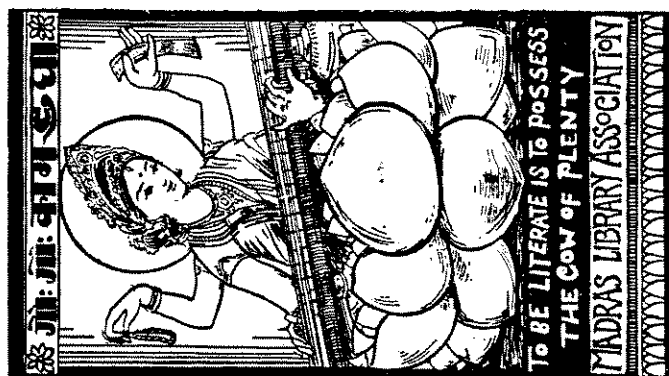


Madras Library Association

Publication Series, 23



THE FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

S R RANGANATHAN

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यो दद्यात्ज्ञानमज्ञानां कुर्याद्वा धर्मदर्शनम् ।

स कृत्वां पृथिवीं दद्यात् तेन तुल्यं न तद्भवेत् ॥

मनुः ।

To carry knowledge to the doors of those that lack it and to educate all to perceive the right! Even to give away the whole earth cannot equal that form of service.

Manu.

The Five Laws of Library Science :

BOOKS ARE FOR USE
EVERY READER HIS BOOK
EVERY BOOK ITS READER
SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER
LIBRARY IS A GROWING ORGANISM

ग्रन्थालय-शास्त्र-पञ्च-सूत्राणि

ग्रन्थालयी सदासेवी पञ्चसूत्री परायणः ।

ग्रन्था अभ्येतुम्-एते च सर्वेभ्यः स्वं स्वमाशुः ॥

अभ्येतुः समयं शेषेत्-भालयो नित्यमेव च ।

वर्धिष्णुः एव विन्मूर्तिः पञ्चसूत्री सदा जयेत् ॥

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE library movement is of comparatively recent origin in western countries and is the result of democratic influences which obtained an ascendancy towards the end of the last century. The desire to extend the benefits of learning to the people at large suggested the foundation of numerous public libraries. The possibilities of libraries as instruments of popular education have ever since occupied the attention of those interested in this movement. Much thought has been given in recent years to the best methods of popularising the use of libraries.

The vast increase in the number of books published year after year and in the additions made to libraries has given rise to a large crop of questions regarding the organisation, administration and management of libraries. Men's outlook in regard to these matters has undergone a radical change. Libraries are now regarded not as precious possessions to be jealously preserved from the intrusion of the vulgar, but as democratic institutions for the profit and enjoyment of all. How to attract readers to libraries, how to extend to all classes the facilities for using them, how to render the maximum amount of help to those who desire to use libraries and how to save the time of the readers and the library staff alike are questions which, simple as they may seem, demand no little thought, imagination, skill and experience from the librarian.

A large mass of literature has grown up about this subject. Library Associations have been started in many countries, chairs have been founded in several Universities for the teaching of library management; and numbers of library journals have come into existence. Attempts have been made to systematize the knowledge on this subject and it is now claimed that it has attained the status of a science. Whether the organisation and management of libraries is to be regarded as a science or as an art, it is needless to consider. There can be no doubt, however, that there are certain essential principles

FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

underlying the management of libraries according to present-day needs and conceptions.

The author of this book has sought to expound these principles in a systematic form. He has been able to reduce them to five cardinal principles and has developed all the rules of library organisation and management as the necessary implications and inevitable corollaries of his five laws. Once the laws have been stated, they appear so obvious that one wonders that they were not clearly realised and worked out before.

Mr. Ranganathan's treatment of the subject is clear, logical and lucid. He has brought to his task extensive knowledge of the literature on the subject of libraries, personal acquaintance with the methods of management of libraries in Britain, a trained analytical intellect and a fervid but enlightened enthusiasm for the library movement. He has been the pioneer of the library movement in the Madras Presidency and has been carrying on an energetic propaganda to spread it. He knows how to rouse and sustain the interest of the reader and has produced a very attractive and readable book. I have no doubt it will meet with wide appreciation and soon come to be recognised as a standard text-book of Library Science.

The Madras University is fortunate in possessing the author as its librarian. Its library has developed in his hands into a live human institution, which aims at a helpful personal touch between the staff and the readers who use the library. The enormous increase in the issue of volumes since the author took charge of the library is a striking testimony to the soundness of the principles on which it has been run and to the efficiency of his management in spite of the very defective housing conditions under which the library has been working.

The publication of this book by the Madras Library Association is not the least of its claims to the gratitude of the public.

P. S. SIVASWAMY Aiyer.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

I

THIS is one of the most interesting books that I have read in recent years upon our profession. It is unique, I believe, in that it attempts for the first time a comprehensive survey by a librarian who has a peculiarly Indian mind, and reflects his own racial culture on the basic theories of the art of book distribution as it is understood in the modern library world. To those who are new to our work it may be a wonder that so much can be made out of what superficially appears to be so simple a craft, but a perusal of Mr. Ranganathan's pages will take the beginner a long way along the path of enlightenment.

Mr. Ranganathan, is unusually equipped for his undertaking. It is now several years since he placed himself for a while under the direction of the lecturers and teachers of the University of London School of Librarianship, and he became particularly associated with me. I found that he was a man of considerable culture, very original in his outlook, persistent and undeviating in his investigations, and wisely given to considering any suggestions that might be made to him. Not only did he attend the lectures in librarianship at the University of London, he made an intensive study of library work of all types by visits to libraries in various parts of the country. For some time he studied every day in the Croydon Public Libraries; where I watched his work with interest. He examined the processes of every department, and spent much time considering and criticizing the various processes. All the way through he was seeking the reasoning that lies at the back of all our doings.

Not only was he interested in books and libraries, he spent some of his leisure in examining the educational methods in the schools of the towns, and their relationship to libraries. His critical outlook went so far that he even started on a new

classification of books. This, as he tells us in a later part of this volume, is employed in the University Library at Madras, and in a few other Indian libraries which are beginning to classify their books.

Such a course of study and such an attitude of mind could not fail to produce a type of librarian whose work would be of importance. The work before us is proof of this.

II

The practice of librarianship long preceded the formulation of any laws whatsoever. In all crafts this is so, of course. It is only slowly and from the continuous experience of workers that a theory can be deduced and given a statement. Ours may claim to be, however, one of the oldest crafts in the world, and some of the quite ordinary processes which have now been brought to such perfection that Mr. Ranganathan is able to formulate their results as "laws," existed in embryo in the Assyrian libraries and probably in earlier ones. The clay tablet catalogues in the British Museum prove to us that there were then not only libraries, but a systematic library science. In later but still early years the work of such librarians as Callimachus in the libraries of the Pharaohs shows methods of management, especially in the classification of books, that are the wonder of modern librarians who have considered them.

Every great nation in the past has had its public libraries, even if their use was sometimes limited to special classes of the community, and in the general anarchy of European civilisation which followed the fall of the Western Roman Empire the monasteries still preserved and added to their libraries.

Library history was largely influenced by this monastic preservation of books, because for centuries libraries were limited to colleges and to other protected buildings, and their use restricted to the inhabitants of these institutions. To preserve the book was of as much and even of more consequence than to get it used. That spirit has been passing away since the

middle of the nineteenth century. The great libraries of the world, with varying degrees of generosity, have been thrown open to external readers, and the attitude of the *conservateur* has given place to what I have ventured to call elsewhere the exploiter of books as the right description of the librarian.

The principal factor in the modern attitude towards libraries and books has been what are known in England and America as "public libraries". This term to-day has quite a different meaning from what it had before 1850. Then, public libraries were public in much the sense in which the public schools of England are public; that is to say, they were limited in their use very largely to the governing classes. The modern public library is a municipal institution supported by towns for the free use of the citizens without discrimination. They were Anglo-Saxon in their origin, and came into being at about the same time in Great Britain and in the United States. These libraries have now been built up with a special technique of their own, with, in many cases, very large stocks of books, and, literally, millions of readers.

