CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DECADE

The last decade of Charles Cutter's life was both a segment that existed apart from what had gone before and a continuation of some previous themes. On the one hand he moved away from the immediate Boston area for the first time in his life and assumed the leadership of a public library. His professional contributions continued but with an emphasis on public library service. They also involved him in a greater range of local professional organizations rather than simply the national Association. On the other hand older themes of struggle continued, particularly with regard to his directing the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts, and his attempt to revise and complete his great accomplishments in cataloging and classification. By the end of the decade an exhausting schedule led to his untimely death and prevented their completion.

The World's Fair

In January 1893 the trustees of the Boston Athenaeum and Cutter agreed upon a severance date of approximately May first. The trustees immediately proceeded to find a new librarian. Cutter needed the time to tie up the various loose ends that were invariably part of the termination of
a long administration, but also found the date convenient because the renewal of the lease on his home in Winchester came due at that time. ¹ His original plans for after April were to give his annual lectures at Dewey's library school at Albany and from there to spend some time in Canada at the hunting grounds of a friend. Afterwards he planned to go to Chicago for the American Library Association meeting and thence to England for the autumn. ²

Cutter's prospects for a new position have been reviewed in Chapter IV. He could not have been very hopeful. The Lenox Library in New York City and the Crerar Library in Chicago remained only fair possibilities. His note to Bowker intimating an autumn trip to Europe captured the irony of the situation. Considering that he usually displayed a saving humor under trying conditions he wrote that he planned to stay beyond the autumn "as much longer as an unappreciative public shall not require my valuable services." ³

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 15, 1893; Another undated letter from either late January or early February 1893 notes the termination of his lease. Still another undated letter, from Elliot Cabot for the Athenæum's Subcommittee on the Choice of a New Librarian, copied by Cutter and sent by him to Bowker, shows that the Athenæum's Library Committee had a new candidate in mind almost immediately, but desired Cutter to set a firm date for his termination so that they could proceed with negotiations. NYPL, Bowker Papers.

²Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, [undated, but late January or early February, 1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers.

³Ibid.
Cutter's early plans were altered soon after making them. In February he combined his lectures at Albany with his preparation of the Expansive Classification portion of the American Library Association Library Exhibit being assembled there. By the beginning of March Cutter had made plans to travel to England during May and June, to return in order to attend the Chicago conference, and possibly to travel to Europe again in the autumn if no library position became available.\(^1\) He informed Dewey of the change and withdrew his offer to prepare papers on cataloging and on proprietary libraries for the Association's meetings, claiming that he would not have the necessary books at his disposal during his trip. He must have felt some misgivings over his decision, however, for the next day he wrote again to Dewey stating that he would do the paper on proprietary libraries, but only because he had conceived half of it during the early morning hours of that very day.\(^2\)

During March he received a great number of letters sympathizing with his plight, but the writers were apparently unable to help him obtain another position. He worked

\(^1\)Letters, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, March 2 and 6, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers.

\(^2\)Letters, Cutter to M. Dewey, March 6 and 7, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Dewey apparently persisted in trying to get Cutter to do the paper on cataloging and classification for Cutter reiterated his intention not to do it in a letter dated March 23, 1893. Ultimately, William C. Lane, his successor at the Athenaeum, presented the paper on cataloging and Horace Kephart, at that time the librarian of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, presented the paper on classification.
assiduously on the Expansive Classification which it would seem he hoped to have well out of the way by the time he left. On April 20th he turned his work at the Athenaeum over to William Coolidge Lane. Cutter had wanted to finish up for Lane as much as he could but he found himself unable to do so, even after working evenings and Sundays. He was sure that Lane might face even more restrictions than he had, a fact that he had mentioned to Dewey as early as the beginning of March. On April 24th he and his wife Sarah left for New York. The finality of the situation was perhaps not better portrayed than in a letter to Dewey written the day before he left.

I am writing on a box in a nearly empty house (we have moved) on the only paper I can find. . . . No doubt I shall write from the other side. Will only say now that my paper (as yet unwritten) will probably be very short. I have not been able to find time to send out a circular of questions, so the paper will be unstatistical and uninstructive in the extreme. My farewell respects to yourself & Mrs. Dewey, & Miss Woodworth & Mr. Biscoe & friends at the State House.

Y. t. in a "tear"

C A C

On April 26th Cutter and his wife sailed for England.

1Letters, Cutter to Charles A. Nelson, April 1, 1893, Newberry Library, Poole Papers; Cutter to G. W. Cole, April 15, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers; Cutter to M. Dewey, March 1, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

2Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 23, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Florence Woodworth had been one of the first graduates of Dewey's library school in 1888 and during the early 1890's was both a cataloger at the New York State Library and an instructor of cataloging at the Albany Library School. Walter S. Biscoe was likewise an instructor at the School.
The Cutters spent the next two months in England. The only surviving indication of their activities is an article in the Nation describing the local color and excitement of "Racing Week at Chester."\(^1\) The somewhat tired view of civilization and several observations on the foibles of mankind indicate perhaps the state of mind that Cutter was in. What else they did or whom they might have visited is not known except that Richard Bowker had also traveled to England early in April in connection with his work for the Edison Illuminating Company, and it is possible that their paths may have crossed before Bowker returned.\(^2\) At any rate, the trip took Cutter away from a very depressing situation. He delayed completion of his promised paper for the upcoming conference. He and his wife did not return until the first week of July. As late as July 1 he had still failed to send the manuscript to Dewey. Louis Cutter answered Dewey's circular letter requesting completed manuscripts only with the expected arrival date of his parents on July 7th.\(^3\)

\(^1\) C. A. Cutter, "Racing Week at Chester," Nation, LVI (June 1, 1893), 401.

\(^2\) Cf., Fleming, R. R. Bowker, pp. 232-33, for details of Bowker's 1893 trip. One might suppose from that account that Bowker remained in Europe throughout the summer. A letter from the office of the Publishers' Weekly to Dewey dated April 12, 1893, stated that Bowker left April 8th and expected to return about June 1st, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. Records of the A.L.A. meeting in Chicago indicate that Bowker attended the meetings. He also presented a paper at the World's Congress of Authors on July 11, 1893. Cf., "Congress of Authors," Dial, XV (July 16, 1893), 29.

\(^3\) Letter, Louis F. Cutter to M. Dewey, July 1, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
The initial purpose of the Columbian Exposition was to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America by making a show of man's material progress. From the very beginning of the planning there were some who felt that the fair should demonstrate man's spiritual progress as well. For that purpose the World's Congress Auxiliary was organized. It worked closely with the Exposition organizers and arranged for a series of world's congresses composed of the leading spokesmen of various cultural and academic subject areas who would likely be attending the fair. Afterwards the papers of each congress were to be published as monuments of the efforts. The buildings for the Exposition were formally dedicated in October 1892 and the fair was opened officially in May 1893. The congresses also began to meet at the latter date and the two aspects of the Exposition continued in full force until the end of the following October.¹

The congresses were arranged in a series of nineteen groupings. Those on the subject of literature were scheduled for July 10 through 22 and included, besides the World's Congress of Librarians, congresses on authorship, philology, history and folk-lore. The congress of librarians met for its first session in the new art building near

¹A before and after view of the congresses is given in Charles C. Bonney, "The World's Congresses of 1893," in National Education Association, Proceedings, 1892 (New York, 1893), pp. 166-74; and in the summary article, "The World's Congress Auxiliary," Dial, XV (November 1, 1893), 251-52. Bonney was the president of the World's Congress Auxiliary.
downtown Chicago on the morning of Wednesday, July 12, and adjourned after a final meeting on Saturday morning, July 15. The congress committee was headed by F. W. Hild, librarian of the Chicago Public Library. With the added effort of Melvil Dewey, a great deal of energy was expended during late 1892 and early 1893 in obtaining promises of papers by an international array of eminent librarians. Although a list of topics was published in the Library Journal in June 1893, the actual list of speakers was not finalized until the papers were submitted immediately preceding the first day of the congress. The hoped-for international scope failed to materialize, however, for only three foreign librarians attended. 1

The American Library Association also held its annual meeting at the same time in conjunction with, but separate from, the congress of librarians. 2 Its first two meetings were held on Thursday and Saturday mornings, July 13 and 15, also in the art building and concurrent with the last two meetings of the congress of librarians. The remaining six

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2The overlapping nature of the two sets of meetings—the Congress of Librarians and the regular A.L.A. conference—resulted in some confusion in the Library Journal reports, apparently because American librarians, Dewey among them, tended to look upon both meetings as a single happening. The two meetings were, in fact, separate and close attention to the separate accounts of each is necessary in order to distinguish them.
meetings were held the following week at various other locations in Chicago in order to overcome the distractions of a railroad that ran immediately adjacent to the art building meeting room.

When Dewey was elected to the presidency of the Association in 1892, he immediately began to plan to make the 1893 meeting of the Association a show-place of library progress. The correlation of the Association's meetings with the library congress was arranged by early fall, 1892. When the idea of producing a handbook of library economy composed of the papers given at the Association meeting was raised by Dewey during the winter, it was heartily approved by the Executive Board of which Cutter was a member. In February Dewey communicated to the Association that he had presented that plan to Commissioner of Education, William T. Harris, with the hope that the Bureau of Education would print the volume as a part of the government sponsored volume already authorized for the congress committee. The idea was approved and in April he announced the plan of the volume to the membership.¹ Cutter's editorial in the same issue of the Library Journal stated that Dewey's announcement was "undoubtedly the most important library announcement for the present year." Recalling the handbook nature of the 1876 Special Report published concurrently

with the 1876 centennial celebration, Cutter echoed Dewey's desire that the new volume would become "a new handbook of library economy," and that it would demonstrate "the enormous development of theoretical and practical library administration of the last two decades."1

Dewey outlined very carefully what he expected from the contributors to the new handbook. His plan was to have the volume present "the points of agreement to which we have generally attained in the 17 years since the organization at the Centennial, and also the points of difference on which our best thinkers are still divided." He went on to state carefully that the contributors "will therefore aim, no so much to contribute new material as to present a judicial digest of previous articles, papers, discussions, and specially of experience."2 The papers were to be in two parts, the first a summary of opinions held and the second the points of the topic still under discussion towards which the 1893 meeting might contribute answers. Abstracts of the papers were to be printed in the July Library Journal and would be distributed to the conference participants at the beginning of the meetings. During the conference itself, the contributors were given five minutes to summarize the results of their findings in order to leave as much time as

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1 C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (April, 1893), 108.

2 [Dewey], "Topics for Chicago Meeting," p. 123. Dewey later quoted these remarks in the introduction to the Congress volume.
possible for discussion. After the meeting the authors were to revise their papers in the light of the discussions at the conference so that the final product would "represent the position of the subject at the close instead of the beginning of the 1893 meeting."¹

Cutter's desire to drop his assignments for the meeting is understandable. He knew that they would not fulfill Dewey's intentions inasmuch as he would not have the opportunity to do the statistical work that was necessary. Despite that problem, he proceeded with the paper on proprietary libraries. An abstract of the paper appeared in the July issue of the Library Journal and he gave a summary of the paper at the conference. The full paper was never printed, however, most likely because of the way Dewey compiled the final volume.

First, Dewey had to correspond with the contributors after the summer meetings in order to get the papers in final form; but Cutter was absent from the country at that time. Second, and perhaps most significant, Dewey's primary concern was that the government sponsored volume provide a new handbook of library economy and to that end he subjected the papers to a vigorous formula. The papers were not to present the authors' own views but rather a summary of the views of others. By being summaries, they would serve the

¹Ibid., p. 124. See also remarks by R. R. Bowker, in A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVIII (September, 1893), C4, where he mentioned that he had brought for distribution extra copies of the July issue.
practical purpose of representing a basis for the kind of Association consensus that Dewey desired. As the editor, Dewey made the final selection of papers. He included not only those papers alone that met his standard, but for some reason also excluded the papers given at the World's Congress of Librarians, although the published volume bore the title, Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress. Perhaps the reason for the substitution was that many of the Congress papers were published in full in the Library Journal by the end of 1893. Moreover, the Congress papers had an international flavor and did not fulfill his design for an American library economy handbook. As a result, Cutter, who also spoke at the Congress, failed to have that paper published either.¹

Cutter's Congress topic was entitled, "The Note of the American Public Library."² He attempted to show in it the distinctiveness of the American public library movement

¹A comparison of the programs, the Congress volume, the A.L.A. proceedings, and the various papers published in the Library Journal reveals the substitution. The full citation reads, American Library Association, Papers Prepared for the World's Library Congress, Held at the Columbian Exposition, ed. by Melvil Dewey (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896). To add to the confusion, the Library of Congress later cataloged and listed the volume also as, American Library Association, Papers Prepared for the A.L.A. for its Annual Meeting Held at the Columbian Exposition, 1893, ed. by Melvil Dewey (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), suggesting that there were two different volumes when there was in fact only one. The papers were originally Ch. 9 of Pt. II of the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1892/93.

²Cutter's topic was listed as early as June 1893 in, "The Congress of Librarians at Chicago," p. 191.
in contradistinction to the development of the more scholarly European libraries. A reporter of the meeting, Constantin Nörrenberg, the librarian of the University of Kiel, quoted him as saying,

It is true . . . that our libraries are young and small; that we cannot as yet use them for profound scientific investigation; that in some of our libraries such investigation can scarcely be begun, and that comparatively modern and cheap books form their chief stock. But we have opened new ways and intend to offer to the public more than is offered in other countries. In our attempts to turn over and over a small stock, to have circulated frequently a small number of books, to place every atom of information and instruction in such a condition that it may be used, we have no superiors. Utilization and diffusion of knowledge are our leading ideas, and the highest mark in our testimonial. 1

Cutter's comments seem particularly relevant to his own growing interest in public libraries. Having already left the Athenæum, he may have felt that only a large or promising public library could offer him a position commensurate with his stature. He emphasized a broad view of the total library resources of the nation and asserted his opinion that a public library by itself need not be considered of a lesser stature than a research library. Several days later at an Association session he continued on the same theme in his short remarks on the relationship between proprietary libraries and public libraries. In his view, the two institutions complemented each other. 2

1 C. A. Cutter, as quoted in Nörrenberg, "The Congress and the Conference of Librarians in Chicago," p. 577. The quotation seems to be the only surviving part of Cutter's paper.

In addition to the papers he presented, Cutter also participated in the proceedings of the Association itself, although he did not seem to take part with the vigor of previous years. He made none of the summary statements of arguments for which he was noted. When the issue of the direct election of officers was again brought up for discussion, the printed proceedings record no comment from him. During the eighth session which Cutter chaired, when the discussion concerned topics upon which in previous years he had made his ideas explicit, he called instead for votes in order to see which view predominated. It may be that Cutter simply preferred to participate less, giving place to the new leadership and its insistence on 'reaching conclusions'. Because he was without a library and planning to go to Europe again, Cutter may also have felt that the wiser course was to defer to the fully active librarians in the profession. Only during the report of the Committee  

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1For Cutter to call for votes of consensus, in the spirit of the new leadership, seems out of character considering his opinion of the practice. Perhaps some of his calls were a bit facetious. For example, on the issue of the worth of subject catalogs in comparison to printed subject bibliographies, Cutter not only called for a vote on the question of whether or not the day of the subject catalog was over, but also for a vote on whether "within a generation the subject catalog will prove to be useless, bibliographies taking its place." The first vote was requested by a speaker. The second vote was of Cutter's own doing. Neither question garnered any yeas, not even from B. P. Mann, who was an outspoken advocate of printed bibliographies. Cutter, however, phrased the second question in such a way as to make it unopposable. See, A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XVIII (September, 1893), C78-82. One problem that arises in evaluating Cutter's low profile during most of the meetings was that he again edited these
for an Index to Subject Headings during the same session did Cutter, who was not on the committee, raise his voice in protest. The committee had compiled a tentative list of subject headings, but in Cutter's mind more work was needed to make the list sound both in its choice of headings and in its basic principles. He was concerned that not only had the committee chosen to disregard one of the more basic directions of his *Rules*, but that they had avoided grappling with the basic principles of subject cataloging, preferring instead to compile an ad hoc list.¹

Dewey called for a finished product even though it would be imperfect. He added, "The old catalogers like Mr. Cutter and Mr. Lane could get along without it, but some of the younger librarians would be exceedingly grateful for anything."² Cutter appealed to the members present to delay printing the list and to submit the principles of the list to the Association for discussion in the *Library Journal*. The results of the discussion could then be incorporated into the finished product. His appeal was disregarded and

proceedings as he had edited the proceedings of previous years, a fact noted in his letter to Bowker, July 23, [1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers. He seems not to have removed his incisive opinions in the earlier years, however, and there is no reason to believe he altered his statements here.

¹A.L.A. Committee on an Index to Subject Headings, [Report and Discussion], LJ, XVIII (September, 1893), C79-82. The proceedings reported a "lively discussion."

²Ibid., p. C81.
put to a vote the matter of going ahead with the list, the vote was heavily in favor of printing.¹

During the remainder of the conference, Cutter gave the report of the Committee on the Place of the Next Meeting and, as was his usual practice, participated in the various social activities. He was also appointed to the continuing committee dealing with subject headings, but since he was in Europe for the coming year, it is unlikely that he took part in making the actual final product.²

Cutter subsequently published two reports of the meetings in both of which he made a point of affirming Dewey's work. In view of his natural tendency to mediation, the articles may perhaps be viewed as his own public statement of support for the new leadership despite his differences of opinion. In the Nation Cutter commended Dewey's "wise" leadership in planning for the volume of papers to be published and for the excellence of the American Library Association exhibit which was pre-eminently Dewey's creation. The exhibit provided not only a model library, but also a comparative showcase of library appliances that included everything from bookkeeping forms to classification systems and cataloging rules. Cutter expressed a mild hope.

No doubt the exhibit will bear fruit in the adoption of better methods throughout the country, and in a greater interest taken in the subject by the intelligent

¹Ibid. The vote was 41 for, 9 against.
²His appointment to the committee is reported in LJ, XVIII (December, 1893), 514. He eventually placed a minority report in the publication itself.
public; perhaps also it will lead to the founding of more libraries.¹

In a much more extensive and generous account in the Library Journal Cutter praised the exhibit for the enormous interest shown in it by spectators. Although he did not specify the source of the complaints, he also made a special point of denouncing the criticism that the comparative exhibit was a promotional device designed by Dewey and his library school supporters for his own methods. That opinion may have arisen because in each of the categories of materials, the library school contribution headed the list. Cutter wrote,

Only a glance was needed to convince any one that the comparative exhibit of library appliances, though it bore most honorable testimony to the zeal, patience, industry, and devotion of the scholars and officers of the Library School, was in no sense a propaganda of Library School doctrines or methods. The utmost fairness was visible everywhere. Every side was exhibited as fully as the material supplied by the different libraries would allow. There had evidently never been any intention of doing otherwise.²

Perhaps Cutter intended to specifically gloss over the happenings of the previous autumn when he had to protest to get his Expansive Classification represented. On the other hand,

¹C. A. Cutter, "The Librarians at Chicago," Nation, LVII (August 31, 1893), 150.

