

**A letter to His Royal Highness the President of the Royal Society [i.e. the Duke of Sussex], on the new catalogue of the library of that institution now in the press / [Sir Anthony Panizzi].**

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7

A LETTER

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY,

ON THE

NEW CATALOGUE OF THE LIBRARY OF THAT

INSTITUTION NOW IN THE PRESS.

[1837]





## A LETTER,

&c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,

A COPY of the address which your Royal Highness, as President of the Royal Society, delivered at the anniversary meeting on the 30th November, 1836, has this moment been put into my hands. In this address, Your Royal Highness mentions the facts that I “was employed by the Council to draw up a classed catalogue” of the Society’s library, and that this classed catalogue is now *composed*. To these facts Your Royal Highness adds that it “is undergoing such a revision from different members of the Council, who have kindly undertaken the task, as is calculated to make it as correct and complete as the circumstances of the case will allow it to be.”

This remark it is impossible for me, in justice to myself and to the members of the Society, who are in general profoundly ignorant of the proceedings of the Council, to pass over without notice, nor without some animadversions upon the circumstances under which the catalogue compiled by me has been withdrawn from my own control, and placed under the “revision” of “different members of the Council.” With what justice and courtesy I have been treated by the Council in this withdrawal will, I think, appear, as will also the bibliographical qualifications of some of those persons who have so “kindly undertaken” to render my catalogue “correct and complete.”

Your Royal Highness cannot be unacquainted with the facts, that I have been prevented from continuing my labours upon the catalogue by what I consider a most unjust resolution of the Council of the Royal Society; that against this resolution I have in vain remonstrated, and that I had



previously endeavoured to dissuade the Council from persisting in certain acts, which, in my opinion, will render the work less correct and less complete than it was my wish to make it, in justice to the character of the Society, and to my own literary reputation. I humbly conceive that, in fairness to the Society, to the Council, and to myself, these facts ought to have been mentioned in Your Royal Highness's address, and I must also take the liberty of protesting strongly against the manner in which Your Royal Highness speaks of the revision which the catalogue is now undergoing, "as calculated to make it as correct and complete as the circumstances of the case will allow it to be," since it conveys the idea that I had performed my task in so incorrect a manner, as to render such a revision necessary, and implies that to me are to be imputed the circumstances which will not allow the work to be as correct and as complete as it would otherwise have been.

The lamented illness which for so long a period prevented Your Royal Highness from presiding at the Council of the Royal Society, left me at the mercy of persons who seem to have forgotten what, according to the principles of common courtesy and honourable dealing, was due to the Royal Society, as well as to myself. I am firmly of opinion, that, had Your Royal Highness heard my remonstrances, and inquired into the merits of them, the results would have been very different for me. The non-attendance of Your Royal Highness, besides depriving me of a judge who would not have been satisfied, as many members of the Council are, with merely acknowledging the harshness of the treatment to which I have been subjected, has also given to individuals an opportunity of prejudicing Your Royal Highness's mind against me.

That Your Royal Highness has not had occasion of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the conduct of the Council of the Royal Society, with regard to the formation of the catalogue, and the state of the library, is evident from the assertions which occur in that address. I shall not here dwell upon the mistake into which Your Royal Highness has been led, with respect to the persons who have undertaken to revise my compilation; but how can it be asserted, that the library of the Royal Society is singularly rich in *journals*, and in works on *physical* and *anatomical* science? How can it be said, that the catalogue would present the "treasures of the library" in such a form, "that persons engaged on works of research, or in any



specific subject of scientific inquiry, might be made at once acquainted with nearly all the sources from which they could derive information?" Had Your Royal Highness not been deceived, could you have held out the Royal Society's catalogue as an example which might influence the Trustees of the British Museum "in hastening the compilation of a similar work?"

As the charges seemingly brought against me in Your Royal Highness's address, are circulated among the Fellows of the Royal Society, I am compelled, with the greatest reluctance, to acquaint Your Royal Highness with the facts of the case, before the same tribunal. I deeply and sincerely regret to be driven to print anything concerning myself; but whatever may be construed into a charge against me, when it proceeds from Your Royal Highness, cannot be passed by with indifference. Had it not been out of respect to Your Royal Highness's address, I should have willingly forgotten this unpleasant affair, being well aware that my statements will be received with derision by those who know that they may be unjust with impunity.

Although it is somewhat an ungracious task to expose the faults of a Catalogue confessedly so bad, as was the first attempt of the Committee, an attempt which, if it had been persisted in, would have rendered the Society the laughing stock of scientific Europe, yet, in self-defence I am compelled to do so. Some of my disagreements with the Council, have arisen, it will be seen, from my repudiating, as judges of my work, those scientific men, some of whom, either compiled or sanctioned that Catalogue, and thus proved themselves unqualified for the task; I must also show that Mathematics, or Natural History, do not of necessity involve a knowledge of bibliography, and that solecisms in the last may be easily committed by those who are conversant with the former, and that it is no uncommon thing for a man of science to be but imperfectly acquainted even with the authors, who have written on the subjects most familiar to him. Your Royal Highness may perhaps have heard of a Secretary, in former times, of the Royal Society, who did not know M'Laurin, and who gravely quoted before the astonished members, *Monsieur Laurin's* Account of Newton's Discoveries. But solecisms more grave than this have been committed, more advisedly, as Your Royal Highness will admit, after having heard the whole history of this unpleasant transaction.

So long ago as October, 1832, I happened to meet Dr.



Roget at dinner, who told me that the Catalogue of the Royal Society, of which a sheet had been set up in type as a specimen, had been found to require revision in passing through the press, and that a Committee, on that very day, had requested him to ask me whether I would undertake the task. I said that I had no objection, and I received from him a *proof* of the sheet in question. The same evening, on my return home, glancing over it, I was astonished at the numberless errors by which it was disfigured. The more I looked into it, the worse did it appear, and I soon felt convinced that it was utterly incapable of correction. I immediately wrote a note to Dr. Roget, stating the conclusion to which I had come, and begging to decline to have any thing to do with a work which I felt satisfied would be disgraceful to the Royal Society, and to any person who should venture to meddle with it. Either in that note, or verbally, shortly after, I mentioned to Dr. Roget that it would be necessary for the Royal Society to have an entirely new catalogue, compiled in such a manner as would answer the expectations which the public had a right to form; adding, that, although I would never attempt to correct what had been already done, I was ready to undertake a new compilation.

I had no idea when I so candidly expressed my opinion, that I was making a powerful and unrelenting enemy in one of the most influential officers of the Royal Society, who, as I have learned since, had put together the titles of books which were to form the catalogue, and was so well satisfied with his performance, as to order a very large number of titles to be set up in type; whatever, in fact, he included in classes, which he called: Mathematics, Astronomy and Navigation, Mechanics, Optics, Transactions, Tables and Journals. The Members of the Catalogue Committee, on being informed of what had passed between Dr. Roget and myself, perceived that my opinion, as to the value of the work done, was correct, and it was resolved that the compilation of a new catalogue should be intrusted to my care. Thus, not only all that had been done was undone at once, but the time which had been lost, and, what is more, the unwarrantable expense incurred by sending so large a proportion of the ill-digested work to press, was thrown away. Such is the origin of my connexion with the Royal Society.

I have a copy of that part of the catalogue which had been set up, and which I was to correct. On looking it



over I find it infinitely worse than the specimen which I declared incurable, although it had been repeatedly revised before it came to my hands, and I advisedly will say again that it was utterly impossible to correct it. That sheet extends from letter A to letter D of pure Mathematics, with which several works therein entered have nothing whatever to do, for instance: Avogadro's *Nouvelles considérations sur la théorie des proportions déterminées dans les combinaisons, et sur la détermination des masses des molécules des corps*; Bagay's *tables astronomiques et hydrographiques*; Brown's *principles of gunnery*; Clifton's *tabular observations, recommended as the plainest way of practising physick*; Cloquet's *Traité élémentaire de perspective à l'usage des artistes*. Since, according to the scheme adopted, there were such classes as Chemistry, Astronomy, Mechanics, Anatomy including Medicine, and Optics, it is clear that to range such works under pure Mathematics, was preposterous.\* I shall not *per contra* attempt to show how many works belonging to this class had been entered under totally different ones: that would lead me too far; but I must mention that several works had been altogether omitted: for instance, out of six works of Anderson's, only three had been entered. As a compensation, however, many works are twice catalogued. Of this I shall give only one or two specimens. Between the two names CONDORCET and CONTI the following entries occur:

CRISTIANI (F. N.) *The Elements of Linear Perspective*. 8° *Cantab.* 1811.

————— *Tetragonismus sive Circuli Quadratio*. 4° *Brixia*, 1821.

