results. It is only by flowery paths and gentle ascents that he can lead them from Braddon to Scott and from Tupper to Tennyson. But he will keep his object always in mind, and will never be satisfied but as he sees the percentage of fiction read decreasing and the proportion of travels, and history, and science, and philosophy increasing. There are librarians who have effected this, some by annotated catalogues, some by personal intercourse (that is, as it were, by the sermon and by the pastoral visit). If they can be brought together and made to tell their methods, others will be moved to imitate them. This, at least, was the result of the Convention of 1853 at New York—a meeting which has probably never been heard of by the greater part of the present generation of librarians. Frequent conventions may become wearisome but one every twenty-three years can certainly be endured by the most indifferent of the profession.  

The comparison of librarianship with a pastoral calling, the business aptitude needed, the relationship of the library to the public schools, the role of the librarian in cultural uplift, and even the praise of annotated catalogs were words that Cutter would reiterate many times over during the coming years.

The main theme of the conference was 'cooperation'.

The call for a meeting had stated that, "efficiency and economy in library work would be promoted," and that the

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conference would "afford opportunity for mutual consultation and practical co-operation."¹ Cutter underlined the theme in his lead article in the first issue of the Library Journal in September 1876. He gave an account of the cooperative effort of the Société Franklin pour la Propagation des Bibliothèques Populaires to extend library privileges throughout France. The "Franklin Society" had supplied books to local libraries and, of particular interest to Cutter, had produced a catalog that at one stroke provided both ready-made access to the local collections and a book selection tool for local librarians, enabling them to expend their limited funds wisely. He suggested that similar cooperative goals were needed in America—"where the ability to read is so much more widely spread, and where libraries are at once so much more used,"—in order that this country would not be "backward in providing collections of books by which the education received in its public schools can be confirmed and continued."²

When the October 1876 Philadelphia meeting was convened, Cutter continued his emphasis on cooperation in a paper on the cooperative acquisitions of pamphlets. Libraries, considered as a whole, were the collectors of the literature of a nation, and pamphlets would of necessity be needed for research relating to the nation. Cutter's

¹"Call for a Library Conference," in Holley, Raking the Historic Coals, p. 54.

resolution of the problem of the enormous numbers of pamphlets to be acquired was not to lay stress on various kinds of better storage, or on more efficient cataloging, or on a systematic program of disposal. Rather, he suggested that the bulk could best be handled if the work was shared through a cooperative plan of collecting in which libraries of different sizes and purposes would collect the materials most relevant to their collections. 1

As the meeting progressed, Cutter received committee appointments. The first was to the Committee on Order of Business with William F. Poole and William T. Peoples. 2 Next, Justin Winsor, who had been elected president, appointed him to the Committee on Sizes; and he was elected to the Committee on a New Edition of Poole's Index to Periodical Literature. 3

The last two assignments above, both dealing with standardization in the area of cooperative cataloging, set the theme for the kind of initial professional involvement


2LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 95. William T. Peoples was the librarian of the New York City Mercantile Library Association.

3Dewey's motion that Winsor, Cutter and Poole be a committee on Poole's Index was passed unanimously, LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 116-17. Subsequently, Cutter reported the committee's work. Winsor appointed a committee on sizes during the third session of the conference. The committee reported to the conference during the seventh session on some general guidelines for making rules on sizes. Winsor subsequently appointed James L. Whitney (Boston Public Library), Dewey, and Cutter to the permanent committee, LJ, I (October/November, 1876), 109, 139-41.
that Cutter achieved. Between that first conference and 1885, he participated in every major cooperative cataloging project sponsored by the Association. The key to cooperative action was the appointment of a Cooperation Committee early in 1877 composed of Cutter, Frederick Jackson and Frederic B. Perkins, with Dewey, the secretary of the Association, serving as the committee's secretary. Its primary work was to recommend standardized library supplies and procedures to the Association's members and to function as a library supply department. In order to back up its work, it began a "bibliothecal museum"; that is, a library supply research center in which products and procedures were collected, compared, and evaluated.¹

Cutter promptly became the chairman of the committee, a post that he held until 1885. During its early years, however, the innovative spirit and driving force of the committee was, in reality, Dewey. His early role in this respect was a fact often mentioned with great appreciation by other leaders in the Association.² Dewey brought to the committee not only his experience as a librarian, but also his acute awareness that the library movement, along with the wider educational field, was an emerging

¹The appointments and an initial report of the work of the committee are given in, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, "Preliminary Report," LJ, I (April, 1877), 283-86.

²Tributes to Dewey's energy and enthusiasm were common, especially during the initial years of the Association. That did not mean, however, that everyone agreed with his solutions, a fact that became very apparent during the 1880's.
business front that could be developed only if standard-ization prevailed. For Dewey, libraries were in need of supplies and of sound practices, both of which would promote economy. But economy could come only through a standardization of the market, and standardization could come only by effective cooperation among librarians. In the work of the Cooperation Committee the cooperative goals of the library profession and Dewey's business sense merged.

Cutter's own propensity for deriving economy through labor-saving devices and procedures, already in evidence in his work at the Athenaeum, provided a basis for his hearty approval of Dewey's work and for his backing of the younger man in every way that he could. He served as Dewey's counselor (along with Justin Winsor and Richard R. Bowker) in order to temper with the wisdom of his own extended experience the younger man's fervent enthusiasm for cooperative projects. He brought his Athenaeum library into the work as an experimental laboratory in order to test some of the committee's findings. And he assisted Dewey in editing the fledgling Library Journal by supplying him not only with a steady stream of articles, but also by editing the technical and erudite "Bibliography" feature.  

1 Cutter's relationship with Dewey with regard to the Library Journal was purely of a 'down home' nature during this period. A general note, most likely Dewey's, suggests that spirit in pointing out Cutter's special bibliographical project on witchcraft and demonology: "Mr. Cutter, of the Boston Athenaeum, while contributing monthly to the Library Journal many pages of painstaking notes on current bibliography, is also, we understand, at work on the bibliography of the Devil (though he is perhaps the last
encouragement of Bowker, the liaison between the Association and Frederick Leypoldt, the publisher most singularly interested in professional library matters (and the publisher of the Library Journal), and Justin Winsor, the president of the Association and the most outstanding librarian of the day, the cooperative projects of the committee took initial form purposively and quickly. Cutter and Dewey, working very closely during this period, along with Jackson and Perkins, made the Cooperation Committee an active and aggressive force.

During 1877, Dewey recommended two far-reaching projects to the Association through the Cooperation Committee which were readily accepted. The first was to provide cooperative cataloging of new books. A committee on Publishers' Title-Slips was appointed to supervise the work. The plan called for publishers to send their forthcoming books to either the Boston Public Library or to the Boston Athenaeum in order to have them cataloged just before publication. In that way the publishers could print the cataloging information in the books themselves in the form of author, title and subject slips. When a librarian received the books, he would have only to remove the slips and paste them on catalog cards. In addition, Cutter was to add subject headings from his dictionary catalog system, while Dewey was to contribute the classification numbers from

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man to whom it could be a labor of love)." LJ, IV (January, 1879), 25.
his Amherst classification system. The publishers were to be assessed a charge of one dollar per title in order to cover the costs.¹

The second project was to produce a printed catalog of five or ten thousand book titles that would function both as a list of best books recommended by the Association (similar to the catalog of the Franklin Society) and as a basic collection and catalog for small libraries. The idea, presented by Dewey in an article entitled, "The Coming Catalogue," resulted in the appointment by the Cooperation Committee of a committee for its preparation, of which Cutter was a member.²

The chief need for both projects was a uniform code of cataloging rules. Dewey had already made a preliminary

¹The printed title-slip project was initiated at the New York conference in September 1877 with Winsor's appointment of a committee consisting of himself, Bowker, and Dewey. The first report of the committee, A.L.A. Committee on Publishers' Title-Slips, [First Report], LJ, III (May, 1878), 113-15, and an advertisement of the project, LJ, III (August, 1878), 243, gave evidence of considerable initial enthusiasm, including the enrollment of thirteen publishers. The second report of the committee, A.L.A. Committee on Publishers' Title-Slips, [Second Report], LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 292, notes the use of Dewey's classification numbers.

²The committee members were Bowker, Winsor, Cutter, Perkins, and Jackson, which amounted to the Cooperation Committee, the president of the Association and Bowker, who was in control of the bibliographical apparatus of the Publishers' Weekly. Dewey was, of course, unofficially connected with it by virtue of his secretaryship of the Cooperation Committee. See, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, [Seventh Report], LJ, III (November, 1878), 331. See also above, Ch. VI, passim, especially pp. 427-29.
report on such a code in January 1877. Subsequently, a Committee on Uniform Title Entries was appointed at the September 1877 New York conference with Cutter serving as its chairman. The committee issued a report the following March, but because the Association held no meeting in 1878, official action could not be taken on it. As already pointed out, the problems of a uniform code were far more complex than had been supposed, and when Cutter gave the committee's report at the 1879 Boston conference (under the name, Cooperative Cataloging Committee), the lack of a definitive response by the members of the Association delayed its acceptance and the code was returned to the committee for additional work.¹

The 1879 conference produced one more cooperative venture that was intimately involved with the necessity for uniform cataloging. Richard Bowker delivered a paper on the need for a standardized list of subject headings that would incorporate the rigorous goals that Cutter had proposed in his Rules. The Association directed Justin Winsor to appoint still another committee, this one on the preparation of an index to subject headings. Cutter, who had been included on the committee, also assumed its leadership.²

¹See above, Ch. VI, pp. 448-57.
²See above, Ch. VI, pp. 441-45, where the work of the committee is discussed in detail.
Cutter and the Professional Ideals of the Early Association

During the period from 1876 to the end of 1879 the organization and growth of the American Library Association proceeded without difficulty. The leadership, though it officially included some librarians from other areas of the country (most notably, William F. Poole in Chicago and his protégé, Charles Evans in Indianapolis), was for the most part concentrated in the Boston area. The composition and activities of the Executive Board, which was elected at the annual meetings and which chose the Association's officers from among its own members, reflected the informal concentration of power. The Board had the authority to increase its own membership and exercised that right in appointing the Cooperation Committee. Accordingly, the Cooperation Committee met with the Board as full voting members.1

Meetings of the Board were most often held in the offices of the Boston Public Library (afterwards at the Harvard College Library when Justin Winsor moved there in late 1877), at the Boston Athenaeum, or even in the parlor at Winsor's home. There was not any conscious policy of exclusion. Instead, the needs of the organization dictated using those who had the ability, resources, and geographical proximity to participate in the work. Boston made a natural starting point for the fledgling organization.

1The authority for the Board to increase its own membership was specified in the constitution. See, A.L.A., "Constitution," LJ, I (March, 1877), 253. See also the committee's appointment, LJ, III (April, 1877), 283.
Efforts were made to broaden participation. Cutter's Committee on Uniform Title Slips included A. R. Spofford, librarian of the Library of Congress, and John Dyer, the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library. In 1877 when a party of American librarians attended an international library conference in London, all of those on the trip were invited to attend the meetings of the Executive Board held on board ship, both on the way over and on the way back. But the coterie of officers was obvious. It included the top leaders of the new association. They carried the business of the Association with them and used the occasion of the trip to plan future projects. The esprit de corps that they developed helped the Association through its initial years. Written accounts of the crossing, the conference meetings, and the various tours that occupied their spare moments, singularly emphasized the camaraderie that resulted.¹

Cutter's own relationship with Dewey became even stronger. In late 1878 when Dewey announced his impending marriage to Annie Godfrey, the only female librarian to go on the London trip, Cutter contributed to the general good will of the occasion by sending Dewey a letter of congratulations written facetiously in a mock form of reformed spelling:

¹The business meetings were noted in LJ, II (November/December, 1877), 221. For an extended treatment of the trip, see Budd Gambee, "The Great Junket: American Participation in the Conference of Librarians, London, 1877," Journal of Library History, II (January, 1967), 9-44.
My der Dyi,

Accept this trifl from your frend and coadjytor. I lqv it to your injenity to draw out the paralel bêtwen the voig which wê took together, with which it ma bè sen to hav a çertan connecjn and the voig of lif upon a ny tak of which you ar about to enter.

Yours veri truli,

C: A. C.

Although the spirit of the leaders seemed cohesive, there was another side of the picture that suggests there was less unity than was apparent. Underneath the coöperative activities lay more serious differences of professional philosophy. On the one hand there was the youthful enthusiasm of Dewey and his business-like approach to library matters. His interest was more singularly in the structure of the professional organization itself in both its formal and informal aspects. That is to say, both formally and informally the growing professional organization needed to be unified in its work and goals. All library concerns could be reduced to matters of economy, including, one would suspect, even the more stately ideals upon which the movement was based. Because Dewey was forceful by nature, he continually attempted to direct the organizational power necessary to achieve reform and standardization, particularly through the projects that he conceived. During the first four years the organizational structure of the new association served this pattern admirably, not only because of its concentration of organizational power, but

1Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, undated but in a folder of letters of congratulations to Dewey and Annie Godfrey on the announcement of their marriage, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Their marriage took place on October 19, 1878.
because the other leaders were for the most part content to defer to Dewey in matters of planning and organization.

On the other hand, many of the older, more tempered leaders, who had obtained their education in the ante-bellum period, saw the library movement more in terms of its cultural role than in the structure of the professional organization. Their more passive, less bureaucratic, and more idealistic approach to the library movement arose in part out of earlier emphases in the changing American intellectual and cultural scene during the mid-nineteenth century. Northern, and especially New England, intellectuals, reacting to the boundless spirit of the Jacksonian period, called for consolidation and a renewal of the social order based on more established institutions and personal values. Although the expressions of what was needed varied according to the individuals involved, several themes recurred. The new order was to be a combination of genteel culture and democratic ideals that would result in an enlightened democracy. It could best be carried out by a corps of younger, elite leaders who embodied the ideals in their lives, and who incorporated a grasp of the emerging sciences (including evolutionary views) and a more disciplined approach to reform organization. The standards for personal and social ethics, especially among those who were older, were based on a conception of authority as it existed in small-town New England culture. As a result of the change in intellectual climate, professional organizations of
every sort sprung up in the years following the Civil War, all dedicated to defining goals and standards and to the establishment of authority in American intellectual life. The library association was no exception.¹

To the degree that the younger library leaders had been less exposed to the ante-bellum milieu, however, it seems obvious that their interest in the finer points of the cultural ideal was eclipsed by their increasing attention to the organization itself. They were part of a general shift in social thinking that attempted to deal with the growing complexities of urbanized America by recourse to the impersonal authority of more involved bureaucratic structures.² This is not to say that the ideals were missing, but rather that the sources of the ideals were less prominent. In contradistinction, those more directly heirs of the patrician background of the earlier movement were more interested in the authority of their persons and views than in bureaucracies involving power. Although they stressed a more scientific approach to organization, they also showed an aversion to centralization of power.³ They

¹This view of changes in American intellectual and cultural life is based primarily on the work of John Higham and George M. Fredrickson. See above, Ch. I, p. 37, footnote 1, for the references cited.