²C. A. Cutter, Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 277. Despite Cutter's words, it was not difficult to see the favored position of Dewey's library school in the exhibit. For example, in the comparative exhibit of cataloging rules, the Library School Rules headed each category with all other codes following those, although Cutter's Rules were by far the most used. See, Katharine L. Sharpe, "The American Library Association Library Exhibit at the World's Fair," p. 282.
it seems strange that he should even raise the issue at all, especially in terms of "doctrines" and "methods," unless there was either a considerable amount of opinion supporting the criticism or the criticism was in fact true.

His words also contained a hidden note of bitterness concerning his own place in the library showcase, however. He continued,

The only thing to be regretted was an occasional gap caused by the remissness or perverseness of libraries that should have contributed. One would fain have had so good an exhibition complete.¹

The personal reason for his note of regret lay in the fact that the devices and forms sent by each library had been divided into categories and displayed under the labels of the contributing libraries and librarians. Much to Cutter's disappointment, he had had to report to the exhibit committee the previous April that the Athenaeum's trustees had declined to participate. Consequently, the Athenaeum's methods and devices, many of which he had developed over the previous twenty-four years, were not represented. Cutter's specific contributions to library practice were, therefore, invisible, existing solely in the forms adapted by and attributed to other librarians.²

The Rudolph Indexer Company

During August and September Cutter continued to plan for an extended trip to Europe during the fall. Had he

¹Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 277.
²Letter, Cutter to Charles A. Nelson, April 10, 1893, NYPL, Nelson Papers. Nelson was a member of the exhibit committee.
secured an acceptable library position he would have proceeded directly to it; but the only offers he received he turned down, decisions on his part that were supported by his friend and advisor, Samuel S. Green, of Worcester.¹ Instead, Cutter seriously considered an offer to direct a new and novel cooperative cataloging program being planned by the Rudolph Indexer Company, named after its founder, Alexander Rudolph.

Cooperative cataloging had been an ideal of many librarians since Charles C. Jewett had proposed such a venture in 1851. His proposal had involved making the Smithsonian Institution the national library center. Stereotype plates made of baked clay would have made possible once-for-all cataloging of the nation's library resources in the form of printed entries for every library to use, with the possibility of cumulating the additions as years went by. His plan failed because he was not able to gain support for his projected role for the Smithsonian Institution and because the stereotype plates were not durable. Years later the plan was humorously labeled Jewett's mudcatalog. The idea persisted, however, and comments appeared sporadically concerning its desirability.²

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, July 23, [1893], NYPL, Bowker Papers.

²Jewett, On the Construction of Catalogues of Libraries, pp. 1-20; Williamson, William Frederick Poole, p. 18. Poole claimed the comment as his own. One can find repeated references to Jewett's abortive efforts throughout the early years of the Association, usually in conjunction with references to his code of cataloging rules.
Cooperative cataloging was one of the chief motivating factors of the early activities of the American Library Association, but when Dewey suffered his disastrous year in 1880, the cooperative cataloging project was disbanded. Although implementation of the idea had therefore failed a second time, the idea persisted throughout the 1880's, spurred by the development of a set of cooperative cataloging rules in 1883 and by the creation of the Association's Publishing Board in 1886. The mechanics of actually cataloging the books and distributing the cards proved to be a difficult problem to solve, but the appearance of Alexander Rudolph on the scene during the period 1891 to 1893 brought the issue to a focus.

Alexander Rudolph, in 1890 an assistant to William Cheney, the librarian of the San Francisco Mercantile Library, had been intrigued with the idea of combining the best points of both card catalogs and printed book catalogs. A card catalog was most often praised for the ease of manipulating the units of entry. It was most often faulted for having soiled cards (a soilage that was passed on to others), for being restricted to a single copy, and for making the scanning of entries impossible. A printed book catalog was most often praised for its compactness, the ease of having multiple copies, and for the ability one

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1For a summary of the efforts at cooperative cataloging, taken from the Association's proceedings, see Velva J. Osborne, "A History of Cooperative Cataloging in the United States" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1944), passim.
had in scanning its entries. It was faulted for its inability to incorporate new material and especially for its expense.

Rudolph's invention was a combination of several mechanical features. He decided to make all catalog entries on small cards of two to four printed lines each. Making them on cards thus insured their ease of manipulation. He placed the cards not into a card tray, but into two different kinds of mechanical holders. The first was an expandable binder that had pages with special fasteners that would hold the slips securely, but could be loosened to allow the insertion of new cards when it was necessary. The second device, called the Rudolph Continuous Indexer, used the same type of mounting sheets, but connected the sheets to one another in the form of a linked belt. Each mounting sheet was sixteen inches long with room for 136 lines of entries in each of five columns. The belt of sheets was placed in a cabinet, forty-two inches high, and was drawn up over a drum to be viewed by the patron through a plateglass cover. As the patron cranked the belt to the desired location, the unused sheets would pass over the drum to return to their hanging storage location in the compartment below.

Rudolph's invention was not a new way of cataloging, but it required cooperative cataloging to make it viable. Rudolph intended to market not only all of the equipment necessary (including the indexing books, machines, and even
a special device for cutting the cards), but also the printed cards themselves. In effect, he would have to begin a cataloging center for the production of printed catalog cards that would of necessity produce uniform cooperative cataloging for whatever libraries used his services.

He made the first announcement of his invention during the 1891 San Francisco library conference, speaking of his new device as a panacea for cataloging. By doing so he caused many librarians to be wary of his claims. Cutter wrote with that thought in mind in the Nation:

The claims made for it are indeed startling. It almost does away with the use of the pen; card catalogues become a thing of the past; it solves the long-standing problem of a universal catalogue; it is speedy--books received in the morning, no matter how numerous, can be presented to the readers in a printed catalogue before night; it is cheap--what now costs $2 can be done for 25 cents. These statements were received with a little skepticism. The visiting librarians can understand how great mechanical improvements can be made; but as the chief expense in cataloguing is not for mechanical, but for intellectual work, they do not see how such saving is possible.1

The announcement proved to be premature in 1891 for when the time came to display his invention, Rudolph could not show it because he claimed the patent had not been secured. His failure to make good his claims brought a good deal of ridicule. Nevertheless, because the announcement had caused much curiosity, when Rudolph finally did reveal his invention to the library world in 1893, it aroused an

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1C. A. Cutter, "Librarians at San Francisco," Nation, LIII (October 29, 1891), 329.
enormous amount of excitement. The enthusiasm was mixed and provoked a conservative skepticism over whether or not the mechanical features would be as practical as claimed. The strong points of book and card catalog forms were joined together; but the disadvantages of a card catalog were also made more severe. Not only could only one person use the indexer machine at a time, but the number of entries tied up as one person used it was far greater than the number of cards in a single catalog drawer.

Cutter's role in the program would have been to add the one final need to complete the project; that is, to head the cataloging division that Rudolph found necessary. That was a position that Cutter would have found most intriguing, for it would have brought the dream of centralized cooperative cataloging to reality. In the same articles in which he reported the Chicago meetings, Cutter significantly gave an amount of space equal to all other aspects of the meetings to the ramifications of Rudolph's program. In both accounts he systematically listed the advantages to be gained. He also suggested a way to alleviate its disadvantages. Smaller libraries would do well to use only the indexer books but in multiple copies. Larger libraries could simply have more continuous indexer machines on hand.

Beyond the mechanical features, the more important matter for Cutter was the probability that cooperative cataloging appeared to be viable and was indeed at hand. In the Library Journal he wrote, "Cooperative cataloging, or
more correctly speaking, central cataloging is a consuma-
tion devoutly to be wished; but it has hitherto been looked
upon as a utopian vision."\(^1\) In the Nation he devoted two
long paragraphs to the matter detailing Rudolph's plans.
New books would have cards made for them which would pos-
sibly include even descriptive notes and would certainly
include the classification numbers of both the Expansive
and Decimal systems. The Rudolph Company proposed, "with
most commendable liberality," in Cutter's words, to print
cards not only for the Rudolph system, but also for conven-
tional card catalogs. They also proposed to begin making
cards for older standard works, a boon especially for librar-
ies that were just beginning. He continued,

Large libraries no doubt will always keep their force
of cataloguers, for their work must be more elaborate
than this is intended to be; but when the Rudolph system
is in full operation, there seems to be no reason why,
in libraries of thirty thousand volumes or less, there
should be any cataloguers at all; or, if they should
still be found necessary, their work would be much sim-
plified and aided by the bureau.\(^2\)

In words reminiscent of the exciting days just after the
beginning of the American Library Association, Cutter sur-
veyed the hopes of those days and the possibilities that the
Indexer Company seemed to promise, especially the prospects
of obtaining good cataloging in an expeditious and inex-
pensive manner.

\(^1\) Editorial, LJ, XVIII (August, 1893), 278.
\(^2\) Cutter, "The Librarians at Chicago," p. 150.
Cutter was also aware that the new venture involved a risk. He wrote to Bowker at the beginning of August that he considered Rudolph's indexer "the most important exhibit in the A.L.A. corner," at the World's Fair. In his mind, the Rudolph scheme was the only viable plan available, even more so than that of the Library Bureau which had been talked about but never made operational. He noted confidentially that he had been asked to take charge, and went on,

They are getting estimates of cost now & if they find the cost far beyond the prospects of pay as Mr. Iles & you do for any card scheme of course they will not go on. They take till Oct. 1 to make up their mind. I take the same time to consider whether I will accept. Jones, Green, & Miss Cutler with whom I talked it over at Chicago are all against acceptance, believing that ultimate failure which they foresee from the slowness of libraries to respond to any such plans for their benefit would be an injury to my reputation. I talked to Mr. Carr (the Rudolph Indexer Co.) but his hopeful­ness and his willingness to put a great deal of money into it, (which after all is the main thing, because if it once gets going it will go on, it is merely a question of whether one can hold out to the turning point) have infected me.¹

Despite his excitement, Cutter remained cautious. He found himself in a quandary between accepting the challenge of an unproven venture and pursuing seriously another library position. He concluded,

What is the Lenox salary? I suppose I ought to make some account of that. My luxuries counsel Lenox; my desire to be of some use says Rudolph. Budge, says my conscience. Budge not, says the fiend. I doubt if I do either.²

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, August 4, 1893, NYPL, Bowker Papers. George Iles was a librarian who had only recently published an article outlining his own ideas for a cooperative cataloging program. Gardner Jones was the librarian of the Salem, Massachusetts, Public Library.

²Ibid.
Perhaps in order to convince Cutter to accept the position, Spencer Carr of the Indexer Company attempted to ascertain how much support their venture had among leading librarians. Early in September he sent a circular letter to three hundred librarians asking for their pointed replies to questions relating to the practical aspects of the plan, including its overall practicability and advisability, matters of cost, fullness of detail desired in cataloging, and whether regular catalog cards as well as the indexer cards should be produced.¹ The replies that were received were very positive and were enough to bring Cutter to the brink of formal acceptance of the position. By the end of September he too was apparently writing to librarians not only inquiring of their interest but enlisting their support of the venture, of which he related, "I have nearly decided to take charge."² The operations center was to be established in New York City and the program was to begin on January 1, 1894. Spencer Carr increased his promotional effort by sending out more literature, including a reprint of Cutter's remarks in the Nation and a long list of

¹[Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter (Woburn, Massachusetts), September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service. The September circular letter is also preserved in the Poole Papers in the Newberry Library.

²Cutter's activity and the quotation are cited in Letter, A. W. Tyler, Wilmington (Delaware) Institute Library, to George W. Cole, October 6, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
testimonials gained from his September circular letter.\textsuperscript{1} Cutter planned to return to Europe but he intended to return to the United States by the projected starting date. He had an added incentive for the trip at that point, for he had wanted to visit the important libraries in Europe in order to try to complete his classification system which was to be used on the proposed cards. In his usual optimistic underestimate of how long it would take him to complete the scheme, he felt that he could finish the work during the fall. In his usual cautiousness about accepting a new position, he declined to make the decision to join the Indexer Company final before he sailed with his wife for Antwerp during the first week of October.

With regard to the actual acceptance among librarians of the Rudolph program, some librarians, while not enthusiastic over the actual equipment involved, felt hopeful about the general features of the cataloging operation. Any cooperative cataloging project was better than none. Arthur W. Tyler, who had recently assumed the librarianship of the Wilmington (Delaware) Institute Library, summed up such hopes in a letter to George Watson Cole.

I should like to see made successful a really good cataloging and classification bureau, for it would relieve us all of an imprecise amount of labor that is really needless, after one library has really done it well. We began to talk about this about 1877, and have

\textsuperscript{1}See [Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter, September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service.
puttered long enuf. It is true that something was done, and this is the most promising thing that has yet appeared. As to the Rudolf (Jacquard) machine itself I have serious doubts, both on the score of utility and expense; but if our cataloging and classification can be done satisfactorily I am sure we shall all be rejoiced.¹

There were others who felt that the Rudolph venture was a direct pre-emption of the efforts of the Library Bureau to do the same thing, albeit unsuccessfully up to that time. The Bureau had been deferring its decision to continue its development of a similar program, but now obviously had to make a decision because of the competition that the Rudolph Company represented. Accordingly, shortly after Cutter made known his intentions that he was strongly considering joining the new venture, Dewey sent him a letter warning him not to get involved with Rudolph. The letter itself, which was delivered to Cutter as he boarded the European-bound steamer, has not survived, but Cutter later reiterated its intent in his reply.² The reason for Dewey's warning was that the Library Bureau was going to proceed with its own cooperative cataloging program, thus dividing up the potential market with the possibility that both ventures would fail. The implication was that if either company survived the fray, it would be the Library Bureau, for it was already firmly established as the main supplier

¹Letter, A. W. Tyler to G. W. Cole, October 6, 1893, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.

of library supplies and of course had Dewey's backing and influence.

Sometime in October the Library Bureau sent out a circular letter giving the history of their efforts to perfect their own program and announcing that the Bureau was going to begin as soon as possible. Not only that, the letter gave firm price information for their service. The justification read:

After spending much time and money, we have succeeded in perfecting new machinery which overcame mechanical difficulties, and after consultation with leading librarians and publishers decided to begin the work in 1893. This was announced at the A.L.A. Lakewood meeting in 1892. Abundant notice was given because the sporadic attempts heretofore made had resulted only in loss of money and annoyance to all concerned. We have deferred action till we are able to guarantee our work to subscribers. Every detail has been carefully studied, and our experience in this kind of work has been so large, we have found publishers and librarians confident that when we did undertake it, it would be carried to a successful issue.¹

The circular closed with a request that subscriptions to the Library Bureau service be returned by November 1, 1893.

Nothing but a full conflict between the two companies seemed possible. William C. Lane expressed dismay at that possibility when he wrote at length to Dewey about the matter in mid-November in a tone protective of Cutter.

¹The printed circular letter mentioned is bound with [Volume of printed circulars and manuscript letters], Rudolph Indexer Company to William R. Cutter, September and October, 1893, CUL, Library of the School of Library Service. An identical copy, dated November 10, 1893, is preserved in the Poole Papers, Newberry Library. The circular also appeared as an advertisement in the October 1893 Library Journal.
I feel very sorry that both the Rudolph Co. & the Library Bureau should take up the printing of cards. The L. B. clearly has the field & their first cards it seems to me are admirable. They deserve the support of the libraries if they carry it on well & the chances are much in their favor as compared with the new company. They must find some way to avoid fighting each other. The Rudolph people I suspect have been too much encouraged by the replies they received. In looking over the printed extracts again today I noticed that many of the writers specified the cards as what they were interested in & I presume most of the rest had these rather than the Indexer slips in mind. Now if the L. B. does this business better than they can, most of their support is cut away from under them.

Do you know whether Mr. Cutter has put his own money into it at all? I surely hope not. I told him before he went back to England that I thought the money sunk in it would never come out again but of course did not like to question him on his own financial connection with it. I think he had supposed that the L. B. had dropped their plans, & was a good deal surprised when they announced their intention of going on.¹

Lane's letter may have suggested to Dewey a way to resolve the problem for two days later he wrote to Spencer Carr in Chicago. After commenting on an exchange of letters that they had already had, Dewey went on to assert the certainty that the Library Bureau could produce cards for new books much more cheaply than anyone else, even cheaper than Bowker could through the Publishers' Weekly. He went on,

I am gratified with your letter in its suggestion that your work would be rather the cataloging of old libraries than dependent on current issues. That seems to me more helpful, as you ought to be able to get a much larger price for the work, and where you can introduce at the same time your indexer the profit on that may carry the loss on printing the slips.²

¹Letter, W. C. Lane to M. Dewey, November 15, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.

²Letter, M. Dewey to Spencer Carr (Carbon copy), November 17, 1893, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
He referred to Lane's letter quoted above and to a similar one from William I. Fletcher that suggested that financially the above course of action would be the best for the Rudolph Company to pursue. He also expressed his feeling that, since the Library Bureau had announced its intention to provide cards for current books as early as a year and a half before, that field rightly belonged to them. He then closed his letter with a specific proposal for the proper direction for each company.

I should think the best plan would be for you to secure all the libraries you can find to adopt the indexer, you furnishing printed titles of their old stock, and for you to catalog also all the new books on indexer slips, while the Bureau should print no indexer slips but confine its attention to the standard catalog cards which it has manufactured so largely. I feel so warm an interest in the whole subject of cooperative cataloging that I can but hope that the thing will come out better financially than my best judgment justifies me in believing.¹

Dewey might well have sounded presumptious to Carr in counseling the Rudolph Company on its business interests. Although he was not officially connected with directing the activities of the Library Bureau, being simply a stockholder, and although he represented himself in this situation as a disinterested onlooker, he had long been associated with the Bureau and was in fact in constant communication with the company's directors giving counsel to their work.² Whether that connection with the Bureau was

¹Ibid.

²Many letters in CUL, M. Dewey Papers, give evidence of Dewey's continuing relationship with the Library Bureau, especially his prognoses on particular business issues.
anything more than a disinterested friendship at this point, or whether Association members felt it to be any more than that is not known. In this situation, the forcefulness of his words to Carr and Cutter, although ostensibly based in a realistic view of the market, can also be construed as his direct effort to throw the weight of his reputation behind the Bureau's effort to outdo the competition, and it is unlikely that Carr could have missed that implication. The motives are consequently not entirely clear. It would seem likely that the effect of Dewey's words could only have caused Cutter to reminisce over the experiences of 1880 and to feel again the frustration of being on the wrong side.