————— *Essais d'Analyse*. Tom. 1. *Par.* 1768.

————— Autre exemplaire.

————— ET M. D'ALEMBERT, *sur le Système du Monde et sur le Calcul Intégral*. 4° *Par.* 1768.

————— *Discours sur les Sciences Mathématiques, prononcé au Lycée le 15 Fevrier 1786*. 8° *Par.* 1812.

The first two entries are to be again met with in the

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\* Of these works none have been classed by me under mathematics, but under the several classes here mentioned: none of the censors of my proofs, have objected to my rearrangement; they have thereby admitted that I was right in my emendation.



same words under the same name between CRESSWELL and CRONIER, although the Elements of Linear Perspective are by CRESSWELL and the Tetragonismus by CRISTIANI. The other four articles are by CONDORCET; the third, instead of being by him and D'ALEMBERT jointly, it is by him alone addressed to D'Alembert; in the last the name of D'Alembert does not occur at all.

Authors' names were not better treated than the subjects. BONAVENTURA, the christian name of CAVALIERI, was taken for a family name, and a cross reference put from it to CAVALIERI; of the three mathematical *decades* of GIOVAN CAMILLO GLORIOSI, one was put under CAMILLO, his second christian name, and the remainder under his family name GLORIOSI. On entering a collection, the word COLLEZIONE was taken for a surname, and NUOVA for a christian name, and thus the entry is to be found "COLLEZIONE (N.)" I will not notice mere errors of the press, of which the number is prodigious; but there are entries which prove abundantly that the printer was not to be accused of them. Cossali's History of Algebra in Italy was printed "*Nella Real Tipografia Parmense,*" and *Parmense* was gravely inserted as the name of the place where the book was printed.

DA CUNHA's mathematical principles were translated into French by D'ABREU after the author's death, and have this title: "Principes mathématiques de feu J. A. Da Cunha." Any one who has even merely heard of the "*feu* Lord Maire de Londres" may easily guess, without much knowledge of French, that *feu* here means *late*, viz. *deceased*. The compiler of this catalogue, however, did not attach such a gloomy meaning to this word; but philosophically conceived it to signify *fire*, as is evident by his precaution in writing it with a capital F, *Feu*; and by substituting the word *Opuscules* for the correct one, *Principes*, the following entry was made:—

"DA CUNHA. (J. A.) Opuscules Mathématiques de Feu, traduits littéralement du Portugais, par J. M. D'Abreu. 8vo. *Bordeaux*, 1811."

— The idea conveyed to a Frenchman by this title would not be very clear, but it might possibly be understood that this is an infamous book, deserving to be burnt. It is a fortunate thing for *feu* Mr. Da Cunha, that this libel on his fair name was not published in his own country (he was a Portuguese) when he was living, and when the fashion was,



not only to burn books, but authors ; else, so dangerous an insinuation by the Royal Society of London might have exposed him to the chance of paying dearly for their blunders and bad French.\*

If errors of so ludicrous a nature occur in the first sheet, which was so often revised, one may easily conceive in what state that part of the catalogue was which was set up, but not corrected. As a specimen I transcribe three entries in the last *slip*, containing a list of names put down *pêle-mêle*, of works said to be mathematical.

BAROCIUS (F.) Admirandum illud Geometricum Problema Tredecim modis demonstratum. 4° Venetiis, 1586.

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\* Of this merely elementary book, two copies are in the collection of the Royal Society, as I find from the proofs of my catalogue, where I had entered it as follows, (with a cross reference from Da Cunha):

“CUNHA (JOSEPH ANASTASE *da*). Principes mathématiques, traduits du Portugais, par J. M. d’Abreu. 8vo. *Bordeaux*, 1811. (*Two copies*).”

One of these copies has been in the library for more than a century, the other was presented before it was printed—if we are to believe the stamps with which they are marked, as belonging to the Royal Society. The former is said to have been presented by the Duke of Norfolk (in 1667): the other is said to have been presented by that author, who is designated as *feu* in the title. How this happened, I cannot say ; probably, the *translator* presented the book : and, the word *feu* not being understood, he was mistaken for the author. The former copy was bought with the money received for the Arundel MSS., and like other books so added to the collection, stamped as the Duke of Norfolk’s gift. Scrupulous chronologists will be perplexed at some future period, by comparing the date of the death of His Grace with that of the books which he is said to have presented : but what do a few hundred years signify for astronomers, for geologists, and for such other philosophers ? Of the propriety of buying a second copy of *merely elementary* works, I am no judge: the Council, probably, suppose that they are the most in request, and that “the limited funds” of the Society cannot be better employed than in meeting what they delicately assume to be the pressing wants of the members by whom they are elected.



CANALERIUS (F. B.) Directorium generale Tranometricum in quo Trigonometriæ Logarithmicæ Fundamenta. 4° *Bononiæ*, 1632.

SODA (D.) Fin dall' Anno 1812, e 1813; ed è un Analisi Geometrica. 8° *Napoli*, 1816.

The problem here announced as demonstrated by Baroccius, is certainly the most puzzling of all the problems that was ever heard of; and the most acute mathematician, even he who catalogued this work, may be challenged to follow Baroccius in its solution. The very existence of the problem is problematic according to this entry; for we are told of an admirable problem being demonstrated in thirteen manners, without being informed what *that* admirable problem is. On referring to my entry, I find that it is a solution in thirteen manners of the problem,—*How to draw in the same plane two lines which can never meet, although infinitely prolonged.* These terms, in which the pith of the matter consists, have been totally omitted, with laudable economy, together with some other particulars of less importance. I had catalogued this work as follows:—

“BAROCCIUS (FRANCISCUS). Admirandum illud geometricum problema tredecim modis demonstratum, quod docet duas lineas in eodem plano designare quæ nunquam invicem coincidunt, etiam si in infinitum protrahantur: accessit etiam instrumentum, quo cujuslibet conici ortus, ac trium conicarum sectionum in plano descriptio fit. 4to. *Venetis*, 1586.”

When this entry is compared with the above, we may easily account for the indignation of my learned censors at the length of my titles, which deprived them of the pleasure of speculating on what the book treated, by my honestly supplying an intelligible title.

As for the second work, by one F. B. Canalerius, author of the Directorium Tranometricum, (viz. Uranometricum,) “in which the fundamentals of logarithmic trigonometry” (the entry stops here),—it proves to be a work by Cavalieri, whose very name seems to have been utterly unknown to those who drew up this specimen of a Catalogue. In the original title the verb is not wanting (which, together with several other important words, has been here omitted), as may be seen in my entry somewhat longer, but I hope very plain and very intelligible.



“CAVALERIUS, or CAVALIERI (BONAVENTURA).

Directorium generale uranometricum in quo trigonometriæ logarithmicæ fundamenta demonstrantur, astronomiæque supputationes ad solam ferè vulgarem additionem reducuntur. 4to. *Bonomiæ*, 1632.”

With respect to Soda, who is made to assert that the words “as long since as the year 1812 and 1813,” are “a geometrical analysis,” I need not assure Your Royal Highness that he says no such thing. The worthy Rev. Dionigio Soda has gravely and repeatedly stated that he has found out the solution of the problem of the trisection of an angle; but he never said that “Fin dall’anno 1812 e 1813” was a geometrical analysis. In the years 1812 and 1813, he wrote three small tracts on his favourite subject; and in 1816, he returned to it with a fourth, entitled “La verità rettificatrice,” (which I have catalogued with this title), in which he refers to what he had written in the years 1812 and 1813 on this subject: but it was the subject, and not the years 1812 and 1813, which appeared to him analytical geometry.

The other classes do not afford fewer instances of carelessness. The three following entries are to be found close to each other, about the middle of the class designated as “Astronomy and Navigation.”

LICETUS (FORT.) Muletra, sive de duplici Colore Corporum Naturalium. 1636.

————— Litheosphorus, sive de Lapide Bononiensis (*sic*). 4° 1640.

LINCKIUS (F. H.) De Stellis Marinis. fol. *Lipsiæ*, 1733.