³See especially Tyack's description of the aversion to politics among Brahmins in George Ticknor, pp. 182-84.
saw themselves, instead, in a more passive role in which
discussion of the issues of librarianship was to be pre-
ferred to a more rigid conformity of methods.

The various library leaders who responded to the
need for a professional organization were doubtless mind-
ful of the need for a sound managerial approach to
librarianship. But they resisted in varying degrees the
effort to take away the freedom that any one librarian had
to do as he saw fit in his own library. They resisted,
therefore, the moves of those such as Dewey to make rigid
conformity to any particular aspect of library economy a
mark of being a professional librarian. On one extreme,
William F. Poole, a forceful leader in his own right, very
early in the life of the organization spoke out against all
librarians running their libraries in one prescribed manner,
either in the processes involved or in the library equipment
used. Of a more indulgent nature was Justin Winsor, more
directly related to the Boston-Cambridge intellectual com-
munity, who, while he organized his own library work in his
own individual way, was cognizant enough of the need for
cooperation and standardization to give tacit approval and
counsel to Dewey's ventures. 1

1 One of Poole's first extended comments on the mat-
ter is contained in the A.L.A. Conference Discussion on
uniform title entries, LJ, II (September, 1877), 28-29.
He said, "The Association ought not to prescribe any special
rule in this matter, no more than it sought to say what kind
of a necktie a man should wear." Winsor always counseled
moderation, but the letters existent in Dewey's correspondence
indicate time and again Winsor's support for the younger
man during the early years. A view of Winsor's own library
Cutter occupied a slightly different position than that of Poole or Winsor during the same formative years of the Association. He included in his own philosophy of librarianship very strong elements from both ideological extremes but without any evidence of an irreconcilable conflict between them. On the one hand his work at the Athenæum and his support of the cooperative projects and goals proposed by Dewey illustrated his own propensity for rigorous organizational practices. He expressed in his annual report to the trustees of the Athenæum in 1880 his conception of the library as a system of processes governed by goals. To him the library could by analogy be considered a finely ordered machine all elements of which contributed to the overall product, efficiency in library use.\(^1\) He found himself more than once irritated by those at the Athenæum who deprecated his efforts to systematize that library.

Moreover, he did not view his work as limited to the Athenæum alone. In his systematizing efforts he saw a way to contribute to the professionalization of the library field as a whole. It was in this regard that he was most in touch with Dewey's efforts. He strove to make his own work

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\(^1\)Cutter, "Report of the Librarian for 1879." It is noteworthy, however, that his expression was guarded, in order to offset any criticism that such a mechanized view might have provoked among the proprietors. See above, Ch. III, pp. 183-84.
on cataloging available to all and usable by even the least sophisticated. In the area of shelf classification he very early picked up Dewey's hope that a standard system might be produced that would benefit librarians everywhere.

On the other hand Cutter also vigorously stressed the ideals of the older generation. He had received his basic education at Harvard College during the ante-bellum period and doubtless experienced the tensions of mid-century America during that time. As early as 1869 in a review of Edward Edwards' *Free Town Libraries*, he echoed George Ticknor's views of the role of the library as an agent of cultural consolidation and control.\(^1\) With those sentiments he could only have responded enthusiastically to General Eaton's request for contributions for a volume on libraries. Eaton expressed quite freely to his contributors his conviction that libraries were "valuable auxiliaries to education and culture." The resulting two-volume work admirably illustrated such concerns.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Cutter, "A Librarian on Free Libraries," p. 234. See above, Ch. II, pp. 94-95, for a fuller treatment of the review.

\(^2\)Eaton's phrase recurs often in the letters he wrote to enlist writers for the project. Of particular note is his circular letter to educational journals seeking support for his education exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia. He stated that the exhibit would demonstrate "the primary and fundamental relation of education to all other interests of society, to Governments and their perpetuity." He concluded his circular appeal with the hope that the combined effort of "teachers and friends of education" would result in "a more universal recognition in public affairs, of education as the cause of all causes insuring the prosperity and perpetuity of our institutions." Letter, J. Eaton to T. W. Bicknell (editor of the New
After the American Library Association was formed, Cutter joined with Winsor in a concern that the wider public, especially those in the Boston-Cambridge intellectual community, be able to see the broad cultural base of the new professional organization, and lend their participation and support to it as a profession of high calling. During the second conference in New York in 1877, Winsor commented that he had heard that the directors of the Boston Athenaeum were pleased that Cutter, their librarian, should be going to the conference in New York and afterwards to London. He continued, "I think that class of people in Boston is heartily interested in the work of our Association." Later, Cutter conveniently summarized the spirit of the discussion in the Nation.

As soon as the friends of education, the believers in culture, the lovers of books can be made to feel that the Society is not devoted to dry details of management, but intends to take in hand the objects in which they are most interested, we fancy they will be ready enough to join and assist with purse and influence.


1 A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, II (September, 1877), 36.

2 C. A. Cutter, [New York Library Conference], Nation, XXV (October 11, 1877), 228. Two years later the hope for the support of the wider Boston-Cambridge intellectual community must have seemed close indeed. Participants in the 1879 Boston conference included, among others, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, James Freeman Clarke, and Charles Francis Adams, Jr.
Cutter's statement in the Nation reveals yet another point of contact between himself and the older, patrician ideals. His contributions to the Nation, many in the form of notices in the section entitled "Literary Notes," were typical of the rationale that the editors, Edwin L. Godkin and later, Wendell Phillips Garrison, sought to fulfill. The periodical was designed to provide an intellectual but realistic force of opinion upon the development of the national character, especially in the areas of politics and education. Its pages became a miniature university where the most eminent specialists in every field wrote their observations and opinions. ¹

Cutter wrote as a specialist on library affairs and on European (especially French) cultural matters. The notice of his death years later stated,

He used to quote the saying that the librarian who reads is lost; but he both read and wrote admirably. His culture was very wide, and the evidences of it are embalmed in the Nation, to which he was a voluminous contributor (in the mass) for thirty-five years, with slight interruption. His odds and ends of leisure were naturally employed for "Notes" rather than for longer essays, which were, however, not wanting, in the shape of articles or book reviews, or, a few years ago, in a charming series of letters from England and France, in which his architectural interest was plainly revealed. ²


² [Obituary on C. A. Cutter], Nation, LXXVII (September 17, 1903), 229. The last reference was to a chronicle of his travels in Europe during 1894 in which he described in detail the cathedrals and towns that he visited.
The most important material of this sort with respect to librarianship was Cutter's more than twenty years of reporting on American Library Association conferences beginning with the Philadelphia meeting. He regularly gave accounts of the main points of debate and often expanded on the remarks made in order to relate them to the values that the Nation represented. Because the conferences were not always held each year, he often gave résumés of what had been discussed at previous meetings. By doing so he was able to provide a sense of continuity to the discussions at hand and to show his own interpretation of how the profession was developing and fulfilling its broader cultural ideals.

The most obvious area of early controversy in which Cutter expressed his cultural overview was the issue of fiction in the public libraries. The existence of fiction, especially that which was light, popular and often written in a sensational manner, seemed to bely high cultural ideals. Nevertheless, such fiction had become increasingly popular in the United States. Librarians who felt deeply about the high purpose of the library found themselves in a quandary between several diverse purposes. The library collected all the literature of a nation, served the public at its own intellectual level, and yet attempted to provide only the best books to the public. In actual situations libraries tended to show a variety of policies on the matter ranging from purchasing no fiction at all, to purchasing
large amounts of popular fiction according to the public demand.\(^1\)

Cutter had already shown sensitivity to the problem in his praise of the printed catalog of the Quincy Public Library. That publication, prepared under the direction of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., a former trustee of the Athenaeum, included lengthy evaluative annotations after many of the entries. Comparing the annotations with those of the class-lists of the Boston Public Library, Cutter found them useful in "encouraging, directing and improving the taste for reading."\(^2\) Moreover, though he had always enjoyed French culture and literature, Cutter was aware that some of the French novelists produced works that were questionable for the common reader. In his 1876 Association paper he repeated approvingly the opinion in the catalog of the Franklin Society, that the peasant would find much of the objectionable literature enjoyable, even though the literature was, not generally of the kind which it is well for anybody to read. The writers prefer to analyze abnormal characters, to depict objectionable morals, and the manners of the demi monde; they hold the mirror up only to the unpleasant side of nature.\(^3\)

\(^1\) An extensive discussion of this question can be found in Esther J. Carrier, *Fiction in Public Libraries, 1876-1900* (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1965).

\(^2\) C. A. Cutter, Review of Quincy, Mass., Public Library, *Catalogue*, in *Nation*, XXI (October 14, 1875), 251. Cutter's appreciation of the value of annotations was demonstrated in the Athenaeum's *List of Additions* which was begun in 1877 and intended for wide distribution.

\(^3\) Cutter, "The Franklin Society of Paris," p. 4.
American Library Association leaders generally chose a middle course between the extremes, following George Ticknor who had proposed that, regardless of ideals, the library must serve all of the citizens, no matter how poor their tastes. Therefore, some popular fiction ought to be purchased for those who could not read more serious works. Having some fiction, however, would likely provide a way to interest the common person in reading of a more substantial nature. With reading guidance the common reader could begin the ascent of a cultural ladder.

When the fiction collection of the Boston Public Library came under public scrutiny during 1877 with an eye towards reducing the annual expenditures, Cutter reiterated that fiction such as that of Mrs. Southworth, Mrs. Stephens, Horatio Alger, and Oliver Optic was justified for the common reader, because,

it gives them pleasure; does them at least no harm; and, being suited to them brings them a certain amount of intellectual profit and a kind of moral instruction; and finally, that attracts them to the library, where there is a chance that something better may get hold of them.¹

He added another aspect to the above 'ladder' theory, however. The librarian would have a chance to "raise by personal influence the character of the reading."² Referring to an

¹Cutter, "The Public Library and its Choice of Books," p. 73. See also his extract on the same theme from the 9th annual report of the trustees of the Watertown (Mass.) Free Public Library, in "Record of Recent Issues," LJ, I (March, 1877), 262.

address by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to the teachers of the Quincy public schools in May 1876, he reiterated the idea that the library and the librarian were intimately connected with the total educational uplift of the citizenry. Libraries were but an extension of the public school system. The librarian functioned as a literary pastor and an intellectual physician. He must not only know the qualities of the books that he dispensed, but,

he must, too, have a quick discernment of character, mental and moral, to know how far he can go and what to say to each of his patients: for he is to be, in a literary way, the city physician, and must be able to administer from the bibliothecal dispensary just that strengthening draught that will suit each case.¹

In 1879 the Association dealt more directly with the problem of the place of fiction in libraries by devoting

¹Ibid. Cutter enthusiastically promoted Adams' view of the relationship of the library to the public schools. Adams' first such statement occurred as an address to the Quincy teachers given on May 19, 1876, entitled, "The Public Library and the Public Schools." After it appeared in the Quincy Patriot the following February and in serial form in the New England Journal of Education during March and April, Cutter promised an extract of it for the Library Journal readers as well. See "Bibliography," LJ, I (April, 1877), 298. In the August issue he gave not simply a few extracts, but rather almost the entire article, beginning with a statement of high praise. See LJ, I (August, 1877), 437-41. In 1879 Adams delivered an address at the Boston A.L.A. meeting entitled "Fiction in Public Libraries, and Educational Catalogues," LJ, IV (September/October, 1879), 330-38. He also published a book containing those two addresses as well as another one entitled, "The New Departure in the Common Schools of Quincy." The latter was delivered in early 1879 and gave an account of the educational reforms in Quincy led by Col. Francis Parker. See Charles F. Adams, Jr., The New Departure in the Common Schools of Quincy and Other Papers on Educational Topics (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1879). Cutter, who thought highly of Adams' ideas, gave notice of the latter publication in LJ, IV (November, 1879), 421-22.
an entire session to the issue. Such notables as Adams, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and James Freeman Clarke, as well as various librarians, took part in the discussion. Cutter described in his *Nation* report of the conference three general types of solutions that had been presented. Adams had pressed for only educational fiction in libraries. Samuel S. Green, the librarian of the Worcester Free Public Library, advocated some lighter fiction and a belief in the 'ladder' theory. Mary Bean, the librarian of the Brookline Public Library, advocated some lighter fiction, but with strict enforcement of their limited circulation. Cutter, however, felt there was "no simple solution." The absence of all light fiction would make the public library unpopular. Young people could get around the circulation rules by passing books around among themselves. Moreover, the 'ladder' theory simply did not work by itself. Instead, what was needed was directed reading in which a librarian's personal influence came into play.\(^1\)

A renewal of the controversy over the fiction collection of the Boston Public Library in 1881 gave Cutter an opportunity more completely to express his sense of the complexity of the issue. As the controversy developed during the year, Cutter devoted several editorials in the *Library Journal* to it, and included elsewhere in the periodical as many of the various opinions as he could in order to keep

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\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, [Boston A.L.A. Conference], *Nation*, XXIX (July 10, 1879), 26-27.
the readership informed. He doubted if the problem would ever be fully settled. The only answer was in his influence theory. On the one hand, even as historical research depended upon imagination, some novel reading, which also depended upon imagination, could do no harm. He went on, however:

But on the other hand, novel-reading undirected, accompanied by no thought of improvement, carried to excess, is in danger of doing more harm than good. And here comes in the new idea of the librarian, according to which he is not a mere perpetual writer, nor a book-watchman, or a registry clerk, but a professor of bibliography, or better still, a teacher of reading, and, so far as he can be, an intellectual advisor, a mental doctor for his town.1

In the middle of the year, when James M. Hubbard—a former staff member of the Boston Public Library and a leader of the attack on the Public Library's inclusive policy of fiction collecting—published a pamphlet listing one hundred objectionable novels that the Library owned with reviews from noted journals that pronounced many of them vulgar or grossly immoral, Cutter expressed cautious support for a more restricted view. He wrote in the Nation that although critics and librarians could not stand in the position of a moral judge over every book that was written, it still behooved librarians to exercise much greater care in their selection. He traced recent French influences in popular novels and continued,

It is never easy to trace the result of moral agency for either good or evil. But one thing is certain; if this stuff has no bad influence on the age, then the preaching of Christianity can have no good influence—the age must be utterly unimpressionable. It is incredible that so much pitch should not defile, that the tone of public feeling should not be in the end lowered by constant familiarity with such perverted thought.