He finally answered Dewey on December 4th in words implying that he accepted Dewey's neutrality in the conflict. He also suggested that he was having second thoughts about his involvement with the Rudolph program.

Your letter warning me not to join the Indexer Company was given me just as the steamer sailed. I cannot remember whether I answered it before the pilot left the ship or nor nor [sic] whether I have answered it since. If I have not I am sorry, but I know you will forgive me, considering what a crowd of new scenes and experiences and ideas have been claiming my attention. After all there is little to say. I can only insist that I am more hopeful than you are of the ultimate success of the Company, that I think it will be able to tide over the trying time before the work begins to pay, and that I am as much convinced as you are of the importance of the plan to libraries.

I regret that the Library Bureau is also going to undertake this work, carrying out their long-talked-of scheme which we all thought had been abandoned. All the leading library people—including yourself—asked us to add the issue of cards to the issue of slips and our decision to do so has been confirmed a multitude of librarians [sic]. Of course the Library Bureau is not
to be blamed; but it is unfortunate that things have happened as they have.

As to my taking charge of the work, it may be that I am over sanguine, but it seems to me that in helping the enterprise on I shall be rendering as much service to the library cause as I could at the head of the best library in the United States.¹

The problem of two rival companies in the new field was given a more complete airing in the December issue of the _Library Journal_. Bowker editorialized on the problem in Cutter's absence, but could only say after regretting the conflict, "may the best win."² An unsigned article entitled, "Central Card Cataloging" gave details of the arrangements of each company and extensive examples of their products. The same article also announced that Cutter would return to the United States by January 1894 to assume the Rudolph position.³ Spencer Carr reiterated the same information as late as January 11, 1894 at a meeting of the New York Library Club in which he spoke on behalf of the Indexer Company's plans and William I. Fletcher spoke on behalf of the Library Bureau. Carr said that Cutter was expected in two more weeks. He felt compelled to add that even after Cutter had returned, final preparations would require "probably" two additional months.⁴


²Richard R. Bowker, Editorial, _LJ_, XVIII (December, 1893), 497. The editorial is signed, "Written in the absence of Mr. C. A. Cutter abroad--R. R. B."


Hedging on Cutter's delay in the venture would have suggested to all that Cutter was not yet ready to commit himself. Any such suspicion could only have been further strengthened when Cutter did not return at the time Carr had indicated. Just when Cutter made a decision on the matter is not known, but he ultimately declined the position and remained in Europe until the following summer.

Perhaps Dewey felt some misgivings about the forcefulness of his opposition to the Rudolph venture, especially with regard to the frustration of Cutter's role in it. He may also have felt that Cutter was not really convinced of his neutrality in the conflict. In February he wrote a long letter to Cutter apparently not knowing whether Cutter had yet made up his mind on the matter. The letter stands not only as an unsolicited defense of his course of action, but also apparently as the last important exchange of personal correspondence the two men had. For that reason it is repeated here in toto.

February 5, 1894

C: A. Cutter
Care Library Journal

My dear Cutter: I can not find out where you are but send this via L. j. office knowing it will reach you. I wanted to answer your note of December 4 from Paris and say two or three things about the R. I. and L. B. interests. I tried hard to convince Davidson and Parker that they might better give up the whole printed title business to the R. I. when they decided to enter the field. They overruled me, and I conclude now wisely, though I personally would have much preferred them to abandon the scheme. They had spent so much money in perfecting facilities, and had announced for years the fact that they were to do this work, that they felt they must do it even if at a considerable
loss. I sank some $25,000 in the first 15 years on these matters, and I should feel very sorry to have you lose any money by investing in the R. I. scheme. I do think however with you that a great good can come from cooperative cataloging and I hope you can build up a large and self sustaining business in this line.

I hope it is true that you are coming to New York and will close the Chicago office, for we want you to belong to the New York delegation and to have you nearer us. You know that everybody in the library school has the most friendly interest in you and your work, and I can see no earthly reason why this R. I. matter should at all complicate matters. I warned Parker and Davidson earnestly not to be betrayed into any feeling of rivalry or criticism of the R. I., and I was delighted to find that they had already instructed their agents in the same way. They have a feeling, which I share, that the chances are 99 in 100 that after an experience which must last some months or some years it will be found essential for maintenance that the R. I. schemes be merged into the L. B. organization. I am not optimist enough to expect that it will be possible for it to meet expenses otherwise. I therefore said to them that as this was the likely outcome they had a business interest as well as the friendship for you in avoiding anything that could put any stones in the way. I suggested to Mr. Carr (who by the way made very queer work in regard to putting an exhibit of the Rudolph devices in the library school) that it would be a good thing if you would push the re-cataloging of libraries rather than duplicate the work which the L. B. had espoused for years and had actually begun November 1. I was pained and annoyed to learn from people in Philadelphia that he had represented to them that I had written a letter "warning" the R. I. not to get on to the L. B. territory, etc. Nothing of the kind was justifiable from my letters, as you will find if you will read them. I never had any such thought, and if I had it would be ridiculous to suppose that I should send any such letter to a comparative stranger. Four or five of us were talking about the matter before the time that I wrote to you (I don't mean the L. B. people, but A. L. A. people, with no interest whatever in the L. B.) and all spoke of the almost certain financial failure of the R. I. scheme and expressed the hope that you would not become personally involved in it. I therefore wrote to you as I did an entirely personal letter. I say to you as I said before to Carr, that we should be very glad to place all the R. I. devices in the Library School museum and to make them just as prominent as those made by the L. B. or other people. I have a double reason for wishing this so that there shall be no appearance that the school is in any way
more favorable to the L. B. than to the R. I. But we did not like at all the correspondence with Mr. Carr on the subject. They first promised cordially and promptly to furnish these devices in Chicago, and then the letters went dodging about and they proposed sending an agent who should stop off a train and make a canvass of the school and then carry off his material. I wrote him plainly that this was not allowed on the part of anyone and if he did not care to carry out his arrangement we would no longer save the time for presenting the subject to the school. You see that it would be for the R. I. interests to have the scheme presented, and you shall have a fair opportunity if it can be done as we should require it from the L. B.; i.e. a permanent deposit of the devices in the school's museum.

I hope we shall have you here during the lecture term, and in any case that you will run up occasionally to see us. Let me know where you are to make headquarters.

Yours very truly,

Melvil Dewey

The Cutters in Europe

With the Rudolph business out of the way, the Cutters continued their travels in Europe. During the autumn they had spent their time in England where Cutter worked on his Expansive Classification at the British Museum. February found them in France, perhaps to visit Lyon where

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1Letter, M. Dewey to Cutter (Carbon copy), February 5, 1894, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. W. E. Parker and Herbert E. Davidson were the active executives of the Library Bureau. The fact that the correspondence between Cutter and Dewey ended (and that this points to a termination of their previous relationship) is of course an argument from silence; that is, there is simply no more than a couple of insignificant items in the Dewey papers beyond this point. However, because the nature of the collection suggests that Dewey tended to keep almost everything, both good and bad, and because Cutter no longer referred to Dewey beyond formal recognition in his later years, the conclusion that their closer relationship ended at this point seems highly probable.
Sarah Cutter's cousin, Charles Appleton, taught law at the University of Lyon. Afterwards they remained for a while in Paris and then took a coaching trip through the cathedral towns of Ile de France and Picardy. They subsequently returned to Paris where, after some difficulty, Cutter obtained a 'reading right' to use the Bibliothèque Nationale. While there, Cutter "studied up" the tour they had taken and reported both the tour and his observations in a series of letters to the readers of the Nation.\footnote{Cutter, "European Libraries--The Bibliothèque Nationale and the British Museum," p. 289.} The series demonstrates Cutter's attitude toward the French culture that he had so long enjoyed in his reading and gives an insight into not only his appreciation of Gothic architecture but also into his attitudes towards contemporary civilization.

In one sense Cutter's tour and his articles bore a likeness to a similar trip that Henry Adams was to take a little more than a year later and with the book that Adams produced still ten years after that entitled, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres. Like Adams, Cutter spoke of the mystique and antiquity of the Gothic cathedrals and cathedral towns. He dwelled on the marvel that such beauty and magnificence could have arisen out of a medieval culture filled with harshness and brutality. He summarized his feelings of the grandeur in a description of the unfinished cathedral at Beauvais.
The cathedral is unique. Before the nave was begun, the political and religious movement that produced the great cathedrals of northern France was ebbing. It left at Beauvais only a transept and a choir. But such a choir! so light, so lofty; the Gothic idea of leading the eye upward carried to its extreme. Nowhere but at Saint-Chapelle in Paris is there such perpendicularity. Even the lofty nave of Saint Ouen at Rouen and the cathedral aisles, which in their narrowness seem still more lofty, do not affect one as does Beauvais. If the artist's conception could have been carried out, there would have been no nobler cathedral in France, and there would have been no need to say that he who should add to the choir of Beauvais the nave of Amiens, the portal of Reims, and the towers of Chartres, would have the finest church in the world.¹

Perhaps like Adams, Cutter's discovery of the Gothic provided him with a world of beauty that allowed an escape from the harsh realities of the urbanized, industrialized and increasingly competitive American culture of which he was a part. Cutter's awareness of a variation in racial makeup of the inhabitants suggests Henry Cabot Lodge's connection of the Gothic style with Anglo-Saxon culture. The difference was evident to Cutter in the more Celtic or Flemish facial types represented in the cathedral carvings and in the people he observed while on tour.² He was aware of the growing refinement of the Gothic style the closer the construction of the cathedrals was in time to the Renaissance period. Of the cathedral at Laon he could encapsulate the whole of the experience one had of such a


structure by saying, "The product, therefore, of a time of emotion, the cathedral has in an unusual degree the highest quality of architecture--expression." He continued by showing the relationship of the result with the "stern, rugged force of the Laonnese," who built it. When one "learns the character of the men who reared it, he feels that they could not have built otherwise."¹ The overall effect was awe-inspiring and beyond words. He quoted an old canon who called the church at Reims, "l'estonnement de toute la chréstienté pour la structure et cimeltrie des bastiments en l'admirant se taisent plus tost que d'en parler."²

In another sense, rather than totally idealizing the past in terms of an idea in the way Adams would do, Cutter gave his sense of realism an equal emphasis. His use of French ecclesiastical history was everywhere apparent as he attempted to describe what political and social conditions surrounded the construction of the various cathedrals. He did not confine himself solely to cathedrals, either, but included castles and whole towns as well. He described the barbarism of the medieval times and what life for the common man must have been like under either duke or prince of the church. He described in great detail the massive castle at Coucy-La-Ville and wrote a step-by-step

¹ "Ile de France and Picardy--II," Nation, LVIII (May 17, 1894), 364.
² "Ile de France and Picardy--I," p. 344.
account of the measures necessary to capture it, given the violent realities of feudal warfare. 1

The descriptions that Cutter gave ultimately provided him with a forum to comment on political and social proprieties for his own day. The open market at Clermont drew his interest for it seemed to him that it was carried on day after day with little hope of selling the "rubbish"--by American standards--that had accumulated there. Once, he surmised, the provincial markets had been vital, but they had been destroyed by the "railroad, which sets up and abases as it will." 2

The financial failure of the town of Noyen elicited from him both a moralism and a comparison.

There is no new lesson to be drawn from this sketch of the history of a pious town. These are old morals--that for power to be stable its basis must be broad, and that where authority has no check it is likely to have little duration. But it is interesting to find the troubles of the present day cropping out six centuries ago--a corrupt ring, a great debt, and a populus qui vult decipi. The financial failure of a medieval town, too, is perhaps something unusual. Is there any other example? 3

In his last installment, Cutter traced some aspects of the social history of Beauvais. Among other things he praised the introduction of the metric system, "desired by reasonable Frenchmen," illustrating the confusion in commerce

1 "Ile de France and Picardy--III," Nation, LVIII (May 31, 1894), 406.
3 "Ile de France and Picardy--IV," Nation, LVIII (June 7, 1894), 425.
caused by the use of two and sometimes three different systems of weights and measures. It was a confusion comparable in his mind to that in America because of the "annoyances of travel in this country before we had our zone system of time." He praised, too, the effect of the French Revolution on the life of the town. Political and social changes, much more far-reaching than material changes, had destroyed at one blow "the whole complicated, cumbersome, annoying system of feudal institutions." He was not sure just how to measure the total improvement in the "happiness and morals of the people," but he implied that it had brought about a much more enlightened political situation in which change could indeed take place.  

His experience of a lively dinnertime political discussion in which several different views were held by the participants gave him the opportunity to make a more general comment quite in line with the Nation's views.

It [the debate] showed--what too many scenes in the Chamber of Deputies might sometimes lead one to doubt--that there are Frenchmen who can engage in a warm discussion without losing their heads. The future of the nation depends on whether there are enough of that sort.

The Cutters spent the remainder of their time in France, the bulk of it in Paris where Cutter was able to continue refining his Expansive Classification by using the collections of the Bibliotheque Nationale. Despite the fact that he approached his project seriously as a "literary

1"Ile de France and Picardy--V," p. 25.

2Ibid.
worker," he had very definitely gone to Europe for purposes other than library-related work. He later wrote of his trip, "My theory of foreign travel is that one takes it to see what one cannot see in one's own country. So I went to Europe to get away from libraries, not to visit them, to forget, not to investigate them."¹

He was not able to entirely eradicate from the trip his professional library concerns and he recounted an old theme in two articles in the Nation and the Library Journal. He was concerned over the state of the catalog of the Bibliotheque Nationale. He felt that the entries in the 900 volumes of special binders could be better kept in a card catalog, in a pasted slip catalog such as the British Museum used, or even in Rudolph Indexer books or machines. He was pleased with the decision of the committee of the library to print the catalog, but took exception to their entry of titles by striking words, rather than by the first word, not an article. The distinction was one that Cutter, a pioneer catalog rules-maker, had long championed.² He also took time to review a pamphlet published in 1894 entitled, The All-Time Library, which told of an effort to make a reference library of selections of writings. Cutter


had not seen the actual library, but found the description of the subject classification woefully inadequate.¹

Preparing for the Forbes Library

Cutter's extended European trip provided him with the change of pace he had needed. The trip also provided him the opportunity to take a new library position. The trustees of the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts secured his help, probably sometime during the spring of 1894, in purchasing books for their new, soon-to-be-opened, library then under construction. He pursued the task vigorously, first in Paris during June and afterwards during July in Geneva, Switzerland. During those two months he bought over 3,000 volumes of French fine arts and literature. A happy result of the contact was the trustees offer of the post of librarian, to become effective August 1st, an invitation which Cutter apparently felt little hesitancy in accepting. He had not been the first they had asked, but their chances of getting someone of his reputation at the low salary of $2,000 per year would have been ordinarily impossible.²

¹ C. A. Cutter, Review of The All-Time Library, by F. J. Wilson, in LJ, XIX (May, 1894), 176.

² Forbes Library, Northampton, Massachusetts, First Annual Report, 1894/95 (Northampton, 1895), pp. 9, 14. (Hereafter cited by number and year only). See also Cutter's remarks, summarized in "Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 1. Exactly who made the first contact with the Forbes trustees or when it was made is not known. W. P. Cutter, in Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 34, plainly
the library later in the year, could couple his statement that the Forbes Library "can be, should be, and must be the most important public library in the Connecticut valley," with his introduction of Charles Ammi Cutter, noting without further comment that the new librarian had spent twenty-four years of his thirty-four years of library work at the famed Boston Athenaeum. The latter institution stood, of course, for the idea of excellence.  

For Cutter the opportunity that the Forbes afforded was a hopeful one and for that reason it overshadowed, at least at that point, the reality of a drastic reduction in salary. His nephew later summarized,

Here was an opportunity for which he had been waiting. All his pet schemes, long in abeyance, now could be

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states that Cutter was offered the Forbes post, "when he was leaving the Athenaeum," Foster wrote in "Charles Ammi Cutter: A Memorial Sketch," p. 700, only that the 1893-94 trip to Europe was "largely in the interests" of the Forbes. It is quite probable, however, that initial contact was made in early 1894 by letter. Cutter reported in his first annual report cited above that he himself had "proposed" the idea of buying books in Europe to the trustees. It suggests either that a third party, aware of the needs of the Forbes and the fact that Cutter was in Europe, might have brought the two parties together with Cutter making the proposal, or simply, that Cutter initiated the correspondence. Frank P. Hill, the librarian at that time of the Newark Public Library, was interviewed for the job early in 1894. That, plus the fact that the book buying did not take place until June, suggests that the trustees were probably not yet in contact with Cutter before the spring. Hill's own words were, "The Northampton affair, from which I hoped much (as I was invited to visit them in Jany last) has fallen through owing to the fact that the city council took the matter away from the trustees & fixed the salary of the libn at $2000." See Letter, F. P. Hill to M. Dewey, March 5, 1894, CUL, M. Dewey Papers. The action of the city council was reported in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, February 17, 1894.

\[Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 8.\]
tried. A book collection could be made de novo; he could finish the classification, apply his rules without criticism, and, above all, develop his ideas as to how a library should serve the public . . .

So Charles Cutter accepted . . . There have been few such opportunities. There was no book committee, no faculty, no school committee to interfere with him. The trustees had the then unusual idea that they hired a librarian to make a library. (The three men who formed the board were the salt of the earth.) And the new librarian had the almost unique idea that books were for people to use.¹

Cutter understandably began his return trip to America with a renewed optimism. He purchased an additional 500 volumes for the library in London and when he arrived in Boston he continued his purchasing there. The Cutters arrived in Northampton late in August and during September Cutter went about drawing up plans for the library's administration.² He also submitted to the Library Journal in September an article describing in some detail his experiences in visiting European libraries. Although he gave particular attention to his work on the Expansive Classification at both the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale, one can also sense the tone of the new beginning in his retrospective view of his travels. He again reiterated the problem of an insufficient catalog at the French library, but now he gave more emphasis to his ideal of library service. He stressed his conviction that

¹W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 34. Although W. P. Cutter's opinion about the uniqueness of Cutter's views should be tempered, still, the happy circumstance of the meeting of the forward views of both trustees and librarian was a significant happening for that period.

²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 15.
only through a complete catalog could a library make its books most useful to the patrons. He stressed the need to lower the expense of searching time to both patron and staff. In support of his belief that adequate shelf classification was a necessity, he described the wasted searching time needed to find twenty-six randomly chosen works on the British Museum's broadly classed shelves. As a specific example of the difficulties encountered in inadequate shelf arrangement, he cited the problem of getting books from the British Museum's 37,000 volume biography section. He felt that the collection, arranged alphabetically by author, could be arranged more efficiently by subject categories. On the subject of other smaller libraries that he had visited, his enthusiasm was also very evident. He wrote,

If I had known that before the year was out I should be put in charge of a city library doubled with a college library, I should have carefully visited such specimens of both classes as came in my way.¹

With respect to those public libraries that he did visit, he turned his critical eye on their inadequate service and restrictive proprietary attitudes and reiterated his library ideal of full service.