Before entering into a particular examination of the first two entries, I beg to observe to Your Royal Highness that I have never seen in the library of the Royal Society the two works by Liceti here mentioned, and I strongly suspect they never were there. I can, perhaps, explain how they got into the Catalogue. A kind of advertisement is to be found at the conclusion of the printed plan of classification of this very catalogue in these words: “The books added to the library through the money received from the British Museum for the Arundel Manuscripts are marked with an asterisk.” The works of Liceti are so marked, and having often observed books not in the collection entered with this distinguishing mark, I was told that although the asterisk was only said to point out the books added through



the above money, it did in fact apply also to such as were *meant* to be added to the library; and I have no doubt that Liceti's two works *were to be*, but never had been, purchased.\*

But although I have been able to explain in a manner, if not agreeable to the parties concerned, at all events satisfactory to any one else, how books never bought were entered as purchased with certain special funds, I am at a loss to account how the first of them at all events was classed among astronomical works. Perhaps *muletra* was taken for a constellation, like the bear, the bull, the ram; and being a compound word (*Muletra seu Mulæthra*, quasi *mulus in æthra*, as *Ménage* would say), the mistake was a most natural one, particularly for a good Greek scholar, who must have recollected the two asses and the stable mentioned by Theocritus.† It would, however, be time lost to speculate further how this book got among astronomical works: suffice it to say, that it is there classed. I cannot state positively, but I would almost stake my ex-

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\* If His Royal Highness the President of the Royal Society had been aware of the nature of the purchases and exchanges of books consequent upon the transfer of the Arundelian MSS., he would not have alluded to that transaction. One instance more of the manner of employing "the limited funds" of the Society in this respect will speak for itself. It occurs in this very class *Astronomy*. Maskelyne's Greenwich observations from 1765 to 1810 were, *of course*, in the library of the Royal Society, and stood in a very conspicuous part of it, in four stately folio volumes. It seems that whoever purchased or chose from the British Museum lists of duplicates, not being aware of this fact, thought that even this copy had been turned into *Bristol pasteboard*, (see Mr. Babbage's work on the decline of science in England, pag. 108); and a second copy of the four folio volumes, which has been turned out as duplicate from the British Museum was added to the library. This is one of the additions which may serve as an example "of what may be accomplished by the exertions of a learned body with very limited funds at its command."

† The class astronomy including also inland navigation, the lines of Theocritus here alluded to must have forced themselves upon the mind of the Arcadian shepherd who



istence that such a book never existed, and that instead of *muletra*, the word meant was *mulctra*, that is, instead of an ideal *constellation*, the real word means a *milk-pail*. The following work by Liceti was probably the one intended :

Fortunii Liceti Genuensis in Patavino Lyceo Philosophi ordinarij Mulctra, siue de duplici calore corporum naturalium dialogus physico-medicus. 4°. Utini, 1636.

*Mulctra*, is the name of the dialogue, in which this utensil takes a share together with Circe, who had metamorphosed a human being into that implement. The subject is physiological, and the heat (*calor*), not the colour (*color*), of some bodies, forms part of the subject in discussion, which I do not find either very learned, very clear, or very intelligible. The other work by the same author, has no more to do with astronomy, than the aforesaid milk-pail ; here is its correct title :

Litheosphorus, sive de lapide Bononiensi lucem in se conceptam ab ambiente claro mox in tenebris mire conseruante liber Fortunii Liceti Genuensis pridem in Pisano, nuper in Patauino, nunc in Bononiensi Archigymnasio Philosophi eminentis. 4to. Utini, 1646.

I suspected at one time, that the error arose from *Litheosphorus* being mistaken for a star, and no attention being paid to that explanation “ sive de *Lapide Bononiensi*.” I am now satisfied that my suspicion was unfounded, and that the blunder is gravely, deliberately, and *learnedly* perpetrated ; it is not to be attributed to the mere ignorance, that *lapis* means a *stone*, not a *star*, but to a very ingenious

catalogued this book, the asses being particularly favourable to sailors :

Ἐκ δ' ἄρκτοι τ' ἐφάνησαν, ὄνων τ' ἀνὰ μέσσον αμαυρῆ  
Φάτνη, σημαίνουσα τὰ πρὸς πλόον εὐδία πάντα.

*Idyl.* xxii.

The Bears and Asses with the stall between  
Foresheew a voyage safe and sky serene.

Mr. Chapman, in his translation, observes that “ the asses are two stars of the fourth magnitude in the breast of Cancer.” Aratus also alludes to them. If two asses are stars, why should not *one* mule enjoy the same honour ?”



process of reasoning, by which phosphorus was metamorphosed into a heavenly body.

To demonstrate this in "as correct and complete" a manner "as the circumstances of the case will allow," I beg to call Your Royal Highness's attention to another work by Liceti which does exist in the library of the Royal Society, and which was catalogued in the following manner, in the specimen now under consideration :

LICETUS (FORT.) De Lunæ sub obscurâ luce prope  
Conjunctiones Libri III. 4to. *Utini*, 1642.

In my proofs it stands thus :

LICETUS (FORTUNIUS). De Lunæ subobscurâ luce  
prope conjunctiones, et in eclipsibus observata. 4to.  
*Utini*, 1642.

The 50th Chapter in the *Litheosphorus* is entitled : De Lunæ subobscura luce prope conjunctiones et in deliquiis observata, digressio physico-mathematica. In this work Liceti declares, "lumen illud obscurum non esse solare nunc a terra revibratum in lunarem superficiem," against the opinion of one Galileo, (not less known than Cavalieri out of the Royal Society's apartments) who held it "essere effetto cagionato dal riflesso de' raggi solari nella superficie del nostrò globo terrestre." At the request of Leopold Prince of Tuscany, Galileo wrote to him a long letter in Italian, dated Arcetri, 1st of March, 1640, the object of which was to answer Liceti's objections, as well as to show that the opinion which he held that the light in question originated, "ex repercussu solaris luminis ab æthere lunæ contermino," was incorrect. Liceti states in these words his opinion at the very beginning of the work, "*De Lunæ subobscura luce*," and continues: "Quam opinionem colere placuit in opere de lapide Bononiensi lucifero, qui cum Luna in ista passione mihi visus est habere miram analogiam." This special treatise "*De Lunæ subobscura luce*," was written on purpose to reply to Galileo, whose Italian letter is inserted at length, and analyzed, paragraph by paragraph.

Whoever catalogued the last of these works, happening to cast his eyes on the first page, where the words just quoted occur, thinking that Lucifer must mean either the Devil or a star, and observing that the Lucifer spoken of by Liceti, was one which according to this author had a wonderful analogy with the moon, he came to the philosophical conclusion, that it must rather be like a star, than like a



devil, and therefore scientifically classed the work "De lapide Bononiensi *lucifero*," among other books on stars, star-fish included, as I shall presently have the honour to show to Your Royal Highness. To unravel the motives for human actions is always a difficult task, and Your Royal Highness will admit that to discover the motives by which were guided the persons who classed these books, requires more depth of learning than I can unfortunately lay claim to: my conjectures therefore may not meet with universal approbation: but then what other reason can be assigned, for placing a book on phosphorus or *Bologna-stone*, not in the collection, among the astronomical treasures in the library?

The work by Linck is to be found entered in my catalogue in the following manner:

"LINCKIUS (JOHANNES HENRICUS). De stellis marinis; figuras et autoris observationes disposuit et illustravit C. G. Fischer; accedunt E. Luidii, de Reaumur, et D. Kade hujus argumenti opuscula. fol. *Lipsiæ*, 1733."

Your Royal Highness may have heard of the Board of Agriculture having sent for twelve copies of Miss Edgeworth's essay on Irish *Bulls*, for the use of that Institution, and this ludicrous mistake was thought so exquisite, that no one would have fancied it could possibly be equalled. But the attempt at cataloguing drawn up by some learned astronomers, the ornament and pride of the Royal Society, proves that among the members of this famous institution, there are some who could leave the whole Board of Agriculture in the shade. The work on *star-fish* mistaken for a work on *constellations* not only is adorned with plates, showing that it treated of *aquatic* not *heavenly bodies*, but on the very title page there is an oval engraving representing on the upper half the heavens covered with *stars*, and the lower half, the sea with *star-fish*; with the motto, *sicut superius ita est inferius*, which was taken literally by the acute individual who made this entry, and who very mathematically argued that the stars *below*, must belong to the domain of astronomical science, if they be, as the author declares, like those *above*. On the recto of the following page a dedication of the work occurs to Sir Hans Sloane, as President, and to the Fellows of the Royal Society, which probably was either passed over unread by the modest fellow who catalogued the book; or served to dazzle his understanding with such passages as this: "fulgent sidera



in cœlis, in orbe litterario illustris vestra Societas. Sideribus inscribere stellas convenit." But how could any one doubt that the work was *astronomical*, when the writer provokingly begins his preface: "Cœlorum spectare sidera decet juvatque Astronomos." It is true he continues: "Physicorum interest stellis marinis visum intendere." But this was probably taken for a figurative speech; and with that bold decision by which great men are distinguished, this work on so inferior a subject as star-fish, dedicated to the Royal Society, was by the *élite* of that same body declared to be a treatise on much higher bodies, on *constellations*, and consequently classed among astronomical books; whilst I thinking *marine* stars to be animals, did not dare to follow an example so *splendidé mendax*, and classed the work among others on *zoological* subjects. What a difference, both with respect to the length of the title and the classes in which it was entered! Linckius would rise from his grave, were he to see mis-classed a work, which, as he said, he had dedicated to the resplendent constellations forming the Royal Society of his days, just because it treated of stars! How fortunate that the learned persons who are to render my catalogue correct and complete have it still in their power to appease his indignant shade by re-classing the work among *astronomical* treatises!