One of the most significant social factors of the last half of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries has been the widespread development of the reading habit amongst western peoples. Even the more conservative nations of Europe have now developed systems of libraries more or less on the Anglo-Saxon model.

III

The modern view, then, of libraries is that which regards all the population as its clientele. Even in university and research libraries facilities are now given to serious students without difficulty almost everywhere. This is the attitude which the librarian in India will, I hope and believe, make his own. It must be quite clear, however, that universal rules or notions must always be given a local and individual application. I do not think the library methods of America, much as I admire them, are root and branch suitable for Europe or even for England. The psychology of the people varies, and

variants in library practice must be made to meet this fact. Even more amongst the peoples of India, with their immense history, powerful traditions, and distinctive racial qualities, the application of merely Anglo-Saxon ideas to a thing so intimate, personal and spiritual as literature, without modification, may not be wise. I have had many foreign students in the libraries under my care, and I have always tried to impress upon them that what they learn from us should always be considered carefully in the light of the needs of their own home countries. I feel that this is immensely important in India.

This, to my mind, gives its special value to Mr. Ranganathan's work. He deals with all the questions which exercise the minds of European librarians. Book selection, with a catholic mind which has determined that all sides shall be heard, and that no personal preference shall have undue influence; the best methods of library furnishing and equipment; a considered statement of what can be done by the catalogue and by the classification: these will be obvious to the reader. He writes, too, as an educationist—as all good librarians should—and I hope he has made quite clear that the development of a literate nation, with a full love for its great literature and a right understanding of the value of books, must begin with considered and generous provision for children.

In the West every child is a potential reader; it must be so in the East, even in places where the children have not yet had opportunities to do much reading or to get access to books.

IV

A wise American librarian once remarked to me that a log of wood with a book at one end and a librarian at another would make a perfect library. That was a picturesque exaggeration, of course, but it is the personal element that the librarian brings into the library which gives it its vitality. Many libraries, alas, lack vitality; they have staffs, but no librarians. The spirit of the real librarian has never been more beautifully or wisely shown than in Austin Dobson's

epitaph on Richard Garnett, one of the greatest librarians of the last century:—

"Of him we may say justly,—Here was one
Who knew of most things more than any other;
Who loved all learning underneath the sun,
And looked on every learner as a brother."

The implications of this are profound enough to humble the most accomplished librarian. It implies that the librarian must be a man of acquisitive mind who closes his mind to no subject of human interest. He is always a learner; he must always be awake to and welcome every development of human thought and every adventure of the human spirit. He must, however, be a man educated not only in the general sense but in every operation and process of libraries. He must be a lover of other men. When young people come to me as aspirants for library work I ask them, "Do you love books?" They invariably reply that they do, but I ask them next, "Do you like people and serving people?" I rejoice that in India there are men who now have taken in hand the choosing and training of librarians. What the country holds in the way of libraries I do not know fully, but with its great literatures, in so many forms, there are no doubt many fields of research and many library possibilities as yet undreamed of even by the Indian himself.

Here, then, is a book that may be an inspiration to all those who, in higher or humbler office, will serve India in her libraries. Conceived in a broad, ungrudging spirit, it must enthuse those who enter upon our profession in that country with the immense, if sometimes undramatic, possibilities of a library. It will show it to be not merely a collection of books which accumulates age and dust, but a living and growing organism prolonging the life of the past and renewing it for this generation, but giving also to this generation the best that its own workers, thinkers and dreamers have to offer.

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS,
Chief Librarian, Croydon
Lecturer in the University of London School of Librarianship
Examiner in Library Organization to the Library Association.

CHAPTER 0

GENESIS

01 Entrance into Library Profession

IN July 1923, the University of Madras created the post of University Librarian. In November, I was appointed its first librarian. I was then teaching mathematics in the Presidency College, Madras, one of the constituent colleges of the University. I started work as librarian in the afternoon of Thursday, 4 January 1924. In the first few weeks, there was hardly anything to do. I felt bored; and I very much wished to go back to the college. But friends advised me not to be hasty. I occupied myself with the cataloguing of hundreds of books lying in a heap. The number of readers visiting the library seldom exceeded a dozen in a day.

02 First Experience

In October 1924, I joined the School of Librarianship in the University College, London. Its library was fairly exhaustive, though small. It did not take more than a couple of months to study its books. After this theoretical equipment, I picked up some practical experience by working in the Croydon Public Libraries for about six weeks. During the next six months, I visited about a hundred libraries of different kinds. The librarians gave me full freedom to observe, to put questions, and to discuss. This was the first experience. It was a rich experience.

03 Library Trends

Libraries were found to be in different stages of development. This facilitated a comparative study of library practices. The forward trends were impressive. But, the lines of development in the different sectors of library practice appeared unrelated. Discussion with those working in the

05 Enunciation

After return to India in July 1925, the over-whelming work of organising and building up the Madras University Library, virtually from scratch, drove this problem out of the conscious level. The 32,000 volumes of the library had to be classified and re-catalogued; concurrently with this, the Colon Classification and the Classified Catalogue Code had to be designed and developed. Open Access was started; and reference service had to be done single-handed. Library publicity had to be done in full measure; and as a result, the daily attendance shot up from two dozen to two hundred. The staff had to be recruited and trained; concurrently, a manual of Library Administration had to be evolved. The annual accession shot up from 1,000 to 6,000. The design of the new library building claimed its own share of thought. The pressure of all these compulsory tasks was pushing the Normative Principles into deeper and deeper layers of the mind. But, it was a congenial and helpful pressure. Every step in the design of the Colon Classification, every rule in the formulation of the Classified Catalogue Code, and every clause in the drafting of the manual on Library Administration radiated from and got irradiated by the Normative Principles, hidden away, by that pressure, at the subconscious level. Reciprocally, the progress and the needs of these tasks should have been unconsciously shaping the Normative Principles into an effable form. This went on for three years. The acute stage of emergence was reached late in 1928. It was late one evening. The pressure was reversed in direction. All other tasks had to be kept aside. The travail was unbearable. At about dusk, Prof Edward B. Ross made his usual daily call on me. I owed my intellectual being to him; he was my professor of mathematics throughout my university course; his versatility and his affection for me made him take intimate and intelligent interest in my new sphere of work. He sensed my state of distress. I shared my struggle with him. He was about to get on his motor cycle. His eyes gleamed—always a sign of his hitting something new; then came his characteristic smile of such

03 FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

different sectors led to the impression that each was working in his own sector without much of contact or correlation with other sectors. Even those working in the same sector did not show much evidence of team-work. There was no evidence of an overall view. All these factors tended to hide the common point of emergence of the trends in the different sectors. Consequently, what could be seen was only an aggregate of diverse practices without an integral relation. It looked as if future developments were totally unpredictable. It all appeared to be a matter of rule of thumb, and severely empirical.

04 Scientific Method

Prior experience in scientific study and pursuit induced a sense of revolt against having to hold in memory and deal with myriads of unrelated pieces of information and independent types of practices. Cannot all these empirical aggregates of information and practices be reduced to a handful of basic principles? Cannot the process of induction be applied in this case? Cannot all the known practices be got by the process of deduction out of the basic principles? Do not the basic principles contain, as necessary implications, many other practices not current or known at present? Will they not become necessary, as and when the boundary conditions set by society change? Such questions began to simmer in the mind. It was, no doubt, realised that the subject of study belonged to the field of social sciences and not to that of natural sciences. But scientific method was applicable equally in both fields. The only difference lay in the status of the basic principles. These were hypotheses in the natural sciences and normative principles in the social sciences. But the cycle of scientific method was similar in both cases. The question to be answered was this: What are the normative principles pointed to by the observed trends in library practices, and pointing to the future trends now not quite visible? This was agitating the mind from the first half of 1925.

occasions; and he said, "You mean, 'Books are for Use'; you mean that is your first law." He went away without waiting even to see my reaction; this was quite like him. But this stroke of intuition of his landed me in perfect relief. The enunciation of the other laws was automatic. About three more hours were spent in filling up five sheets of paper with deductions from the five laws. Their enunciation was thus complete.