From September 17 to 22 Cutter attended the American Library Association conference held at Lake Placid, New York. Given the events of the preceding weeks, he

¹"European Libraries--The Bibliotheque Nationale and the British Museum," p. 289. It should be noted that Smith College was located immediately across the street from the Forbes Library and made heavy use of the new facility, especially during the library's first decade.
doubtless carried with him a mood of triumph. The mood was reinforced by the comments of Association leaders. Secretary Frank P. Hill noted specifically that Cutter was "once more a full fledged librarian," and Frederick Crunden included Cutter among six leading library pioneers for the work they had done in "creating a science on which our profession was based." The comment with perhaps the most satisfying ring was made by Dewey, who stated in the midst of a tribute to the recently deceased William F. Poole,

The one man who from the first, through the whole history of the Association, has always had faith, and not only said, "I think it can be done," but also "I will help," and did help, was Charles A. Cutter of the Boston Athenæum. The other librarians were often in doubt, but Mr. Cutter never failed to join heartily in every advance movement.

During the social activities of the conference Cutter took his turn at the bonfire party by entertaining the group while his own fagot of pine branches burned, and certainly enjoyed the debate—with Dewey taking the negative and William I. Fletcher the positive—on the facetious question, "Did Mr. Cutter Ascend Whiteface?" He also contributed his own witty speech among others at the annual dinner that was highlighted by menus written in both Decimal and Expansive

1A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XIX (December, 1894), C110, C172.

Classification numbers.¹ Cutter later pronounced the conference to be "most profitable," not only because of the library business it contained, but especially for the "inspiration and energy" provided.²

The Forbes Library and Northampton

Northampton had a long and varied local history.³ It had been the starting point for Jonathan Edwards' New England revival efforts. It had also borne the marks of staunch Yankee convictions narrowed to bigotry when two Catholic Irish immigrants, Dominic Daley and James Halligan, were mistakenly condemned and hung in 1806 for the murder of a local inhabitant. Throughout the nineteenth century, Northampton intimately reflected the changing character of American social and cultural life. During the ante-bellum period, it witnessed its share of social reform efforts, including the short-lived Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a reform community, water-cure establishments, and the dietary and health lectures of Dr. Sylvester Graham, after whom the 'graham cracker' was named.

The size and character of the river town had been typically affected by the economic currents of the late

¹"The Social Side of the Conference," LJ, XIX (December, 1894), C176-77.

²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 15.

³The points in Northampton's social history that follow are taken from the tercentenary history of the town, The Northampton Book; Chapters from 300 Years in the Life of a New England Town, 1654-1954 (Northampton, Mass.: The Tercentenary Committee, 1954).
nineteenth century, notably with a solid growth of industry. During Cutter's tenure there, the population rose from about fifteen to nineteen thousand inhabitants. A wide variety of foreign-born moving into the community throughout the century comprised approximately one-fourth of the city's population (the state average was thirty per cent) during the same period. The heaviest representation were the Irish and French-Canadian, but during the period there was a heavy influx of hard working Slavs, people who eventually came to own many of the previously Yankee farms in the region. Still, one writer comments that the atmosphere of the region with regard to the immigrant seems to have been "comparatively tolerant." His summary of the reasons are thoughtful.

Foremost seems to have been an unusually cosmopolitan local tradition that made for tolerance that was rare indeed in most communities of the size of Northampton. Secondly, the town seems during the 19th century to have experienced a chronic shortage of labor, so that economic competition with the lowest stratum of the native community, a repeatedly recognized concomitant of minority discrimination, was minimized. Thirdly, Northampton was a river town and, having from early times been in the path of a natural movement of population, it had developed the type of open-ended society which is characteristic of such towns and is relatively congenial for the migrant.¹

Charles Edward Forbes was born in Bridgewater in 1795 and practiced law in Northampton from 1818 until his retirement in 1865.² His prominence in both the community


²Biographical information on the life of Judge Charles E. Forbes is taken from Florence B. Adams, "Forbes
and the state was highlighted by several public offices including a period on the state's Supreme Judicial Court from 1848 to 1849. He was a man of considerable intellect and strong convictions who early developed a bias against organized religion—particularly Roman Catholic—which he felt most often followed too narrow a path to develop "enlightened freemen."¹ Through the influence of the examples of Oliver Smith, the founder of the unique and humanitarian Smith Charities and of Sophia Smith, the benefactress of Smith College, of whose will he was executor, he determined to found a library for Northampton. His will stated,

It has been my aim to place within reach of the inhabitants of a town, in which I have lived long and pleasantly, the means of learning, if they are disposed to learn, the marvelous development of modern thought, and to enable them to judge the destiny of the race on scientific evidence, rather than on metaphysical evidence alone. The importance of the education of the people cannot be overrated.²

The terms of the will, promulgated at his death in 1881, were generous at a time when library philanthropy was just coming into prominence, but they also set the scene

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¹Charles E. Forbes, "The Will of Charles E. Forbes," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 3. Forbes' will is also included as an appendix in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, although in a slightly abbreviated form.

²Ibid.
for a variety of struggles. 1 A total of $220,000 was to be divided into three separate funds: $50,000 for a building; $20,000 for administration (the Aid fund); and $150,000 for a Book fund. The investment income from the latter two funds were to provide for those needs. If the building fund proved to be insufficient, the whole amount was to be invested and allowed to accumulate for approximately ten years at the end of which the three funds would again be separated. That course of action enabled the trustees eventually to turn over to the city in 1894, an Aid fund of $20,000 with accumulated interest of $2,858, a building that cost $134,529, and a book fund of $294,000 with accumulated interest of $40,042.2

The first problem related to the will arose out of the basic purpose of the bequest. Northampton already had a public library. A small private library, begun in 1826, had been given to the city in 1860 and supplied with a building through the $40,000 benefaction of John Clarke in 1867. The John Clarke Library was subsequently opened in the city's Memorial Hall building in 1871. In searching for a lot on which to build the new Forbes Library, one faction felt that the best move would be to build next to the Clarke Library and make a single public library.

1This account of the problems engendered by the terms of the will is primarily based on the thorough discussion given in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 1-16.

Another faction sought to keep the two separate and proposed a location on the Turner property two long blocks away, but across the street from Smith College. When the first faction suggested that such a location would place the library under the influence of the college rather than making it attentive to the city's needs, President L. Clarke Seelye of the college revealed that Forbes had privately hoped for the library to include the college in its purview. The problem was finally solved when it was noted that the will called for a fireproof structure, completely separate from older buildings. As a result, the Turner lot was purchased.

The second problem arose out of the tone of Judge Forbes' indictment of organized religion. The passage from the will quoted above went on to make an almost scurrilous attack on Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, Forbes was very explicit that the book collection itself was to avoid sectarian works of religion as far as possible.

It is my design to form a library of works of science and the arts, in their broadest acceptation, of ancient and modern history, and of the literature of our own and other nations; but as theological works cannot be wholly excluded, in the selection of these latter works no preference shall be given to any sect or system of theologic inquiry, but strict impartiality is to be extended to all of them. Histories of different religions may find an appropriate place in this department.

It has been asserted that there are between two and three thousand different systems of religion in existence. But as a general rule these are the inventions of cunning men or the vagaries of semi-lunatics, speaking boldly and impudently in the name of God, of whose decrees and purposes they know as little as the most ignorant of their victims. The result is seldom
doubtful. It is wealth and power on the part of the prophets, ignorance and poverty on the part of the disciples.¹

In addition to the above, Forbes also directed that no clergyman would be allowed employment in the library, or any part in the administration of the library. It has since been pointed out that Cutter narrowly avoided this stricture, for although he had trained for the ministry, he had never been ordained. Finally, Forbes buttressed the open nature of the book collection that he desired by providing that any citizen might request in writing any book to be bought or placed in the library, and if the trustees declined, their decision must also be in writing, "in order that the rights of the parties, if desired, may be determined at law."²

Despite criticism of Forbes' views, little could be done about them. Besides, the breadth of what Judge Forbes did consider to be proper for the collection was generous enough to suggest that he had only the best intentions, rather than any narrow view. He considered the book fund to be the "mainspring of the institution," applicable to,

the purchase and repair of books, pamphlets, manuscripts and papers of a literary or scientific character, and the binding of the same. Maps and charts, and to a limited extent, statuary, paintings, engravings and photographs, may be purchased as ornaments to the library and aids to scientific inquiry.³

¹Forbes, "Will," p. 3. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.
A third problem arose with Forbes' allocation of the funds themselves, a problem that would plague the library throughout Cutter's administration and for some years afterward. Forbes deliberately kept the Aid fund small in comparison to the Book fund and denied any use of the Book fund for administrative purposes. He required that if the city accepted the benefaction, it would itself supplement the funds for administration. Although it was not uncommon for benefactors to neglect the administration of a library in their wills, the usual practice was to give their money for a building. In this case, Forbes provided for both a building and an enormous yearly acquisition of books; but at the same time he gave little help in dealing with the acquisitions when they came in. The situation was only partially alleviated when, in 1892, Dr. Pliny Earle, for twenty-four years the director of the Northampton Lunatic Hospital, left $50,000 to the city, the income of which was to be used for the library's administrative expenses. The total yearly investment still remained inadequate, however.\(^1\)

The city itself had to make up the difference between the yearly investment income and the money needed to operate the library. But even before the library was

\(^1\)For the Earle bequest, see sections, "Dr. Pliny Earle, One of the Donors," and "The Will of Pliny Earle," in "Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, pp. 1 and 3. As a result of Earle's bequest, the library was sometimes called the Forbes-Earle Library, although most of the time the name Earle was omitted.
opened, the imbalance spelled trouble. An article that appeared in the local newspaper in February 1894 outlining the proposed administrative expenses of the new library was perhaps indicative of what was to come. It was entitled, "The Library Elephant; A Glimpse of What Lies Before Us," and it suggested that a year's operating expenses would require between $9,500 and $10,000, the city's part amounting to $6,000. Considering that 1894 was a time of general economic depression from which Northampton had not escaped, the budget must have appeared ominous.¹

From the very beginning the town kept the administrative total at a minimum, despite what was needed to keep up with acquisitions and services; and sometimes they did not always provide even that minimum. Salaries and number of staff were restricted with the librarian to receive no more than $2,000 a year. They could not have expected to find a prominent librarian to work for such a low sum, so that it was fortunate for them that Cutter was both available and open to accepting the appointment.

The first two of the above problems became public issues during the decade of the 1880's, but were settled by the time the building site was settled upon and actual construction began. The issue of the administrative expenses of the library came to a head only after the library

was opened in 1895 and the operation of the library made the needs apparent. The building itself was designed by William C. Brocklesby, a Hartford architect, and was of unmistakable H. H. Richardson style, incorporating among other things a typical cavernous round arch for the entranceway. It was constructed of Longmeadow brownstone and, following the prescription of the will that it be fireproof, was built without structural steel, except for the roof which was a marvel of iron-work and slate.¹ The building was made for adaptability and permanence. Cutter later said of it:

The Forbes building has contributed to the success of that library. Well placed in the centre of ample grounds, substantially built in an agreeable semi-romanesque style, it is unlike other libraries in that its whole lower story, 100 feet square, is a single room broken only by the pillars and arches that sustain the second floor. Older libraries look confined, dingy, and gloomy compared with this new, bright, open, cheerful building, and many of later date are not as home-like and comfortable.²

The First Year, 1894-1895

On the fourth of October 1894 Cutter took active charge of a library staff that consisted of himself, a janitor and three assistants. The newly completed building had

¹A description of the architectural style of the building is given in Karl S. Putnam, "Northampton Architecture: a Sequence," in The Northampton Book, pp. 157-58. Floor plans and photographs can be found in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 72-77.

no furniture, and together they faced the unpacked boxes of 3,500 books which he had purchased during the previous months.¹ That vignette was from Cutter's own hand and provides one theme that constantly resounded during his tenure there. That is, the library, despite its auspicious and wealthy beginning, would always be understaffed and the staff would always be behind in what could only be considered a mountain of work.

The other theme had to do with the library's purpose. It was delineated by Cutter at the dedication of the library late in October 1894. President Seelye of Smith College and Melvil Dewey both spoke of the idea that the library would be an auxiliary to the public school system. As such it was a people's university.² Cutter spoke more specifically, however, of the lines along which the library would be run. He summarized his administrative philosophy in the four words, liberality, simplicity, elasticity, and utility. Simplicity was his word for an economical approach to library operations. He echoed his philosophy of earlier years that library techniques and appliances should always be tailored to the appropriate goals. Economy was "always desirable in the management of a library," but in this case the reality of the situation would drive them to it. He added therefore, that because

²The remarks of Seelye and Dewey are summarized in, "Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 24, 1894, p. 1.
of the library's financial limitations, "we shall not be able to buy much red tape." ¹

Liberality, elasticity, and utility were more directly applicable to his sense of library service. Every effort would be made to provide the library needs of all the various kinds of patrons, not simply to the Smith College community, "but to everyone in the town, from the gray-beard to the smallest child who can read, or indeed can enjoy looking at pictures." ² Service would subsequently become Cutter's most urgent quest and in order to achieve it he placed all other concerns—including those of cataloging and classification—in a secondary position. Circulation privileges would be developed carefully with due regard to the capabilities of the collection, but every borrower who was interested in special subjects would be aided in every way possible. All such liberal ideals of service would be developed in the context of limits, however.

Libraries, like states, flourish best with the greatest allowable liberty, but in a library as in a state, it must be liberty under law not license without law. We wish to allow every man all the privileges that we can up to the point where his privileges would interfere with the rights of someone else.³

Just as the development of the collection had occupied Cutter's initial relationship to the library, so it

¹Cutter's remarks, summarized in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, are recorded more fully in, Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, pp. 16-17.
²Ibid. ³Ibid.
continued to be the most important activity of his first few months. Two days after he assumed charge he wrote to the American Antiquarian Society with regard to collecting Northamptoniana. In March the following year he began a correspondence with Samuel S. Green of Worcester about exchanging duplicate copies of books and about jointly ordering foreign books—a correspondence that was to last more than three years.\(^1\) Exchanging duplicates was a policy made necessary by the large volume of purchasing done with a small staff. Cutter reported in his first annual report that in the first place he kept no accession book, but rather kept the bills as records of purchase in order by date. He reasoned that "the questions that this method leaves unanswered are questions whose answers are not worth their cost."\(^2\) Second, he kept no lists of books on order other than marked catalogs, trusting his memory to avoid duplication as much as possible. Since some duplication was unavoidable, he carried on an exchange program to offset the procedure.\(^3\) Such simplified methods, while not perhaps foolproof over a long term, enabled Cutter to build a large collection very quickly, but with a minimum of staff.

\(^1\) Evidence of Cutter's duplicate exchange activity can be found in the American Antiquarian Society, Librarians' Correspondence; in the Worcester Public Library, Letter copy-books of Samuel S. Green, March, 1895 to March, 1898; and in the Springfield City Library, Correspondence files of John C. Dana, 1897-1901.


\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 21-22.
He had hoped to begin the collection by purchasing the American Library Association's 1893 Columbian Exposition exhibit library of 5,000 volumes. He very quickly determined, however, that four-fifths of the model library were already held by the Clarke Library and, because he did not wish to duplicate the resources of the older institution, he searched out only those books that the Clarke Library lacked, as well as standard dictionaries and encyclopedias.¹

His philosophy of collection building drew upon all of his ability as a bibliographer. He assumed that the library's primary responsibility was neither for amusement nor for any form of specialized research, but rather for supplying any patron with something, at least, on any subject. That did not mean that he did not later develop special areas, but in the beginning he purchased a broad range of materials that demonstrated his own grasp of overall bibliography. Special groups such as the Smith College community would be served in somewhat greater depth, but only in relation to the primary goal. The Daily Hampshire Gazette reported in that regard, that when Cutter received requests from some of the professors for books in their own special areas of interest, he simply commented that "he had purchased a few such as he thought would be useful for general reading by the public."²

¹Ibid., pp. 18-20.
By purchasing books with that broad base in mind and with little initial restriction on total expenditures, Cutter was able to accumulate 13,000 volumes by January 1895 and nearly 28,000 volumes by the time the library opened in July of that year. He made his own casual statement of his engrossing effort to his old friend, Richard Bowker, in January 1895 when he wrote, "One of these days I want to renew relations with the L. J. but now I am too much absorbed in trying to get all the good books for half their cost and to reduce them to order when I get them."¹

Cutter's monumental efforts at building a collection de novo necessitated, as he stated, that he impose some "order" on the books. The trustees allowed from the beginning that the catalog would be a dictionary type of authors, titles, and subjects arranged in one alphabet. In addition, they designated that the catalog would be placed in Rudolph Indexer books. Their decision was doubtless based on Cutter's promotion of the devices, for as if to prove their worth, he took special pains to explain in his first report their special merits.²

Another experiment was not so successful. Cutter had recommended and the trustees had proposed to the city council that a special appropriation be made for making a collection of entries with linotype castings. They reasoned

¹Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 6, 1895, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, pp. 10 and 23.
that by 1900 a catalog of the entries for some 60,000 volumes could then be easily printed, with the added possibility of making special lists upon demand. The proposal was not approved, however, and the entries that were made by that method, apparently done in hopes that the project would be approved, had to be redone.¹

Once the books were cataloged, they were prepared as simply as possible for the shelves, and arranged according to the seventh expansion of Cutter's Expansive Classification. Because that expansion was not complete, however, Cutter found himself pressed to work on those schedules that were most needed. During 1895 he worked out the last of the schedules for Biography (Class E), History (Class F), and Geography and Travels (Class G). It was perhaps in that regard that he also made a preliminary schedule for Music (Class Vv-Vz), although the Newberry Library in Chicago was also interested in that schedule.²

The amount of work that Cutter accomplished during the first few months was enormous, but not unexpected of him. He had always been most content when there was a monumental job to be done to which he could apply his penchant for organization. At the same time the library was woefully understaffed. During the month of September 1894 he had hired the first four assistants, among them Miss

¹Ibid., p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 22; "Forbes- Earle Library," p. 4; See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 597-98.
Mabel Winchell, who was to act as his trusted and chief assistant until the end of 1901. Still, the helpers that he had were not sufficient to do the amount of work that was necessary to open the library for actual use in a short time.\(^1\) In the above mentioned letter to Bowker, Cutter went on to say that in addition to library work, he was also busy "in getting the new city council to give us enough to run the library on, or to speak more accurately, to get our trustees & treasurer to be courageous enough to ask for all we want."\(^2\) With respect to an opening date, Cutter publicly suggested that perhaps by June 1895 or even by January 1896 the library would be ready. One of the problems was that by January 1895 when he made the statement, only 2,000 of the 13,000 volumes acquired by then had been cataloged.\(^3\) The trustees had different ideas. They had originally wanted to open by January 1, 1895. The date was put off to April 4th and finally to July 1st, but only with the compromise that the books would not be completely cataloged. Cutter later suggested that with the staff available, the mass of incoming books could not have been ready even for a July 1, 1896 opening.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Wikander, *Disposed to Learn*, p. 12; "Northampton (Mass.) Forbes L.,” *LJ*, XX (July, 1895), 251-52.