These few specimens will satisfy any one of the justice of my assertion that it was impossible to correct such a work. I am fully aware of the difficulties, nay, of the impossibility, of compiling any catalogue which shall be free from errors of a very grave description. No work requires more indulgence than one of this sort; but the specimens which I have given are such as cannot admit of excuse or palliation: they must at once convince the most indulgent observer that those who committed them were incapable, utterly incapable of performing the task they had undertaken. After what we have seen, shall we wonder that NEWTON'S *Principia* should be misplaced? We cannot wonder; but by Your Royal Highness, who has the honour to fill the chair once occupied by that immortal man, and by those Fellows of the Royal Society who are not unworthy of the distinction, something like sorrow must be felt, when they see in the catalogue of their library that work classed among *pure Mathematics*, as if *Mechanics* had nothing to do with it.

The Committee having determined to intrust me with



the compilation of a new catalogue of their library of scientific books, the following resolution was passed on the 16th of October, 1832:

“That it be recommended to the Council to engage Mr. Panizzi, of the British Museum, to make a new Catalogue of the scientific books in the library of the society, arranged alphabetically according to the heads, and in the mode to be agreed upon by the Committee, and including an alphabetical index of the names of the authors, for which he is to be paid at the rate of thirty pounds for every thousand titles he may so catalogue; such remuneration, however, not to exceed five hundred pounds.”

On receiving a formal communication enclosing this resolution, I returned the following answer, on the 19th of the same month:

“I shall be happy to make the catalogue mentioned in your communication of the 16th inst., on the proposed terms, and to wait on the Committee, as soon as convenient to them, to settle the manner in which they wish the work to be executed.”

This resolution having been confirmed by the Council, a meeting took place between the Committee and myself on the 31st of the same month, after I had for the first time paid a visit to the collection of books in the Society's apartments. Three points were particularly discussed at that meeting: 1st, the system of classification which the Committee had rashly adopted; 2nd, the impossibility of dividing scientific from non-scientific works, in the sense of the word as used by the committee; 3rd, the kind of assistance I was to receive. Owing to the state of unexpected confusion in which the books were, I asked that, instead of the mere *manual* assistance which it was always understood I was to receive at the expense of the Society, Mr. Robertson, then their Clerk, should be employed. As to the first point, it was agreed that at the proper time I should state my views to the Committee, and that there was no doubt much deference would be paid to my opinion: as to the second, it was determined that I should write out the titles of all the works indiscriminately, adjourning to the completion of this first operation the settlement of the point as to the division of scientific from non-scientific works. I then observed, that if I were to catalogue all the



works, instead of only the scientific ones, I might be entitled to more than £500, the maximum fixed; I was told that I should never suffer by that limitation. As to the third point, no objection was made, the extreme confusion of the library being undeniable; and no one ventured to say that I ought to have foreseen such a circumstance before accepting the terms proposed. Not only myself, but also several members of the Committee, left the meeting, fully persuaded that all was settled, when, to my great surprise as well as theirs, we were informed that the remaining members of the Committee had subsequently passed the following resolution:

“That Mr. Panizzi having expressed a desire to have Mr. Robertson’s services, this Committee do not feel themselves authorised to recommend any measure to the Council calculated to increase the expense *already* contemplated.”

This proceeding, coupled with others still more indelicate, on the part of an influential member of the Committee, on which I do not more particularly dwell, in order to adhere rigidly to the narrative of the main facts, which I can prove by official documents, disgusted me so much, that I was on the point of giving up the agreement. But I was recommended otherwise, and I was advised to propose as a *juste milieu*, the following arrangement, which I was given to understand would be acceptable. I therefore wrote to Mr. Children as follows:

“I thank you for the copy of the resolutions passed by the Library Committee of the Royal Society, and beg to observe, that when I asked only for an assistant to hand me down the books for the compilation of the Catalogue, I was under the impression that they were so placed that any person might be able to find such of them as I might want to have before me. On discovering that no one but Mr. Robertson knows where the books stand, I was *compelled* to ask for *his* assistance. I believe that a guinea a week would be a fair remuneration for his trouble, and I am ready to contribute the half of this sum, if the Royal Society will pay the other. This will *not increase the expense already contemplated by the Committee*, but will entail upon me an expense which I could not contemplate before hand, not imagining that the library was



in the condition in which it is. I shall wait to hear from you before I commence my labours, &c.”

In consequence of this proposal I received from Dr. Roget the following letter, dated the 8th of November, 1832:

“Sir,—The Council of the Royal Society have resolved, with reference to your letter to Mr. Children of the 1st inst., which was communicated to them, that Mr. Roberton be engaged to give you the assistance specified in your letter, and that he shall be paid in the manner, and at the rate therein mentioned.”

On the 12th of November, 1832, I began to execute the work intrusted to my care. I had to put together the various volumes of the same work, which were to be found in different parts of the library; to collect and place in some order the various numbers of journals which lay scattered on the windows, and even on the floors of the apartments of the Society; to affix numbers or press-marks to each of them, so that they might be easily referred to when wanted; in fact, I had to perform a variety of things requiring great labour and time, which I was not bound to do by my contract, and which were of the greatest importance and utility to the Society's collection. To these unforeseen causes of delay and additional trouble, another was added; the occasional deprivation of Mr. Roberton's assistance, who was compelled to work for the Royal Society, thus leaving me without that help which was stipulated to be afforded to me during the hours expressly set apart for the purpose, and to the payment of which I contributed.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, and hoping that ultimately my sacrifices would not be forgotten, in about a year I wrote out *roughly* the titles of all the works in the library, and towards the end of October, I reported my progress to the Committee; and with regard to preparing the Catalogue for press, I used the following expressions:—“Before proceeding to this part of his labours, Mr. Panizzi begs to be informed what is the maxim which the Committee will be pleased to adopt with respect to works not strictly relating to science. Although it was originally intended to have a catalogue only of the scientific works, which form part of the collection of the Royal Society, it was afterwards ordered that Mr. Panizzi should write the titles of all their books indiscriminately, and that it should



then be considered what further steps should be taken with respect to such works as did not immediately relate to science." In consequence of this report, the following resolution was passed on the 24th of October, 1833 :

"That the Catalogue be divided into two parts; the one comprehending books on scientific subjects, and the other, books not on scientific subjects; and that those in the latter of these divisions be arranged alphabetically."

The system of classification, which had been adopted before I had become connected with the Royal Society, being liable to many objections, I was given to understand that, if proper cause were shown, it would be altered; and on my submitting to the Committee a specimen of the manner in which I conceived the catalogue ought to be printed, according to the well known predisposition of the leading members, I took the opportunity of suggesting at the same time what I thought a much better plan than the system of classification previously fixed upon by the Committee, which I begged of them to reconsider. I was then, and still am of opinion, that an alphabetical catalogue, with an index of matters, would be of greater use, and more creditable to the Royal Society, as well as to myself, (although more laborious,) than their scientific scheme. No notice was taken of my suggestion, and the following resolutions were passed on the 9th of December, 1833 :

"That Mr. Panizzi be instructed to adopt the arrangement of the Library in Classes, agreeably to the resolution of Council, of the 9th of February, 1832."

"That the Catalogue be printed in octavo, and with the same type as the specimen prepared by Mr. Panizzi."

On the next day I wrote as follows to the Committee, by whom the resolutions had been passed :

"The resolutions passed yesterday by the Library Committee, are so peremptory, that I am precluded from urging any thing more against the plan, which I am compelled to adopt in the arrangement of the Catalogue, and I shall (as far as I am bound,) obey the orders of the Committee without further observation. I must now beg the Committee to give special directions respecting the following classes of books, as they have done for the others.



“ Under which of the seventeen heads, which I am instructed to adopt, am I to put books on acoustics? On naval, civil, and military architecture and engineering? Strategy? Arts, trades, machinery, manufactures? Agriculture? Biography of scientific men? What is to be done with encyclopædias, works embracing treatises on several subjects, and works on miscellaneous subjects? . . . . .

“ I think it right to ask for plain and positive instructions, lest I should act in a manner which might not be approved of by the Committee, on whom rests the sole and entire responsibility of the system now adopted.”

