

aside as less important than the time which it would take to elaborate it. What is required is a system of numbers which will run in numerical rotation in the museum and will yet allow of the addition of new specimens in the division of the classification to which they belong without disturbing this numerical order.

In the College of Surgeons of London, as in the Charing Cross Museum, which has lately been completely recatalogued under Dr. Hunter, only one set of consecutive numbers is used, and these numbers follow each other in rotation all through the museum. Gaps are left in the series for new specimens, and new duplicate specimens are distinguished from the original by a small letter. Thus: 1001, Tuberculous Pericarditis, 1001a, ditto.

The objection to this method is that it does not allow for the growth of the museum. When new specimens have exhausted all the numbers of the gaps that have been left in the series or have occupied all the shelf room that has been left empty for them, an extension means a complete renumbering of the collection in order to preserve the rotation. A descriptive number is needed which will be common to each group of specimens, some additional letter or figure being added to distinguish the particular specimen from another of the same group. This has been attempted in the Army and Navy Museum, Washington. Here a descriptive number is used; it is made up of letters to represent the anatomic, and figures to represent the pathologic condition, while the particular specimen is indicated by a figure placed after a decimal point. Thus, for instance, capital D, would represent the circulatory system, little a, the heart, and 3 anomalies. All specimens showing anomalies of the heart are labeled Da3, the individual specimens of this condition would be Da3.1, Pa3.2, Da3.3, etc.

If I may venture to criticise so excellent a museum, it appears to me that in the Army and Navy collection the idea lying behind this descriptive number has not been systematically carried out in its application, so that it does not altogether answer the purpose for which it was intended. The classification on which the numbers are based does not attempt to be a complete one, only a few headings being used, and these not always exhausting the main divisions of the subject, nor following each other in the order in which we are accustomed to think of them. So that not only is it often difficult or even impossible to classify a specimen under the headings that the catalog numbers furnish, but also it is impossible to observe the numerical order in the different groups without disturbing the natural order in which the specimens should stand.