06 Exposition

Then began the exposition of the implications of the laws in the diverse sectors of library practice. There was no professional organ in India in those days for library science. But, a few years earlier I had taken part in starting the monthly, *South Indian Teacher*; and I had the hospitality of its pages. For the exposition of problems in library organisation and reference service, of general interest to the public, the *Hindu*, a local daily, was kind enough to lend its columns for a few years. These articles in the *Hindu* served the double purpose of library publicity and of releasing my tension. In December 1928, the University of Madras invited me to give a course of Vacation Lectures to teachers. These were to be given at the time of the Provincial Educational Conference; that year, it met at the Meenakshi College, Chidambaram, on the eve of its becoming the Annamalai University. There were about a thousand teachers present; and many of them were personal friends. There could not have been a more congenial and sympathetic audience for the first formal exposition of the newly enunciated Five Laws of Library Science. The implications of each law were worked out in two lectures. Such of them as were in current practice were illustrated with lantern slides, diagrams, and verbal description. Some new practices were also deduced as likely to come into being; some of these have already done so; the *Insdoc list*, started in 1954, is one of them in substance. As the audience consisted all of teachers, the educational implications of the Five Laws received great emphasis. However, these are not fully given in this

book. They became the sole subject of a separate series of vacation lectures delivered in Madras in three later years. These lectures have been expanded into the *School and college libraries* (1942). In December 1930, the First All-Asia Educational Conference was held at Benares. Its organiser, P Seshadri, invited me to be the Secretary of its Library Service Section. This gave me an opportunity to expound the Five Laws to an audience of librarians; these were only a few in those years. It gave a further incentive to work out in detail all the implications of the Laws of Library Science in the sphere of library organisation and legislation. In fact I drafted a Model Library Act. This was discussed at the conference clause by clause. The Library Act of Madras (1948) was based on this Model Act. The Library Act of Hyderabad (1955) also has followed it. This Model Act was embodied in Chapter 4 of the first edition of this book. In this edition, however, it has been replaced by an improved bolder version, drafted in 1950 to suit the independent sovereign status of India. Above all, the School of Library Science, started in April 1929, gave an opportunity for the systematic exposition of the Five Laws, once every year.

07 Publication

The Madras Library Association was founded in January 1928 to promote the establishment of a state-wide library service. Nearly 800 members were enrolled within a short period. Naturally, they were all lovers of books and friends of library, but not of the library profession. In fact, there were hardly ten persons in the profession in Madras in those days. To enlist the active interest of the members, Mr. K. V. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, the President, conceived the idea of asking some of them to contribute to a symposium. There was a good response to this. The symposium was published in 1929 under the title *Library movement: A collection of essays by divers hands*. The leading essay was the one on *What makes a library big* by Rabindra Nath Tagore, the national poet. In 1930, it was decided to start a regular

Publication Series "on the technical and practical aspects of library work." It was felt appropriate to start with a volume giving a full exposition of the Five Laws of Library Science, from which all the others could stem as necessary implications. Accordingly, the first edition of this book was published in June 1931. Through God's grace, the later volumes flowed in succession, year after year, working out the implications of the Five Laws in one branch after another of Library Science. About 48 books were thus published. Some were published by the Madras Library Association; and some by other agencies. And by 1953, the twenty-first volume of the series of the Madras Library Association was reached: It was *Library science in India: Silver jubilee volume presented to the Madras Library Association*.

Two friends spent several days with me in shaping the first edition. Mr. K. Swaminathan, then Professor of English in the Presidency College, took great pains to examine every sentence critically and reduce faults in language and style to a minimum. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Ayyar—a respected statesman of India, a former Member of the Government of Madras, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras and of the Benares Hindu University, an erudite scholar, and a great lover of books—read all the pages of the proof, made many suggestions of value, and finally furnished the Foreword. My professor in London, W. C. Berwick Sayers, wrote the introduction. It was from him that the greatest inspiration was derived. Apart from listening to him in the class-room, I had spent several hours with him informally. He was of help in many ways to make the year in Great Britain truly profitable. My regard and affection to these three gentlemen have made me retain the original text, the foreword, and the introduction in the present edition.

08 Sequel

But, during the quarter century, that has elapsed since the first edition was published, two fundamental changes have come. One is the generalisation of the concept "Book;" this

has been emphasised in recent years in the term "Documentation." The second change is the generalisation of the term "Growth;" this is a change in my own ideas, brought about while teaching in the class-room and working on the *Library development plan* (1950) and *Library book selection* (1953). Further it was felt desirable to answer the question, "Is there a Library Science?" Moreover, library movement has made great strides in many lands, including India. To accommodate these changes, an eighth chapter has been added, with the title "Scientific Method, Library Science, and March of Digvijaya." It is this chapter that is new in this edition.

12 August 1956,
248 Hofwiesenstrasse, Zurich 57.

122 PRESERVATION FOR POSTERITY

It may be of interest to reflect for a while on this elaborate process of preservation. What must have been the purpose of such preservation? It is difficult to think of any purpose except that of preserving for the use of posterity. No doubt, it is a healthy or, at any rate, an unavoidable trait of human nature, that we think of our children—of our posterity—and that we are even prepared to deny ourselves many things, in order to hand them over unimpaired to posterity. But an inevitable deduction is implied in this practice. Even as we are anxious to hand over our books to posterity, every succeeding generation may be actuated by an exactly similar altruistic motive; and in consequence books may have to be for ever in chains and may never be released for use. This aspect of the question seems to have escaped notice for a long time and 'BOOKS ARE FOR PRESERVATION' had usurped the place of 'BOOKS ARE FOR USE'.

123 INHERITED HABIT

This tendency to hoard books had originated at a time when books were rare and difficult to produce. Before the invention of printing, it took years to copy a book. Copying the *Mahabharata* was work for a whole lifetime. Under such conditions, there was justification for forgetting that BOOKS ARE FOR USE and for overdoing the act of preserving them. But this tendency appears to have unfortunately developed into a regular habit, as a result of long practice. The situation was thoroughly altered by the invention of printing. And yet, it took centuries to overcome this long-inherited habit. The first step was to declare an amnesty for the books and set them free from their chains. But, even after they were unchained and were permitted to be taken out for use and handled by readers, there was not, for a long time, a generous recognition, on the part of those maintaining and managing libraries, of the right of readers to an unhampered use of books. The restrictions placed in the way of books being freely used were many; and it is only in recent years that a

CHAPTER I

FIRST LAW

11 Elemental Principle

THE first law of Library Science is like the first law of any other science. It embodies an elemental principle. In fact, it is self-evident; one may be inclined to say that it is trivial. But, that is an invariable characteristic of all first laws. Take, for example, the first Upanishadic law of conduct—*Satyam Vada*—speak the truth. So is Newton's first law of motion.

111 ENUNCIATION

The first law of Library Science is: BOOKS ARE FOR USE. No one will question the correctness of this law. But, in actual practice, the story is different. The law has been seldom borne in mind by library authorities.

12 Neglect of the Law

We may examine the history of any aspect of library practice; and we shall find ample evidence of a deplorable neglect of this law.

121 CHAINED LIBRARY

Let us take, in the first place, the way in which books were kept in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was not uncommon in those days to have books actually chained to the shelves. The books were fitted with brass frames and rings, which were tied to iron chains, whose other ends were safely fastened to the shelves. Such chained books could not migrate from the shelves beyond the length of the chain. Their freedom was confined to the sphere determined by their chains. Certainly, such chaining was more conducive to the preservation than to the use of the books. In fact, libraries were then regarded, not as organisations for furthering the use of books, but as institutions for preserving them.

vigorous movement seems to have set in to eliminate all such handicaps. Such a movement has by no means become universal as yet. There are several countries—and our land seems to have a fair claim to be classed with them—which are still hardly affected by this new movement.