We are not now speaking especially of the vulgarity and bad taste of these books, nor even of their occasional indecency; these are largely matters of convention, and, though they may offend, will not of necessity seriously hurt readers. Indeed, it may be well that these writers should display enough of both these qualities to drive away some readers in disgust. The real evil is the thoroughly unchristian, because selfish, spirit that is in them all; and the idea which pervades almost all that we have either read or read about, that passion is rightly lord of all. The very least the most indolent critic can say is, that books saturated with this spirit will not have an elevating influence, and that it is not worth while to take any especial pains to put them within reach of everybody; that in doing it no institution does any good or deserves any praise; and that if any appreciable proportion of the fiction circulated by the Public Library, at an annual cost of $30,000 consists of such novels, the money could be better spent.

Cutter went on to suggest that after reading Hubbard's pamphlet, he could better understand the statement of the headmaster of one of Boston's schools, who claimed, "The Public Library is a curse to school children." Cutter continued by stating that he reviewed Hubbard's pamphlet in order,

to call to it the attention of the authorities of our city and town libraries. It may lead some who have been liberal or careless in their purchases of fiction to consider whether, after all, it is worth while to spend any considerable part of their limited funds in the purchase of such rubbish as is here characterized, and whether,

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2Ibid.
again, the public as a whole really do "demand" such reading, and whether if it is necessary to furnish some, it is necessary to furnish so much.\footnote{Ibid.}

In a small library, he surmised, there was no problem, for censorship got lost in small book budgets where elimination of poor fiction could be achieved without controversy. But in a large public library, where there was money to buy all such fiction, he suggested that Hubbard's pamphlet be kept on hand in order to be able to restrict the reading of such novels.

There were, of course, many other subjects discussed during the same period, including matters of such national scope as copyright laws, the need for a new national library building, library legislation, and civil service as it applied to libraries. Cutter was not the only library leader to express his views concerning them; but his own expressions bore the unique character of a combining position that included both the very business-like and the cultural elements. For that reason he seems to have functioned, especially during the early years of the Association, as a moderating influence between those such as Poole and Dewey who were the more visible leaders.

Cutter was not, as one writer has described him, simply the "quiet and gentle onlooker," whose conclusions were often accepted although they had gone unnoticed in public discussions.\footnote{Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 96. The} While it is true that he was a shy
person in public and that he did not like to engage in public argumentation, he did not hesitate to state his opinions forcefully with both authority and wit. He was particularly effective in print where any public shyness was replaced by lucidity and aggressiveness in presenting his own more central position. He made perhaps the most engrossing expression of that position in a paper delivered before the Association's Buffalo meeting in 1883. He entitled his address, "The Buffalo Public Library in 1983." In the contemporary literary genre of utopian schemes, he attempted to show the extremes working together in one totally integrated library system. He incorporated in his utopian picture many of the most recently invented technical and mechanical devices (some of them surprisingly prophetical) in order to gain the best economy and uniformity of operation.¹ But all of the devices were used as a way to achieve the library's wider cultural ideals.

¹Twelve years after giving the paper, Cutter wrote to George Watson Cole about a similar paper Cole had just prepared. "I wondered if you enjoyed writing that last part as much as I did a somewhat similar paper which I read at the Buffalo convention. I have already seen some of my forecasts in that paper carried out in part. I wonder if you will see some of your suggestions put in practice a little earlier than the date you state. Possibly." Letter, Cutter to G. W. Cole, July 30, 1895, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
Cutter began by relating the occasion—a trip to Buffalo one hundred years in the future in order to see the public library. Buffalo was then an industrial city of two million inhabitants in which all industries from Niagara to Buffalo were supplied with electrical power from the Falls. In order to keep the ugliness of industrialization from disrupting the beauty of the area, the factories had been set back from the parks and recreational areas along the river.

The city of Buffalo was wealthy because of its industry, but true to the morality of wealth, had paid primary attention to the educational needs of the populace, "naturally" turning part of its commercial energy "into the channels of literature, art, and science." He went on,

The library, therefore, as being the very culmination of the educational system, had a high reputation both for its excellent management, for the extent to which it was used, and for the pride and affection with which it was regarded by the citizens.

The library building was near the center of the city, but set back from the busiest streets and separated from other buildings and businesses in a 'quiet' zone. It was being gradually built on a 200 foot square block, part of which was rented to small businesses until the land was needed. The rents were being accumulated for a building fund. The building itself was a utopian marvel of library architectural concepts and mechanical devices then being fervently discussed in the library profession. At its core

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was an iron bookstack 150 feet square rising to a height of eight, eight-foot levels. The stack was honeycombed with passageways that extended its full width and made it accessible from both sides. Along the sides of the stack area were reading rooms, 150 feet long and twenty feet wide, one room to each of two stack levels, so that from the desks the passages into the stacks on any one floor looked like "so many bird holes in a sandy river bank, sixty of them leading off into the darkness." Electric "glow lamps" were placed strategically along the passageways.

Architecturally neither the stacks nor the reading rooms were adorned with niceties and indeed offered "as little chance to the architect as any room you can imagine." But the stacks had a vast capacity and the long reading rooms accommodated 100 readers each. The outside of the building was pleasing, but "inside everything is sacrificed to utility." The utility of the building helped to achieve an economy of library process. It also served as a way to insure against fire, for all in the building was functional and made of fireproof materials.

The books were placed in the stacks in a relative rather than a fixed location shelf classification scheme, with the most used classes nearer the ground level floor. The reading rooms corresponded to the books of the class nearest at hand and subject specialist librarians were on duty in each, "a scientific man for the sciences, an art

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1Ibid. 2Ibid., p. 214. 3Ibid.
lover for the art, an antiquarian for the history, and a traveller for the geography.” The specialist librarians developed their knowledge of their own subject areas and infused their attendants with the same enthusiasm.

On the one hand their knowledge of the shelves, volume by volume, on the other, their personal intercourse with the students enabled them to give every book to that reader to whom it will do most good,—as a skilful bookseller suits the tastes of his patrons,—and to answer every inquiry with the best work the library has on that matter, as the doctor prescribes the right medicines for his patient.

The book retrieval system was by itself a complexity. A patron could call for a book at the delivery desk on the main floor or as he sat at his study desk in a reading room. If at a desk, the patron had only to punch the call number on a special keyboard. The number would light up on a large central board and a runner, wearing noiseless slippers, would quickly get the book and bring it to the patron's desk. If the book was on another stack level, a system of elevators and book-lifts would speed it on the way.

The temperature of the building was controlled and the air constantly refreshed. Newspapers, kept in a special room, were therefore safe from deterioration. If a patron wanted material from a newspaper or a book held by another library across the country (for the job of collecting was divided among libraries), telephone communication would allow the needed passage to be read aloud, or if more

1Ibid., p. 212. 2Ibid., p. 213.
extensive use was needed, a recording to be made and transmitted "on the foil." The patron was assessed a slight charge for the time involved. In the words of the future Buffalo librarian,

This exchange is going on all the time between different libraries. Of course, it is not exactly the same thing as having newspapers at hand, but in some respects it is better. The searchers become very acute in their scent, and will find things which the untrained inquirer would be sure to miss. The great advantage, however, is that it leads to a more thorough keeping of newspapers than would otherwise be possible.

Cataloging procedures were also enhanced with various mechanical devices. The catalog cards, produced in multiple sets by a photographic process, included not only the cataloger's notes and headings, but also a picture of the title page. Production of the cards was achieved in an assembly-line process in which cameras and a conveyer line kept the process in a constant movement. The cards themselves were placed in book catalogs that had adjustable bindings.

It was with regard to the services of the library, however, that the merging of the purpose of the library and the economy of its operations was most obvious. There were branch libraries throughout the city connected to the main library by telephone in order to convey requests for needed books that were not in the smaller collections. Moreover, an all-city reading program was also relayed to the smaller units from the main building. Phonographic editions by the best readers were made of good books designed to elevate

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1 Ibid. 2 Ibid., pp. 213-14.
the literary taste of the public. On certain evenings, advertised beforehand in the local newspapers, patrons could go to any of the buildings of the library system in order to hear the books read. Novels, of course, drew the greatest crowds, but only a limited amount of fiction-reading was allowed. In the words of the future librarian,

> In the circulation of books we have to follow the public taste, but in these listening-rooms we have the matter more in our control. Of course we must select bright books which the people will come to hear. Dull books must be rigidly excluded; but that is not difficult, because no dull book is published in reading-machine editions. Yes, I think a great deal of information is spread that way, and at any rate they are a valuable rival to the dram-shops, and keep many a young man out of bad places.¹

Certain other social conventions were also observed. The delivery room was divided into three areas; one for men, one for women, and a third for children. The air, being controlled, was kept fresh in order to keep people from going to sleep. Every person had to be allowed into the delivery room who desired to enter, of course, "but from the reading-rooms the great unwashed are shut out altogether or put in rooms by themselves. Luckily public opinion sustains us thoroughly in their exclusion or seclusion."²

A concerted effort was also made to reach children. Special classes for children on how to use the library were taught by specialists in the use of books. The emphasis was on developing a child's scholarly ability be leading him through the steps necessary to investigate subjects.

¹Ibid., p. 215. ²Ibid., p. 213.
There are great differences, of course, among the children. Some take to the exercise as ducks to water, some manifest the most perfect indifference. There is the same variety throughout education. But, on the whole, no part of our library work is more effective. I do not hesitate to say that the useful reading is quadrupled in any city where such a course is pursued, for the children with whom the method takes grow up as real inquirers instead of being desultory amusement seekers. The ordinary novel-reader is not done away with, though his tribe may be diminished. But novel-readers come from a different class, and read for a different object. We can never convert them, and often cannot intercept the taste in youth. Our chief work is to bring into the fold those who otherwise would not read books at all. It is not the novel but the newspaper reader we aim to catch.1

The librarians who worked with the children were those who had caught the above spirit, and they not only helped children to get books, or imparted a love of reading, but they also imparted "some culture of heart and soul."2

Indeed, the rationale for all of the technical devices in combination with the efficiency of the library building and management, was the all-encompassing purpose of the library as an agency of cultural uplift. The library, is not a mere cemetery of dead books, but a living power, which supplies amusement for dull times, recreation for the tired, information for the curious, inspires the love of research in youth, and furnishes the materials for it in mature age, enables and induces the scholar not to let his study end with his school days. When he leaves the grammar school, it receives him into the people's university, taking also those who graduate from the university and giving them too more work to do. Its mottoes are always 'plus ultra' and 'excelsior'. There is not an institution in the country more democratic, not one which distributes its benefits more impartially to rich and poor, and not one, I believe, in which there is less taint of corruption and less self-seeking in those who administer it.3

1Ibid., p. 216. 2Ibid., p. 217. 3Ibid.
With that statement Cutter brought his excursion to a close, admittedly, a "land of dreams." In his paper he had shown his conception of the marriage of technology and high cultural purpose. The members in the meeting too felt the generous nature of the vision and Cutter's address was received "with great applause" and with a special unanimous vote of thanks. The two ideological extremes were well enough stated so that even two years later, Frederick Jackson could suggest to Dewey himself that Cutter had made one of the best statements of overall goals to be sought. Yet, however his statement of goals might have been received, Cutter did not address himself to the basic issue of the profession during the 1880's; that is, how was the American Library Association to define its own roll in achieving those goals. At first there was little difficulty, for with Melvil Dewey providing the impetus, the organizational leadership proceeded without any hesitation into projects that would help to achieve the various goals. In 1880, however, several events occurred that disrupted that initial harmony and threatened the future of the Association itself. Samuel S. Green, in his chronicle of the early years of the Association aptly entitled the period, "Depression in 1880."

1Ibid.
2Reported in LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 276.
1880, The Year of Troubles

The prelude to the troubled year occurred with the establishment by Melvil Dewey in 1879 of the Readers and Writers Economy Company in order to provide library and educational supplies on a sound business footing. Funding was supplied by Frederick Jackson. Cutter and Frederick B. Perkins were made directors and Dewey was both president and treasurer. The American Library Association approved the transfer of the library supply department of the Association, previously an activity of the Cooperation Committee, to the new business with the understanding that the Cooperation Committee would serve as a policy board.¹

Soon after its establishment, however, Frederick Jackson found it necessary to move west for reasons of health. Perkins, who almost single-handedly was putting together the proposed A.L.A. Catalog, resigned his position at the Boston Public Library in 1880, and, after attempting to go into business as a library consultant, became the librarian of the San Francisco Free Public Library. Richard Bowker, who had served as an advisor to Dewey, took a position as an agent of Harper's in London in mid-1880. And

¹The official relationship of the Economy Company to the Cooperation Committee is recorded in, A.L.A. Cooperation Committee, [Report], LJ, IV (July/August, 1879), 286-87. It should be pointed out that although the Cooperation Committee was to serve as the policy board for the Economy Company, the Committee was not in reality a separate entity, for the individual members of the Committee comprised for the most part the board of directors of the Company. In addition they all had heavy financial interests in the business. See also above, Ch. III, pp. 187-90, for other details of Cutter's role in the company.
Cutter became extraordinarily busy with developments at the Athenaeum due to the receipt of two sizable bequests. Dewey found himself overworked, financially strapped, and in a struggle with Bowker over the Library Journal. The final blow came when a struggle for the control of the Economy Company itself, pitting Dewey against a small coterie of stockholders, broke into the open in October 1880 and caused the company's collapse in the following months.

The combination of troubles and removal of the key working members on the Cooperation Committee caused the discontinuance or delay of all of the cooperative projects directed by the committee. The A.L.A. Catalog was discontinued after Perkins left, and although officially turned over to Dewey by the Association in 1885, it was not completed until 1893. Likewise, work on an index to subject headings was also discontinued and not resumed until 1892. The publisher's title-slip project was permanently discontinued, and the completion of a uniform catalog code was delayed until 1883.

Cutter felt the collapse of the Economy Company more severely perhaps than anyone except Dewey. He suffered strained relations with Dewey because of the nature of the legal battle that ensued. Dewey lost the company but recouped almost all of his financial investment in an out-of-court settlement, although he claimed to have lost the promise and freshness of the new field in the process. He almost immediately began again, this time as the Library
But Cutter strongly disapproved of Dewey's new venture for he apparently felt that Dewey had violated the terms of a settlement that placed some restrictions on Dewey's re-entering the same field. As a result of the debacle, the close working relationship between the two men was broken. During the ensuing months the first strong statements of competition with Dewey were made by Cutter with regard to their respective shelf classification systems. Nevertheless, the two men remained cordial and continued to confer with each other during their occasional luncheons, although Dewey mentioned to Bowker that they carefully avoided mentioning the Economy Company. Later, when Dewey was invited to accept the librarian's post at Columbia University, Cutter warmly encouraged him.1 Thereafter, they continued their relationship through correspondence, but it was often limited to library business. Cutter remained responsive, however, to Dewey's enthusiasm, at least in part.