\(^2\)Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, January 6, 1895, NYPL, Bowker Papers.


Because the trustees insisted upon the July opening date, Cutter had to resort to even more economy measures. Uncataloged books received very simplified processing and were arranged on the shelves according to the broad subject divisions of the second or third expansions of his classification system. The shelves were then closed for browsing, except for teachers or those who had a specific subject in mind. In addition, 1,000 volumes were placed in the delivery room for general reading. When the library was opened on July 1, 1895, of the approximately 28,000 volumes collected, only about one-third had been entered in the catalog.¹

A provisional list of rules and regulations for circulation was approved by the trustees in their June 1895 meeting. The rules were, in their words, "as liberal as they thought possible to get the best use of the books."² Among the provisions were registration rights for any inhabitant of Northampton twelve years old or older, for visitors in Northampton, and for college students in Northampton or neighboring towns. Special provisions made it possible for teachers to check out six or more books at a time for use in their teaching and for books to be placed on reserve in the library for use by college students. Borrowing was limited to one book in English for a two-week period, or two, if one was fiction. A patron was allowed, however, to


²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 11.
check out, at the same time, magazines, books in other
languages, or additional English language books for research
in special subjects. ¹

Circulation control was accomplished by using the
Browne system of charging in combination with book-cards
of the type that Cutter had used at the Boston Athenaeum.
A borrower was given at the time of his registration a
Manila card pocket with his name on it. When he found a
book that he wanted to take out, the book's card was placed
in the pocket and the resulting packet was placed in a file
arranged by circulation date. Since only one card could be
put in a borrower's card pocket at a time, additional pock-
ets were issued for the different classes of materials
allowed to circulate. Typical practice in libraries of
that time was to keep two kinds of circulation files, one
by circulation date, and a second by patrons' names. Cut-
ter reported that he had limited the records to only the
first kind in order to keep the work at a minimum and
because a file by patron, while useful, was more than the
library could afford. ²

During the first five months after the library
opened, nearly 1,500 persons registered as borrowers. The
additional work quickly became burdensome for the already

²Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, p. 23. The most important element was the date a book was due. Cut-
ter kept a separate filing sequence for each day's circu-
lation.
severely taxed staff. As a result Cutter found himself unable to attend the American Library Association annual conference held that year in Denver during the middle of August. It was the first time he had missed an annual meeting since the organization was founded; but he doubtless felt a justifiable pride in the work he was accomplishing. He suggested as much in an affable letter to his fellow librarian, George Watson Cole, at the end of July, when he concluded with the ironic line, "Are you like the rest of us lazy easterners going to shirk Denver?" ¹

By the time of the first annual report at the end of November 1895, the statistics of the overall amount of work accomplished were even more impressive. He had acquired 31,027 volumes of which 28,425 non-gift items had cost a total of $33,050.07, or, $1.162 per volume. The latter type of figure was one that Cutter perhaps felt was necessary owing to the large sums being expended. In addition, 2,632 pamphlets, 28 maps, 85 engravings, 174 chromoliths, 1,423 photographs, 55 manuscripts, and 12 water-colors had also been added. Circulation for the short period totaled 2,115 volumes used in the building, and 8,924 volumes outside. Cutter reported 9,215 volumes cataloged, although he also noted that 5,611 of them, cataloged in linotype, would have to be redone. As if the amount of work was insufficient, Cutter outlined what he felt the future

¹Letter, Cutter to G. W. Cole, July 30, 1895, American Antiquarian Society, Cole Papers.
demanded. The people of the community needed to be made aware of the presence of the library. Study clubs needed to be encouraged. Finally, more literature had to be purchased, especially for the French-Canadian population of the area.¹

Administration of the Forbes Library, 1895-1903

Acquisitions and Collection Growth

The number of acquisitions of the first year did not repeat itself during the succeeding years of Cutter's administration, but the rate of acquisition remained high.² During the second year, 13,000 new volumes were brought in. During the following years the yearly rate dropped steadily, from a high of 9,278 volumes in the third year to a low of 5,619 volumes in 1903. Even so, the total number of volumes acquired by 1903 was nearly 97,000. Books were not the only kinds of materials collected. Besides the special collections treated below, Cutter also reported during the same period the acquisition of 14,000 pamphlets, more than 600 maps, including some in relief, 188 manuscripts, and a large number of newspapers. The total effort rivaled even that of Cutter's former example, John Langdon Sibley of Harvard.


²The acquisition statistics here are taken from the second through ninth annual reports of the library, 1895/96 to 1902/03. The report year was from December 1st to November 30th, so that the ninth annual report extended three months beyond Cutter's death.
Cutter was careful to show the purposefulness of his collecting activities. A local newspaper article in November 1896 spoke of the Forbes policy on buying books of rare value. The article first gave a picture of the cutthroat market for original imprints, but then went on to state explicitly, "The Forbes library does not lavish its money on any such curiosities, but it looks out for opportunities of procuring the same historical matter in adequate reprints."¹ Cutter was also aware of the diverse backgrounds of his patrons and purchased books with the differences in mind. Besides the typical breakdown between children and adults, such variations included ethnic differences. In 1902 he enumerated the latter, which included French-Canadians, Germans, Poles, Hebrews, Swedes, Bohemians, Hungarians, and Lithuanians. He compiled that list in the same year that he made a point of noting his special purchases in Yiddish literature.²

His awareness as a bibliographer was demonstrated not only in the excellence of his selection, but also in his awareness of what not to buy. One such instance of his watchfulness occurred in 1900 when he discovered that a twenty-volume literature anthology had been published in both English and American editions, but under different editors' names. Cutter had ordered them both, thinking

them different. The problem was further compounded when the American publisher announced its intention to publish still another set that incorporated all of the first edition but with an additional ten volumes of material. Cutter found the whole matter irritating and strongly cautioned librarians in a sardonic letter to the Library Journal. Privately he thought it no less than intent to "defraud" and a "cheat." ¹

Still another of his concerns had to do with the purchase and circulation of fiction. Just as years before he had felt it to be the librarian's duty to exercise care and taste in selecting only the best in fiction, so he continued his efforts in that direction, both at the Forbes and in professional circles. He participated in a reading program during 1895 and 1896 sponsored by the Massachusetts Library Club in which the volunteers read two novels a week for a year in order both to review them and to develop their own critical abilities in distinguishing the more worthwhile from the less worthwhile.

When he participated in a discussion on the A.L.A. Catalog—Supplement at the Cleveland American Library Association conference in September 1896, he related his experience in the program by beginning,

¹"Changed Titles--A Peculiar Case," LJ, XV (May, 1900), 218. The matter dragged on for a year and included a public defense by the publisher. The private remark is contained in a letter, Cutter to J. C. Dana, April 13, 1901, a response to Dana's letter of March 14, 1901, Springfield Public Library, Librarians' Correspondence.
What is there more important for us than the choice of books, the selection of those tools with which we are to work upon the public, the selection of what will in the end determine whether the public will come to our libraries at all and what influence we shall have on them?¹

The question demonstrated his concern for the influential role of the library on the reading public. In that sense his views remained the same as in earlier years.

Early in 1898 he described at two professional meetings his practice (while still at the Boston Athenaeum) of reading with his youngest son.² His description was well-received and suggests that the Association as a whole felt the concern deeply. But his earlier view in which he displayed a considerable Brahmin-type hesitancy toward poor quality books also seems to have become modified, perhaps as a result of his reading program, and certainly because of his intensive public library work. In place of his rigid canon of selection by taste and good literary expression, he asked in 1901, "Should libraries buy only the best books or the best books that people will read?" He thought the question answered itself, for, "of course, we are to buy the best books." But he qualified the idea of "best" with his newly acquired appreciation of the wide range of any

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C134. See also the report of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXI (October, 1896), 464.

²See reports of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXIII (January, 1898, 28, and of the joint meeting of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey library associations, LJ, XXIII (April, 1898), 155.
particular library's clientele.¹ The librarian was to select the best books not for,

the librarian, nor for the book committee, nor for the self-elected book committee outside the library, nor for the shelves (to keep them warm by never leaving them); but the best books to satisfy the just demands of our clients for amusement and knowledge and mental stimulus and spiritual inspiration. The library should be a practical thing to be used, not an ideal to be admired.²

That attitude still did not speak to the problem of the poor taste of many uncultured readers, but Cutter sensed that the problem of influencing the reading public was much more complicated than it had perhaps been conceived of previously. He went on to state what he felt was a change in the position of the library in society.

The whole history of libraries in the past century may almost be condensed into one sentence: They were the libraries of the one fit reader; they are the libraries of the million unfit as well as the one fit.³

His observation also suggests that he was thinking in terms far less exclusive than when he was at the Athenaeum. He continued by drawing a picture of the sensitivity that the librarian should have.

I think many most excellent persons do not really enter into the state of mind of those who are at a stage of culture or mental ability or aesthetic taste which they have passed beyond. If they could, they would know that there are men of a certain rigidity of mind

¹"Should Libraries Buy Only the Best Books or the Best Books that People Will Read?" LJ, XXVI (February, 1901), 70. The paper was originally read before the Western Massachusetts Library Club on January 23, 1901. It was also reported at length in "What Books Will People Read? A Problem for Public Libraries," Springfield Republican, February 7, 1901, p. 5.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 71.
to whom a book which is two degrees above is as much a sealed book as if written in Chinese. Sometimes it need not even be above a man to be lost to him. A book on his level, if it be a little aside from his ordinary range, is as if it did not exist.¹

He described what a librarian could do given this real situation. First, he ought to have a wider range of books on hand than simply those that fit the present needs of his patrons. In that way he could introduce variety into his patrons' intellectual diets as the occasion allowed. Second, he ought to resist attempts rigidly to define the "best" books, but rather allow the idea a wide range of interpretation according to the intellectual and spiritual development of the individual patrons. Last, he ought to select books wisely with that wide range of patrons in mind.

Drawing on literary and architectural allusions, Cutter pictured the ideally balanced library.

Select your library, then, as Shakespeare wrote his plays, the highest poetry, the deepest tragedy side by side with the comic and the vulgar. Do not make the regularity, balance of parts, dignity of expression, of the French classic drama your model or you will have only a succès d'estime. Imitate a Gothic cathedral. Do not fancy that libraries can be Grecian temples, made by rule, all just alike wherever they are, perfect in form, suited to one limited use.²

He admitted that his approach was "discouraging" to any who wanted a "royal road to learning."³ His newer view did not negate the educational work of the librarian, but it did show that the work was much more strenuous than had previously been supposed, although the work retained its pastoral character. He concluded,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 72. ³Ibid.
The natural inclination to better one's self must be gently and unobtrusively assisted. Here, as in all pastoral work, success comes from sympathy. He can best minister to another's wants who can put himself into another's place, enter into his mind, and so feel those wants himself. As the librarian will do injustice to the scholar unless he has himself felt the sacred thirst for knowledge; as he will not, indeed, cannot supply the demand for the beautiful unless he has himself felt the artistic thrill, so he will fail in properly providing for many of his people unless he remembers the gradual opening of his own mind or is able to recreate his forgotten state of ignorance and inability.  

The enormous number of purchases caused a strain on all the internal processing arrangements of the library. With regard to physical facilities, they prompted Cutter to call as early as 1896 for the construction of a two-story iron stack that had been part of the original building plans. His plea went unheeded at that time and in 1899, when the collection had passed 77,000 volumes, he repeated it, only at that time almost as an ultimatum. He expressed his opinion that the only alternative he had was to put books on the floor. Despite his plea, however, the stack was not built during his administration.  

Special Materials

Besides the accumulation of regular library materials, Cutter was also active in collecting several kinds of special materials; namely, music, medical literature, and art reproductions. Cutter might well have purchased some printed music as early as 1895, for early that year

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1Ibid.

he attempted to complete a new schedule for his classification of music. Active purchasing did not begin until late 1896 when the complete works of Beethoven, Chopin, and other composers, in Breitkopf and Hartel editions, and the Bach and Handel Societies' editions of those masters were added. The approximately 430 quarto volumes costing about $900 were looked upon as the "foundation" of a "music department." A promise was made to buy the works of other composers, "if it is found that there is any call for these." In the annual report for that year, Cutter more explicitly related that the policy had been inspired by the practice of the Brooklyn Public Library and would include extensive circulation of the materials. By 1899 the first mention was made of the purchasing of sheet music. Totals given the next year showed nearly 1,500 items of sheet music. By 1903 that total had increased to nearly 4,300. As the number of music materials increased, Cutter found it necessary to wrestle with the nature of his music shelf classification once again. He had at first arranged the materials strictly by composer. Later, he settled upon a preliminary arrangement by subject or instrumental grouping and subarranged these by composer.

1[Note], Daily Hampshire Gazette, November 20, 1896, p. 5.


3See his, "Shelf Classification of Music," pp. 68-72. See also above, Ch. VII, pp. 597-98.
The medical collection was established as a result of an initial agreement made with the Hampshire District Medical Society in 1897 to provide more efficient services for the area's doctors. The following year the Society's own collection of 615 volumes were placed in a special room in the library and the library itself not only processed them as a special group, but also began to make its own purchases to expand the collection. By 1901 the Society began to meet at the library in the room set aside for the collection. An intimation of the interest that Cutter's efforts in this respect may have generated is contained in a letter from John C. Dana, the librarian of the Springfield City Library. Dana sought information from Cutter for a similar situation in Springfield.¹

The most extensive special materials were art reproductions. They represented one of Cutter's abiding interests and were a manifestation of his belief that the library had a role to play as an agent of cultural uplift. He had gained extensive experience with the place of art reproductions in the library of the Boston Athenaeum where the collection of such materials had become a partial surrogate for the exhibits of original art works that had been transferred to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1876.

The Forbes trustees were receptive to the same spirit of representing art in the library and directed Cutter while he was still in Europe in 1894 to purchase books in the fine arts. Cutter was careful to note at various times that in doing so he was avoiding the overly expensive editions of such works. By the end of the library's first year, Cutter had added to the collection, in addition to books, a great number of other types of materials. These included photographs, engravings, casts, water-colors, and chromolithographs. During the second year he increased the number of such materials with the addition of many more of the same as well as with posters and drawings.

During 1896 Cutter's interest in this area of library service expanded still further. In February he published a review of the catalog of the Avery Architectural Library of Columbia University, "a collection to make the mouth of the country architect water and his heart contract with envy at the superior privileges of his fellows in New York." In March he brought the first photography exhibit to the library. While at the annual meeting of the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston, he had learned that the Club owned a large collection of photographs taken by Antonio Sella,

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1 Forbes Library, First Annual Report, 1894/95, pp. 14, 18-20. The statistics for this section are taken from the totals listed in the annual reports.

an Italian wool manufacturer and an avid mountain climber. The mountain scenes were of the Alps and the Caucasus and, though available in print, were difficult to find. The Club was willing to lend them to any institution for an exhibit provided all costs involved were cared for by the borrowing institution. Cutter arranged to cover the costs by selling the catalog of the exhibit. For Cutter, an enthusiastic hiker and New England mountain climber in his own right, the exhibit was of great interest on its own merits. It also became for him an important method by which to draw people to the library. He stated at the Cleveland American Library Association conference in September,

Everything is of importance which makes the library the intellectual centre of the town; everything is of importance which brings people to the building and lets them see that there is a library and leads them to think of taking out books.¹

He followed the mountain photograph exhibit with one prepared by a professional photography company from Boston, and with another composed of photographs and curiosities gathered by a local citizen while in residence in the Far East. In June 1896 Cutter himself prepared an exhibit of photo-lithographs of the Arundell Society and other book illustrations, for the meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club held at the Forbes. In reporting his work to the Association, he described his experiences with

¹C. A. Cutter, "Exhibitions of Engravings and Pictures," LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C115. See also his summarized remarks in the report of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXI (May, 1896), 235.
the mechanics of setting up an exhibit and encouraged other librarians to do the same. He felt that room should be made for the exhibits even at the expense of co-opting the reading room.\(^1\) He elaborated in his annual report for that year the reasoning behind the displays.

A public library should be the center of culture of its town. It should promote knowledge, literature, and art, by every means in its power. . . . Those [exhibitions] which we have held have, I am sure, not only given pleasure, which in itself would be a sufficient justification, but have broadened their visitors' minds, have supplied some of the advantages of travel to those who could not leave home, have renewed the impressions of those who have been abroad; have increased the knowledge of art and educated the taste of all who saw them.\(^2\)

During 1897 the Forbes Library joined in a league of twenty Massachusetts libraries for the preparation of traveling exhibits that would remain in each library for two weeks.\(^3\) Cutter again purchased photographs of the collections of great European galleries from the Braun company in Paris, just as he had done at the Boston Athenaeum. During the next three years his purchasing of reproductions continued unabated. By 1901 he reported an art collection of some 44,000 items, although he noted that there were comparatively few in color and even fewer originals. His report for the following year noted that the exhibits themselves were less visited, but that the


circulation of photographs had exceeded 11,000 items. By 1903 the reproduction collection was nearing 50,000 items.

Cutter's efforts in professional library circles at promoting the use of fine arts materials also continued unabated. Early in 1897 he reviewed the literature of the fine arts at the New York Library Club meeting, subsequently publishing his remarks in the Library Journal.¹ Of various categories of the literature that he noted, he emphasized that the books on principles, aesthetics and criticism, and art histories should be collected assiduously; not simply any that were available, but especially those of "power," such as Santayana's Sense of Beauty. He stated that, although the latter would doubtless be difficult for the learner, it would reward the effort to read it. He added a note that characterized his interest in the Gothic: "The paragraph, for instance, on the part which the flying buttress plays in charm of the Gothic cathedral is the best on the matter that I have ever met with."² In April Cutter further generalized on his own experience in a review of George Iles' Annotated Bibliography of Fine Art.

No public library can afford to neglect art nowadays, and therefore few can dispense with this list. In old times I have seen more than one small library that had not a single book on art. Probably it would be impossible to find such now. Everywhere a class of readers interested in the subject is springing up, a state of

¹New York Library Club, [Report], LJ, XXII (January, 1897), 35; C. A. Cutter, "Fine Art," LJ, XXII (February, 1897), 87-88.