Before proceeding farther, I beg to state, that the 17 classes fixed upon, by the resolution of the 9th of February, 1832, which I was now desired to carry into execution, were precisely as follows: 1. Mathematics (Algebra, Geometry, Probability, &c.). 2. Astronomy and Navigation. 3. Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Hydraulics. 4. Optics, Catoptrics, Dioptrics, Light, Colours. 5. Chemistry, Pneumatics, and Meteorology. 6. Electricity, Galvanism, and Magnetism. 7. Natural Philosophy (General works on). 8. Geology, Mineralogy, and Fossils. 9. Botany. 10. Zoology. 11. Anatomy, Physiology, and Medicine. 12. Natural History (General works on). 13. Transactions. 14. Journals. 15. Voyages and Travels. 16. Maps and Charts. 17. Tables on various subjects.

On the 23rd of December, 1833, the following resolutions were passed by the Catalogue Committee:

“ *Resolved*,—That the following subjects be added to the classes already agreed on, *viz.*

Acoustics . . . . . to . . . . . Mechanics, &c.

Astrology, Inland Navigation .. to .. Astronomy, &c.

Engineering . . . . . to . . . . . Mathematics, &c.

Agriculture . . . . . to . . . . . Botany.

Alchemy . . . . . to . . . . . Chemistry.

Naval, Civil, and Military  
Architecture, Strategy,  
Geography, Topography } Miscellaneous.

Biography of Scientific Men } Those classes to which the  
sciences for which they  
were respectively cele-  
brated belong.



Comparative Anatomy . . . . to . . . . Anatomy.  
 Arts, Trades, Machinery,  
 Manufactories, Dictiona- } Miscellaneous.  
 ries, Encyclopædias

“*Resolved*,—That, if Mr. Panizzi should, in the progress of his labours, have any doubts respecting the classification of any particular book, or on any other points, that he be requested to refer to either of the persons composing the following sub-committees, *viz.*

For Classes 1—4 to Mr. Baily, or Mr. Lubbock.  
 Classes 5—7 . . Dr. Roget, or Mr. Children.  
 Class 8 . . . . . Mr. König, or Mr. Murchison.  
 Classes 9—12 . Mr. König, or Mr. Children.  
 Classes 13—16 Capt. Beaufort, or Mr. Greenough.  
 Class 17 . . . . . Mr. Lubbock, or Mr. Peacock.  
 Class 18 . . . . . To any of the preceding Gentlemen.

“*Resolved*,—That Class 18 be set up first, and proofs sent to all the persons above named; and that proofs of the remaining Classes be sent to their respective Sub-Committees.

“*Resolved*.—That after Class 18 has been set up, the printer proceed to set up the Classes in the following order:

1— 1— 4  
 2— 5— 7  
 3— 8  
 4— 9—12  
 5—13—16  
 6—17.”

Having undertaken to compile the catalogue “in the mode to be agreed upon by the Committee,” no alternative was left for me but to proceed as well as I could in the ungrateful performance of my task. To point out the absurdity of this bed of Procrustes was out of the question. There was no hope of opening the eyes of men who, having united *Pneumatics* to *Chemistry* and *Meteorology*, as if *Mechanics* had nothing to do with it, now directed me to add *Inland Navigation* to *Astronomy*! I was, however, amused as well as grieved at receiving the dry direction of adding so many subjects to the very convenient class *Miscellaneous*, &c.;



for it so happened that the class *Miscellaneous* had never been mentioned before in any way whatever. I stated my embarrassment to one of the secretaries, who told me that the class *Miscellaneous connected with science* had been "contemplated;" and on my request, this *contemplation* was reduced into a corporeal substance, by his adding in his own hand to a printed list of the other classes the following entry,—“18. *Miscellaneous connected with science;*” and this is my only warrant for following the *contemplated* order.

At the conclusion of about twenty months of unremitting labour, the manuscript of the Catalogue was ready for press; and, with the full knowledge of the Council of the Royal Society, I began to send copy to the printer at the commencement of August, 1835. About two years previous, it had been *contemplated*, and, for aught I know, determined by the Council of the Royal Society to have a gallery built round the library. If this determination had been carried into effect during any of the long vacations in 1833 or 1834, or whilst I was working in other rooms, or even when I could suspend for a while my work, it would have been of great service to me, since the taking down the books from the upper shelves was an operation of no inconsiderable labour, causing loss of time, and not unaccompanied by danger. It so happened, however, that this was not done. The printer having engaged, on condition that no unnecessary delay should take place in correcting the press, to keep the type of the whole of the Catalogue standing, I made arrangements not to leave town till the work should be actually printed. On the 17th of August, 1835, I heard from Mr. Robertson that the gallery was going to be erected *immediately*, that the books were to be covered over, and the place rendered unfit for me to work in. I was chagrined at such a proceeding. There was no necessity for having the gallery erected just then; but it was then more than ever necessary for me to have access to the books, in order to insure the correctness of my work, which, for the reasons before stated, I could not at that moment suspend. This was well known to Mr. Lubbock, who ordered the erection of the gallery, and who was aware how thankful I should have felt, had it been done before. Under these circumstances I addressed the following letter to Mr. Children:

“ Sir,—I heard last night, to my great surprise and regret, that certain alterations which are to take place



immediately in the library of the Royal Society, will prevent my having access to the books, and cause a great number of them to be displaced. You are aware that the Catalogue is now printing, and need not be told that under such circumstances I cannot answer for its correctness. I think it proper to mention the fact, that no blame should be attached to me in future for the bad consequences of an arrangement which I could neither foresee nor prevent. I have," &c.

Mr. Children, if I recollect rightly, communicated my letter to Mr. Lubbock, and, I believe, felt the force of the following hypothesis I put to him: "Suppose the Trustees of the British Museum were to order you to have a catalogue of shells printed, and, whilst you are fulfilling their orders, one of them should come to the room where the collection is placed, and in your absence, without even having the courtesy of mentioning the fact to you, he should give such orders for altering the cases as would disarrange some parts of the collection, and prevent you from having access to the remainder, do you think it would be possible for you to perform your work in a creditable manner? Would you like such treatment?" The person employed to erect the gallery called upon me, and I explained to him what I was engaged upon, and how far I thought he would interfere with me. He saw and admitted the difficulties, and, as a *mezzo termine*, suggested that the gallery might be got ready so as to be put up at a future period, and in a short time, when the inconvenience might be more easily got over; for instance, at the ensuing Christmas or Easter recess. This was unobjectionable, and I thought that the suggestion would be adopted. I was, however, mistaken. The workmen took possession of the library, the books were covered over, the room turned into a workshop, without one syllable being ever spoken to me on the subject, and without any official notice whatever taken of my letter. The inconvenience and loss of time caused by this proceeding was very great; and as it might be said at a future period that neither was in fact occasioned, I requested three gentlemen, whose character and knowledge of the kind of work I was engaged upon will give the utmost weight to their opinion, to visit the place at the time. They agreed in saying that it was impossible for me to make use of the library whilst the construction of the gallery was going on, and are ready to bear witness to the truth of this statement. I am loth to impute motives; but



I always thought and do still think that this was done purposely to annoy me, and to render it impossible for me to complete the work in as creditable a manner as I wished to do.

This, however, was not the only time that the Council of the Royal Society did not condescend even to notice my letters. As I was ordered to enter the works alphabetically for each class indiscriminately, according to the authors' names, I had no choice with respect to maps and charts. Some friends whom I consulted, and who knew as well as myself that no suggestion of mine would ever be attended to by the leading men of the Council, advised me to adhere to the letter of their plan, whatever might be the consequences. It seemed to me so very preposterous, however, that this class should be catalogued in this manner, that after all I thought it better to point out, as delicately as possible, the absurdity of such a principle applied to such a class, and at the same time to suggest a corrective, and on the 1st of March, 1836, I addressed the following letter to the secretaries :

“Gentlemen,—The Catalogue of the scientific books of the Royal Society is all set up (with the exception of one class, *Maps and Charts*), and the *revises* have been returned to the printer for the necessary alterations. I have also written out the titles of almost all this class, excepting those of a few articles which are incomplete ; and I would have sent them to the printer, had I not thought it right to call once more the attention of the Council to the state in which are those documents. It will be useless to know that they form part of the collection if they be not rendered accessible. It would be the more requisite to have them properly arranged, as the alphabetical order adopted for the other classes does not well suit this, to which I should suggest the necessity of adding a special index of places. The Council, on my representing the confusion in which the Maps are, came, long since, to the determination of having them arranged ; but, although I have not failed renewing my representations, nothing has ever been done to carry that determination into effect. I cannot undertake to do it ; but if the Council find a person *competent* to the task, I will see that he performs it in a proper manner. No time will be lost, as I shall, in the meanwhile, proceed to make ready for press the second



part of the Catalogue, so that it may be printed as soon as the first part is struck off.