Although Dewey remained the secretary of the Association until 1890, well-after his year of troubles, the tone and the activities of the Association took a different course. In his drawing back and his subsequent removal to New York in 1883, other leaders with more patrician leanings

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1The letter of encouragement from Cutter to Dewey is post-dated only "Apr. '83," CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The dating coincides with other replies dated late April 1883 in response to Dewey's request for advice on whether or not to accept the position. Cutter wrote, "My dear Dui, Of course you will accept. It's the place for you and you are the man for the place."
exercised a closer control over the organization. It was during this period that Cutter exercised most directly his own leadership within the Association.

**Association Activities, 1881-1892**

Justin Winsor remained the president of the Association until 1885, although his original interest in the organization waned in the face of his historical writing after 1880.¹ He was followed by William F. Poole from 1885 to 1887, and by Cutter from 1887 to 1889. Thereafter the presidential term was limited by a provision that no person could succeed himself. Frederic Crunden of the St. Louis Public Library served for the year, 1889 to 1890. Dewey was elected next, but had to withdraw midway through the year because of illness. William I. Fletcher finished his term. Karl Linderfelt of the Milwaukee Public Library was elected in 1891 but resigned in the spring of 1892 when his embezzlement of public library funds was exposed. His public disgrace both shocked and embarrassed the profession. Finally, Dewey was elected in 1892 and served as the chief architect of the Association's extensive contribution to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

Cutter remained on the Executive Board during the entire period. At first he did so by virtue of his chairmanship of the Cooperation Committee. When the makeup of that committee was changed in 1885, he was appointed a

¹The *Memorial History of Boston, 1630-1880*, which Winsor edited, was published during 1880-1881.
vice-president, a position he held until 1887. He served on the committee to consider Dewey's proposed library school (1883-1885), on the committee to make a standard table of transliterations for cataloging (1883-1885), and on the committee dealing with a revision of the constitution (1889-1893). In 1887 he was elected to the Executive Board of the newly-formed A.L.A. Publishing Section, serving in that position until 1892. Most important, he was chosen president in 1887, serving until 1889. In that position he became the last of the older style presidents who operated under an Executive Board composed for the most part of original members of the Association.

Cutter and the Library Journal

Beyond his actual organizational work, Cutter continued his own particular brand of leadership in the way that he was best equipped; that is, in his writing. His interest in the technical matters of cataloging and shelf classification not only found expression but also increased immensely in number. He also continued his regular reporting for the Nation. His most important post, however, was his editorship of the Library Journal from 1881 to 1893. In that position he became the chief publicist for the leadership of the 1880's and produced a flood of editorials and editorial notes on current issues. When those are added to his Nation writings, they reveal what became his own evolved statement of the purpose of the professional organization.
The circumstances that led to his appointment went back to 1876. At that time he encouraged Dewey in the establishment of the periodical and became associated with it immediately as the editor of the "Bibliography" section. He worked closely with Dewey, who paid him directly for his contributions, and supplied the younger editor not only with the most substantial portions of some of the early issues, but regularly with articles as well.

The Bibliography section was itself a masterful monthly review of the state-of-the-art. After experimenting through several issues with how to arrange his material, he finally settled on a format that included two parts. First, he entered whatever reviews of books he might have gathered (some of which he wrote himself) in a section entitled "Notices." Second, he made a "List of Recent Publications" of interest to librarians, this section itself divided into: A. Library Economy and History and Library Reports; B. Catalogs of Libraries; C. Bibliography (i.e., published bibliographies in all fields); and sometimes, D. Indexes (i.e., published indexes in all fields). In each of the sections, and especially in section A where newspaper and magazine articles concerning current library issues were listed, he liberally added excerpts from the articles themselves, as well as editorial annotations. He often mentioned in the notices of articles from other publications his own anonymous notices in the Nation.
Working closely with Dewey was only part of Cutter's preparation. He also unavoidably worked closely with Frederick Leypoldt, the Journal's publisher, and with Richard R. Bowker, Leypoldt's agent. He was, therefore, in a unique position when trouble broke out between the publisher and Dewey in late 1878. Leypoldt had begun publishing the Journal as a secondary project during its early years, although his chief interest as a bibliographer lay in his American Catalogue. Because of the Journal's only minimal subscription list, it proved a losing venture through its early years. In late 1878 in an effort to raise more capital for his American Catalogue, he sold the Library Journal and the Publishers' Weekly to Bowker with the understanding that he would repurchase them when he was in a better financial position. He continued, however, as the actual publisher of the Journal.

Bowker found it necessary to reorganize the publishing arrangements of the Journal in order to put it on a sounder financial footing. That meant renegotiating Dewey's contract as editor with the intention of separating more completely Dewey's work for the periodical from his work in the library supply business, for the two aspects had become confusingly intermixed. Although a new contract was eventually agreed upon, editorial relations became strained in the process, partly because of the chaotic nature of Dewey's working habits, but also over a matter of personal pride; that is, a disagreement between the two over who had
been most responsible for bringing the periodical into existence in the first place.¹ In one heated exchange, Dewey threatened not only to withdraw from the editorship, but also to begin a rival publication. He claimed that "the leading men" of the Association wanted him to follow such a course and claimed that Cutter himself would help put the rival publication on its feet with his own contributions.² Cutter was not in actuality a party to the dispute, even though he had been implicated by Dewey. Bowker must have sensed the situation, for he immediately wrote to Cutter appealing to Cutter's "admirable ability as a diplomat" to help straighten the matter out.³ Cutter, and Winsor too in this instance, helped to settle the dispute and eventually the matter was resolved. But the financial condition of the publication continued to worsen. New subscriptions, the backbone of support in the face of low advertising revenue, failed to materialize and by the end of 1879 the publisher showed an accumulated loss of $2,400 for the first three years.

The situation remained unchanged for the first half of 1880 despite repeated appeals to Association members to


²Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter, January 3, 1879, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

³Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter, January 10, 1879, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
help recruit new subscribers from among smaller libraries. Moreover, Dewey's own growing troubles with the Economy Company made it increasingly difficult for him to do his editorial work. As a result the publishers announced in June 1880 that the Library Journal would be suspended, with the provision that the regular features, such as the Bibliography section, would be included in the Publishers' Weekly, which would be sent to the subscribers instead. The decision was actually attributable to Bowker and his acute business sense.\(^1\)

A wave of protest from loyal Association members and his own dissatisfaction at discontinuing the periodical in the middle of the year moved Leypoldt to reverse the decision. In the absence of Bowker, who had gone to England, he decided in August to continue the fifth volume by issuing double issues at two-month intervals.\(^2\) With Dewey increasingly preoccupied, Leypoldt sought and received help from Cutter who aided him in getting the periodical out and attempted to find a solution.\(^3\) In the double issue for September and October, Cutter presented to the subscribers a plan for continuing that became the basis for a new beginning in 1881. He proposed that the subscription price be

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\(^1\)Editorial, LJ, V (June, 1880), 168-69.

\(^2\)Editorial, LJ, V (July/August, 1880), 207-08; Fleming, R. R. Bowker, pp. 64-66.

\(^3\)Letter, F. W. Leypoldt to R. R. Bowker, August 11, 1880, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
reduced from $5.00 to $2.00; that the total amount of subscription income at the beginning of the year be used to determine how many issues would be published; that economies of publishing be undertaken, such as reducing the physical size of the volume and using cheaper paper; that if necessary the issues be held to only eight pages bi-monthly; and finally that the Association pay entirely for the issue that included the annual conference proceedings.\(^1\) Cutter's proposals were enthusiastically accepted in the response to a questionnaire and as a result the publication continued, although at a subscription price of three rather than two dollars.\(^2\)

Dewey, by then involved in his court suit, resigned his editorship effective at the end of the year, and Leyboldt offered the job to Cutter. Cutter, true to his cautious manner, made explicit his own conditions. He accepted the job on a six month trial basis and noted that his duties at the Boston Athenaeum would take precedence over the Journal in case of conflict.\(^3\) His caution seems to have been unnecessary, for the periodical under his leadership gained a new lease on life and by the end of his trial


\(^3\)Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, January 14 and 16, 1881, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
period he was happily able to report to Bowker that Leypoldt surmised that the *Journal* would pay for itself for that year.  

In some respects the general policies of the *Journal* remained the same under Cutter's editorship as they had been under Dewey. The periodical had from the beginning been designed to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas among librarians. It had also aimed to provide a forum for 'best' answers to the needs of librarians, thus becoming a continually revised manual of library economy. For that reason Cutter continued the regular feature, "Notes and Queries," a device that enabled librarians to share both their frustrations and solutions regarding library problems. So also, the "Bibliography" and "Pseudonyms and Anonyms" features were continued. The latter was a monthly list of the real names of anonymous and pseudonymous authors. In all three of the features, editorial comments were generously added as expressions of wise counsel. In addition, Cutter almost immediately added a section entitled "Library Purchase List." It followed the format of the Athenaeum's *List of Additions* and listed the best books for a local

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1 Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 12, 1881, NYPL, Bowker Papers. The same information was conveyed to Bowker in letters from Leypoldt, August 5, 1881, and from Adolf Growell, September 13, 1881. Growell was a member of the Publishers' Weekly staff. Perhaps it was a way to convince Bowker, who was in England, that the decision to continue the *Journal* had been a wise one.

2 Cutter reiterated that basic purpose in an appeal for contributions, in Editorial, LJ, VI (August, 1881), 224.
library to buy, annotating the selections with comments from leading periodical reviews. By providing this information, Cutter attempted to fulfill the intention behind the then defunct A.L.A. Catalog project. In February 1883 he added a similar section entitled "Literature for the Young" which was compiled by Caroline Hewins of the Hartford Public Library.

In another respect Cutter changed the periodical by moving the editorial column to the beginning of the monthly issue, featuring not only the opinions stated there, but also correlating them closely with the material in the issue at hand. The change of position for the editorial matter tended to highlight even more the authoritative voice that the Journal had held. It was a self-conscious policy that arose when the Journal became the organ of the American Library Association soon after the Association began, and was continued for many years, especially with respect to book reviews. In 1892 the policy was very explicitly stated, when, in response to two authors whose books had been reviewed harshly, Cutter noted that their personal replies would not be printed because they were inadequate, they argued ad hominem, and they did not lessen the misleading qualities of their publications. He stated,

And though our reviews are generally initialed so as to make them the personal view of each writer, yet none are published which do not represent the opinion of the
The more important effect of the change in editorial position was to give prominence to Cutter's views, especially on the nature of the Association itself, an issue that became central in Association discussion in the succeeding years.

Cutter edited the literary contents of the *Library Journal* for twelve years until late 1893. Leypoldt took care of the business matters, but when he died suddenly in 1884, that aspect of the periodical returned to Bowker. Cutter's own propensity for some subjects was reflected in the publication, particularly his concern for the problems of shelf classification. Between 1881 and 1886 a large number of articles on that subject appeared. Although

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The policy did not extend to all contributions. Since the eighth number of the first volume, a statement had been included on the editorial page that read, "The Editors of *Journal* are not responsible for the views expressed in contributed articles or communications." Nevertheless, there was an effort to present only the 'best' materials (for example, in the Bibliography section) and if the works were not of that quality, the editors were not at all hesitant in saying so.

2The number of articles on classification had reached such proportions in 1886 that perhaps Bowker felt uneasy about them. By the fall of that year Cutter was already tiring of the classification debate, for it had produced little that was enlightening. In October he wrote a facetious note to Bowker on the problem: "I think you are mistaken in thinking that articles on classification are not welcome to the editor of the *Lib. jnl*. He has himself assured me that he thinks more of articles on that subject than on any other except perhaps cataloging. You were probably thinking of the publisher, but his opinion is of little value, as (between ourselves) he knows very little of the needs and likings of librarians." Someone, perhaps Bowker.
Cutter had been happy about the fact that the publication had paid its own way in 1881, during the period it remained only barely self-supporting. The subscription price was again raised in 1883 to $4.00 and to $5.00 in 1885; and the problem of recruiting additional subscribers remained.

Older Leaders and 'Best' Solutions

The problem of support for the periodical was related to matters beyond simply those of its price. The *Library Journal* was the official organ of the Association and under Cutter's editorship gave decided support to the Association's leadership; but a librarian still had to subscribe to it apart from his association membership. Some librarians, especially those from smaller libraries, felt that neither the periodical nor the Association adequately expressed their own concerns, and consequently, they were not willing either to pay for it or to support the Association more than half-heartedly. It was that attitude that lay at the heart of a struggle over the control of the Association during the 1880's, an understanding of which is necessary in order to assess Cutter's position in the Association, both as the editor of the *Journal* and as an Association officer.

The leaders of the American Library Association of the 1880's, true to their more patrician leanings, were much himself, penciled in on the postal the word, "joke". See letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, October 23, 1886, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
less aggressive in the exercise of the power that a professional organization could represent, than Dewey had been. The object of the Association as it had been originally framed was,

to promote the library interests of the country by exchanging views, reaching conclusions, and inducing co-operation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy; by disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries; and by cultivating good-will among its own members.¹

As long as Dewey remained in his original position of influence, the problem of "reaching conclusions and inducing co-operation" had specific direction, for he proposed the projects that aimed at that goal and largely supplied the inspiration for them. While it is true that during this period he remained in the Association's executive councils, his influence had been lessened, not only because of the events of 1880 but also because of his move away from Boston.

In contradistinction, the leadership during this period was more concerned with discussing issues and encouraging each librarian to reach his own conclusions and to make his own choices of action, than with building an organizational structure that would bring to bear a uniformity through standardization. Some uniformity was desirable, of course, but it was necessarily to be an expression of measured deliberation rather than of organizational pronouncement; and it was to allow for differences of

opinion and practice. A greater concern for the leaders was that the Association should express the high cultural ideals that they had absorbed in their ante-bellum years. For this reason, perhaps in an unconscious way, they resisted efforts to democratize the leadership of the Association simply for its own sake. They viewed the possible solutions to the problems encountered by all libraries, large and small, in terms of the examples of the best library practice then extant. That attitude theoretically allowed for the opinions of all librarians who wished to speak, but in reality, gave a greater weight to the larger more elite Eastern libraries from which they themselves came.

When Cutter became the editor of the Library Journal, he inherited an organ that under Dewey had been intended for furthering the objects and activities of the Association as Dewey had conceived them. Cutter shaped the Library Journal as an authority of ideas rather than activities. It became under his leadership a forum for differing opinions of the best solutions and enlightened attitudes rather than a manual of final conclusions.

As a result of the change in the style of leadership, a power vacuum developed. No effective cooperative projects of the nature of those previously inspired by Dewey were developed. The new edition of Poole's Index to Periodical Literature was completed by 1882 and a continuing project was made of it. But it had been provided for
outside of Dewey's immediate control in 1876 and had, in
the person of William I. Fletcher, an energy that insured
its continuity. The only major projects that did resemble
the earlier spirit--Dewey's School of Library Economy, the
Library Bureau, and the American Library Association Pub-
lishing Section, either remained outside of direct control
of the Association, as was the case with the first two, or
was only a shadow of the ideal that Dewey had pursued, as
was the case with the latter, which in its first years was
hampered by a severe lack of funds.