²Cutter, "Fine Art," p. 87.
things due outside of the large cities in part to European travel, but in greater measure to Harper's, Century, and other illustrated magazines.¹

Early 1899 saw Cutter supplying the Springfield City Library with a photograph exhibit of old masters. Cooperation on such matters with John C. Dana, the librarian there, continued until Dana left the area two years later.² During the Montreal conference of the American Library Association in June 1900, Cutter recounted his own extensive experience of obtaining and making use of photographs and photoprints of all kinds. His later enlargement of the presentation constituted a small manual of the techniques he had learned. He divided his practical advice according to the catchy phrases, Getting, Keeping, and Using, and included among other matters a classification scheme for the arrangement of a library's art reproductions. He also expanded the rationale for his activities to include aid for art study clubs and the preparation of patrons for foreign travel.³ In 1903 Cutter presented his various ideas

¹C. A. Cutter, Review of Annotated Bibliography of Fine Art, ed. by George Iles, in LJ, XXII (April, 1897), 211.

²Letters, J. C. Dana to Cutter (Letter-book copy), March 3, 1899; Cutter to J. C. Dana, March 10, 1899, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence. Other correspondence between that date and 1901 attest to the cooperative exhibit activity between the two libraries.

³C. A. Cutter, "Photographs and Photoprints," LJ, XXV (October, 1900), 619-25. He had originally wanted only to lead a discussion on the subject, but he could not get any others to participate with him. Most of those he contacted pled lack of experience. He finally gave up the idea of a discussion, stating to President Henry J. Carr, "I fear I must hoe this row alone." Letter, Cutter to H. J. Carr, May 26, 1900, American Library Association Archives,
on the same matters to the New York State Library School in a series of lectures. These were issued as a pamphlet in 1905.¹

Extension of Services

All of Cutter's efforts at building the Forbes collections were aimed at making the library as useful as possible to the greatest number of persons and at bringing the library a pre-eminent standing in the library world. Going hand-in-hand with his collection building, therefore, were his efforts toward the extension of regular library privileges. By the end of the second year, registration of patrons totaled nearly 2,700 persons above twelve years of age. Circulation, recorded both within and outside the library, climbed to 7,729 and 40,675 volumes respectively. Cutter's concern for recording in-library use was most likely prompted by the heavy use of the library by Smith College students.²

During 1897 he made the first major changes in library privileges by opening a children's room in the library and by providing the children with circulation rights. In his annual report for that year, Cutter reviewed how lending privileges had at first been limited to those of Carr Papers. Other correspondence in the same collection reveals his efforts at recruiting participants.

¹C. A. Cutter, Notes from the Art Section of a Library, With Hints on Selection and Buying, Library Tract, no. 5 (Boston: A.L.A. Publishing Board, 1905).

²The statistics are from the annual reports.
twelve years of age or more, a practice common among older libraries and always the case in Northampton. He went on to make the observation, "that children should be drawn to the library much earlier in order to get the reading-habit well established before they go to work, or form less desirable habits." Some libraries had lowered the age limit and others had removed it entirely. Cutter approved the latter course but with restrictions. He wanted to guard against an opposite extreme in which children might "bury themselves in books and lose the benefits of outdoor play," or "read, when they ought to be pursuing their school studies." He concluded that since it was not the province of the library to decide such matters, parental permission forms were needed.

During 1896 the library's open hours were extended to Saturday afternoons. Cutter was not satisfied, however, that the library was reaching those who would not ordinarily come in anyway. Early in 1897 he proposed that the daily hours should be extended into the weekday evenings. They were subsequently extended but it is likely that part of the justification was the accommodation of Smith College students. In fact, the use of the library by the students, especially for reserved books, provided a bone of contention for some who thought that the library was more interested

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in the students than in the townspeople. Cutter was very sensitive to such criticism, for it did not rightly represent his feelings about the total clientele of the library. He helped to alleviate the problem of crowding by college students anxious to obtain books, by having a special checkout window made for them. The problem did not begin to abate, however, until 1900 when he reported that the College was simply using the library less. The decline continued until 1902 when it leveled off. Still, he did not wish to discount the College's presence, for it too was part of the great variety of patrons that the Forbes served. Its presence gave justification for the expansion of the total book collection into the theological, historical, and social sciences areas, more so than if it had not been there. He wrote in 1902,

The result of the mixture is that the library must be ready to supply at once not only the amusement and general information that are expected of the ordinary town library, but also opportunities for more varied and deeper study such as are usually looked for in college libraries and a few of the larger city libraries.

Circulation outside the library increased all throughout Cutter's administration. During 1897 a twenty-two per cent jump was recorded, but Cutter could happily

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3Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 2.
announce at the same time that fiction accounted for only forty-five per cent of the total. The total increased to over 100,000 items by 1903, but this was due in part to the large circulation of photographs and sheet music which themselves amounted to about 12,000 items. The growth in circulation was also due to an increasingly liberal loan policy over the years. At first, patrons were limited to one non-fiction book in English and one novel for a two week period. But very soon after circulation began, the privilege extended to extra materials of all sorts, including "for study, any number of books up to 100," which could be kept until someone else wanted them. The only restriction was that at the end of six months the borrower had to return those which he was done with and after one year he had to renew the remainder.

Despite the increases in local circulation, Cutter became convinced that the library could do still more to reach the people. During 1899, two events occurred that illustrated his overall concern. First, he arranged for delivery stations for regular circulation in outlying areas. Second, he arranged with the Clarke Library in Northampton to cooperate on interlibrary registration. Cutter had envisioned the extension of services to the outlying areas

1Forbes Library, Third Annual Report, 1896/97, p. 8; Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 3.
2Ibid.
as early as his first annual report but was delayed in implementing the idea. The first arrangements were made for a delivery station at Florence, Massachusetts, by loaning supplementary books to the small Lilly Library there. The Lilly librarian would come to the Forbes and select books to take to Florence. By 1901, 100 books a month were being used and smaller deliveries were being made to Loudville, Pine Grove, Smith's Ferry, and West Farms, to be loaned by teachers to students and families.¹

In December 1899 the first regular branch library manned by Forbes employees was begun at Bay State, Massachusetts, when fifty books were taken to a store in the town for circulating purposes. Miss Dorcas Tracy, a Forbes assistant, later described to the Bay Path (Massachusetts) Library Club the initial experience in such a way as to highlight the difficulties encountered.

The people there were much pleased with the books, but disliked to register, and only seven books were given out the first night. The branch was an experiment. The people had expressed no desire for books, and would never have gone to a big library building. They like good literature, and have said many times they didn't want to read anything unless it would do them good. They dislike the modern novel exceedingly. They like simple love stories for their fiction, good histories and magazines. The men like Hugo, Dumas, Weyman, and detective stories. In fact, we take a little of everything out in our basket--music, picture books for the very young, stories for all ages, and nature books.²

¹Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 3.

²Dorcas Tracy, "The Branch Work of Forbes Library," Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 29, 1902, p. 6. The meeting at which Miss Tracy spoke was held at Palmer, Massachusetts, October 28, 1902.
Eventually the idea of the branch station took hold among the people and the circulation for the second year rose to more than 6,400 volumes.\textsuperscript{1} A similar station was set up at Leeds in 1902, the books initially being sent by express at the request of local teachers on behalf of their students. Afterwards, a library employee made the trip there just as at Bay State. In both operations, the library assistants practiced what Cutter referred to as "library spade husbandry." The assistants "learn the wants and taste of their clients, bring them the books which will suit them, and with their consent, often at their demand, advise them what to read."\textsuperscript{2}

The idea of branches led Cutter to still another idea for extension of services. In November 1902 he sent to Andrew Carnegie what he described as "a long and as I thought convincing letter" appealing for funds to support "a scheme for traveling libraries in Western Massachusetts, especially among the little and poor hill towns." Carnegie did not answer the query, however, and Cutter abandoned the plan, for, in his words, "nothing can be done without money."\textsuperscript{3}

Cooperation with the Clarke library began with cross registration of patrons in 1899; but a more serious question

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{2}Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, pp. 3-4. See also, Tracy, "The Branch Work of Forbes Library;" and, [Note on the opening of the Leeds branch], Daily Hampshire Gazette, February 7, 1902.

\textsuperscript{3}See Cutter's words about his letter to Carnegie in, Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 9, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
remained for Cutter. He had long considered any local library a part of the total library resources of a town, or of a region, and in the broader framework, of the nation. Cooperation was a way to increase the total effect of all the libraries together, and it troubled him that any particular library should consider its own interests without that wider view. Of the three libraries in Northampton (the Forbes, the Clarke, and the Lilly, in Florence), he wondered why they were separate at all, considering that two of them were only two long blocks from each other. Together, the two libraries provided the town with what Cutter calculated was the largest per capita circulation figures of any town of comparable size in the state, and perhaps of any in the nation.¹

With regard to the still wider relations of the Forbes with other libraries, he reported in 1899 that interlibrary loans were being made with the Boston Athenaeum and the Boston Public Library. By 1902 loans from the Forbes to other libraries outside the city listed 260 different persons as borrowers. He related, "Books and photographs go in all directions, and the warm thanks received show that the practice is justified by the good it does."² He had an even more inclusive scheme that made the

¹Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 4. Cutter often gave per capita circulation figures for the Forbes and Clarke libraries in his annual reports.

Forbes not the library of Northampton only, but also a regional center for western Massachusetts, much as he supposed the Worcester Public Library could serve the central part of the state and the Boston Public Library both the eastern area and the state as a whole. He emphasized in an area meeting the willingness of the Forbes to help the various smaller libraries in the western area, and he "deprecated the narrow spirit which would not allow a library outside the town to enjoy the privileges of the town."¹ At about the same time he confidently wrote, "The Forbes especially has the power to perform this service without interference with its original and proper function, and power to do good carries with it the obligation."² His regional plan was not one that he was to see fulfilled.

There were also other more strictly operational matters having to do with the library's extension of services that Cutter had to deal with over the years. He retained a very fluid attitude in his adaptation of methods to accomplish the best service possible. An example of his attitude appears in a letter to Katharine L. Sharpe in 1896 in answer to her request for a description of his circulation record system. He sent the description but also appended the words,

I send a condensed statement of our charging system showing its present state; but I introduce improvements

¹Reported in a meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXVI (June, 1901), 344-45.
²Cutter, Library Facilities of Northampton, p. 4.
whenever I see the need of one; so that this descrip-
tion may not be correct next month.¹

In this case the method remained the same for
another seven years. Then Cutter made a change that he
freely admitted he was "ashamed" of not thinking of before
then. Instead of keeping a separate filing sequence for
each day's circulation, he put all circulation records in
a single sequence arranged by author but with cardboard
tabs showing the due dates. In that way he was able to cut
down the time needed to find out when a book that was out
was supposed to be returned. Previously, the search in-
volved checking thirteen filing sequences representing
each day of a circulation period and all those that were
overdue.²

At the same time Cutter tempered his fluidity with
a sensitivity to the patrons and to how the library
appeared. When President Dana asked Cutter in an American
Library Association discussion whether or not he had
installed a "fence" between the patrons and the charging
records, Cutter replied that he had, but only in order to
prevent the patrons from handling the circulation files.

¹Letter, Cutter to K. L. Sharpe, March 7, 1896,
University of Illinois Archives, Sharpe Papers. Miss
Sharpe was the director of the Armour Institute Library
School, afterwards the University of Illinois Library School.

²Cutter, "Charging Simplified--Abolition of the Two-
Weeks File," LJ, XXVIII (September, 1903), 664. Appar-
ently, however, there was yet no thought of a double card
system in which circulation records were kept both by bib-
liographical order (author or call number) and by circu-
lation period.
When Dana pressed him further as to whether he approved of such fences for any purpose, Cutter replied with words that illustrate his sensitivity and his picture of the personal nature of the library.

I do not like them. I would not have had that fence if I could avoid it, but a year's experience showed that it was absolutely necessary to prevent not so much intentional as idle meddling. I want the whole library to be and to appear as free as possible, with no marks of separation between the force and the public, and as few notices about keeping quiet and not doing this and that and the other as possible. I wish my library to appear like a home, but open fireplaces, flowering plants, pictures, statues will miss their effect if they are accompanied with the marks of the office and the prison.¹

With regard to open stacks in libraries, Cutter continued to favor the practice, although the Forbes' collections were restricted due to the incompleteness of their cataloging and classification. He also favored the practice of circulating almost every type of material that a library had, except, that is, items that could not be replaced, such as manuscripts, unique books, and local materials. His freedom in this practice was reflected particularly in the large circulation of the Forbes' music and art materials.²

¹A.L.A. Conference Discussion on "Library Furniture, Fixtures, and Appliances," LJ, XXI (December, 1896), C128. A "fence" referred to a grating similar to that found in front of a teller's cage in a bank.

²A.L.A. Conference Discussion, LJ, XXV (August, 1900), C154. See also Cutter's opinions reported at a meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club, LJ, XXVI (January, 1901), 25.
Finally, with regard to circulation rules, he favored at the same time both a loose and a strict practice; loose in the sense of great liberality, but strict, in the attempt to protect the rights of the modest patron. He wrote,

All library rules should be made for the sole purpose of ensuring a just and equal distribution of the privileges of the library, to protect those who want only their rights and might yield them too easily against those who take all they can get and keep all they can hold, to protect ordinary persons against their more energetic, hustling, selfish neighbors.¹

A particular application of the above attitude was displayed in his collection of fines for overdue books. He felt that liberality in the reduction of fines must always be practiced while at the same time a firmness should be shown that made clear the axiom, "The way of the transgressor is hard."² Such a practice was in the end for the good of all involved. At the same time he felt that the rules should be made in the beginning so that only few fines would be incurred. His goal depended on the idea that the successful operation of a library would only be achieved as the librarian and the people joined forces in a common reasonable effort to benefit one another.³

Staffing Problems

Although Cutter's ideals of what the library movement entailed were broadly based, energetic, and laced with

¹C. A. Cutter, "Library Discipline: Rules Affecting the Public," LJ, XXVIII (February, 1903), 65.
²Ibid., p. 67.
³Ibid.
common-sense reasonableness, in practice he often found himself unable to adequately fulfill them because of a staff that was small in size and funding that kept it that way. It has already been mentioned that funding problems were apparent as early as the beginning of library operations in 1894. The succeeding years saw the problems become more and more compounded with little relief. Consequently, when Cutter had to make a choice as to what administrative operations would be favored, he chose over and over to assign the staff to the public's service, rather than to internal operations such as cataloging and classification, matters that had occupied him so intensely during previous years at the Athenaeum. Doubtless, such decisions caused him continual frustration, but he kept his optimism, particularly because of the exceptional record of public service that his library was forging.  

Recruiting and keeping a well-trained staff became an increasingly vexatious problem for him. First, the pay was low (in John C. Dana's words, it was "almost nothing")

1Cutter's frustrations often surfaced in his annual reports of the cataloging backlog. As early as December 1896, Sarah Cutter confided to R. R. Bowker that the Forbes was "depressing and discouraging," although she quickly added that her husband was still both happy and enthusiastic concerning the work. Letter, Sarah Cutter to R. R. Bowker, December 4, [1896], NYPL, Bowker Papers. The date of the letter is established by reference to the trying times of three years before that.

2Letter, J. C. Dana to Harry L. Koopman (Letterbook copy), March 29, 1899, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence. Koopman was the librarian of Brown University and had written to Dana in search for a job for his half-brother. Dana stated, "Mr. Cutter wants
both during a probationary period and after the assistant had worked there for a period of time. The Northampton City Council offered a good deal of resistance to contributing to any increase in the basic allocation for administrative expenses even though it had agreed to support that aspect of the institution. Understandably, the depression of the mid-1890's, which Northampton did not escape, must have caused much of the hesitance. Equally important was the enormous size of the Forbes bequest with respect to building a collection, far beyond what a typical library in a town of Northampton's size might ever be responsible for. By the time the lean years were ending, the administrative needs had so increased that too sudden an increase in administrative funds still seemed out of the question.

Cutter was personally affected by the problem. Although he had been hired at an annual salary of $2,000, he received less than that most of the time. In 1897 the reduction could perhaps be explained as a decision by the trustees to allow him only a leave of absence without pay for the long European trip that he and his wife took that year. From 1900 until his death, Cutter received an annual salary of only $1,800. Considering the fact that he had been earning $3,500 a year at the Boston Athenaeum, besides his income from the Library Journal, and that he had help badly; but has very little money to pay. He usually takes young women who work for almost nothing."

1Cutter's salary was reported regularly in the annual reports.
suggested to Dewey that he could not consider less than $5,000 a year for the proposed University of Chicago position, one cannot help but suppose that the matter of salary was an irritation to the Cutters. Added to their financial situation was the fact that the Cutter household always included other relatives. An indication of their feelings may be seen in the gift of Sarah Cutter to the Forbes Library in 1904 of a $5,000 endowment to help raise the salary of the next librarian.¹

Because the low administrative funding precluded the hiring of specially trained persons, Cutter resorted to special methods to deal with the assistants that he did find. These were almost always young single women, untrained and often out of high school, who lived at home and perhaps cared for an elderly parent. Cutter's practice was to hire them for a probationary period during which he trained them himself. A related problem was that the assistants frequently left the employ of the library, if not through marriage, then because they could easily find a better paying job elsewhere with the worthy recommendation of an apprenticeship served under Cutter himself, an acknowledged master teacher. Cutter frequently referred in his annual reports to that sort of occurrence, but the worst period seems to have been during 1900 when he reported that seven

¹Note on the appointment of William Parker Cutter to the Forbes librarianship, LJ, XXIX (May, 1904), 270; Letter, Cutter to M. Dewey, April 14, 1892, CUL, M. Dewey Papers.
assistants, including his best cataloger, left during a period of six months.¹

When assistants remained, they did so out of a deep sense of devotion. One such assistant who fit that picture was Mabel Winchell who began with Cutter in October 1894. She became so proficient that Cutter early placed her second in command and left the day-to-day operation of the library in her hands during his absence, although he kept in contact through correspondence during the longer periods. By 1900 she had also become Cutter's aid in representing the Forbes in the professional meetings of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. But even she could not resist the attractiveness of a better paying position and left the Forbes at the end of 1901 for the position of head librarian of the Manchester, New Hampshire Public Library. When she was approached to consider the position, Cutter attempted to retain her by trying to get the trustees to raise her salary.² Because she was by then disposed to take the position anyway, Cutter, who touted her work "unreservedly," could only watch her leave also, recommending to her new employers that she be allowed to be "practically supreme," in her freedom to operate.