124 EXAMPLE 1

A Professor in a College ruled over his department for nearly a quarter of a century. The pursuit of his subject—zoology—slowly narrowed the range of his vision; and he became mechanically minded. Trivial details began to loom large for him. Hence he came to attend personally to the meticulous discharge of every item of routine, from the opening of the doors and windows to the periodical emptying of waste-paper baskets. He was given to getting into a rage if everything was not in its place. Unfortunately, under the force of this inexorable tendency, he came to regard the shelves rather than the hands of readers as the proper place for books. The assistants, whose advance in their cadre depended on the goodwill of the Professor, would rather forego the use of books than run the risk of exciting his rage by drawing the books from the shelves. The students of the first year course, who alone were strangers to his idiosyncrasies, would occasionally ask for the books of the departmental library. He used to dispose of them with this dilemma: "Have you followed the class lectures? If so, you do not want these books." "Were you unable to follow the class lectures? If so, you cannot profit by reading these books." The senior students would not approach him at all, since they had had painful experiences of the futility of such attempts. The result was that, when he retired at long last, his successor had to cut open the pages of several of the books bequeathed to him! In some cases, it was even found that it was not worth-while to waste time in cutting them open; for, they had gone entirely out of date and had to be discarded. Would such a professorial career have been possible if the College had acted on the law—'BOOKS ARE FOR USE'?

125 EXAMPLE 2

The extraordinary strength and inexorability of this inherited tendency, which stands between the books and their users, is brought out by the case of another Professor—this time, a Professor of Philosophy. The Professor was a philosopher not only by profession but also by practice and temperament. He was also one of those that felt an urge for social service. One form of social service that our Professor of Philosophy decided to render was to give a chance for his neighbours to become learned. To this end, he used to invest most of his savings in books. When he had made up a good collection, he built a nice little reading hut to house the books. He used to spend most of his spare time in this reading hut, so that he may serve out the books personally. He was, however, very disappointed at the ultimate indifference of his neighbours. So, one day he took me to his reading hut to take advice. On his way he was waxing eloquent over the excellent books he had bought for the library, the depressing indifference of the people of his locality to the use of books, and so on. The conversation that ensued as soon as we entered the charming but desolate reading hut threw a flood of light on the persistence of the long-inherited preserving habit which could smother even the sincere resolve and the good intentions of an honest philosopher.

"Where are your books, my friend?"

"All these ten almirahs are full of them. I spent a hundred rupees on each of these almirahs. I had them specially made, etc., etc., etc."

"But, my dear Professor, why have you lined their lovely transparent glass doors with these ugly sheets of brown paper?"

"You don't know how these visitors bother me. If I don't stick up this brown paper, they look at the books through the glass door. They ask for this book and that, and I have to pull out all the books."

Poor vanquished philosopher! Comment is needless.

126 EXAMPLE 3

While such things are common with us in the twentieth century, we have only to go a century back to find the iron sway of this hoarding habit over American Libraries. T. W. Koch of the North-western University records a significant but typical story¹ of a librarian of Harvard. The Harvard University Librarian "once completed an inventory of the library and was seen crossing the yard with a particularly happy smile". When he was asked the reason for his exceptionally pleasant mood, he exclaimed with pride, "All the books are in excepting two. Agassiz has those and I am going after them".

127 MODERN LIBRARIAN

On the other hand a modern librarian, who has faith in the law that 'BOOKS ARE FOR USE,' is happy only when his readers make his shelves constantly empty. It is not the books that go out that worry him. It is the stay-at-home volumes that perplex and depress him. He too will constantly cross the yard to meet his Agassizes. But he will go to them, not to snatch away the books they are using, but to distribute the new arrivals that need to be introduced to them as rapidly as possible.

128 FORCE OF FIRST LAW

The different stages by which the force of the law, "BOOKS ARE FOR USE," worked out the gradual removal of the restrictions induced by the aforesaid inherited habit may be summarised as follows:—The chains were first removed and sold as old iron; but access was limited to the chosen few. Then those that could pay were allowed the use of the books. Then came the further step of making them free to all, but only for use in the premises of the library. Then, lending to the favoured few; then, to all who paid the fee; and at last, lending free to all. Perhaps we are just reaching this stage in our land. But this was by no means the end elsewhere, where the first law had been familiar

sufficiently long, to lay bare all the implications embedded deep in its bosom. In such places, aggressive methods, which have made other enterprises successful, came to be employed to push forward the use of books. Then branch libraries were opened in the larger cities in order to provide a fair collection of books and an inviting reading room within a few minutes' walk from each home. Then books were sent out for a nominal fee to those who could not conveniently come after them. Then boxes of books were sent free to the homes of those that would offer to get them introduced in their neighbourhood. The latest is that books are carried in a motor-van from street to street for distribution among the residents. What further triumph is in store for the first law, it is difficult to guess. But, as stated by J. P. Quincy, one is tempted to adapt a well-known Celtic paradox by saying that a public library is as good as a private one and, for the effective study of books, has decided advantages over it.²

13 Library Location

The location of a library may, in general, be taken as an index of the degree of faith that the authorities of the library have in the law, BOOKS ARE FOR USE.

131 EXAMPLE 1

I happened to visit Dindukkal, a municipal town in the south. The city-fathers of the place invited me for a discussion about building a library for the town. The question of site turned up at a very early stage. Practically all of them suggested a place in the outskirts of the town. One of their reasons for suggesting such a remote site was that there was too much dust in the centre and that the books would be spoiled. Another reason adduced was that, otherwise, "all sorts of fellows" would get into the library. It never struck them that the function of the library was to make "all sorts of fellows" use its books and that the dust problem should not be allowed to drive away the library beyond the zone of accessibility and usefulness. On the other hand, they were

202 POTENCY

EVERY PERSON HIS OR HER BOOK! What a volume of ideas rests in a potential state in these six words of but seven syllables! How exacting will be the task of carrying out these ideas! What a variety of vested interests is arrayed in opposition against any attempt to put these ideas into force! These points require careful examination in a study of the Second Law.

203 EDUCATIONAL VALUE

It may be convenient to start from the very beginning. What are libraries? Libraries are collections of books built for a special purpose. What is that purpose? 'USE' is the answer supplied by the First Law. What is the use of books? Books give information; they educate. They may also give solace; they may furnish a harmless means of recreation. Let us first concentrate on their educational value. If books are tools of education, the law 'EVERY PERSON HIS OR HER BOOK' presupposes the concept 'EDUCATION FOR EVERY PERSON.' This lays bare the fundamental issue. The history of the answer to the question, "Is every person entitled to education?" will show how the Second Law too has been in actual practice seldom borne in mind by library authorities.

21 The Classes and the Masses

211 ANCIENT DAYS

It is customary to begin all academic history from Aristotle. What is Aristotle's answer to this fundamental question? "It is the intention of nature to make bodies of slaves and freemen different from each other... And since this is true with respect to the body, it is still more just to determine in the same manner, when we consider the soul."³⁸ These plausible premises led Aristotle to the characteristic conclusion that "a slave can have no deliberative faculty."³⁹ The result of this rigorous reasoning was that "while Athens and Sparta offered education to freemen, nine-tenths of the population were excluded from the privilege of learning."⁴⁰ In translating

CHAPTER 2

SECOND LAW AND ITS STRUGGLE

20 Introduction

In the last Chapter, we traced the slow emergence of the First Law and examined, in a brief manner, its effect on the method of keeping books, library location, library hours, library furniture and library staff. The changes brought about by the First Law in all these matters were of a fundamental character. If the final effect of the First Law should be described in one word, that word is *revolution*. Once the outlook was revolutionised, other things followed in course of time.

