

as they are called in the United States, and university or college libraries, have descended in direct line from older institutions of a like nature.

It is amusing now to read some of the objections offered in England to the passage of the Free Public Libraries Act, the Magna Charta of the people's library in the United Kingdom, which was introduced in 1850. The proposal was in effect to allow towns of ten thousand inhabitants and over, through their council to tax themselves to the extent of one halfpenny in the pound for the erection or rental of library buildings, but not to buy books, for the purchase of which they trusted to gifts. It was objected that the bill would "tend to make the poorer inhabitants of boroughs pay exclusively for the enjoyments of those who were better off than themselves;" that the library would become a "mere newsroom which only those well-to-do people who had plenty of leisure would be able to avail themselves of;" that by the introduction of lectures hereafter the "libraries would become normal schools of agitation," etc., etc. One opponent said that, however excellent food for the mind might be, he thought that food for the body was now most wanted for the people. He did not like reading at all, and he hated it when at Oxford; but he could not see how one halfpenny in the pound would be enough to enable town councils to carry into effect the immense powers they were to have by this bill. Opposition to the measure was unavailing, however, and the Public Libraries Act in due course received the royal assent. From that time to the present, appreciation of the benefits derived from libraries has been steadily and rapidly growing throughout the English-speaking world. The United States had anticipated the mother country in the establishment of popular libraries, and the colonies were no laggards. There is now no more favourite form for the benefactions of a public-spirited citizen than the foundation and endowment of a library. Millions of people resort daily to these institutions, which have taken their place beside the school as one of the great uplifting social forces of the day. With the opening of the library to the masses, however, arose the need of a change in the methods of conducting it which had been in vogue. When few but book-men came to the library, the duty of the librarian amounted to little more than supervision of the property under his charge. The readers generally knew where to turn for the information of which they were in quest; if not, they were willing to search till they found. But with untrained readers, with the young, who now are very properly welcomed to the libraries, the case is widely different. These readers must be helped and guided in every way possible. And it is the desire to do this; to place every resource of the library quickly at the disposal of the reader; the wish to make the library of the utmost possible service to every one who enters its precincts, that is at the bottom of the large expenditure of time and money upon catalogues, classifications, charging systems, and the numberless other technicalities of which the reader is generally in blissful ignorance. Indeed, many readers feel aggrieved by the very means that are necessary to assist them. The card catalogue, or its twin sister, the slip catalogue, is the only device yet discovered for keeping the entire catalogue up to date in a single alphabet, thus avoiding the