²Letters, Cutter to Judge N. P. Hunt, Manchester, New Hampshire, November 5 and 11, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. Cutter found out about her consideration of the new position immediately upon his return from a trip to Europe.
That had been the kind of situation in which she had been trained.¹

As a result of the problem of keeping trained assistants, Cutter had resorted as early as 1896 to another method of recruitment. He took in pupil assistants, often not yet out of school, but paid them no salary. Instead, they simply had the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of library work as an apprentice at the Forbes, perhaps in preparation for some day becoming librarians. He could not have been very enthusiastic about staffing his library in that manner. As late as 1893 he had remarked in a discussion at the Massachusetts Library Club that at the Boston Athenaeum he had quit taking no-pay assistants because he had found "work done for nothing dear work, unless the assistant when trained became part of the library force."² Regardless of the difficulties involved, the annual reports noted a steady stream of pupil assistants throughout his administration.

The Forbes assistants doubtless found their employment in Cutter's ranks of great benefit; for having found the daily routines of library work insufficient for instruction, Cutter gave them special training. He began a weekly class, the first exercises being practice in cataloging and

¹Letter, Cutter to Judge N. P. Hunt, Manchester, New Hampshire, December 6, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

²Massachusetts Library Club, [Report], LJ, XVIII (March, 1893), 85.
classifying books, in which the work of each student was discussed by the group as a whole. In later describing his initial effort, Cutter went on to show how his classes went beyond training exercises and became what now would be called an incipient form of participatory management.

We were not only without books and trained assistants, but we were also without rules and without a policy. So that a great many questions came up. Gradually our class in cataloging and classification developed into a library council in which every question of proposed change of rule that came up was considered, and I found this of great assistance in setting the library in motion. The discussions instructed the assistants; they also instructed the librarian; and they provided us with a much better policy and body of rules than we should otherwise have had.1

Formal classes were not the only manner of instruction. Cutter also encouraged his assistants to attend area professional meetings, especially after the Western Massachusetts Library Club was formed in 1898. During 1901 and 1902 the names of Forbes employees occur rather frequently in the discussions, the presentations of papers, and participation in library work institutes in the area. Finally, despite the constant shuffling of staff, one senses that staff morale was consistently high. Certainly that was in part due to Cutter's own encouragement of "fellowship" among librarians. It may also have resulted from Cutter's indulgent attitude towards having parties. Lawrence Wikander's short history of the Forbes suggests the latter with its inclusion of several photographs of social times.

1 1"A.L.A. Conference Discussion on the "Need of Apprenticeship for Students," LJ, XXIII (August, 1898), 135-36."
during Cutter's administration. That same spirit was evident in the holding of a facetious professional organization among the library assistants during 1901 entitled the "Corner's Club."¹

**Cataloging and Classification**

The most serious effect of inadequate administrative funding and staffing occurred in the realm of cataloging and classification. By the end of the second year of operation, Cutter could report only 13,000 volumes processed in the complete manner that he felt essential. Increasing circulation had used up any additional staff time. To make matters even worse, more than 5,500 of those volumes made with linotype entries during the first year had to be redone. The recataloging was not completed until 1899.²

During the third year of operations, regular cataloging for the Rudolph Indexer books was suspended altogether in favor of brief author slips pasted in a binder.³ By 1898 Cutter was even more exasperated over the matter. He appealed to the trustees to give priority to finishing the cataloging and classifying with the statement,

*I do not know of any other library which circulates all of its books while four-fifths of them are_

¹Wikander, *Disposed to Learn,* photographs; Program of the "Corner's Club" and letter, Miss Cy Peters to J. C. Dana, ca., February, 1901, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence.


uncataloged. I am certain that no library which tried the experiment would doubt the utility and economy of a catalog. Similarly, many cataloged libraries get along without classification or with a very crude classification; but no one who has been in a well classified library will willingly dispense with full and careful classing.¹

He then referred to John Fiske's 1876 article entitled, "The Librarian's Work," in which Fiske noted that for 14,000 volumes acquired by the Harvard library that year, seventeen catalogers had been employed. He went on to show that in comparison, the Forbes had been adding books at a rate of 15,000 volumes a year but had had at the most only two catalogers. He argued for an additional appropriation for three additional catalogers.

Cutter had been intimately acquainted with the Harvard situation and perhaps he felt that his use of the statistics might have made his request appear reasonable and perhaps even conservative. The only kind of response that the annual report, which came out near the end of 1898, seemed to have engendered, however, was a controversy over the propriety of his methods. Articles in both the Springfield Union and the Northampton Daily Herald expressed negative opinions about Cutter's system of cataloging books. The first stated that the public disapproved of it because of its obscurity, and implied that because of the method, library assistants did not "seem to know just what books are in the library."² The second article, appealing to unnamed

²Quoted in Wikander, Disposed to Learn, p. 13.
critics, stated that the system was "very intricate, puzzling, and clumsy. It differs radically from the systems used by the largest and most modern libraries, and, it is said that one Boston library which adopted it several years ago is now replacing it with another system." Both articles implied that the cause of the high costs of the library, especially in cataloging and classification, was to be laid at Cutter's feet rather than at the feet of the City Council. Cutter was attempting, in effect, to foist on the city an unnecessary expense based on his own private and complicated way of doing things.

Cutter replied to the charges in a letter to the editor of the Daily Herald, a letter that he subsequently quoted in his annual report for 1899. He first gave an account of the influence of his cataloging rules, repeating the phrase used in the Nation in 1890, that his rules were "The Cataloger's Bible." He reported that besides having been adopted by the best British librarians, "No library that I ever heard of, either in Boston or elsewhere, having adopted it, has ever given it up."^2

He then pointed out a major confusion in the articles—that they made no distinction between cataloging and classification—in such a way as to suggest the ignorance of those who wrote the articles.

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^1 Ibid.

But as most persons, knowing nothing about cataloging and shelf classification, are not aware that they are two entirely different things, it may be that the writer of the article meant to object to the shelf classification adopted in the Forbes Library—the so-called Cutter's Expansive system.¹

He defended his system by noting that any such system gained acceptance only slowly; but that the Expansive system had already achieved such recognition. He included a long paragraph of the same encomiums that he had used before the American Library Association during the previous year and reported that John C. Dana of the Springfield City Library had also decided to adopt it.

Finally, Cutter answered the implied charge that, because the books were not wholly classified on the shelves, they were therefore lost to the public. He showed that on the contrary, more than 40,000 of the 55,000 items circulated the previous year had been from the unclassified section. He concluded,

It is not true that a large collection of books cannot be "a public library till it is properly indexed and cataloged." It cannot reach its full usefulness; its readers will be constantly annoyed, hampered, delayed by its want of a proper equipment; it will cost much more to run it; but it is still a public library, capable of doing much good.²

A few days later a more measured article in the Springfield Republican put its finger on the roots of the problem. The time for annual appropriations was facing the Northampton city leaders including money for the management of the Forbes Library. The massive appropriation of the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 9.
Forbes will for books had made a continuing problem of keeping the processing of the books at the same pace. At the same time, "To provide for it adequately would be a great burden on the city, and this no one desires." The real problem lay in the will itself. Judge Forbes, the article suggested, had certainly never intended that his bequest provide the city with a "white elephant." The only reasonable solution would be for the trustees to attempt to have the provisions of the will altered so that they could transfer some of the book fund into the administration fund, even if it meant going to the state supreme court. The article went on to express an attendant issue, one that would smolder for another six years before being resolved. It pointed out that for all the benefits that Smith College received from the existence of the library, it had not contributed to the administrative support of the library in nearly an adequate proportion. A partial solution to the administrative funds problem would be, therefore, for Smith College immediately to contribute directly to the fund. Such a solution could hardly have appealed to the officers of a college that had its own financial burdens, and it is perhaps significant that by the following year the use of the library by Smith College students


2Ibid.
began to decrease. The College eventually did make a special contribution of $500 toward the fund, but not until 1902.¹

To state the outcome of the controversy plainly, despite the flurry of emotions, business continued as usual. The city continued to supplement the inadequate administrative funds of the Forbes bequest with its own inadequate appropriations and Cutter remained stymied, despite his later calls for the town to fulfill its part of the agreement. Cutter continued to insist upon the need for both complete cataloging and for the use of his own shelf classification system. With regard to the latter, he had good reason to do so. Professional interest in classification, which had lain relatively dormant for the previous few years, had come alive again with the appointment of a new librarian of Congress in 1897 and with his desire to provide the national library with a new shelf classification that could prove to be the system adopted nationally. Interest in the Expansive Classification system had also reached a new peak particularly through Cutter's own promotional efforts, even though the system was incomplete. He defended it before the membership of the American Library

¹Forbes Library, Sixth Annual Report, 1899/1900, p. 10. The use of books within the library dropped by twelve per cent that year, although book circulation outside the library increased by almost twenty-six per cent. The drop continued until 1902 when it leveled off. See also, "Smith College to Forbes Library; A Gift of $500 in Recognition of the Aid Afforded Students by Use of Books," Daily Hampshire Gazette, November 26, 1902, p. 1.
Association. Dana's adoption of it at the Springfield City Library was a great encouragement. Cutter also made it available to the students at the library schools then coming into existence. He could only have been deeply pleased when the Librarian of Congress himself, through the prompting of one of his assistant librarians who had used the system previously, wrote to him in 1897 requesting copies for the national library's use. Finally in early May 1901, Cutter received a visit from a specially appointed Library of Congress fact-finding committee that included among others, William Parker Cutter, Cutter's nephew. The purpose of the visit was to ascertain the extent that Cutter would allow the Library of Congress to alter his system for their own purposes.¹

Some relief from the cataloging problem was offered in 1901 when the Library of Congress began to issue printed cards of its own holdings. Cutter grasped at the occasion as a way to supply not only a catalog, but one with complete printed entries. He convinced the trustees that a catalog was possible by adopting the Library of Congress cards and

¹See above, Ch. VII, pp. 612-13. Continuing correspondence between 1899 and 1901 on the use of the classification at the Springfield library is preserved in the Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence. See also Scott, "James C. M. Hanson and his Contribution to Twentieth-century Cataloging," chs. VI-VII, passim., for details of the use of the Expansive Classification by the Library of Congress. When Herbert Putnam arranged with Cutter for the visit in 1901, Cutter apparently wrote to Dana about the news. See Letter, J. C. Dana to Cutter (Letterbook copy), April 16, 1901, Springfield City Library, Librarians' Correspondence.
any of those produced by the Library Bureau that could be used. In June 1902 Cutter reported in the Library Journal,

We have no catalog. The Library of Congress cards offer us a chance of cataloging slowly but well a library holding at present 87,000 volumes and growing at the rate of six or seven thousand a year. So far, since we resolved to catalog in this way, we have been largely occupied in certain preliminary work and have ordered only about 5000 cards, of which we have not been able to incorporate in our catalog as yet more than half. This is barely keeping up with current additions; but we see that when we have finished all the preliminary work we shall be able to make an effective attack upon the 87,000 volumes, the accumulations of the past seven years. The cards are very accurate. We have found only two errors, I believe. The style is excellent, and will be improved. The service is remarkably prompt, and there is an evident desire on the part of the Librarian of Congress and his assistants in this department to accommodate the libraries of the country as far as possible. ¹

A year and a half later, that number had grown to more than 30,000 cards from the Library of Congress and nearly 10,000 from the Library Bureau. Even at that rate, however, the effort to supply a complete catalog for the library continued to elude Cutter, and at his death in 1903 the catalog was still a long way from completion. In the end, complete catalog access to the collections was achieved under William Parker Cutter, but only by reverting to simplified cataloging of the type that his uncle had tried to avoid. ²


²Statistics for the acquisition of printed cards are taken from the annual reports. The information on W. P. Cutter's work on the catalog is taken from Wikander, Disposed to Learn, pp. 18 and 22.
Professional and Social Life

The building up of the Forbes Library provided Cutter with both triumph and frustration; perhaps just enough of the former to offset the latter. His struggle to make the best of the situation did not hinder him from a new surge of professional activity during the same period, although in a much broader range than in previous years. His activities in this regard appeared frequently in a schedule already very full.

Cutter continued to participate in the American Library Association annual conferences although not with the same consistency as he had during its earlier years. Besides the 1895 meeting in Denver, Cutter also missed the 1897 meeting in Philadelphia and the 1901 meeting in Waukesha, Wisconsin. When he did attend, he took part in the conference discussions as he had done before, but now in the role of an elder statesman of librarianship with a specially developed interest in public library service extension. His only major Association appointment during this period was in 1900 to the Advisory Committee on Cataloging Rules, chaired by James C. M. Hanson of the Library of Congress. Cutter faithfully attended the committee meetings and vigorously represented his own views on cataloging in the general meetings of the Association. The work of the committee was time-consuming, although not without reward. During one marathon series of sessions of twelve meetings in five days, Cutter alternately expressed
to friends both the tedium—"Rules Committee work drags"—1 and the inspiration of the occasion.

We finished all we could finish & I, at least, feel well repaid for coming as it is not a little thing to get the point of view of 6 experts in cataloging. I am sure my Rules will profit by it. I am eager to get to work upon them.2

Cutter also participated in the professional library scene by continuing his writing. Besides his already mentioned spate of articles on public library concerns and upon cataloging and classification, he also wrote several book reviews, two memorial sketches of noted librarians (one, a lengthy Nation review of the library work of Justin Winsor), and Nation reports of the 1900 and 1902 Association conferences.3 He also continued his practice of promoting the work of younger librarians, particularly those in his own region. One such example occurred in 1901 when he sent several letters of appeal to Henry J. Carr, at that time the president of the American Library Association, in an effort to obtain national exposure for what he felt was a charming paper read by a young librarian at the February

1Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, March 25, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

2Letter, Cutter to Henry J. Carr, March 26, 1901, American Library Association Archives, Carr Papers.

3"Justin Winsor," Nation, LXV (October 28, 1897), 335; "Louisa Cutler--In Memorium," LJ, XX (September, 1895), 310-11; "The Librarians at Montreal," Nation, LXX (June 28, 1900), 492; "Meeting of the American Library Association," Nation, LXXV (July 3, 1902), 7-8. Of the various reviews, perhaps the closest to his chief interests was his review of Classification of Books in the Library, by Joseph C. Rowell, in LJ, XX (June, 1895), 214-15.
meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. The paper was eventually published later that year in the Library Journal.¹

Cutter continued to participate in Massachusetts library organizations. He continued his association with the Massachusetts Library Club that he had helped to found in 1890 and of which served as the first president. His activity in that organization lessened after the fall of 1898 when he helped to found and served as the first president of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. It was patterned after the statewide organization and met at different libraries for monthly meetings as well as holding a larger annual meeting. A summary of his comments at the first annual meeting reported Cutter's sense of the changes coming over the profession as a whole. It stated that Cutter, was especially struck with the difference between the subjects discussed by the early A.L.A. conferences and those of today. Details and technicalities have given place on the program to the broader subjects of library extension, the evolution of books, etc.²

In one sense Cutter's comments indicated his own change of interest, especially his deep involvement in the public library scene. In another sense the observation was not as much an indication of changes of topics--the subject

¹See the correspondence between Cutter and Henry J. Carr for March and April, 1901, American Library Association Archives, Carr Papers. See also the reports of the Western Massachusetts Library Club after 1900 in the Library Journal for Cutter's promotion of training institutes for librarians at local libraries.

²Western Massachusetts Library Club, [Report of the 1st Annual Meeting], LJ, XXIV (August, 1899), 487.
of library extension was discussed in the early meetings--
as much as a change in the structure of the Association
itself. General meetings of the American Library Association
and the smaller local clubs emphasized the general problems
of public libraries. Special sections and divisions were
coming into existence during the 1890's to care for the
technical matters that had previously been given the lime-
light under such earlier leaders as Cutter and Dewey.

In addition to his participation in the above organi-
zations, Cutter also became increasingly involved in other
library organizations and in education for librarianship.
At first his participation involved attendance at such
events as the union meeting of the library associations of
New England, held at Hartford, Connecticut, in February
1897, the joint meetings of the New Jersey and the Pennsyl-
vania library associations in 1898 and 1899, and the annual
dinners of the New York Library Club which he attended
almost without exception throughout the period. As often
as not he would be called upon to contribute to the dis-

cussion at hand or to make general observations on the
development of the library profession gained out of his
long experience.¹

Later in the period his participation came to in-
clude increased activity among Eastern library schools. He

¹See the reports of these meetings in the Library
Journal. See also his correspondence with Charles A. Nelson,
then at the Columbia University Library, for his acceptance
of invitations to attend the New York Library Club annual
dinners, NYPL, Nelson Papers.
had previously lectured annually at Dewey's library school and he continued that practice until his death. By 1900, however, he began to give lectures also at the Pratt Library Institute in Brooklyn and at the Drexel Library School in Philadelphia.\footnote{See the reports of those three schools in the \textit{Library Journal}. Also, in his varied correspondence, Cutter would occasionally mention that he had recently been at one or another of them.} He most often lectured on the Expansive Classification but occasionally he would speak on other subjects, such as, for example, his lectures on fine arts materials and the library given as the New York State Library School's alumni lectures in 1903. Whether he traveled to a library school to speak, supplied the students with his classification system by mail, read the reports of the use of his classification and cataloging systems in the many schools springing up, or spoke to groups of library students on tours of libraries, Cutter must have become increasingly aware that his work towards the systematization of library science was everywhere present.

His total schedule of activities, usually heaviest in the spring of the year, became increasingly full and most likely very wearing. The year 1901 provides a striking example: On January 9th he attended the Somerville meeting of the Massachusetts Library Club; January 29th, the Springfield meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club; in March, a joint meeting of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey library associations; March 22 to 26, the
meetings of the Advisory Committee on a new Catalog Code in Atlantic City; March 27th, lectures at Drexel; afterwards back to Boston and a stop at the Boston Athenaeum for a couple of days; from there to Albany, New York for a week of lectures at the New York State Library School. During May and June he received a visit from the special committee of the Library of Congress sent to investigate his classification system and attended another meeting of the Western Massachusetts Library Club. At the same time he was also working steadily on the seventh expansion of his classification system and was beginning work on a new and greatly revised edition of his *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog*. It is perhaps no wonder that from the end of June until October he and his wife took an extended European vacation trip for a rest. He must have been disappointed, however, to have to face the news upon his return that his first assistant, Mabel Winchell, was to leave the Forbes by the end of that year.