201 ENUNCIATION

The Second Law of Library Science comes on the heels of the First Law to carry this revolution a step further. If the First Law replaced the concept 'BOOKS ARE FOR PRESERVATION,' the Second Law widens the concept 'BOOKS FOR THE CHOSEN FEW'. If the revolutionary cry of the First Law was 'BOOKS ARE FOR USE', the revolutionary cry of the Second Law is 'BOOKS ARE FOR ALL.' If the approach of the First Law was from the side of books, the approach of the Second Law is from the side of users of books. If the First Law vitalised the library, the Second Law magnifies the library into a nation-wide problem. If the First Law threw open the existing libraries, the Second Law plants new libraries and brings about the culture of new species of libraries. If there was reluctance to act up to the First Law, there is, in the initial stages, positive opposition to the Second Law. Thus, the revolution brought about by the Second Law is of a more advanced nature and brings humanity nearer the goal.

this in terms of books, we find that 'BOOKS FOR THE CHOSEN FEW' was the ruling concept and that the Second Law had no recognition. Even in Rome, which heralded the establishment of municipal and state schools, the privilege of learning rarely crossed the occupational and income lines.

212 MIDDLE AGES

The narrowness of the Middle Ages is described by Margaret Hodgen in the following words, "The spirit of exclusion which the land-owning classes asserted towards ambitious villeins bound for the church; the church toward laymen seeking intellectual independence; the merchants towards outsiders looking to enjoy profits of commercial enterprises, was in turn asserted by all toward the educational aspirations of the poor."⁴¹ We are even told that "vassal fathers were punished for allowing vassal sons to attend school."⁴²

213 EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The spirit of exclusion persisted for centuries. Here is a specimen of eighteenth century opinion. "To make the Society happy and People easy under the meanest circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be ignorant as well as Poor..... The Welfare and Felicity therefore of every State and Kingdom, require that the knowledge of the Working Poor should be confined within the Verge of their occupations and never extended (as to things visible) beyond what relates to their Calling. The more a Shepherd, a Plowman or any other Peasant knows of the World, and the things that are Foreign to his Labour or Employment, the less fit he'll be to go through the Fatigues and Hardships of it with Cheerfulness and Content. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic... are very pernicious to the Poor, who are forced to get their Daily Bread by their Daily Labour."⁴³ What a benevolent dispensation! What a show of inevitableness in this eighteenth century reasoning! With such ideas running rampant, one can easily imagine how effectively the concept

'BOOKS FOR THE CHOSEN FEW' would have thwarted the emergence of the rival concept 'BOOKS FOR ONE AND ALL.'

214 NINETEENTH CENTURY

Even the nineteenth century was for long under the spell of this concept of a bipartite division of persons into a small governing class consisting of those who, almost as it were by divine right, occupied the privileged position, and the large class of the others who, as it was supposed, by the essential constitution of things, belonged to the lower orders, had no right to education and hence had no right to the instruments of education, viz., books. The well-to-do and influential classes—the *freemen* of the nineteenth century—resisted outright on grounds of sheer self-interest even the bare suggestion that the poor should be given the rudiments of education. The story is told of the Marquis of Westminster refusing to give even a farthing for the London Mechanics' Institute because of his apprehension that the education of the workmen would make them rebel. "True," he said, "but we must take care of ourselves." "The struggle that books had in reaching *every person* is amply illustrated by the experience recorded by Francis Place, a Charing Cross tailor of the early years of the last century. He "had to be more and more careful that none of his ordinary customers should be allowed to go into the library at the back of the shop." "Had these persons been told that I had never read a book, that I was ignorant of everything but my own business, that I sotted in a public house, they would not have made the least objection to me. I should have been a 'fellow' beneath them, and they would have patronised me; but ... to accumulate books, and to be supposed to know something of their contents, was putting myself on an equality with themselves, if not indeed assuming superiority; it was an abominable offence in a tailor, if not a crime, which deserved punishment. Had it been known to all my customers that in the few years from 1810-1817, I had accumulated a considerable library, in which I spent all the leisure time I could spare, ... half of them at

least would have left me."⁴⁶ We find Green complaining even late in the nineteenth century that "It is one of the inconveniences attaching to the present state of Society in England, that all questions of education are complicated by distinctions of classes."⁴⁶ Even so late as 1918, the *Hansard* discloses that the Education Bill of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher was opposed on the ground that, if the workmen are to be given such a long and elaborate course of education, "How are the horses to be kept at work, the cows to be milked, the sheep to be tended and the folds to be pitched? How is education going to help a man who has to spread manure on a field."⁴⁷ A veritable incarnation of Barnard de Mandeville!

215 POLITICAL INSTINCT

That the political instinct of those in privileged positions was vehemently opposing the advent of the Second Law of Library Science is pointed out in unmistakable words by all students of Politics. Viscount Bryce says, for example, "That all the despotic governments of sixty years ago, and some of them down to our own day, were either indifferent or hostile to the spread of education among their subjects, because they feared that knowledge and intelligence would create a wish for freedom."⁴⁸

2151 England

The arguments of those that opposed the Ewart Bill—the first Public Library Bill of England—were "that too much knowledge was a dangerous thing and that libraries might become centres of political education."⁴⁹ In his Presidential Address to the Leeds Conference, Dr. Guppy remarked, "It is somewhat perplexing to find that in the middle decades of the last century, many of the most eminent men were debating, with all seriousness, not what was best in literature to put before the people, but whether it would be safe, and wise, and politic to admit the general public to libraries at all. So far from readers being considered competent to handle and examine books, it was a question whether the rough uncul-

tured democracy should be permitted, even with most stringent precautions and regulations to invade the sacred precincts of the Library."⁵⁰

2152 Russia

When a library school was inaugurated at Moscow in 1913, the following question was asked in the National Duma by the leader of the extreme right: "How can the government tolerate library courses, which would pave the way for a revolution?"⁵¹

216 SELF-PRESERVATION

Thus the Second Law had to face not merely an inherited habit as was the case with the First Law; but it had also to face a very strong opposition based on political and economic instincts. However misleading these instincts might have been, there is hardly any ground to doubt their *bona fide* nature. In fact, as it may be easily seen, they were mere derivatives of a more fundamental instinct *viz.*, the instinct of self-preservation.

2161 Contrary Inference

But, society had not been lacking in far-seeing souls that could perceive the mistaken nature of such opposition. There were indeed men who would draw just the opposite inference from that very instinct of self-preservation. The location of factories near sources of power caused a redistribution of population and the towns were inundated with a flood of people unaccustomed to civic responsibilities. The crowding together of tens of thousands of the illiterate poor was creating a host of unspeakable nuisance. For a time, the black-coated gentry were able to maintain a safe distance from centres of dirt, disease and petty criminality. But they could not remain aloof for ever. Poverty rudely encroached in course of time. It brought disease and unsavoury sights to the doors of the vicarage and the manor. In their eagerness to defend themselves the gentle folk hurried to their most trusted advisers.