Occasionally the Bureau of Education helped with
publications, but the cooperative spirit that had taken
place during 1876 was no longer in evidence, doubtless due
to the Bureau's own busy efforts, but also because there
was no single librarian who would take charge.¹ When Eaton,
the Commissioner of Education, appealed to librarians to
prepare an exhibit for the New Orleans Exposition in 1884,
only Dewey responded affirmatively.² In addition to the
above matters, the Executive Board seemed to be less inter-
ested in the formal continuity of the annual meetings and

¹Mary S. Williams, "The Library Work of the Bureau
of Education," LJ, XII (January/February, 1887), 66. Eaton
had also promised in 1885 to print the A.L.A. Catalog, but
Dewey was not able to get the work ready at that time. Cf.,
notes in LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 326; IX (April,
1884), 69.

²Letters, J. Eaton to M. Dewey and Cutter, October
10, 1884, U.S.N.A., "Letters." Dewey presented a paper to
the Exposition on the proposed A.L.A. Catalog, according
to Williams, "The Library Work of the Bureau of Education,"
p. 66.
in the structure of the Association itself. The 1884 meet-
ing was cancelled by the Board over the question of when
to meet and only an informal meeting was provided for in
1888 when similar scheduling problems arose.

Cutter encountered the problem of the nature of the
Association almost immediately upon assuming his editorial
post in 1881. The problem was expressed in the form of a
criticism of that year's Washington conference. The meetings
had been for the most part given over to discussions con-
cerning shelf classification (Cutter had again raised the
problem of fixed versus movable shelf location symbols),
library architecture especially as it concerned the need
for a new building for the Library of Congress, and the
distribution and deposit of public documents. J. K. Hoyt,
a correspondent for the Newark Daily Advertiser, reported
in a somewhat caustic vein, that the leaders of the Asso-
ciation seemed intent on discussing the concerns of larger
libraries rather than the concerns of smaller libraries,
the librarians of which were struggling with "the adapta-
tion of the library to the forwarding of technical or prac-
tical education."¹ Making a play on words, he asked whether
the library leaders had found "the true hub around which to
revolve." Instead, there was "an overpowering sense of
Cambridge, Harvard, and Boston--a feeling among the inferior

¹J. K. Hoyt, "Washington Conference," Newark Daily
Advertiser, February 12 and 15, 1881, as reported in LJ,
VI (February, 1881), 30.
planets that they were revolving around the Hub."¹ The larger libraries and their librarians presented their problems and their solutions as the only concerns that existed, rather than "how books can be brought within reach of the toiling masses who need them the most."² Likewise, little was said to help the rural or the factory operative librarians. He concluded,

The value of such an association is undoubted; it has within it learning, sharpness of intellect, the elements of progress; but it would be well to remember that in this country it is the duty of intellect to grapple with ignorance, that intelligence must come down from its pedestal and lift the lowly up to its own level.³

The fact that a sensitive nerve had been touched was evidenced both by Cutter's inclusion of Hoyt's remarks in the February issue and by his devoting an entire editorial to the problem that Hoyt had raised. He began by admitting that Hoyt was partly right. The practical (i.e., practical to the larger libraries) material--"semi-material" in Cutter's words--did in fact outweigh the intellectual and moral, and the three principal subjects discussed were in fact concerns of mainly the largest libraries. He wrote, "It is not the first time that the objection has been made; and now that it has found a public utterance, perhaps it will receive more attention."⁴

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, VI (February, 1881), 23.
Cutter went on to suggest, however, that Hoyt's analysis was also partly in error. There was in fact opportunity for the silent to speak and the subjects spoken of were in large part applicable to even the smallest library. He continued, "If the papers treated of these questions from the stand-point of large means and cultivated readers, it would have been very easy for any librarian to divert the current of debate into the channel he desired it to follow."¹ He expressed the hope that the conference to be held in Cincinnati the following year would be better in that regard and that the Library Journal itself, which had also been criticized in the same way would be able to better represent the concerns of the smaller libraries. Using Hoyt's own words, Cutter wrote, "We earnestly request the librarians who are 'responsible for the mental nutriment of factory operatives and the laboring poor' to send us their experience, and to detail their difficulties and perplexities."² He concluded that in the final analysis, the problems of all libraries were probably the same.

Although Cutter saw the issues of libraries of all sizes as being in essence the same, there is a sense in which he failed to grapple with the tenor of the objection. Hoyt had criticized what he felt was an elitist attitude on the part of Association leaders, who not only saw their own problems as the only important ones, but who also had little sympathy for the practical realities of life that

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 24.
less prominent librarians dealt with. They theorized about the masses and about cultural uplift, but without a corresponding first-hand experience of either the masses or what it really meant to serve them. Implicit in Hoyt's criticism was the idea that the leaders of the Association, prominent men in their own world, not only did not sympathize with the librarian who worked in a more restricted situation, but also kept the Association under their own control. Cutter's idea of the help that the Association might give was to provide a forum for what seemed to be the best solutions to library problems. The answers given were grand solutions to general problems, however, and they may not have seemed very practical. Cutter's answer to Hoyt's implicit criticism was to place the burden of participation on those who had not spoken up.

The conference at Cincinnati could not have helped the matter very much for it was held in a distant location and was poorly attended. In 1883, however, the Buffalo conference provided a wider coverage of librarians' concerns and Cutter editorialized,

Two or three years ago certain murmurs were heard that the small libraries did not get enough attention at our conferences. If we remember right it was not a librarian but a journalist who voiced the complaint, but he may have received a hint from some of the librarians who felt that their needs had been overlooked, but were too retiring to speak of it, and perhaps had not the means of getting the grievance into the public press. No one can read the report of the last conference and make the same complaint.¹

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, IX (March, 1884), 39.
He continued by describing the papers on library service for the young and for adults and on libraries and schools (all, however, by librarians from what might be considered as larger or prominent libraries). He concluded by stating a truism.

But, after all, an example drawn from a small library is not necessarily the one which will do most good to another small library. The best work gives the best exemplar, and the best work will come, not from the best library, but from the best man wherever he happens to be.¹

His comments on the problem did not erase the reality, however, that there was a feeling of being left out on the part of smaller libraries. Seven years later, in discussing with Dewey the problem of the makeup of the executive board of the new Massachusetts Library Club of which he was the first president, Cutter wrote,

I didn't exclude anybody from Mass. Lib. Club. If I hadn't made a vigorous protest even trustees wd have been shut out. . . . But I find there is among smaller libraries a very strong dislike and distrust of the A. L. A. For that reason it is a pity that the Exec. Board are all A. L. A. men. We must live it down.²

Dewey's Practical Solutions

The struggle that developed over the control of the Association did not come about simply because the problems existed, but because in the person of Melvil Dewey a contrasting alternative to the Association's approach to its purpose was offered, an alternative that Dewey did not

¹Ibid.

²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 19, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
hesitate to emphasize. When Dewey moved to Columbia University in 1883 he immediately set about to provide the kind of help that he felt the greater mass of librarians would appreciate. Much like the cooperative projects of the first years, his work remained intensely practical, simplified, and standardized. In 1885 he published a completely revised edition of his shelf classification that included the needs of larger libraries while at the same time retained its simplicity of use for small libraries that it had had from the beginning. In 1887, after having unsuccessfully bid for the Association's backing, he began a library school that would provide training for librarians that was both simple and yet thorough. He continued his Library Bureau and founded the New York Library Club, the first such local library organization and a prototype of other local organizations to come. His projects were outside the official control of the Association and served both as pre-eminent examples of his own ideals of uniformity and standardization, and as bases of operations from which to promulgate his views. There were some who could only look askance at his activity, considering it to be an expression of a desire for power. For that reason, his efforts to get his programs accepted in one way or another

1Cutter was Dewey's chief competitor in classification. Cutter's scheme from the start was aimed primarily at large libraries while hopefully adaptable to smaller libraries. Dewey's scheme was just the opposite. In his second edition Dewey corrected the small library orientation by greatly enlarging the schedules.
by the Association met resistance that sometimes moderated or even blocked them. Others, however, applauded his efforts and provided him with the support he needed eventually to regain a position of power within the Association.

In 1886 he began a new publication entitled Library Notes. His announcement in the 1886 conference gave the essence of his concerns.

We of the A. L. A. ar very proud of what we hav done in ten years, and with good reason. But we must face the facts. Of the 5,000 public libraries in the U. S., how many ar under our influence? How many hav practical knowledge of the existence of the A. L. A. or its official organ, the Library Journal? It is rather startling to realize that we hav never succeeded in reaching directly over one-tenth of our home field.1

He went on to give his opinion that the Library Journal was too expensive and that what was needed was a cheap quarterly that would sell at a dollar a year. If that were too expensive, the price should be lowered still more, even if that meant only twenty-five cents a year. The publication was not to be a cheap substitute for the Library Journal, but rather a beginner's tool. He added,

It [Library Notes] is rather a necessity for the present time to carry forward our work, and wil deserve the hearty support, sympathy and cooperation of every believer in the modern library idea.2

Library Notes became both a complement to and a competitor with the Library Journal. Dewey was conscious of both aspects when he suggested to E. C. Thomas, the editor of


2Ibid.
of the English publication, Library Chronicle, that each should promote the other's publication in their respective countries. He described how he did not wish to duplicate the standard features of the Journal, and therefore would act as a feeder to the older publication. The new periodical would, however, give the practical side of librarianship, and in England would complement the Chronicle just as it would the Journal in America.¹

Dewey's journalistic venture became in reality a continuing simplified and very practical manual of library procedures. Most of the articles in it were written by Dewey himself or by members of his library school team.² Cutter and Bowker felt the competitive spirit immediately. Cutter had already conducted a survey of his own concerning what readers wanted in the Journal and had reported his findings the previous year. A return of only thirty questionnaires, however, could not have clarified the matter to any degree, for the replies demonstrated for the most part a great deal of complacent satisfaction with the publication as it was. The two written statements that he did suggested, moreover, diametrically opposite opinions. And Cutter's use of them suggests his own growing awareness of


²Library Notes was published regularly for only about two years. It was finally discontinued in 1898, having by that time a total of only four volumes. Its irregularity did not, however, have any bearing on its initial impact, particularly its practical value for novice librarians.
the nature of the associational struggle. The first unnamed correspondent wanted the periodical to be completely "practical." The second wanted it to be more inspirational, but with the added quip,

When attending the convention I asked myself once or twice,--oftener, to be honest,--'Are librarians too busy to think of books in any other respect than commodities to be labelled and circulated?'

Cutter continued to seek an answer. Throughout the remainder of 1885 and during 1886 he encouraged librarians to send in reports of their practical experience, noting that every librarian should consider himself an assistant editor of the Journal. Doubtless, the appearance of Library Notes was the reason that Bowker changed the format of the Journal in 1887. A more attractive type style was used. The succession of articles arguing the fine points of classification practice that had been a staple diet through 1886 ceased and many more items of the how-to-do-it variety began to appear. The new approach was described by Cutter in January 1887 as a "series of practical papers for the smaller and younger libraries, such as will form the


2Dewey's competition with the Library Journal was not all that overt. During the same meeting that Cutter discussed his survey, Dewey also emphasized the need for written contributions to the Journal. See A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 297. Perhaps by the following year, however, he was convinced that a more affirmative approach and action was needed.
material of a practical handbook of library administration."¹

The struggle over the types of solutions that the Association could offer to its members also affected the organization's public discussion over what it had in its power to do when faced with particular issues. Again, the chief impetus in the discussion came from Dewey in the form of a cooperative project. He proposed at the Buffalo conference in 1883 that the Association approve and lend its fullest support and guidance to his plan for a school of library economy to be established at Columbia University. He had had such a plan in mind since 1877 and had made it one of the conditions of his acceptance of the post of chief librarian at Columbia. He outlined the purpose and course of instruction that the school would follow, all of which was centered in the practical training necessary to run a library. He expressed his belief that if a student was trained briefly and systematically in the comparative merits of various library management techniques and library appliances, he would be much better equipped to step into a library and manage it efficiently, without having to spend years in haphazardly learning the same matters in an apprenticeship.²

¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XII (January/February, 1887), 3. During the next three years a series of symposia appeared on such practical matters as the care of pamphlets, the collection of fines, the care of maps, and the care of rare books. Even so, the contributors tended to be from the large established libraries, the Athenaeum represented in almost every case.

²Melvil Dewey, "School of Library Economy," in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883),
His plan provoked considerable discussion not only in terms of approval or disapproval of the basic idea, but over the question of what the Association had within its power to do. William F. Poole expressed his wariness of the project on the basis that apprenticeship in a major library comprised a much better educational environment. Lectures on subjects would never give a student the sort of experience he would need.\(^1\) Cutter spoke in favor of the basic idea because he felt that the traditional method of training librarians through apprenticeship, a method for which the Boston Athenaeum had already earned a considerable reputation under both Poole and himself, had inherent limitations. The staffs of good libraries often had large turnovers because trained persons were anxious to find a library of their own. The various levels of attainment reached by different trainees also led to oversized staffs. Moreover, the trainee's experience was often limited, either to a single department in the library or at best to a single library without the broadening effect of a wider exposure. He supported the idea of a regular school training for librarians, not as a substitute for practical experience,

\(^{285-88.}\) Dewey inserted a bracketed editorial comment in the printed proceedings that most likely indicated his sense of the opposition to both his practicality and to his New York work. He wrote, "In saying this I do not raise the question of the merits of New York libraries on methods. Sometimes it is more useful to study the things to avoid than those to imitate."

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\(^1\) William F. Poole, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 288-89.
but as a complement that would bring together both theory and practice. An added benefit was the known fact that "regularly educated men get the best positions and the best salaries."¹

Cutter, among others, was at a loss, however, as to how the Association could support Dewey's proposal, for Dewey had outlined little more than a proposed curriculum for his library school idea. Because the idea needed more deliberation, a committee was immediately appointed to study the proposal. Cutter reported its findings the next day, expressing the divided nature of their opinions. They could not agree on recommending participation because there was no actual plan to approve. For that reason, one member wished that no statement at all be made. The other four members desired to encourage Dewey, but for the same reason offered only a resolution which read,

That this Association desires to express its gratification that the trustees of Columbia College are considering the propriety of giving instruction in library work, and hopes that the experiment may be tried.²

A minority report to defer any further considerations including any resolutions at all was defeated by a special vote, and a new committee was appointed and ordered to report at

¹Ibid., p. 290. It should be noted, however, that Dewey had said very little about "theory."