For occasional relaxation Cutter continued to enjoy the social life of the professional meetings, especially the dancing. His enjoyment of the latter must have been infectious, for when he was absent from such an occasion, his absence was noted. ¹ An indication of his tenacity with

¹For example, Julia T. Rankin wrote in "The Social Side of the Waukesha Conference," *LJ*, XXVI (August, 1901), p. 49, "Although Mr. Cutter was absent the dancing contingent was ably represented, and a delightful evening was enjoyed." See also, W. P. Cutter, *Charles Ammi Cutter*, p. 30.
regard to dancing appears in a letter to Mabel Winchell soon after she had left the Forbes. After mentioning the trouble he had had with his knee the previous fall, he added, "The knee isn't painless, but I managed to dance 16 of the 19 dances at the party given to Miss Saxe."¹

Cutter also took occasional trips to the White mountains of New Hampshire and retreated at other times to a camp at Pendleton near Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire. Of the latter, Cutter's nephew later described,

Mr. Cutter always entertained at his own expense a group of the girl assistants from the Forbes Library. There were canoe parties on the lake, songs around the evening camp-fire, and, always, poetry or charades. These "girls" are gray-haired now, well up in the library world, or happy mothers; but they all look back on the Pendleton camp with fond memory.²

Cutter also enjoyed the theater and concerts. Again his nephew reported in retrospect that "he frequently provided some of his library staff with tickets and, on various occasions, took several to Springfield to see a production which was too important to include Northampton in its itinerary."³ On the other hand the Cutters also faced times of sorrow, such as in 1895 when Cutter's aunt, Cordelia, died, the last of the three who had taken care of him in his youth, or in 1898 when the Cutter's youngest son, Gerald, died of typhoid fever.⁴

¹Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, March 24, 1902, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.
²W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 55.
³Ibid., p. 56.
⁴Gerald C. Cutter's date of death is given on his
Interspersed with Cutter's other activities over the period were two European trips. The first of these came in 1897 on the occasion of the Second International Library Conference that met from July 13 to 16. It was similar to the London conference of 1877 only this time the American group included more than sixty members. Cutter was elected an honorary vice-president and took an active part in the discussions. He presented a paper explaining his Expansive Classification and displayed copies of the printed schedules he had completed up to that point. He doubtless also took the opportunity to attend the receptions that had been scheduled at many of the London libraries and to go on the tours provided. One of the highlights of the tours was a two-day trip to Stratford with a stop along the way at the Warwick Castle.¹

After remaining in England for an additional two weeks, he traveled to Brussels, Belgium with Charles H. Gould, the librarian of the McGill University Library in Montreal, where they attended a meeting of the Institut

¹For an account of the trip, see Budd Gambee, "The Role of American Librarians at the Second International Library Conference, London, 1897," in Library History Seminar No. 4, Proceedings, 1971 (Tallahassee: Library School, Florida State University, 1972), pp. 52-84.
Internationale de Bibliographie held from August 2 to 4.

In a letter to Mabel Winchell he compared the two conferences.

We were very busy at Brussels, not so much feted as at London, not hobnobbing with marquisses & presided over by an earl or a 'Sir'. But our president and secretary were senators. At the dinner I sat between a senator and a general and every moment was occupied.

For the first time in my life I addressed a public meeting in French. It is not so very difficult when one knows what one wants to say.¹

He then went on to speak of the toasts raised to Paul Otlet, "the Melvil Dewey of Belgium."²

Cutter also took the occasion of the Brussels conference to deliver yet another paper on his classification system. Directing his remarks to the international orientation of the organization, he spoke on the subject, "Reasons for Using the Expansive Classification in an International Bibliography."³ Unfortunately for Cutter, the founders of the Institut had two years previously made an agreement with Melvil Dewey to use the Decimal Classification as the basis for their documentation work. Following the Brussels meeting, Cutter toured Belgium, Holland, and Northern France.⁴

¹Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8, 1897, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

²Ibid. By address he apparently meant a 'toast'.

³The title of his paper was listed in a note on the papers of the conference in LJ, XXIII (February, 1898), 57. Otlet and Henri LaFontaine were the founders.

⁴Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8, 1897, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. He also stated that he considered traveling to Denmark and Sweden, but it is not certain whether or not he did so.
Cutter took the second of the trips in 1901 with his wife. Although he kept up a constant correspondence with Mabel Winchell, answering her queries about administrative matters at the Forbes and directing her in matters pertaining to the on-going printing of the Expansive Classification, he was also intent on resting as much as possible from library labors. His letters portray in a unique way his deep enjoyment of touring and his penchant for detailed observation. For example, he wrote on June 29, 1901,

Our windows look upon a narrow lane, a thickly bushed garden running down to the River Dee (i.e I believe black--Dee, the Scottish Dhee) a brawling salmon stream, fordable anywhere where it is not dammed, like Mill River, then more trees through which run the funny little trains, another treed bank perhaps 50ft. high & the canal, with diminutive boats (canal 7? ft. wide) then the slope of Crow Castle, Castell Dinas Bran, 950 ft. high, which we shall climb this afternoon.

Everything is as green as possible & in the evening mists, for we are in a river valley, as fragrant as possible. I went round Castell D. B. day before yesterday, climbing a hill about 1400 ft. high, the height of Chesterfield. But yesterday I was weaker than a wet rag with another attack of malaria, yielding now to vigorous administration of quinine.

I am subscribing to a circulating library here, which I did before I knew there was a "Public Library and Newsroom," Sir Theodore Martin, K. C. B. (Author of Life of the Prince Consort) President. Annual subscriptions, 2s., 5s., 10s. Visitors tickets 6 d. a week, 1 s. a month. Probably only one book allowed at a time. I fancy the two book system is unknown in this country. Miss Bessie Brown, Berwyn Road, is the librarian, & she attends every day from 3.30 to 4, to exchange books, & on Thursdays & Tuesdays from 6.30 - 7, and on Saturdays from 6.30 to 7.30 (!!). The newsroom is open all the time, without a keeper, but each time that one uses it one is expected to put a penny in the slot.¹

¹Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, June 29, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence. Other details of the trip are preserved in other letters in the same collection.
July and most of August were spent in England where the Cutters inspected a large number of churches for their architecture. His reports of several humorous occasions included visiting a cathedral, remarkable for a verger who says his patter at a tremendous rate, like a rector gabbling the service, and yet never fails to prefix an h to an accented vowel & to leave it off from an unaccented one. He told us, for instance of the 'Eye Halter' and of something that was erected in 'hayteen forty hate'.'

Cutter added, without breaking his descriptive stride, "But it is also noteworthy for the most perfect Norman chapter house in England a marvel of rich and varied ornament."  

While in England Cutter ordered some books for the Forbes and on one occasion met the widow and son-in-law of the late Justin Winsor. They were also on tour. At the end of August the Cutters traveled to France where in Paris they dined with a cousin, attended the French theatre—Cutter mentioned having seen Comedie française three times—and searched for photographs for the Forbes collection. Finally, after returning to England, they sailed for America on October 7th.

The Last Year

Upon returning from his trip, Cutter immediately plunged back into the same busy schedule that he had

1 Letter, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, July 14, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.

2 Ibid.

3 Letters, Cutter to Mabel Winchell, August 8 and September 19, 1901, CUL, Mabel Winchell Correspondence.
previously pursued. The loss to the Forbes of Mabel Winchell prompted him in January 1902 to reorganize completely the administration of the library into separate art, music, and children's departments with an assistant responsible for each. In the spring of 1902 and again in 1903 he gave library school lectures, and in April 1903 received an intriguing offer from Frank P. Hill, then at the Brooklyn Public Library, to head the large reference department there. His schedule was overbearing, however, and as a result of the exhaustion of it he contracted an almost fatal case of pneumonia.

Recovery was slow but was helped by the interest of his friends, a fact that he mentioned in a warm circular letter that was printed in the Library Journal. The letter showed that he had not lost his sense of humor, an ever present quality of his in times of crisis.

I am sure you will be glad to learn that I am emerging from the two-dimensional into the three-dimensional state. For four weeks I have been either a line as I lay on one or the other side, or a plane when I was flat on my back. Now they are raising me each day a little higher with a view to ultimate sitting up when I shall have assumed the dignity of the solid.

There are some compensations in sickness to make up for the loss of time which it entails. One of them is finding out how many friends one has. During the days of danger there was a constant stream of inquiries from most unexpected persons. In convalescence one of the trustees is anxious to know when I can eat trout that he may go and catch some for me. And the stable keeper who boards my horse has made the same offer. My room is fragrant with the perfume of flowers, some of which were sent from distant Newport by a former assistant.¹

¹C. A. Cutter, [Circular Letter, May 19, 1903], LJ, XXVIII (June, 1903), 319.
Although his recovery at that time seemed assured, the illness pointed out to both Cutter and his wife a harsh reality. Cutter had clearly overworked himself with library and professional activities, and to continue the same pace might well bring his life to an end without completing his two most important projects, a new edition of the *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* and his Expansive Classification. Sarah Cutter felt that the only alternative was to convince her husband to retire from the Forbes Library and to concentrate wholly on his projects. She also felt that she could not by herself convince him of that necessity. Accordingly, not having broached the subject with her husband and aware that he would not approve of her action, she wrote to their long-time friend, Richard Bowker, to help her in the task. Her letter revealed her sense of urgency.

One thing, however, was plainly prescribed to me while his life was in instant danger, and that is that it is my duty to urge him to give up the care of the Forbes Library and to devote his faculties and strength to the completion of the two works which he would be very sorry to leave undone. The principal of these is the Expansive Classification.

And if you agree with me that this is much more important a work than that of conducting the library, will you aid me in convincing my husband of it?1

Bowker quickly responded with a warm and persuasive letter to his old friend, tactfully using his own semi-

1Letter, Sarah Cutter to R. R. Bowker, May 30, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers. The letter came to Bowker's New York City office and was forwarded to Bowker by Helen E. Haines, Cutter's successor as editor of the *Library Journal*. She appended another note by Cutter's wife that stated that she had not yet discussed the matter of retirement with her husband. Letter, Helen E. Haines to R. R. Bowker, June 1, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
retirement as an example and dwelling on the need for Cutter
to consider how best to complete his classification.

I did not appreciate until Miss Haines showed me
that delightful letter "to a few friends" that you had
been dwelling so near the borderland in your recent
illness, or indeed I should have made haste to assure
you of my sympathy and hopes. Now that you are again
on the full road to health let me bring you, in sending
congratulations, the tribute of my reverent apprecia­
tion for you, with my hopes for many years of fruit­
fulness before you. I use the phrase advisedly, for
I think we should all reverence a life so well lived,
so fruitful, as your own, although it is hard for me
to believe that so many years have passed over your
head as the biographical authorities would make out.
I hope the future years will indeed bring increasing
fruition.

I suppose on the whole no one is so well fitted as
yourself, at least from the library point of view, to
run down the details of specific subjects in your
larger scheme of the Expansive Classification, and if
this should be specifically the best service to which
you can put your long years of library training, I
trust that you will not hesitate to do that best thing
if you can afford to do so. I do not think any whole­
somely busy man, at any age, with so much youth and
work left in him as you have, can break off from life
relationships and retire into "innocuous desuetude."
I am trying in this country retirement to reach the
happy mean by keeping busy, in fact the more busy at
real things, in this less crowded and rushing environ­
ment, while going to New York from week to week or
fortnight to fortnight as needs bring me--and I com­
mend to you my admirable example. You have earned
leisure, but I know you still want to work, and I
hope that work may be both of the most fruition for
the profession of which you are now the Dean, and with
the utmost possible comfort to yourself.¹

Cutter's long reply to Bowker, written over a
period of six weeks, showed both his struggle over what to
do and his estimate of his own life. To him the question
was not at all whether to retire, but rather, where he could

¹Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter (Carbon copy),
June 2, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
do library work and still have the leisure to work on the projects close to his heart. He wrote,

July 1903

My Dear Bowker,

I thank you heartily for your cordial letter. It came at a time when joy at the consciousness of return-strength was contending with impatience at the slowness of the gain and a fear that never again should I be able to do what I had done. It helped the better side. Kind words of appreciation always cheer one, even if one fears that they are unmerited. If I had more of life left such friendliness might help me to try to deserve the good words.

Written June 3. Like the rest of my race I am not generally so ready to accept advice as praise. But in this case since it coincides with the advice of others, with the wishes of my wife, with common sense and in some slight degree with my own inclinations, I shall seriously considered it. One thing at least is sure: I go on no more lecturing tours. Pneumonia is too high a price to pay for the pleasure of having an audience. I may indeed do a little missionary work for the E. C. and Pratt, but I would not again go through the worry and strain of preparing talks on a subject that is too much for me for either money or lore.

Some time ago Dana advised me to give up the details of library work to the first assistant and the stenographer and spend my time in finishing the E. C. A former assistant told me yesterday (June 2) that when she heard I was sick she trembled for the E. C.; Mr. Thomas Aaland, libn of a pub. lib. in the borough of Southwark, has been objurating me in true English style, but no more than I deserved, for not sending him the promised Useful Arts. Miss Haines, Parker, and my coadjutor Richard Bliss all urge what you urge. So plainly I must reform. But not by giving up library work. No more dances, novels, theatres for me; no more writing letters to friends or articles in the Library Journal. All these pleasures must be sternly set aside. Hereafter nothing but a steady grind. But in that case library interests will be necessary as a distraction. I never could work long at one thing; still less is it possible now.

June 9. The problem is not as simple as you suppose. Is it not the mistake of reformers to suppose the problem simpler than anything ever is in this world, at least in the social world? It is true the E. C. ought to be finished and shall be if I get another presidential term of life. But what of the 4th edition of the Rules for cataloging promised for the last three years and loudly demanded by as many
as clamor for the E. C.? What of the new catalog of the Forbes Library, which with perplexities of its own is dependent upon the completion of the Rules as much as on that of the E. C.? Nor am I quite ready to limit my chance of doing good (library good, I attempt no other) to Cataloging and Classification. I hope for instance that setting an unexampled example of liberality will not be without its effects not merely on the few libraries that have friends enough to follow it but also on others, who may be led to do what they can. Then I am not content with what we have done in our children's room & I have found an assistant who I hope will push the good work there. Our branches too could do better. . . . There are other things to be done and even if there were not something new is always coming up in library opportunity & I should hate to be out of it all.

But now comes a proposition that would take me away from Western Massachusetts. I should like to know what you think of it.

Hill wants me to come to him in Brooklyn, to develop the reference and study departments. I would go without hesitation if only he had money enough at his command to do there what we have done in Northampton. How would you like to see 600,000 borrowers registered in Brooklyn, 60,000 of them taking out pieces of music, 50,000 of them using works of art, a total circulation of thirteen million volumes, half of it "serious reading"? That would be a proportionate result for that population. There is a disposition just now to decry large circulations because the recreative part of the reading is said to be profitless and some of it may be injurious. But serious reading is generally allowed to be on the whole desirable; and if so, plainly the issue of six million serious books is better than the issue of a million or the half million which I believe is Brooklyn's present limit.

Of course, if we think that recreative reading is on the whole a bad thing it may be that the evil overbalances the good coming from the other half of the circulation. In that case we should not only look with disfavor on any increase in the circulation but should even abolish public libraries as at present conducted. This is not a purely academic discussion in this case; for tho Hill has not money enough to develop a Northampton circulation, he has enough to largely increase the present efficiency of his library if it is spent rightly. The question is Shall I go and help him or shall I let him find somebody else to do it?

Yours truly,

C: A. Cutter

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1Letter, Cutter to R. R. Bowker, June 3 to July 16,
Because Bowker had recently become a trustee of the Brooklyn Public Library, he was able to reply to Cutter with information on the financial situation of the Brooklyn situation. He emphasized, however, that the most important thing for Cutter to consider was not how much work he could do in any position, but rather whether he would have the leisure to complete his work on the Expansive Classification and the Rules. He encouraged him to accept the position, supposing that would be the case and also stating that the Brooklyn work was at any rate more important than finishing the Forbes catalog. Perhaps he felt that once Cutter had come to Brooklyn the efforts of Hill and himself could keep Cutter from overexerting himself in library work. He was aware at the same time of Cutter's indomitable spirit and closed his letter with a friendly indication of it.

I have just been advocating the appointment of a college professor who graduated fifty years ago to be Vice-president of our College because of his abiding and inherent youth, and I should be prepared to give you the same recommendation for juvenility—even should you leave off dancing.1

In order to go over the details of the Brooklyn offer, Cutter traveled to Boston for a conference with Frank P. Hill, the Brooklyn librarian. William Parker Cutter, who recorded a letter of Cutter's that described his

1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers. The Parker referred to was William Parker Cutter.

1Letter, R. R. Bowker to Cutter (Carbon copy), July 17, 1903, NYPL, Bowker Papers.
two days of activities in connection with the trip, rightly suggests that it seemed to be rather strenuous activity for one who was recovering from a serious illness. Cutter wrote,

I came up Wednesday, lunched with him [Mr. Frank P. Hill, the Brooklyn librarian] at the University Club on the low roof garden overlooking the Charles (it was high tide), and we spent the afternoon in exhaustive discussion. The result was that I said No. . . . Of course I should like the opportunities which the Br. Lib. presented, but some of them were problematical & all meant an amount of hard work for which I am hardly capable now. I am feeling very well. Wednesday I supported a six hours railway ride, a long conference in the afternoon & a visit to Salem (Ammi is a dear) without feeling at all used up. Today I have interviewed all old friends at the B. A., bought or rather refused to buy books at Clark's, visited Harv. Coll. Libr. and exhausted their catalog hdgs on music and art, had a long discussion with Miss Browne on arrangement and dined at Marliave's with Roland, and am no worse. A great but short thunder storm just as dinner was over. After lunch at Cambridge I took an open car trolley ride to Waverly. Pleasant route. Lunched with the summer school at the Dunster's cafe, a cheap and clean place on Dunster St. Had a pleasant talk with one of the scholars, who complains that they have nearly worked her into a nervous prostration in 4 weeks. Themes daily, on such subjects as "Compare Swift and Goldsmith." Hard work for hot weather. Thermom. here 93 today. Wish I were in Charlemont. Shall go back to Northampton after seeing dentist tomorrow. . . .

Cutter's decision to remain at the Forbes was noted in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, which concluded with the remark, "but he has at last decided to remain at the Forbes library, to finish or at least to bring nearer to completion the work which he has begun there." His decision was fateful. Not being one who could rest when there was work to

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1 W. P. Cutter, Charles Ammi Cutter, p. 38. W. P. Cutter gives the date of the letter (July 30, 1903) only. "Ammi" is Cutter's grandson, R. Ammi Cutter.

do, and yet not really fully recovered, he went back to work. But a renewed attack of illness set him back again, and he went with his wife to New Hampshire for another period of rest at the end of August. A week later a telegram from Sarah Cutter to the home of trustee Arthur Watson communicated the sad news that her husband had died suddenly at Walpole, New Hampshire on September 6th.¹

¹The details mentioned here of his final illness are recorded in "City Suffers a Great Loss," Daily Hampshire Gazette, September 8, 1903, p. 1. The newspaper account surmised that he died of heart failure because of his weakened condition.