

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIMENS IN THE PATHOLOGICAL
MUSEUM OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

In the year 1897 this museum was renovated and put in order under the direction of Professor Adams. At this time the specimens were grouped on an anatomic classification, with a pathologic subclassification, and a corresponding descriptive catalog number made up of letters and figures, as in the Army and Navy Museum, was used. The classification employed, however, as was necessary in any attempt to get the whole mass of material into order in a short time, was too broad to be adequate for permanent purposes. The few divisions made were soon found insufficient for classifying purposes, as they could not indicate the whole range of pathologic possibilities.

In the year 1899 the late Professor Wyatt Johnston laid the decimal system of classification and catalog numbers, which is the subject of this paper, before the Museum Committee. It was adopted and applied and the collection catalogued upon it.

In its application this system has been found to meet all the requirements of the case. Its decimal character admits of its being extended in any one direction or of its being modified in any one particular at will, and specimens can be kept in order on the shelves without the help of skilled labor.

The general principles of this classification may be summed up as follow:

A full classification, both anatomic and pathologic, is aimed at, in which there is a logical sequence of ideas. The anatomic condition is made the main classification and the pathologic condition a subclassification under it. In the anatomic classification organs are made to follow each other, so far as possible, in their relations in the body. Thus, the respiratory system runs: 21, nose; 22, larynx; 23, trachea and bronchi; 24, lungs; 25, pleura, passing from the surface inward. So also in the pathologic classification, anomalies, circulatory disturbances, inflammations, progressive and retrogressive changes follow each other in the order in which they are generally presented to the student.

The descriptive numbers are made up of figures only. A decimal point is used, and the anatomic condition is represented by numbers before, the pathologic by numbers after the decimal point. The particular specimen is indicated by a small index figure to the right of the full number.

The Dewey system of library classification is followed. This is a decimal system. The set of numbers before and after the decimal point each represent a complete classification in themselves. In each classification there is a division into ten main groups, and each of these groups may be divided