²A.L.A. Committee on a School of Library Economy, [Report and Discussion], LJ, VIII (September/October, 1883), 293. The ad hoc committee consisted of Cutter, Henry J. Carr (Grand Rapids, Mich., Public Library), B. Pickman Mann (U. S. Department of Agriculture Library), Mellon Chamberlain (Boston Public Library), and Chester W. Merrill (Cincinnati Public Library).
the next meeting of the Association.\(^1\) When it did report in 1885 (there was no meeting in 1884), not only had the school itself not yet begun, but the committee itself had not met during the intervening period until five weeks before the Association meeting. The committee could subsequently come up with little more than a new resolution of gratitude and a deferral to still the next meeting.\(^2\)

The real question in the matter at hand was not, in reality, the question of a library school per se. Dewey had done little more than propose the idea of the school to the Association. What he really sought was the endorsement for another of his practical projects, the approval of which would have given him more control over the Association's activities. By this time, however, the leadership of the Association would not go ahead with the project until it was more firmly developed. The opposition to taking votes of approval for a project or a standardized mode of practice was led by William F. Poole who considered the

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 293-94. Chamberlain was the dissenter. The original resolution was carried, but only after a heated debate in which Dewey accused Poole of being against the idea of the Association itself in 1876. For the ensuing exchange of correspondence between the two, see Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 94.

\(^2\) The new committee consisted of Cutter, W. E. Foster (Providence Public Library), Samuel S. Green (Worcester Public Library), Mary Bean (Brookline Public Library), and Hannah P. James (Newton Free Library). For its report, see A.L.A. Committee on a School of Library Economy, [Report], LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 291-94.
Association more a place to express one's views than to gain authority for one's "hobbies in methods of library work."¹

During the 1885 conference, when the Association balked at taking a vote on the matter of cataloging rules for transliterating, Dewey spoke out vehemently:

We have done nothing more practical in advancing library interests than in formulating our general opinions on various subjects. When we degenerate into a mere debating society in which to make speeches, and never dare to express our personal opinion, for fear that in the future we may learn more and wish to alter it, we shall take away the chief value to the libraries at large. The old and experienced libraries are not the ones to whom these meetings are most useful. Some of them will never alter the plans they used in their younger days, however great improvements may be made. But there are hundreds of the smaller libraries who wait to learn the result of these meetings, and they will be sorely disappointed to find that the net result is a series of speeches, with no means of knowing what the general judgment of the meeting is. It is folly for us to take time to record the individual opinion of each member when a vote will show so quickly the number favoring either side. I should favor recording the number voting each way; but we should remember that nine-tenths of the questions we have discussed, after they have been fully considered, have been voted unanimously one way, the results of those votes have been eminently satisfactory to the very large number who have been guided by them.²

When the opinions of others were asked on the propriety of voting for one particular method of transliteration, Cutter replied,

I brought the question before the meeting to get an expression of opinion, such as we have had, and also

¹William F. Poole, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 309.

to interest members in the question. I do not myself feel that I know anything about it. (Laughter) I do not think either that the Association knows anything about it. (Laughter) And I do not think that a definite vote at this time is desirable.¹

Cutter may well have felt himself to be in a difficult position. He had supported Dewey's ventures in the past, but the issue at hand was clearly a matter on which he felt the Association should not make an authoritative pronouncement, at least not at that point. By 1889 he made a more definite commitment to side with Poole's and Winsor's position that the Association was a deliberative, not a legislative, body. When a vote was called for on the matter of rules for abbreviations in cataloging, Cutter lined up against the move to place the authority of the Association behind a single solution to the problem. He appealed to the membership.

I protest against taking any vote. On a subject that requires such calm and careful consideration as this, an excited assembly, in a noisy, hot room, is not in a fit frame of mind even to grasp the question, much less to decide it. These things are hard to settle even in the quiet of one's study. They should not be sprung upon us here when we are at the mercy of any ready speaker. I doubt if half those who are present know what they are asked to vote on; and I am sure that in such matters we have no right to pass a resolution that shall in any way bind the Association, or be quoted hereafter in favor of any set of rules, or to choke off discussion. Our vote would be worthless. We have accepted the report; let us stop there.²

When Dewey later complained that members would shift back

¹C. A. Cutter, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 311. The insertions were added by the editor.

and forth between opinions like shuttlecocks and never reach a decision while later reading the conference reports, Cutter turned his words back on him.

We can just as well read both sides as hear both sides, and in reading we can carefully weigh arguments, which we cannot do in the hurry of a meeting where the breath of the speaker is—to adopt Mr. Dewey's simile—continually blowing the weathercock round.¹

Finally in 1892 in the committee deliberations for rewriting the constitution of the Association, Cutter specifically voted against Dewey's proposal that the 'objects' of the Association should include 'reaching conclusions'; that is, conclusions that would constitute single solutions to difficult practical problems. Cutter agreed with Winsor that the phrase was inappropriate.² Charles C. Soule, also a member of the committee and a close friend of Dewey's, sounded the two men out and advised Dewey that the two thought the terminology to be a "wild phrase." He thought that in order to keep from running into open opposition from them, it would be best to conciliate their view, at least at the outset, "by conceding,—not with the principle,—but the statement. After all, if we strike it out, making recommendations is not prohibited,—so it doesn't really much matter."³

¹Ibid., p. 277.

²[Draft copy of the new constitution], MS, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The draft copy was circulated early in 1892 to members of the committee and included both their votes and emendations concerning the different articles.

Cutter may have felt troubled about his opposition. During the deliberations in March he expressed in a note that in the light of Soule's distaste that the committee report be anything but unanimous, he would drop his opposition to Dewey's measures for constitutional changes; to everything, that is, except the direct method of electing the officers of the Association. Yet, one cannot help but suppose that Cutter's frame of mind was somewhat upset over the whole matter. Not only was he involved in a conflict with the Athenaeum trustees, but he was also facing an outbreak of scarlet fever in his household. Furthermore, he was in correspondence with Dewey, having already asked the younger man to be on the lookout for him for a new library position. In any case, Cutter must have felt a tension in being both in opposition and in debt to Dewey at the same time.  

1 Letter, Cutter to [?], March 5, [1892], CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The note does not have an addressee, however, and it could be argued that it was not intended for Dewey. Moreover, Soule's letter to Dewey, already noted, suggests that by April Cutter resumed his opposition.
Dewey several years before the difficulty of trying to
demand uniformity at all costs. His note on the subject
turned the sense of the meaning of 'practical' around, by
making those who demanded uniformity at all costs the un-
practical ones. He wrote,

You unpractical fellows who have never catalog'd seem
to think that rules can cover all cases, & that uni-
formity is better than adaptation to circumstances. I
no [sic] of no rules wh. will relieve a cataloger from
the necessity of using his judgment & studying many
cases; if there are any such rules they are bad.¹

Later, at the end of his life, Cutter reiterated the same
theme in the statement, "The golden age of cataloging is
over." That is, cataloging rules in his view could not be
reduced to an ultimate code in which all the issues had been
settled simply because the Association had wished them to
be so. One senses in his statement the nostalgia for a day
when such issues could be left in a healthy suspension.²

Probably for the above reasons, Cutter began in the
mid-1880's to promote, along with his belief in the good
gained from learned discussions, the idea that the Associa-
tion's highest value lay in its ability to bring librarians
together for mutual encouragement. The source of Cutter's
emphasis may well have come from the Association's experience
at Lake George and Saratoga, New York, in 1885. Previously,
the conferences had been held in busy metropolitan areas,

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 22, 1883,
CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²For a discussion of Cutter's phrase and the fourth
dition of his Rules in which he stated it, see above, Ch.
VI, pp. 474-78.
but the distractions of the cities proved a hindrance to the business of the meetings. Samuel S. Green related concerning the 1885 conference that for the first time the meeting was held in a summer resort where the members were free from such distractions. The spirit of fellowship prevailed. He wrote of that year that the librarians, were always together, and, attending sessions faithfully and mingling freely at other times in the midst of congenial surroundings, found that in a higher degree than usual they attained the objects which had brought them together. Much work was done, all members engaged in doing it; they became acquainted with one another and had an enjoyable time.¹

The next year at Milwaukee, the effort to promote such fellowship was extended to include an extensive post-conference excursion that included a trip to St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Ashland, Wisconsin. Afterwards, each of the conferences included such post-conference excursions and Cutter extended the fellowship purpose of the meetings especially to such trips.² By 1891 he was phrasing the experiences in terms of the religious calling of librarians that he had used a decade before. Not only were librarians the literary pastors of the people, but in their contacts with one another they were in the apostolic position of inspiring one another with high ideals, especially when "two or three are gathered together on the way to and from our annual conventions and in the intervals between the

¹Green, The Public Library Movement, p. 121.
²Cf., C. A. Cutter, Editorials, LJ, XII (November, 1887), 503; XIII (September/October, 1888), 275; and XIV (July, 1889), 303.
meetings, and all the time during the post-conference excursions.¹ During the conference that year he reviewed the history of the Association and related that the good of the meetings was not in hearing the papers offered, but was instead,

a great deal more in listening to the discussions which follow the papers, and more even than that in the little private conferences which are going on all the time on the street cars, in the railroad cars in which people come to the conference, in the hotel corridors, and elsewhere, in which the librarian privately gives his experience, his difficulties, and the way in which he has overcome them.²

In an implicit demonstration of his identification with an older, more genteel approach to the librarian's calling, Cutter devoted his presidential address in 1889 to an interpretation of the essence of librarianship. In contradistinction to his 1883 address at Buffalo in which he dwelled upon the working relationship between techniques and ideals in a library's operation, he spoke instead on the quality of judgment needed to do library work; a quality that he chose to call common sense. The common sense that he spoke of did not refer, however, to utilitarian practicality. It was, rather, an attribute of the enlightened character in which all the higher and lower faculties were balanced in harmony. His thoughts were specifically

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¹C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVI (July, 1891), 199; Cf., C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVII (April, 1892), 119. The phrase, "two or three . . ." is, of course, an allusion to Jesus' words to his disciples in Matthew 18:20.

directed, therefore, at those for whom librarianship was little more than a skilled trade concerned with mechanical devices and oversimplified solutions to complex problems.¹

He began his speech with his typical display of wit, pointing out at the same time his own recognition of the individuality of people.

Common Sense—what is it? I hope no one will insist on a definition. . . . But if I must be explicit, I will say common sense is my sense; other people's sense, when it differs from mine, is little better than nonsense.²

He protested against those who felt that such common sense was a rarity by pointing out how it was a natural quality of the American character that had come as a result of its frontier experience. With respect to libraries, he added,

So our libraries, begun modestly a century ago, by making the most of a little and by the use of mother wit, have, with the schools, opened up a great country of intellect, have extended themselves more than anywhere else on the globe, have become a necessity—at least wherever the New Englander goes—and, the era of luxury having come, one finds them on the frontier, or what was lately the frontier, at Minneapolis, at Denver, with all the perfections of material and personnel that the Library Bureau and the Library School can furnish.³

He went on to suggest, however, that there was still much to desire in the way of improvement. "Even the most

¹Common sense as defined here is directly related to the faculty psychology inherent in Scottish common sense philosophy. Cutter would have been exposed to the latter at Harvard. See Howe, The Unitarian Conscience, Ch. II.


³Ibid.
practical people fall into most irrational acts."¹ Pointing out a series of examples taken from everyday experience, he defined common sense in terms of harmony and purpose.

As I came here I saw a country house on a lake bank, where there was a lovely view. A barn was planted between the dwelling and the lake, the house turning its back upon the water and facing a cabbage field. Was this sensible? Is it sensible to risk one's eyesight on the ill-printed newspaper in the vibrating car? . . . Is it sensible for men to "put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains?"²

He continued his list of examples but shifted to common library problems.

A great sum spent on a building, and none left to buy books; book funds bequeathed, and nothing to run the library; a librarian appointed because he is cousin of the wife of the president of the board of trustees, or an old classmate, or a union soldier, or because he is secretary of the Young Men's Democratic (or Republican) Club; . . . a new building made barely large enough to hold the books already belonging to the library; the reading-room which should be the quietest place in the building, made so magnificent as to attract crowds of sightseers; and so on, and so on.³

He then moved into the main part of his speech, a digest of current library practices, each held up to his measure of common sense. He took up in order, the problems of compiling library statistics, the employment of library assistants, library rules and their use, book selection, the treatment of fiction, collecting pamphlets, accepting gifts, weeding collections, cataloging, and classification. With each subject he emphasized the importance, not of learning a certain number of set solutions, but rather of developing those qualities of one's character that would enable a

¹Ibid., p. 148. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.
librarian to weigh all of the important factors and to produce a harmony of method and purpose.

His advice was pithy and aimed at those for whom librarianship was all mindless activity with no sense of the deeper values and goals involved. With regard to producing statistics he related,

There are persons who, like children, must pull up their plants to see if they are growing. And they want to know such details,—how many bakers and how many candlestick makers use the library, what percentage of fiction and what percentage of theology is used, on what day in the year the most books were taken out and on what the fewest. Yes, it is all interesting; looks as if it ought to be useful; is sometimes needed as a defence against the attacks of the unfriendly; but one would like to know how often any practical measure is the result of the figures so laboriously got together. Perhaps it is enough that they sometimes prevent foolish measures being adopted.¹

He claimed that he did not decry statistics and gave some examples of his own use of them. He added, however, that once an investigation had been completed, it was best if it were terminated rather than continued without purpose year after year.

With regard to choosing library assistants, he again pointed to the quality of character needed.

In the selection he must justify his privilege. He should remember that he cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and he should not accept or should dismiss at once, not merely those whom he finds to be unfaithful shirks, but those whom he finds to be slow, stupid, clumsy, illiterate, especially illiterate. A man can hardly hand a book over a counter properly, a boy cannot get a book well from the shelves, to whom it is no more than a block of wood.²

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 149.
With regard to the librarian's relationship to the public, he suggested,

It goes without saying that every librarian should be above all suspicion of favoring any one. As librarian he has no dislikes, hatreds, jealousies; he is of no sect in religion, of no party in politics; he helps all alike, as the physician heals all alike. When he finds among his assistants one who is also impassionate and impartial, he may intrust him or her with the dispensing power.¹

His treatment of the problem of book selection also impinged on the breadth of the character of the individual librarian. "Rules for buying one can hardly give, yet there are certain general principles."² The principles he referred to were, however, matters of judgment. A librarian must be able to determine the dullness (in literature), inaccuracy (in science), and dullness and untrustworthiness (in history) of books if he intended to build a disciplined collection. He went on, "Of the causes for rejection I should say: Inaccuracy, evil intent, dullness; but the greatest of these is dullness."³ He was not willing, however, to exclude all worthless books. "A great library should contain monuments of human folly as well as of human wisdom."⁴

Cutter also applied the same canons to the treatment of fiction. A librarian should be able to discern the best from only the good, and both of those from the worst. The standard of judgment should be literary merit. There were situations, of course, where the librarian could not avoid

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 150. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
the dull book. But in those situations he should strive
to substitute novels that were a grade better than the ones
sought, and to reinforce his intentions by the personal
relations that he had with his patrons. He admitted that
it was more possible to influence reading habits in a small
town, but he called upon both the librarians and trustees
of the larger public libraries to,

wake up to the perception that in this supplementary
public school which we call public library, it is their
duty to provide teachers as well as text-books, the
attendants in the delivery-room need not all be merely
animated machines, with no higher ambition than to pass
over the counter 300 volumes an hour. If there are
several attendants, one at least will be competent to
give advice; if there is only one, he will have been
chosen because he had some knowledge of books—and of
human nature.¹

Only when those personal qualities of the librarian were
emphasized could good fiction become "one of the most power­
ful engines of civilization."²

After having emphasized in the various aspects of a
librarian's work the highest faculty, common sense, Cutter
closed by referring to the value of one's faculty of emotion
and imagination.