The first of these, the economists, recommended a judicious dose of education. Adam Smith, for example, recommended that "The public can impose upon almost the whole body of the people the necessity of acquiring the most essential parts of education, by obliging every man to undergo an examination or probation in them, before he can obtain the freedom in any corporation, or be allowed to set up any trade either in a village or town Corporate."⁶² He took advantage of this predicament of the well-to-do and even pleaded as follows: "The education of the Common people requires, perhaps, in a civilised and commercial society, the attention of the public, more than that of people of some rank and fortune..... The public can facilitate this acquisition by establishing in every parish or district a little school, where children may be taught... Though the state was to derive no advantage from the instruction of the inferior ranks of people, it would still deserve its attention that they should not be altogether uninstructed. The state, however, derives no inconsiderable advantage from their instruction. The more they are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. An instructed and intelligent people, besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one. They feel themselves each individually, more respectable and more likely to obtain the respect of their superiors, and they are, therefore, more disposed to respect their superiors. They are more disposed to examine and more capable of seeing through, the interested complaints of faction and sedition; and they are, on that account, less apt to be misled into any wanton or unnecessary opposition to the measures of Government."⁶³

2171 LADDER OF LEARNING

Although, generally speaking, the words of Adam Smith fell upon deaf ears, there were some who could appreciate the soundness of his reasoning. In fact, it induced Mr. Whitbread to introduce a Bill in Parliament in 1807 for universal

education, though, it goes without saying, it was rejected by an overwhelming majority. In spite of the ridicule of die-hards, the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" did much to spread education among the masses, under the inspiring leadership of Lord Brougham. The *Penny cyclopaedia*, the *Penny magazine*, the *Gallery of portraits* and the *Pictorial Bible* are the surviving monuments of the missionary zeal which championed the cause of 'BOOKS FOR ALL,' in the thirties of the last century. The majority of the magnates and officials of the early Victorian era desired that the young peasant should till the same fields, with the same tools in the same seasons as his father before him. However, enlightened souls like Matthew Arnold were impatient with the tardy recognition shown to the newly emerging concept 'EDUCATION FOR ALL.' As Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, he lamented, in 1853, that "The children of the lowest, poorest classes of the country, of what are called the masses, are not, to speak generally, educated; the children who are educated belong to a different class from these, and consequently of the education of the masses, I, in the course of my official duty, see, strictly speaking, little or nothing."⁶⁴ The first twenty pages of Graham Balfour's *Educational systems of Great Britain and Ireland* give a brief but vivid picture of the ingenuity and tenacity with which a handful of far-seeing patriotic statesmen secured the educational enactments of 1870, 1880 and 1891, which successively made 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' first permissive, then compulsory and finally free.⁶⁵ Once 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' had been established, it required but a decade or two for our Second Law 'BOOKS FOR ALL,' to enter the field and quietly bring about the realisation of Huxley's dream,⁶⁶ of 'a ladder of learning' from the gutter to the Universities.

2171 Example I

How literally the Second Law has realised this dream of Huxley may be seen from the account given in *Adult education and the library*,⁶⁷ about the progress of a fisher-boy along the paths of learning. He was born in Norway. In his

own private library. In an open access library, the reader is permitted to wander among the books and lay his hands on any of them at his will and pleasure. The powerful service, that this system renders to the Third Law can be realised by those who have watched a library change from a 'Closed' to an 'Open Access' state. It is a matter of common experience that the change increases the number of volumes drawn for use. More important than that is the frequency with which readers 'make discoveries.' Not a day passes without some readers exclaiming with an agreeable surprise "I didn't know that you had this book!"

511 EXAMPLE 1

It was only the other day that I found a student picking out Roland K. Wilson's *The province of the state* from the shelf, where it had had about eight years' undisturbed rest prior to the introduction of the open access system. I asked the student who recommended the book to him. He said he did not know of the existence of the book and that he hit upon it by sheer chance, as he was browsing round the Politics region. This chance occurs almost every minute in an open access library.

512 EXAMPLE 2

Here is another telling instance. The secretary of the local Teachers' Guild asked me for materials bearing on Secondary Education and Matriculation. I took him round the shelves to show him some of the presidential addresses of the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. As I was pulling out the volumes and scanning the nature of the presidential addresses, the secretary, who was browsing round the neighbouring shelves, came back with a great joy exclaiming 'I have found out what I wanted.' He had a thin red quarto in his hand. It was Volume I, No. 1 of the *Universities review*. An article in it entitled *The Dandelion and the Jack* contained just the idea he wanted. This red volume had been lying on the shelf for some months quite

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CHAPTER 5

THIRD LAW

50 Enunciation

We shall now pass on to a consideration of the Third Law. While it resembles that First Law in making its approach from the side of the books, it is in a sense a complement to the Second Law. While the Second Law concerned itself with the task of finding for every reader his appropriate book, the Third Law would urge that an appropriate reader should be found for every book. In fact, the Third Law is 'EVERY BOOK ITS READER.'

501 COMPARISON

While the First Law revolutionised the outlook of the libraries, the Third Law would make that revolution as thorough as possible. It will be seen, further, that the implications of the Third Law are not less exacting than those of the Second Law. We shall devote this chapter to an account of the different devices employed by libraries to fulfil the requirements of the Third Law.

502 MEANS

Perhaps a cynic may suggest the obvious device of having as few books as possible in the library. But such a device is ruled out by the extensive requirements of the Second Law; and its inconsistency with the Fifth Law will become apparent in a later chapter. The most prominent of the means used by libraries to satisfy the Third Law is the *Open Access System*. The other devices relate to shelf-arrangement, catalogue entries, reference service, the opening of certain popular departments, publicity methods, and extension work.

51 Open Access System

By 'Open Access' is meant the opportunity to see and examine the book collection with as much freedom as in one's

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untouched by the hand of any but the peon on dusting duty. But for the introduction of the open access system, probably it should have remained like that for ages without ever finding its reader.

513 SHOP ANALOGY

If there is faith in the Third Law, it is as absurd and as ineffective for a library to deny open access and simply offer to produce any book on request, as it would be for a busy shop to lock up its wares in wooden cupboards and expect its wares to sell. The shop, which is anxious to see every one of its things pass into customers' hands, allows complete open access even to its tiny articles. Customers are allowed to come in crowds, browse round and handle any article. It looks on all people as potential customers and in its anxiety to find a buyer for every article, apparently lets the people loose inside its premises. Any visitor to that shop is sure to be convinced of the efficacy and the wisdom of that method. Exactly, the same method should be adopted by a library that wants to find a reader for every book on its shelves.

514 HISTORY

It is a matter of common experience that the majority of readers do not know their requirements and that their interests take a definite shape only after seeing and handling a well-arranged collection of books. This factor came to be recognised only during the last 10 or 15 years in Great Britain. But in America, where the sway of the Third Law established itself even earlier, 'Open Access' had been brought into the service of that law even before the close of the nineteenth century.

515 LONG VIEW

That a long view should be taken by the library authorities with regard to 'Open Access' is illustrated by the following extract describing the then new American tendency:—²¹⁸

"As a rule, the newer libraries are allowing a great amount

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of freedom in direct access to shelves on the part of all users of the library. Many of the more recent buildings have been planned so that the visitor may go directly to the shelves, and many of the older buildings have been remodelled to permit this practice. In almost every way this has been a gain. There has come with it no small loss of books. But that loss is insignificant in view of the greatly increased use of the libraries which has resulted from easy contact with books."

516 UNAVOIDABLE LOSS

Thus the sway of the Third Law has even convinced the Library Authorities of the wisdom of acquiescing in the unavoidable loss and sacrifice of a few volumes to increase the chances for securing for EVERY BOOK ITS READER. But let not this remark mislead one to infer that a heavy loss of books from year to year is a necessary concomitant of the 'Open Access' system. On the other hand, experience shows that the loss from theft is really negligible. A proper measure of the theft is the percentage of the number of books lost to the number of books issued in a year. Using such a measure, Miss Isabel Ely Lord, the Librarian of Pratt Institute Free Library, has demonstrated with elaborate statistics,²¹⁴ that the theft in 'Open Access' libraries is not much greater than in 'Closed' libraries. She estimated the mean loss per year as "17 in every 10,000 circulated."²¹⁵ After examining the statistics of the Croydon Public Library for several decades, W. C. Berwick Sayers confirmed this estimate in a letter of his in 1947.

517 BOOK THIEF

Again, where a theft occurs, it is almost invariably the act of some one or two deliberate and persistent thieves. "The general public are not thieves. Thieves from libraries are a class like burglars. One man commits a large number of burglaries and creates a great deal of trouble; but this does not prove that the whole population of a village or town is burglariously inclined. The benefit of open shelves is indis-

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putable, and the probable loss of two or three hundred books per annum at a total cost of perhaps \$150 may be considered small, if the salaries which would be required for one, and possibly two more assistants, not to mention page-boys, etc., had to be paid.²²¹⁶

518 Tropics

Perhaps, we in the tropics may add that the loss is small when compared with the loss due to the perishing of paper and the ravages of insects, provided certain safeguards against thefts are introduced.