“ I hope to be favoured with directions as soon as convenient, and I have the honour,” &c.

Not only was no alteration made as to the entries of the titles of this class, not only was no determination come to of having at least an index of places as I suggested, but no notice whatever was taken of my letter, although a resolution was passed, never communicated to me, of having the maps and charts arranged, on some plan of which I have not the least knowledge, even at this moment.

This letter, however, was taken advantage of to annoy me. As I spoke of the *revises* of the catalogue being returned to the printer for the necessary alterations, it was whispered that I acted in contempt of the orders of the Committee, by whose resolution of the 23rd December, 1833, transcribed above, I was desired to send *proofs* to the persons therein mentioned, and that I had no business to revise the *proofs*; that my duty was to send them so soon as set up as directed. I did not care at first for what was said, as I knew that what I intended to do was more advantageous to the Royal Society. My determination was to revise the catalogue *for press*, that is, to have it put into pages, with correct running titles, &c., in fact, brought to as complete a state of perfection as it lay in my power to do, and then to send *revises* as ordered by the resolution of December 23rd, 1833. I then hoped that the gentlemen to whom such revises were sent would examine them with a *critical* and not a *malignant* eye, after making themselves masters of the directions which had been given to me, and of the plan on which I had been obliged to act. For this purpose I intended to accompany each set of *revises* with a kind of circular, in which I meant to explain what orders I had received, and on what principles I had acted in carrying them into execution. This letter *mutatis mutandis* I further intended to prefix to the Catalogue, when published; as a preface to it. The parties ought then to have returned the *revises* to me with such *suggestions* for the improvement of the Catalogue as they might have deemed requisite; leaving, however, to me to adopt them or not, on my own responsibility. No one would have been more grateful than myself if this had been the proceeding acted upon. Aware as I am of my own deficiencies, of the difficulty of the work, of the oversights that persons even the most learned, the most diligent, the most acute cannot



avoid in a compilation of this description, I should no doubt have profited by the observations of the distinguished persons who would have assisted me with their learning; whilst the uniformity so necessary in a work like this would not have been disturbed, principles clashing with each other, would not have been introduced, and I should have had doubly to answer, had I obstinately and wilfully persisted in not correcting such real mistakes as might have been pointed out to me. My reputation being at stake, I should have been most anxious to avoid every just ground of censure; and, should I have been ever so careless of my character, the Royal Society would have had it in their power to make me answerable for my misconduct, having in their hands a large balance due to me, which would have been amply sufficient to make me pay for every page that, owing to my obstinacy, it might be necessary to cancel.

Before, however, such a work could be called *ready for press*, it required at least, four *revises*. The title of a book, its size, date, &c., are all positive *facts*, which admit of no fanciful correction: the same is to be said of the names, surnames, &c., of the author; the peculiar or antiquated orthography, &c. Add to this, all the difficulties of classification; particularly, when so absurd a plan as that which was forced upon me by the Council of the Royal Society was to be executed. It is impossible without confusion, to introduce all corrections at once; and were it even possible it ought not to be attempted, because, by dividing the attention to so many different points, the mind is more apt to overlook errors, which would not escape detection if a regular system were adopted in correcting. My idea was to pay particular attention at one time to the orthography, &c.; at another to the bibliographical points; at a third to the classification, taking notes, as I proceeded, of such errors as required consideration before fixing a precedent as to how they were to be corrected, as well as of all points which deserved maturer reflection. I then should have had the slips reduced into pages, looked to the headings, running titles, &c., settled definitively, and, as far as I could, uniformly, all doubtful points; and this corrected revise I should have considered the sort of *proof* fit for the eyes of the gentlemen mentioned in the resolution of Dec. 23d, 1833.

But this could not be done. Every day I received hints to the effect, that the gentlemen were *ready for me*, that they *were anxious*, that they were *impatient*, &c. They



could not understand *why* I was so long in sending the *proofs*, (as if it were not my interest more than theirs to complete the work as speedily as possible). The annoyance was incessant. On referring to the resolution of Dec. 23d, 1833, I saw there was no doubt they were right as to the *letter*, for it spoke of *proofs*, not *revises*, being sent: to appeal to persons who did not even notice my letters was of no use, and, therefore, I was obliged to act contrary to my conviction, fully persuaded that I was doing what was injurious both to the work and to myself. I hastened to get back the revises from the printer, and without any further correction, I sent them on the 8th of April, 1836, as ordered, taking the precaution of writing on each of them, as follows: *2nd revise, not read*; meaning thereby that it ought to be considered far from the state of perfection to which it was capable of being brought.

On the 25th of April, no revises had been returned, but a meeting of the Library and Catalogue Committee having taken place, the following resolutions were passed:—

- “1. That all comments or notes expressing matters of opinion on the articles in the catalogue be omitted, and that those notes be inserted which relate to the actual condition or state of the book: such notes not to be expressed in the first person.
2. That the Catalogue should be made up to the end of the present month of April.
3. That Mr. Panizzi be requested to make such alterations in the copies of the Catalogue as may be pointed out by the members of the Committee: but, if he should have a doubt on any of the points, that he be requested to refer to either of the persons attached to the class in question.
4. That after the requisite alterations are made, a revise be sent to each member of the Committee as before, with the altered copy.”

Any one conversant with the subject, must see that it was impossible to comply with these resolutions, except by spoiling the work, and almost recompiling it. Lest, however, I might be too precipitate in remonstrating against a principle, which, *practically*, might be indifferent, I waited to see what was the state of the revises, as *altered* by the several learned individuals to whom they had been sent. Had they made few or no alterations, it might have been more easy for me to convince the Committee of the injurious and



unjust effects of their resolutions, and, possibly, I might have succeeded. I went night after night, to the Royal Society's apartments, to see whether any of the revises had been returned corrected. I found there at one time the Class *Astronomy*, with very few alterations, by Mr. Baily; on the margin I made observations upon them, thinking the revise was to be left with me. He, however, took it away; transferred his observations, *modified*, to Mr. Lubbock's copy of the same class, and ordered that the revises of *Miscellaneous* and *Tables*, which had been returned by Mr. Peacock, with two or three very slight and gentlemanly observations, should *not* be delivered to me: and the order has been so well obeyed, that I have never been able to see them since. As for Mr. Lubbock, he had found no fault with the class *Astronomy*, but in one single instance, respecting a work of his own; and in that solitary case he was wrong, and I was right, as he implicitly avowed, by running the pen over his own remark, on my simply requesting that he would have the kindness to look at the works which he had written, and I had catalogued, which he condescended to do. This looked so far promising, as to lead me to hope, that, however bad were the principles laid down in the foregoing resolutions, I should not have practically to complain of their application. In this I was, however, mistaken. The very classes which had passed one ordeal, when submitted to another, were more altered; and, as I had foreseen, the greater was the number of the alterations and of the persons making them in the several classes, the greater were the discrepancies and inconsistencies. One found fault with the length of the titles; another with their shortness: one did not like the arrangement of *Transactions*; others did not object to it; and the same parties would have them arranged one way, in one class, and another in another; in one class, I was desired to make alterations, which, in the identical case in other classes were not required; some disapproved of *Meteorology* being united with *Chemistry*; and others would have no *Physiology* and *Medicine* in the same class with *Anatomy*, which was the same as to wish me to reclass the whole library, after having been compelled to adopt a bad classification; at last, the very type itself, the use of capitals, the use of italics, punctuation, and everything in fact, which had been previously discussed and arranged, was now found fault with, and all laid to my charge, and of course it was expected to be altered.

I then saw that the resolutions were even worse practically than they seemed to be theoretically, and I determined



to show the impossibility of complying with them, as well as the injustice of expecting me to do so. When I speak of impossibility, of course I speak of it consistently with the compilation of a *good* catalogue; and if ever the Council of the Royal Society will submit the case to competent judges, I am ready to prove what I say. The question is, not whether the revises of the Catalogue, which I was obliged to circulate prematurely, were faultless, but whether the alterations which I was desired to make would not render them worse. I contend, that of the real errors which I see in those revises, and which I meant to correct, very few indeed have been perceived by the revisers, whilst many of their proposed alterations are absurd. I will go farther; I will say that whoever brings forth the Catalogue of the Royal Society will never introduce into it the alterations which I was commanded to do: should this be the case, I shall then appeal to the very fact itself as my justification for refusing to do what they themselves will not carry into execution; consequently acquiescing in the justice of my objections. I know that my *unread* revises have been circulated among other gentlemen besides those to whom I had been desired to communicate them, inviting such persons, without mentioning the precise state in which the revises were left, to point out any errors they could discover, in proof of my ignorance. I lament those errors as well as my ignorance, but I am ready to join issue even on the merit of those *revises*, as such. Let them be fairly examined; let the first sheet of *Mathematics*, which I read *twice*, be compared with the first sheet of the same class printed by the Committee's order, and which was read by them at least *six times*, and then let it be decided which of the two is more faulty, and who has the greater reason to be ashamed of his performance.