I have praised common sense. But the librarian is
no worse if he combines with it some grains of imagina­
tion and sentiment; if he is one whom the vast book­
rooms of the great European libraries would strike dumb;
if he feels an indescribable pleasure in hanging over
an old manuscript or one of the works of the first
printers, with its sturdy paper and honest ink, black
as when first struck off, and its curiously irregular
lines of type; if he prefers a quaint old binding to a
necklace of jewels; if the odor of a case of books just
come from abroad more delights him than a garden of

¹Ibid., p. 151. ²Ibid.
flowers; if to him his library is the pleasantest place on earth, and his work there the most engrossing, the most satisfactory, that he can imagine; if every detail is to him of pressing importance, and he longs to perfect every part as the poet polishes his verses, and the painter retouches his canvas; if, as he answers the innumerable questions of the ignorant—and the learned—he fancies himself like the guide on the Alps, the pilot in the harbor, the equal of the teachers in the schools, the professors in the colleges, yes, of the pastors in their parishes. All of these delusions—if delusions they are—will not harm him, for they are not inconsistent with common sense.¹

Elections and the Revision of the A.L.A. Constitution

The conflict over American Library Association leadership also surfaced in the problem of who should participate in the leadership ranks. As in the other aspects of the Association struggle, the problem was given force and articulation by Melvil Dewey. One source for broader participation occurred with the rise of local library clubs. The New York Library Club that Dewey began in 1885 was to become a prototype for other local groups. In Dewey's thinking, local clubs would not only give the opportunity for wider participation, but would also provide a way for the profession to reach local librarians with their influence. When the movement caught on all over the country after 1890, Cutter was one of the first to praise their usefulness, especially as a way for those who could never expect to become the head of a prominent library to obtain recognition.² Cutter saw the purpose of the local clubs

¹Ibid., p. 154.
²C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVI (March, 1891), 70.
much in the same manner as he saw the purpose of the parent organization; that is, as places of debate, mutual encouragement, and inspiration, rather than as a tool for recruiting librarians for an overall program of standardization. His statement in 1890, that diversity of opinion in the Association was a sign of its good health, revealed an attitude that he extended to the local clubs as well.¹

With regard to the breadth of leadership participation in the Association, Dewey exerted more explicit pressures to open up the leadership ranks. In two separate reports during the first session of the 1885 meeting at Lake George, he expressed his opinion that the organization needed to move more vigorously. With regard to the confusion about planning for the annual meetings, he related, "I wish to urge that the Association make up its mind to have an annual meeting, and do away with this jumping and jogging from spring to fall."² The cause of the meeting irregularities was, of course, due to the Executive Board. Consequently, in his report as secretary, he asked rhetorically if it was not time to rotate the officers of the Association after having "drifted along, electing the same officers year after year."³ He suggested that it was a way to break in new


²Melvil Dewey, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 301.

workers while at the same time keeping some of the older ones. He continued, "If this is the better plan, now, at the close of our first decade, is the fit time to begin the new system." The new system would, of course, also have provided a rationale for Dewey's election as president of the Association in the face of Winsor's decision to step down that same year.

The limited nature of Executive Board participation had arisen because of the electoral system used. The Board had always been elected as a slate of five members put forth by the nominating committee, the latter appointed by the Board and usually heavily composed of its own members. The newly elected Board then chose, almost always among themselves, the officers of the Association and the leading members of the standing committees. They had tended to rely upon a limited number of men to fill those positions.

When the nominating committee of the meeting that year reported later during the conference that they could not initiate rotations because of the constitutional method already used, Dewey spoke even more pointedly, although at the same time trying to allay any criticism about his proposal.

It looks a little queer that we should elect the same old committee in a routine way, and naturally, some are impressed with the view that it is time to change. My own notion would be to make a standing rule that officers should not be eligible for re-election. The matter should be decided in some way to show that the change is made not because of a lack of confidence in

\[1\] Ibid.
our old officers. . . . I think we ought to rotate the officers, and should not get into the idea that if we drop a name on the list of officers it is because of lack of confidence.\textsuperscript{1}

A motion to effect Dewey's proposal was carried, but in no sense unanimously, and with a relatively small number of members voting.\textsuperscript{2} The report of the nominating committee later in the conference expressed the wish that the list of names presented would be more representative, but the change that was made was in terms of geographical distribution rather than in terms of what Dewey seemed to have in mind. The concentration of the leadership in the Boston area had always existed as a vague tension. Although the tension was partially alleviated by the choice of William F. Poole as president in 1885 and by scheduling the 1886 meeting in Milwaukee, it remained an issue about which Cutter and others were sensitive. The 1887 meeting was held in New York State at the Thousand Islands resort town. The 1888 meeting was scheduled for St. Louis, but at the last minute was rescheduled for the spring of 1889 in order to accommodate the completion of the new building of the St. Louis Public Library. Because the new date was so early in the year, and the 1888 meeting had to be replanned, an autumn meeting in the East would have been a financial burden for the Westerners, and in Cutter's mind, "offensive" to the

\textsuperscript{1}Melvil Dewey, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 326.

\textsuperscript{2}The vote was 22 to 12 and is given in LJ, X (September/October, 1885), 327.
St. Louis librarians. Consequently, when Cutter announced that a meeting would be held in the Catskills, he specifically noted that it would be informal and would not conduct official business.

The 1889 meeting was subsequently held in St. Louis as scheduled, but the problem of Westerner versus Easterner remained on Cutter's mind. Dewey was apparently aware of Cutter's feelings when in 1890 he wrote to him, seemingly in jest, of a proposal by Crunden that needed the approval of the Executive Board, "It is a little western in its flavor, but I can stand it if you can." Two years later, however, Cutter reiterated the same issue. In writing to Dewey about the coming conference, he stated, "By the way as it is a western year wouldn't it be better for Utley to preside at some of the sessions. The westerners won't like it if we have three eastern presidents in succession."

Dewey's attempt in 1885 to change the leadership did not accomplish as much as he would have perhaps desired. There was a general turnover in committee membership. For example, Cutter was not continued on the Cooperation Committee for the first time since it was formed. But Poole, who was appointed president and who served from 1885 until 1887,

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2Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter, June 12, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

voiced outspoken opposition to the uniformity that Dewey
wanted. Subsequently, the Executive Board itself introduced
a resolution at the 1887 conference that the president could
not succeed himself and that an informal vote be taken to
see whom the Association members present desired for presi-
dent. The motion was doubtless prompted by Dewey for he
attempted to allay fears about circumventing the constitu-
tional power of the Board by claiming that the informal
ballot was little more than a straw vote. An informal se-
cret ballot was taken, but without counting it, the tallies
were turned over to the Board who did not report its totals.¹
Cutter was elected to serve the following year. Dewey's
design was further thwarted when only an informal meeting
was held in 1888 and Cutter was obliged to continue for a
second year.

In 1889 Dewey proposed a much more drastic change
by making a motion to have the Executive Board itself elected
more openly. He proposed that instead of the existing Board
nominating a single slate for the new board, an informal
ballot be taken and those with the highest votes be the
slate. He expressed as his reason the desire to guard
against,

any criticism in the future that the Board is a slate
made up by the leading spirits and given to a nominat-
ing committee. We have thus far escaped such criticism,
and had best change to a safer system before any feeling
arises. This system gives every member an equal chance

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XII (September/
October, 1887), 438, 441.
to express his preference for the government of the A. L. A. for the next year, and is all there is left to see of democracy in an election.1

Dewey's proposal was approved, although the informal ballot taken probably resulted in the same members being elected to the Board for the following year as would have been selected for a slate under the old method. Nevertheless, besides the ten who received the highest number of votes and from whom the top five were chosen as the slate, twenty-two others also received votes. The resulting broad spectrum of candidates, the calling into question of the traditional election method, and the issue of taking votes of endorsement, became the occasion for a re-evaluation of the constitution itself. A committee, consisting of Cutter, Charles C. Soule, Melvil Dewey, William C. Lane, and William I. Fletcher, was appointed to review the constitution as a whole. During the ensuing year, however, it did no work on the problem and during the 1890 meeting it was dismissed and a new committee appointed in its place. Cutter was again included, this time joined by Justin Winsor.2 By 1892 not only was the method of electing the Board coming under attack in favor of a more open policy, but the issue had been raised of whether or not all the officers themselves should be directly elected. At that point, Dewey, who had been

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2See the A.L.A. Conference Discussions and reports in LJ, XIV (May/June, 1889), 287, and XV (December, 1890), 103.
elected president during that conference, drew back. He preferred only the direct election of the president. Otherwise, the Executive Board should elect the other officers.° Cutter defended the older method in toto and both he and Winsor spoke out against any direct election process. Cutter was of the opinion that the Executive Board had always acted properly. Not only that, the person whom they had chosen among them annually had usually been the one who had received the highest number of votes for the board itself. The constitution was approved in 1892 with the older method for the most part intact. In 1893, however, when the issue was again raised, the direct election process prevailed.

Upon completing his two-year presidency, Cutter felt a relief from the duties of the office. He wrote to Dewey, "I hav already dropped out of activ participation in A. L. A. I am an ex." Except for the presidency of the Association, he had not really done so, of course, but there was good reason for him to feel the desire in the face of mounting pressures.

His duties as editor of the Library Journal were increasing despite a slightly enlarged editorial staff. Help had initially come in the person of Charles Alexander Nelson, a bibliographer at the Astor Library in New York

1 A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVII (August, 1892), 54-60.
2 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
City. From May 1887 to October 1888 Nelson wrote the notes about libraries that formed part of Cutter's feature, "Library Economy and History." When Nelson assumed the librarianship of the Howard Memorial Library of New Orleans in November 1888, his place was taken by Paul Leicester Ford, also of New York City and also an accomplished bibliographer. In 1890, however, Bowker engaged Ford as his own assistant in order to relieve himself of some of the management duties in the New York office of the Journal and the Publishers' Weekly. The job of collecting and editing the major portion of the materials remained, therefore, on Cutter's shoulders, although he received occasional materials from others for the increasing number of editorials that were appearing.

A particularly burdensome and growing part of the editorship consisted of preparing the papers and proceedings of the annual conferences. One aspect of that job entailed condensing recorded debates. Although the Executive Board had repeatedly given him the freedom to make the condensations as he saw fit, there were always some who wanted to emend their public statements, thereby causing delays. There was, of course, a decided difference between the

1 See the notice of Nelson's work in LJ, XIII (June, 1888), 171-72; See also, Letter, R. R. Bowker to C. A. Nelson, May 31, 1887, NYPL, Nelson Papers.

manuscript reports of the meetings and what finally appeared in print, a fact noted in 1889 by the Finance Committee while searching for possible unrecorded motions on membership rulings. In 1890 a stenographer was employed for the first time, but that not only made the job of condensation more involved, but also caused additional delays.¹

Another aspect of the problem concerned the relationship of the proceedings to the Library Journal. Delays of any sort made it difficult to give a consistent pagination to the Journal as a whole, for a regular issue was ordinarily devoted to the proceedings. When the material was late, Cutter could only guess at the numbering of the next monthly issue, that often came out prior to the issue with the proceedings. When he solved that problem in 1890 by giving the proceedings a separate pagination, he expressed privately to Dewey that it was an idea he felt "ashamed" not to have thought of previously.²

In addition, questions about the cost and distribution of the proceedings were continually raised, especially by the treasurer of the Association. One of the conditions that allowed the Journal to continue its existence in 1880 was the Association's assumption of the cost of the proceedings themselves. But the Association was not often in a

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²Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, October 9, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
good financial position during the decade and wanted the *Journal* to assume a larger portion of the expense. Cutter acted as an arbitrator between the Association and Bowker in the matter, but the problem was not easily resolved. The matter was made only more complicated by the need to determine just how many extra copies of the proceedings to print for the use of Association members who received them upon payment of their annual dues, when a number of members annually did not pay. The problem of non-dues-paying members sparked a continuing debate during the early 1890's as to who should or should not get copies and Cutter found himself in correspondence constantly trying to determine the correct number of copies to be printed.\(^1\)

Besides the *Library Journal* and the increasing attention that it demanded, Cutter also felt other growing pressures. He found himself involved in the already mentioned struggle over administration policies at the Boston Athenaeum. He prepared a new edition of his *Rules* and in 1890 privately published Karl Linderfelt's *Eclectic Rules*. He was also busy making a new classification scheme as well as completing the one he had already begun for the Athenaeum.

### The Change in Leadership

The heavy pressures, combined with the extensive changes taking place in the Association, could not but have

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\(^1\)Many letters in the Dewey Papers at the Columbia University Library between Cutter, Dewey, and the treasurers of the Association, especially after 1890, attest to the problem.
caused Cutter to reflect on the nature of his own position in the profession as an authoritative spokesman. New libraries and librarians were increasing in number, not a few of the latter educated at Dewey's library school and loyal to his approach to the basic issues. The passing of many of the older leaders and the assumption of leadership by younger more organizationally inclined persons during the late 1880's and the early 1890's suggests in one sense the normal evolution of an organization. Yet, the change was far more profound and far more purposive than is evident on the surface, for it arose from both a conflict of philosophies and considerable maneuvering within the organization, especially on Dewey's part. As a result, the older leaders (and with them their general professional philosophy) were eclipsed, and perhaps, in a more realistic sense, even dispossessed of their leadership roles. The change of leadership was not expressed in open conflict on a personal level, however. The older leaders tended to ride above such open battles. With regard to the conflict between Dewey and Poole, Williamson has surmised, "The battle which was fought from 1876 to 1894 was one in which only Dewey was seriously engaged." While that may have been true of Poole and Dewey, Cutter was too close to the struggle by virtue of his relationship with Dewey to have avoided its reality.