52 Shelf Arrangement

Even in an open access library, the chances for the fulfilment of the Third Law can be made or marred by the principle adopted for the arrangement of books on the shelves. Arrangement by size or (except in literature) by the alphabetical sequence of the author's name is as arbitrary as arrangement by the colour of the cover. Ordinarily, it is not the size of a book or its author (except in literature) that determines the kind of person that will use it. It is its subject-matter. Hence, it is by the subject-matter that the books should be arranged on the shelves if they are to be given a reasonable chance to find their readers.

521 CLASSIFIED ARRANGEMENT

A well articulated classified arrangement of the books on a subject basis is what the Third Law would recommend. It can be easily seen that, if all the dozen books that the library may possess on, say, Alternating Currents are kept together and in close proximity to the other books on Electrical Engineering, there will be a much greater probability for each of them to be picked up by a reader than when they are scattered among perhaps a hundred thousand volumes, in accordance with the freak of the alphabet building up the names of authors.

522 RECENT ADDITIONS SHELF

The subject-matter of the book is not, however, the only factor that can arrest the attention of the visitors of the library. Psychologists tell us that 'recency' is an important factor in securing attention. The Third Law would expect the library staff to exploit this factor as well, in the arrangement of books on the shelves and it is now a common practice in libraries to have a separate 'Recent Additions Shelf' very near the entrance. The soundness of the psychologist's dictum about 'recency' is usually well demonstrated by the rapidity with which the Recent Additions Shelf gets emptied. It is this shelf that invariably gives the maximum satisfaction to the modern librarian, who, under the influence of the Third Law, is greatly worried by the books that won't leave the shelves.

523 RE-ARRANGEMENT

'Novelty' in shelf-arrangement is another means, not infrequently adopted to attract the attention of the visitors to books that need help in finding their readers. An occasional redistribution of the contents of shelves may help in establishing fresh contacts between men and books.

524 SHOW-CASE

Another usual device employed in this connection is the location of small attractive show cases with books in strategic positions of the reading-room and the stack-room, labelled with catching legends like 'Books worth looking into,' 'Books of the hour,' 'Interesting books recently unearthed' 'Long-forgotten but useful books' and so on.

525 ACCESSIBILITY

Another important factor in shelf-arrangement which has a decided effect on the Chance of a Book to get Its Reader is its easy accessibility or otherwise. Books within the comfortable reach of a reader of average height are much better

whatever with this aim of Book-Selection but it would remonstrate against haphazard selection which is utterly indifferent to the immediate and prospective requirements of the readers. The threat of the allotment lapsing in a few days sometimes forces a Library Authority to rely solely on the first trade list or catalogue, that chance might put in the way. This is a danger that should be avoided. Book-Selection is work that should be done from day to day taking into account the demands of readers, the progress of publication and the funds available.

CHAPTER 6 FOURTH LAW 60 Introduction

We have seen in the last five chapters that the main concern of the first three Laws of Library Science is to get the books of the library used as fully and by as many persons as possible. We have also seen that, however axiomatic those laws appear to be, they have really begun to assert themselves as ruling concepts only during the last few decades. We further examined some of their implications and described the changes they are bringing about in the outlook of libraries and in the various aspects of library policy and administration.

601 COMPARISON

We shall see in this chapter what further light is thrown on some of these problems by the Fourth Law of Library Science. This law makes its approach from the side of the readers as was the case with the Second Law. Perhaps it may even be said that the interest of the Fourth Law almost completely centres round the readers. Taking for granted that BOOKS ARE FOR USE, that EVERY READER SHOULD BE SERVED HIS OR HER BOOK and that EVERY BOOK SHOULD BE HELPED TO FIND ITS READER, it proceeds to fashion the library administration accordingly. In company with the Fifth Law, it concerns itself with the situation that should arise as the requirements of the first three laws come to be increasingly fulfilled. In dealing with the new problems of such a situation, it introduces the element of time and concentrates its attention entirely on the time-aspect of the problem.

602 ENUNCIATION

SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER—this is the Fourth Law of Library Science. Perhaps this law is not so self-evident as the others. None the less, it has been responsible for many re-

forms in library administration and has a great potentiality for effecting many more reforms in the future. Perhaps the most convenient method of studying the consequences of this law will be to follow a reader from the moment he enters the library to the moment he leaves it, critically examining each process, which he has to go through, with an eye to the economy of time that can be effected at each stage.

61 'Closed' System

Perhaps the first thing that a reader does, on entering the library, is to discharge the used up books. But it will be convenient to postpone the consideration of this process and take it up along with the method of charging, as the details of the two operations are, by their nature, interdependent.

611 APPLYING AND WRITING

Hence, the main process that should be first studied in the light of the Fourth Law is the choice of books. In a 'closed' library, this has to be done entirely with the aid of the catalogue. The catalogue of a growing library is either of the card form or of the paste-down form. If it is of the latter form, even in a small library like the Madras University Library with but 70,000 books, the catalogue runs through fourteen folio-volumes. In the British Museum Library, the paste-down "general catalogue now fills over 1,000 volumes."¹²⁵ A common heading like 'Smith' takes a volume all for itself. Further the inevitable occurrence of certain general headings, such as 'Academies' and 'Periodicals' add further complications. A good deal of time is naturally wasted in hunting out for the required title in such a labyrinth of entries. Having got them, one has to write them out with great accuracy on separate slips and hand the slips over to the man behind the barrier. Then follows the harassing interval of waiting—for several minutes in small libraries and even for hours in large ones. It is not unusual for readers of the British Museum Library to apply for their books in the forenoon and call for them after lunch. Some readers with

forethought would also send their slips overnight to save time on the next day.

612 CAUSES OF DISAPPOINTMENT

If the library is popular, the loss of time due to the search for entries and to the waiting at the counter may recur several times before the right book is got. The recurrence may be due to many causes. After some time, the slip may be returned with the endorsement "entry incorrect." The spelling of some essential part of the entry may be wrong. This would render the tracing of the book impracticable. The group of figures, constituting the press-mark or call number as it is called, might have been wrongly copied. Substitution of a small letter for a capital or omission of a dot or a comma might make all the difference. Or the slip may come back with the endorsement "on loan" or "engaged." Then the old process of selection and waiting will have to be gone through once again. Before the Madras University Library changed to 'open access,' several cases used to occur almost every day when the process had to be repeated half a dozen times before a reader got some book. Again, when the book is actually produced, it may turn out to be spurious or, for other reasons, unsuitable to the reader. The catalogue entry might not have given a clear enough indication of the nature of the book. That means the repetition of the whole process over again. These features would "make the selection of books a heart-break and a labour tainted with disgust."¹²⁶

613 MEASURE OF LOSS OF TIME

The average amount of time that a reader had thus to waste at the counter in the Madras University Library in 1928 (just before the open access system was introduced) was about half an hour. The colossal nature of this waste can be realised if we integrate over a full year the amount of time thus wasted by the community as a whole. Let us take as a convenient unit of measure one person working for one hour. Let us call this a 'Man-hour.' Now, the average number of visitors in

the library was 200 per day. Thus, 100 man-hours were wasted per day or 36,500 man-hours per annum. To realise its economic significance, we must convert this into money. A salary of Rs. 75 per mensem would correspond to half a rupee per man-hour. Even with this low equivalent, the wastage for which the 'closed system' of the Madras University Library was responsible in 1928 amounted to nearly Rs. 18,250 per annum. In discussing the profit and loss account of the open access system, one should give due weight to this aspect of the matter. The Fourth Law would insist that, in deciding large questions of policy, such as open access *vs.* 'closed' system, the spirit of the modern method of cost-accounting should be adopted and long, broad and full views should be taken, dealing with the community and the library as a whole. An alarmist attitude should not be developed by isolating the probable or actual loss of a few volumes in a year or by taking any other partial view of the matter.