That the impropriety of the resolutions themselves, independently of the abuse to which they were practically liable, may be better understood, I shall now proceed to examine them shortly in detail. The first is:—"That all comments or notes expressing matters of opinion on the articles in the catalogue be omitted, and that those notes be inserted which relate to the actual condition or state of the book: such notes not to be expressed in the first person." Now, I am not aware of ever having expressed any opinion but what was strictly and properly necessary in compiling a *good* catalogue. I may have been mistaken in the application of the rule, but the principle is unobjectionable. The notes are mostly bibliographical, never



critical on the merit of the work, and the Committee, far from objecting to them, ought to have been thankful that I had taken the trouble of introducing them. I shall give the following specimens. To the entry, "Éléments de Géométrie," said to be by Louis Duke of Bourgogne, printed at Paris in 1729, 8°, I added the following note: "This work is generally supposed to be by Malezieu, mathematical teacher to the Duke, who wrote out the lessons which he received. The publishers in the dedication allude to the fact, that Malezieu possessed a copy of the book in the handwriting of the Duke of Bourgogne." To the "Mémoires" of Charnières on the observations of the longitude, I added this note: "'All the author's additions and corrections carefully put in by J. B.'" This note is on the title-page of this copy, and the volume is interspersed with alterations in manuscript. I suppose J. B. to mean James Bradley." To the "Liber Novem judicium in judiciis Astro- rum," I appended a note as follows: "Panzer v, 398, 489, gives the name Meschella and Ptolomœus incorrectly [instead of Mesehella and Phtolomeus], and also substitutes *huius* for *istius*. The date which, he says, in the title is 1508, is M. D. viiii. in the volume before me; and so it is at the end." To the title of one of the two copies of Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*, printed at Antwerp in 1664, 4°, a note is appended in these words: "On the fly-leaf of this copy occurs the following note:—'Mr. William Lilly (the astrologer) told me that *Monas Hieroglyphica* Δ was made by a friar in Germany, who could have made it knowne to J. Dee, who did not understand it, and y<sup>t</sup> Kelley, perhaps, poysoned the friar; for he did not live long after 1673.' The hand in which this note is written is not known." These, on an average, are some of the longest notes doomed to destruction. Others consist simply of a reference to Panzer's *Annals*, where the book is described, and others are merely: "No more published;" or "with corrections in manuscript;" or "wanting so many volumes or parts." Will any one contend that a catalogue is better without the information contained in these notes than with it? Excepting a few verbal alterations, what else can be objected to them? As for the use of the first person, I have not had recourse to it, except when I found it my duty to do so. Let us turn back to the note to Charnières's *Mémoires*. The author's additions, if put in by Bradley, are of course of much more value than if written by any other J. B.; and I therefore take upon myself the responsibility of saying that "I believe" so; otherwise if I say nothing, the im-



portance of the book is greatly diminished, and if I speak in the third person indefinitely, I may seem to give to my private opinion the sanction of the Society to which the book belongs; and, if I be mistaken, I should be liable to censure for having added the weight of their name to my own errors.

But this is not all. The notes, now objected to, which have given me much trouble, and from which I expected some credit, were inserted with the full knowledge and approbation of the parties who now find fault with them. The note to the *Éléments de Géométrie*, by Louis Duc de Bourgogne, was inserted in the specimen of the Catalogue submitted to the Committee in November, 1832, and was by them approved, as a sample of what these notes were to be; and now it is struck off! As to bibliographical notes, so far were the Committee from objecting to them, that the *Annals of Panzer*, the *Allgemeine bibliographisches Lexikon*, by Ebert, and the *Supplement to Brunet*, were bought on my especial recommendation, for my own assistance in compiling the Catalogue; and of course the use I intended to make of them was not disapproved of. Nor is this enough. Although *all* my bibliographical notes are expunged, one utterly uncalled for, but which may serve to flatter the vanity of the possessor of a book, who happens to be an influential member of the Council, is added for me to insert in the Catalogue!\*

The second resolution is, "That the Catalogue should be made up to the end of the present month of April." I do not know why it should be expected that I should make up the Catalogue to the end of April last. My engagement was to catalogue the books which *were* at the time in the library of the Royal Society, not those which might be added to any indefinite period. My contract with the Royal Society was a *bad bargain*; and, treated as I have been, I do not know why I should have consented to make it worse.

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\* Thinking my trouble would be appreciated, I even went so far as to collate leaf by leaf the rarest books in the Society's library, and I wrote in pencil on the fly-leaf of each, whether it was perfect or not. I state this in order that the Council may have an opportunity of causing such notes to be carefully rubbed out, not as objectionable in themselves, but because signed with my initials; on the principle that unobjectionable works are forbidden by the Court of Rome *in odium auctoris*.



In order to carry on the Catalogue to the end of April, it would have been necessary to add all the volumes or numbers of works in progress, Transactions of Societies, Journals, &c. To do this *well*, may take perhaps a month's time, for which no compensation would be made to me, as the number of *titles* by which I was to be paid would not be increased. I can easily prove that I have been employed on this work at least six months more than I should have been, had I limited myself to do only what I was *bound* to do by my agreement. The collation of Transactions of Societies, and that of Journals, which were scattered all about the library, from the cellars under the apartments of the Geological Society up to the floors of the Royal Society's apartments, and to the very top of the book-presses, took an immense deal of time and trouble; and I now regret having bestowed it for the benefit of a body who have not appreciated it. I put the sets in order, made memoranda of what was wanting, put duplicates aside, had the series bound, placed them on the shelves, &c. All this I did out of a foolish notion that my exertions would have been kindly noticed. Instead of which, by this resolution the Committee, treating me as if I were their servant, order me to add, as a matter of duty, to the work which I had performed out of mere good-will.

The third resolution is expressed as follows: "That Mr. Panizzi be requested to make such alterations in the copies [query *classes*?] of the catalogue as may be pointed out by the members of the Catalogue Committee; but if he should have a doubt on any of the points, that he be requested to refer to either of the persons attached to the class in question." This resolution was passed before any alterations were made by the members of the Catalogue Committee; hence, before the Committee knew what alterations might be pointed out, it was ordered that I should make them: in other words, it was resolved, ere the individual cases were known, that the members of the Committee must be right, and I wrong, and that I must myself stultify my opinion by agreeing to whatever was suggested differing from it. This eventual infallibility is moreover assumed not only for each member of the Committee, but also for every unknown person to whom these members took the unwarrantable liberty of communicating the revises I had sent to them. I was allowed to be sure "if I had *a* doubt" to petition "either of the persons attached to the class in question." But did it never occur to the Committee that "either of the



persons" might be of a different opinion from the other? Was I to enter into a controversy for every "doubt" with the learned persons who differed from me? Have the Committee any idea what trouble a single alteration might cause, and what inconsistencies it might occasion?

The 4th and last resolution, "That after the requisite alterations are made, a revise be sent to each member of the Committee as before with the altered copy," could not be submitted to by me after I had seen what were the effects of sending revises to the same gentlemen. Moreover, where could I expect this would end? After a second revise what could have prevented them requiring a third and a fourth? And why should I not have been requested to alter as much as they pleased, or have had to answer a volume of doubts?

Having learned to my cost, that the altered revises might be taken from me, as was done with those of Mr. Peacock; and these being indispensable documents for my defence, I waited till the rest had been returned, directed to me; and then having carefully examined them, and put them out of the reach of those who had unwarrantably detained the others, I addressed the following letter to the Secretaries of the Royal Society on the 17th of June, 1836:

"When I undertook the compilation of the Catalogue of the Royal Society, it was on the positive agreement, that I should perform the task 'in the mode to be agreed upon by the Committee:' which means that they were to devise a plan, and I was to execute it. This I have done, as well as I could, under disadvantages which I have in vain endeavoured to remove. From certain resolutions lately communicated to me, as well as from some alterations which I am ordered to make in that part of the Catalogue now in type, I find that my exertions to give satisfaction are useless: that, by my acquiescing, out of mere respect to the Royal Society, to perform what I was not bound by my agreement, with no inconsiderable loss, I am called upon to make further sacrifices without regard either to my interest, or to my feelings; and that I am to give up the only hope, which induced me to undertake the task, and to submit to great hardships—that of gaining some credit in the execution of the work.