Another commentator on the scene and a close friend of Cutter's, Samuel S. Green, drew the same picture of

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1Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 103.
denouement, although seemingly without an awareness of the larger conflict of basic philosophies. His chronicle of the Association ended with the year 1893, although he himself continued in library work far beyond that time. He explained that from 1876 to 1893 he had been,

one of the inner circle of officers which guided the movements of the American Library Association and in constant and immediate association with the leading spirits who not only animated the action of that organization but were especially earnest and effective in bringing about library development in general.¹

He ended his story where he did because the older members of the organization were passing from the scene. He therefore added, without any sense of there having been a conflict,

After 1893 although I attended many conventions, wrote a number of papers and took a general interest in the library movement, I gradually ceased to keep in touch with the details of new propositions, relaxed somewhat intimacy with other librarians and failed to keep conversant with the inside knowledge of the workings of leaders which I had hitherto enjoyed.²

One could surmise from a surface view that Cutter's position in the Association and his relationship to Dewey had remained unchanged during the period. He had always been known as a shy, rather quiet person of great wisdom and optimism. One had to make it a point to get to know him, but once having done so, would be privy to his deeper thoughts on librarianship and life. He conscientiously carried out his own conviction that the annual conferences

¹ Green, The Public Library Movement, p. 302.
² Ibid.
were chiefly valuable because of the personal contacts they afforded. Thorvald Solberg, a younger librarian, illustrated the fact admirably at Cutter's death in the form of several vignettes. He related his first memorable experience of hiking and boating with Cutter during the 1886 Milwaukee conference, commenting on his gentlemanly qualities, his friendliness, and his modesty, and of how often Cutter was sought out by others. Of the relationships that resulted, Solberg wrote,

It was his intense love of nature which helped to make Mr. Cutter such a delightful companion. Walking, driving, cycling, boating, he was always alive to all that was fine and good, and while he said little—he was never gushing—you felt that nothing escaped him and that he was drawing in with every breath what there was of beauty in sky, earth, water, trees, flowers—color, form, fragrance—all appealed to him. We all of us know too how surely at the conferences Mr. Cutter was found thoroughly enjoying every innocent pleasure, and how many of us now feel, as I do, that to that trait of his we ourselves owe many an hour of happy enjoyment, the memory of which still lingers. It should not be left unsaid that in the same high degree he was appreciative of whatever was fine in human nature. He was never envious, always kindly. In the most intimate talks with him, while he was always frank and honest, he was never inconsiderate of others. I never knew him to say anything contemptuous of any other librarian or of any other man. He was not afraid of criticism and never resented it. He would say sometimes that if his work would not bear criticism he would better know it, and his willingness constantly to endeavor to improve his work was remarkable.¹

Cutter also greatly enjoyed the Association's social functions and more often than not took part in the levity of the occasion with his engaging sense of humor and his propensity for making subtle puns. At parties he gained a

reputation over the years as being an indefatigable dancer, although his nephew noted later that his dancing was more noted for its enthusiasm than for its accomplishment. The same attitudes were even more pronounced in his personal relationships with those with whom he worked most closely. His correspondence sparkles with his wit and offered much enjoyment for all.

Cutter's personal charm also made it possible for him to carry on a friendly relationship with Melvil Dewey when other older library leaders found it difficult. Dewey was the sort of person who seemed to force persons to choose up sides. Cutter was able, however, to incorporate both friendliness and criticism. For example, when Dewey found the opposition of the Columbia trustees to his library school to be too much, Cutter warmly recommended him for the position of New York State librarian at Albany. He wrote to Dewey, and noted, that while such a position no longer appealed to himself—although it would have ten years earlier—"You [Dewey] (to say nothing of your being a far abler man) are younger and just at that happy age when enthusiasm has not faded and experience enough has been gained to prevent any more serious mistakes." One can surmise a reflection in the latter phrase of the depressing events of 1880.

1 W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 30.

2 Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, November 28, 1888, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Along with his personal letter, Cutter also included a more formal recommendation for Dewey to use.
Despite their friendliness, however, there was an unmistakable cooling in their relationship from what it had been in earlier years. Dewey's star was rising. Cutter liked him and appreciated his inventiveness and enthusiasm, but he was also aware of the younger man's limitations. He opposed Dewey's approach to the purpose of the professional organization, not on a personal level, but rather on the simple basis of his differing philosophy of librarianship. During 1892, however, Cutter experienced a series of events that brought him face to face with Dewey's power.

Early in 1892 when the conflict with the Athenaeum's trustees broke into the open, Cutter declared his intention to his closest friends that he would continue there for only the remainder of the year. Because he needed another position, he appealed to Dewey, who had many contacts, to look out for him. Cutter's situation was unique. He was one of the best known and the most liked of the library leaders. His stature was such that only a few library positions would actually fit his talents. His one limiting factor, however, was the specialization of his experience, a fact noted by Dewey when he recommended Cutter to Massachusetts Governor John Brackett in 1890 for appointment to the newly created Free Library Commission. Dewey wrote,

C. A. Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum is one of the best known American librarians and all would expect his name on this board. He is shy and quiet but a man of great learning and modesty and though his library

1Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, February 24, March 27, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
experience has all been in Harvard and the Athenaeum instead of public libraries, he has, as editor of the Library Journal, unusual knowledge of their workings.¹

Despite the fact that several prominent libraries needed librarians, the only help that Dewey could render was to ask Cutter if he would consider the post of librarian of the new University of Chicago, a position under Dewey's own direction.² Dewey's overall plan for heading the University of Chicago library system included a university extension department, the university library, and his library school. He wanted Cutter to oversee the day-to-day operations of the library because he [Dewey] was practically out of that more strictly librarian's work. With regard to "laying out the building, settling on methods, rules, etc.," however, Dewey expressed the necessity to have "a large finger in the pie; but he felt they would still work harmoniously because "our ideas are so nearly alike on most of these questions."³

He continued with the touchier matter of shelf classification schemes and revealed his determination that the decimal scheme would be the only one, a necessity in his thinking, in order to make the University of Chicago the "library center of the world."⁴

¹Letter, M. Dewey to J. Brackett (Carbon copy), July 7, 1890, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Cutter was not subsequently appointed to the Commission.  
²Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter (Carbon copy), April 6, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. See also above, Ch. IV, pp. 261-64.  
³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
Dewey related the difficulty he would have in leaving the Albany position at once, and the possibility that Cutter might have to precede him, but only to suggest to Cutter that it would be with the idea of Dewey himself following. If Dewey changed his mind, Cutter could do as he pleased. But Dewey added,

In almost any other case I should say nothing about this, but I feel as if it was a matter of large importance for the plans I have at heart that the Chicago University library should be worked on thorough D.C. lines and be a great library center, and I would be unwilling to try to put any one in charge of it who would run off to some other line, for it should of course go on as it has been started and not be changed back and forth.\(^1\)

Dewey closed his letter with an appeal to Cutter to express his frank opinion and a request for Cutter to name the salary he would need. His letter, however, cast only a thin veil over his own aggressiveness and his almost total disregard for Cutter's own creative contributions to librarianship. He seemed insensitive to the room that such a creative person would need to operate. Cutter was to exercise his freedom only with regard to the everyday operations of the library. When it came to policy decisions, Dewey could justify his "finger in the pie" only with the covering statement that they would work together well because their views were alike, an opinion that belied the facts. Perhaps most blatantly, he suggested that the greatness of the Chicago University library was totally dependent on its use of the Decimal Classification. Without

\(^1\)Ibid.
mentioning Cutter's Expansive Classification by name (the only viable alternative to the Decimal Classification at that time), Dewey suggested that if anyone "would run off to some other line," his goal would be subverted.

Dewey's letter to Cutter represented, in reality, much more than a simple job offer and indeed much more than a display of Dewey's own unabashed aggressiveness. It was a symbol of the meeting of the two sides that had been engaged in a struggle concerning both the authority and power over the young Association. Cutter found himself at a severe disadvantage, however. He was committed to leaving the Athenaeum and he needed a new position. He had been involved in the rewriting of the constitution and had taken a position in opposition to Dewey, so that Dewey's offer in a sense put Cutter in his debt.¹

¹The interrelationship between the job offer and the rewriting of the constitution is not entirely clear, especially because of the timing of the offer for the Chicago position. The committee had been meeting regularly during February, March and April in preparation for the 1892 A.L.A. conference at Lakewood. Soule kept Dewey closely informed of the committee's mood. On March 27 Cutter notified Dewey of his decision not to be a candidate for the Athenaeum librarianship the following year. On March 29, Soule, having heard rumors of Cutter's troubles, wrote to Dewey that if he, Dewey, did not want the position at Chicago, he might recommend Cutter. Dewey's proposal, barely a week later, coming when it did, may have been perfectly sincere, but his own letters to Harper at the end of January made it seem incongruous. Winsor, the other chief antagonist to Dewey on the committee, had also "heard" that Dewey was seriously reconsidering the move, an opinion attested to in a letter to Poole, April 8, 1892, Newberry Library, Poole Papers. But his information apparently came from Cutter after Dewey's proposal was made and received. Cutter must also have received some other information not contained in Dewey's April 6th letter for Winsor related that Cutter indicated
When Cutter wrote to Dewey concerning the position offered, he demonstrated an awareness of the implications of Dewey's terms. He first sent a short note stating that he needed more time to consider the offer. He continued, "I can only say now that I have no objection, consequentious or otherwise, to using the D.C., tho I certainly believe the E.C. is better." As an afterthought, he wrote along the side of the sheet, "Your proposition has one good side. We have worked together in the past, & we have either agreed or differed amicably."¹

Six days later Cutter conveyed his feelings more directly. After mentioning some of the work he found it desirable to complete at the Athenaeum before leaving, he wrote,

Dewey was reconsidering on the basis of a better financial offer from Harper. The fact is that Harper resisted Dewey's demand for a larger salary.

It is not difficult to conclude, therefore, that Dewey's offer was dubious as well as demeaning. Although not supportable by available evidence, it might also be possible that Cutter's resumption of his opposition on the committee may have occurred as he realized the lack of substance in the proposal and could resume a serious consideration of the issues concerning the constitution, unhindered by any feelings of having to compromise his views for Dewey's sake. At any rate, the entire spring of 1892 seems to have been one of extreme tension for the A.L.A. leaders who faced Dewey's aggressive efforts to change things. To complicate matters even more, the president of the Association at the time, Klas Linderfelt of Milwaukee, was indited at the end of April on charges of embezzlement of his own library's funds. His position as one of the older leaders may have made the other older leaders feel vulnerable in the face of Dewey's activities and may account for the harsh opinions expressed against him in the Library Journal and in private correspondence.

¹Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 8, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The double underlining is Cutter's.
Nevertheless, for a very good position I would leave tomorrow. Yours is is [sic] not in all respects a very good position, tho it has some attractive features. You can understand that I should much prefer to be unrestrained in my library and that I am eager to put into practice the best classification and notation yet devised, tho I think you know me well enough to be sure that if I come to Chicago under your direction I shall carry out the Decimal Classification to the very best of my ability.1

Regardless of this exchange of notes, and of what overtones may have been present, the possibilities of the Chicago arrangement failed to materialize.

During the remaining months of the year, Cutter became involved in one additional imbroglio related to the changing scene. It involved the make-up of the American Library Association exhibit committee for the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the nature of the exhibit itself. The make-up and activity of the committee exhibited how far Dewey had been able to re-establish his own influence in the Association. Dewey was elected president of the Association at the 1892 conference and consequently would preside over the meeting of librarians to be held at the World's Fair the next year. During the conference he pressed for and gained the acceptance of Mary Salome Cutler as the chairwoman of the exhibit committee. She was also the person in charge of Dewey's library school at Albany, although Dewey justified her choice as a "recognition of woman's part in American librarianship."2

1Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

2Letter, Dewey to the members of the A.L.A. Columbian
Others, among them William F. Poole, were greatly disturbed at her appointment and persuaded Westin Flint, a member of the Bureau of Education, the sponsoring body for the library exhibit, to press for the appointment of Cutter or some other prominent librarian to the post instead. Cutter was already a regular member of the committee. There were still others, however, who supported Dewey's move and who felt that if Cutter was appointed chairman, he would not be as forceful as Miss Cutler or one of Dewey's proteges. Cutter himself would not accept the proposed change and threatened to resign from the committee altogether if it were made. He was simply unwilling to participate in that sort of politics. Miss Cutler therefore remained the chairwoman, and Cutter remained active on the committee. His private opinion may well have been that of Poole, whom Williamson describes as being shocked at the "steam-roller methods used by the library-school people to dominate the meeting at which Dewey was elected." Cutter's Nation report of the 1892 conference made only small reference to the Exposition Committee, June 6, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

1Letters, Westin Flint to W. F. Poole, June 11, 1892; Cutter to [W. F. Poole] (fragment), undated but on the same issue, Newberry Library, Poole Papers; Cutter to M. Dewey, June 19, June 20, 1892; Frank P. Hill (Newark Public Library) to M. Dewey, June 16, 1892; and several letters from Frederick P. Crunden to M. Dewey, summer, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Hill and Crunden strongly supported Dewey and, in addition, Hill felt that he had a stronger claim to the chairmanship in case Cutler was ousted, than did Cutter. In any case, Cutter attempted to steer clear of the conflict as best he could.

2Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 103.
problem, but it was an old theme that showed the difference represented by the leadership style of the older members.

In speaking of the crowded program and the fact that the coming library exhibit was little considered, he wrote,

With the feeling that a large body could not properly decide the details of an exhibit, the matter was referred to a committee with power to act, when a better course would have been to invite suggestions by a full discussion in committee of the whole, with the understanding that no vote should be taken.¹

With regard to the exhibit itself, Dewey's plan was for the library catalog section to fully display only his own Decimal Classification scheme. Cutter strongly expressed his sense of injustice over Dewey's intention and when the committee relented and allowed a partial display of the Expansive Classification, Cutter spend a considerable amount of time preparing it. He was at a disadvantage, for while Dewey had the staff of the library school available to do the work on his scheme, Cutter had only himself to do the work on his own.²

By 1892, therefore, the changeover to the leadership represented by Dewey and a younger generation was complete. Williamson has written a rather concise summary of the differences between the two approaches and the effects of Dewey's triumph in terms of the conflict between Dewey and Poole.

¹C. A. Cutter, [American Library Association's Meeting at Lakewood, Nation, LIV (May 26, 1892), 396.

²See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 602-04.
These disagreements were of much more than personal importance, for they reflected fundamental differences of approach to librarianship. In the long run, Dewey's influence—wielded through the machinery of the association, the pages of the Library Journal, and the classes of the Albany library school—prevailed. The resulting standardization of method conferred many benefits on American librarianship but also had its drawbacks in its rigidity and dogmatism. Dewey introduced system and order but often at the expense of life and creativity. American librarianship can thank Dewey for training scores of young librarians to work in the many new libraries of the country, but it can also call him to account for encouraging the bloodless slave to rules, whose public image was all too often not a caricature but a true portrait.\(^1\)

In the end, Cutter, who had participated so intimately in the leadership of the Association, found himself on the outside. At the end of April 1893, he also faced the depressing situation of having no library position.

\(^1\)Williamson, William Frederick Poole, pp. 98-99. Dewey's influence grew especially because of the many young librarians trained at his library school and through the multitude of special projects and publications that he was able to sponsor, not the least of which were his decimal classification and Library Notes.