614 INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS METHOD

In modern communities, such as those of America and England for whom time is money and money is time, the slogan of the Fourth Law—*SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER*—seems to have produced a profound impression. Further, the recent tendencies in the evolution of business methods and the rapid diffusion of the 'cost-accounting' consciousness not only among the leaders but even among the masses have led those communities to conclude that the balance of advantage is decidedly in favour of the open access system. In this system, the wastage due to waiting at the counter is eliminated fully and the wastage due to wading through cumbrous catalogues is reduced to a minimum and may even be altogether unnecessary for many ordinary readers.

615 INDICATOR SYSTEM

Historically, an attempt was first made to eliminate the loss of time due to books being on loan. This was done by the ingeni-

ous invention of the 'indicator system.' 'A library indicator, as its name implies, is a device for indicating or registering information about books. The information usually conveyed to the public is some kind of indication of the presence or absence of books, and the methods of accomplishing this almost invariably take the form of displayed numbers, qualified in such a way as to indicate books *in* and *out*.'¹⁹²⁷ Several patterns of indicators were invented from 1870 onwards. In all cases, a large run of counter space had to be given up for accommodating these mechanical contrivances and this created new problems.

616 OPEN ACCESS

But as the Fourth Law gradually asserted itself still further and insisted that the time wasted in tracing the titles in catalogues and waiting thereafter for the books to be brought by attendants should also be saved, the indicators were slowly given up and the open access system came to be regarded as the only satisfactory device to *SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER*. Thus, the claims of the open access system, already advocated by the Second and the Third Laws, came to be reinforced by the Fourth Law, on grounds of national economy.

62. Shelf-Arrangement

The interest of the Fourth Law is not exhausted however with the introduction of open access. It has an equal interest in reforming the shelf-arrangement. In an open access library, the nature of the shelf-arrangement can make or mar the mission of the Fourth Law.

621 ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

One old fashioned method which still seems to persist in some of our libraries is that of alphabetical arrangement by the authors. But in the majority of cases, the interest of readers goes by the subject rather than by the author. Even in literature, the authors of the biographies and the critical works are not as important as the author forming the subject

71 Growth in Size

We shall first trace the consequences of the simple growth in size. For this purpose, it may be convenient to examine the main parts of the organism that are capable of growing. They are the books, the readers, and the staff. It is well to repeat here that a modern library is a trinity of these factors. It must be clearly realised that a collection of books without readers has no more right to be called a library than a group of readers without books and that the mere juxtaposition of books and readers without the service of a staff, that know to effect contact between the right reader and the right book, at the right time and in the right manner, cannot constitute a library either. The modesty with which library authorities underestimate the rate of growth of each of these factors is unimaginable. We shall have occasion to give instances of this modesty as we go into details. But a far less pardonable thing is to set about organising a library as if it would be stationary, as if neither the books, nor the readers, nor the staff would grow in number. There could be nothing more reprehensible than a faulty organisation obstructing the free development of a library, or indeed of any institution, to its full stature. The frequent recurrence of this fatal mistake in library matters is due to the failure to realise a fundamental fact, *viz.*, an organisation which may be suitable for a small library may completely fail when the library grows big. Technologists know from painful experience that a successful laboratory method may not always turn out to be a successful manufacturing method. Physicists too are now beginning to realise that what may hold good in situations of an infinitesimal order may cease to do so in similar situations of a finite order and that what holds good in a set up of normal size may cease to do so in situations of an abnormally big size. The library organisation should not short-sightedly allow itself to be unduly influenced by the present size but should plan its lay-out in such a way as to make it easy to keep pace with the necessary growth of the library. Let us now take up each of the three elements of the trinity and trace the con-

CHAPTER 7

FIFTH LAW

70 Introduction

Now, we come to the fifth and the last Law of Library Science. While the first four laws deal with the functions of a library, the Fifth Law tells us about the vital and lasting characteristics of the library as an institution and enjoins the need for a constant adjustment of our outlook in dealing with it. While the first four laws indicate the spirit that should characterise the management and administration of libraries, the Fifth Law enunciates a fundamental principle that should govern the planning and organisation of libraries. While the first four laws embody maxims that are nearly obvious, the Fifth Law is not perhaps so self-evident.

701 ENUNCIATION

The Fifth Law is: A LIBRARY IS A GROWING ORGANISM. It is an accepted biological fact that a growing organism alone will survive. An organism which ceases to grow will petrify and perish. The Fifth Law invites our attention to the fact that the library, as an institution, has all the attributes of a growing organism. A growing organism takes in new matter, casts off old matter, changes in size and takes new shapes and forms. Apart from sudden and apparently discontinuous changes involved in metamorphosis, it is also subject to a slow continuous change which leads to what is known as 'variation,' in biological parlance, and to the evolution of new forms. This change is so slow but so effective that the protagonists of evolution assert that it is the shapeless undifferentiated protozoa of the palæozoic age that has transformed itself, by successive stages of variation, into the most differentiated specimen of creation—the human being. The one thing that has been persisting through all those changes of form has been the vital principle of life. So it is with the library.

sequence of its growth on the different aspects of library organisation.

711 BOOKS

Let us first take the books. The number of books in a live library must and does grow. We shall assume that there is hardly any probability for the recurrence of the familiar anecdote of the Kansas legislator who objected to an appropriation for more books for the University library with the eloquent words, "Mr. Speaker, I object to spending this money. Why, they've got forty thousand books there at Lawrence now, and I don't believe any one of them professors has read 'em all yet!"²²⁰ We shall also assume the impracticability of the Quincy plan, which is to equalise the rate of weeding out and the rate of accessioning, after the size of the collection reaches an arbitrary norm. While finance is no doubt the ultimate deciding factor, it cannot be denied that some light is thrown on the average rate of growth of the book-collections of libraries by the following tables giving the annual rate of book-production in some of the important countries of the world.

Table I, giving the number of books published in some of the foreign countries in 1927 is extracted from the *Publishers' weekly* 115, 1928, 281. I am indebted to the Education Secretary to the Government of India for the Table giving the number of books published in some of the Indian Provinces in 1927.

7111 World Book Production
International Book Production Statistics for 1927.

Name of Country	No. of books published	Name of Country	No. of books published
1. Russia	36,680	8. Italy	6,533
2. Germany	31,026	9. Holland	6,103
3. Japan	19,967	10. Denmark	3,293
4. Great Britain	13,810	11. Sweden	2,652
5. France	11,922	12. Spain	2,374
6. United States	10,153	13. Switzerland	1,909
7. Poland	6,888	14. Norway	1,238

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7112 Indian Book Production
Book Production Statistics of India for 1927.

Name of Province	No of books published	Name of Province	No. of books published
1. Madras	4,042	6. Bihar and Orissa	1,550
2. Bengal	3,425	7. Delhi	414
3. United Provinces	3,298	8. Central Provinces	217
4. Punjab	2,537	9. Burma	122
5. Bombay	2,211	10. Assam	54
		Total for India	17,120

7113 Library Accession

To view the subject from another angle, here is a table giving the annual rate of accession in a few libraries:

Name of the Library.	No. of Vols. added in a year.
1. Library of Congress	202,111
2. Boston Public Library	94,339
3. Cambridge University Library	90,916
4. Birmingham Public Library	28,566
5. New York State Library	23,313
6. Imperial Library, Calcutta	7,832
7. Madras University Library	5,628
8. Aberdeen Public Library	3,726

712 STACK-ROOM AND FITTINGS

We shall first trace the effect of the growth of stock on Library Architecture. The part of the library building that is primarily concerned with this is the stack-room. Its size, its relative position, the book-rack forming the unit out of which the stack is built, the parts of the book-rack, the shelf-planks, label-holders and all such things relating to the housing of the books will have to be examined in the light of the inevitable growth in stock.

7121 Size

Taking the size first, it is seldom that the Fifth Law does not outwit the library authorities. To take an example, the

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