“Under these circumstances I respectfully appeal to the Council through you, against being called upon to comply with the resolutions now communicated to me, not being bound to do so by my agreement, which I am ready to fulfil, on my own responsibility, to the utmost of my power, honourably and strictly according to its letter and spirit. Should the Council doubt my having done my duty, or disagree with me in the interpretation I put upon our contract, I am ready to submit the whole case to any *competent* judge, and will abide by the decision of any two gentlemen conversant with the subject, one to be elected by the Council, and another by myself. I shall not object to the Council appointing on their behalf a member of their own body, or a member of the Catalogue Committee, as I am confident of the justice of my case, when once understood. Nor do I wish to force myself upon the Royal Society, on the strength of my right to carry on the work as agreed upon. I am ready to rescind that agreement on such conditions as any two referees will determine.

“Had the revises which I sent on the 8th of April last to certain gentlemen, by order of the Catalogue Committee, been returned sooner, I should ere this have communicated to you my resolution on the subject. Several of these *revises* have been returned only this moment, and one of them is even now detained at the Royal Society, although the gentleman to whom it was sent returned it about two months ago, no doubt intending it should come to me.

“I beg to assure the Council, that it is with great reluctance I have come to this determination, after having borne much to avoid the unpleasant necessity of taking this step; and have the honour to be,” &c.

Nearly a week elapsed before an answer was vouchsafed to this letter, and I thought a fresh fit of oblivion had taken the Council, when I received the following letter:—

*Royal Society, June 24, 1836.*

“Sir,—I am directed to request the favour of your attendance on Monday next, the 27th instant, at 4 o'clock, to meet the Library and Catalogue Committee; when the subject of your letter, which was laid before



the Council on Thursday last, will be taken into consideration.—I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN D. ROBERTON,  
Assist. Sec. R. S.”

I addressed the Secretaries in the following words :—

*June 25, 1836.*

“ Gentlemen,—When I was expecting to have the honour to hear *from you* the result of my application to the Council of the Royal Society, expressed in my last letter *to you*, I was surprised to receive a communication *from the assistant secretary*, requesting me to attend a meeting of the Catalogue and Library Committees on Monday next, when the subject of my letter, which I am told was laid before the Council on Thursday last, is to be taken into consideration. I beg to inform the Council through you, that after due consideration I think it would not be advisable for me to attend as requested. Whenever I attended before, I was not so well satisfied with my position as to wish to be in it again.

“ Lest what I had the honour to state be misunderstood, I beg to repeat, with respect to the subject of my former letter, that I am ready to perform my contract, or to refer any point connected with it to any two gentlemen, to be mutually fixed upon.

“ I am ready to give the most unlimited powers to such referees, if the Royal Society will do the same on their side.”

In consequence of this letter, I was favoured with the following communication from Dr. Roget :

*Royal Society, July 7th, 1836.*

“ Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that the Council of the Royal Society, at their meeting this day, came to the following resolutions, on the subject of your letter of the 17th ult.

“ ‘ *Resolved*,—That the Council regret that Mr. Panizzi should find any difficulty in complying with the Resolutions of the Catalogue Committee of the 25th of April last ; but, in order to meet Mr. Panizzi’s



wishes, the Council consent that he should consider the remarks of the Committee only as suggestions for his guidance.

“ ‘ *Resolved*,—That Mr. Panizzi be requested to expedite the scientific portion of the work already set up, and to send a final revise to the Secretary as soon as possible.’ ”

“ I am further desired to request you will favour me with an early answer.—I have the honour,” &c.

The terms of these resolutions were most welcome : I had been privately informed that the Council had acceded to my wishes, and that, by the words, that “ the remarks of the Committee should be considered only suggestions for my guidance,” they meant in fact to leave entirely to me the adoption or rejection of the suggested alterations, on my responsibility, which was precisely what I contended for ; and I should never have doubted that this was the fair meaning of the resolution, prefaced as it was by the *plausible* professions of “ meeting my wishes.” A friend, who has kindly advised me throughout this business, thought there was something awkward, or to speak plainly, *crooked*, in the words “ suggestions for my guidance ;” for, he said, “ as they want you to send what they call a final revise to the Secretary, they clearly mean to have the power of altering again. If you acquiesce now, the same question as to their right of making you alter what you have done will eventually be raised once more, and your acquiescence will then be brought forward against you. The word *guidance*, moreover, means that you are to be *guided* by the suggestions made, rather than that you are to be *guided* by your own discretion and judgment. In fact this is a resolution, by which nothing is decided, and still less granted.” He then advised me to ask for a downright categorical answer : “ if the Council (he continued) do really mean to meet your wishes, they will so explain their resolution as to leave no doubt ; if, on the contrary, there be but an apparent concession, they will be driven to say so openly and clearly.” I therefore, on the next day, addressed the following letter to Doctor Roget :

“ Sir,—I have the honour to receive your letter of yesterday’s date, conveying two resolutions of the Council of the Royal Society, and I hasten to inform you,



“As to the first, that however kind the Council may consider it to consent that I should look upon the remarks of the Catalogue Committee, as suggestions for my guidance, I must respectfully insist upon my right of considering the resolutions of the 25th of April last, one and all, altogether null and void, being, as I contend, at direct variance with the terms of my contract. I called upon the Council, as the party with whom I have contracted, either to agree with me in my view of the case, or else to refer the point, and I conceive I am entitled to a categorical answer, either one way or the other.

“As to the second resolution, calling upon me to expedite the scientific portion of the Catalogue already set up, I beg to remind the Council, that if I had not been so often unjustly interfered with, the Catalogue would be already printed by this time. The revises were forwarded to the several gentlemen, to whom I was desired to send them, on the 8th of April last. The whole of them is not returned as yet, and I do not see how the Council can call upon me to expedite the Catalogue, as if I were to answer for the delay which has taken place, owing to the revises being so long detained. I requested, *in writing*, Mr. Robertson, more than two months ago, to send to the several gentlemen by whom the revises were detained, urging their return, but Mr. Baily took away my written memorandum, and ordered Mr. Robertson not to take any steps. In fact, I believe that in my memorandum I had desired Mr. Robertson to mention the delay to the Treasurer. On the 17th of June, I received the last parcel of revises as yet returned, and on that very day I wrote to you, requesting the Council either to agree with me as to the interpretation of my contract, or refer the point in question; and your favour of yesterday is the answer to my letter. Surely I am not to blame for the delay. On the contrary, I suffer severely by it: my time is wasted away, as I am neither allowed to perform my contract, nor set at liberty, so as to be able to engage on something else. It is owing to the Council and to their Committee that I have not proceeded, and I expect a compensation for my loss of time.

“I now again entreat the Council to honour me with a positive answer, either explicitly declaring that



they agree with me in the view I take of the case, or else appointing a person to whom they refer the decision of the point or points on which we should disagree. I shall be guided by their example as to the extent of power to be given to the referees: the one on my side shall be ready at a day's notice.

"Let every member of the Council ask himself whether I could have made a fairer proposal; and if each of them feels that I could do no more, let them not as a body refuse to do what they would not feel justified in refusing as individuals.

"In the hope of being honoured with a positive and explicit answer without further loss of time, I remain," &c.

On the 14th of July, I received the following answer from Dr. Roget, dated on the previous day:

"Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th inst., in which you mention your having received my communication to you of the resolutions of the Council of the Royal Society of the 7th, but in which you do not supply the information they are desirous of obtaining, and with which they expect that you will favour me. The full concession which, on your appealing to them, the Council have made to your wishes with regard to the resolutions of the Catalogue Committee you complained of, and the only ground on which, as far as can be collected from your letters, you had objected to proceed with the Catalogue, appeared to them to be a sufficient answer to your questions on that subject, and to entitle them to a definite answer from you relative to your willingness to comply with the wish expressed in the second resolution of the Council, which I had the honour to communicate to you; namely, whether you are willing to proceed with the revision of that part of the Catalogue already set up in type, and return the revises, finally corrected in whatever manner you may think proper, to the Secretaries? It is important that the Council should learn your determination at their meeting to-morrow, that no further time may be lost in bringing the work to a conclusion.—I have the honour," &c.

I was perfectly aware, even before receiving this letter,



that Dr. Roget and one or two more members of the Council supposed the resolutions of the 7th to be "a full concession to my wishes;" or that in other words they put upon it the same interpretation which *I* had at first attached to it; the question was not whether some members of the Council were of that opinion, but whether the Council as a body would so interpret it, in which case there could be no possible objection to pass a straightforward explanatory resolution. But I had learned that the influential members of the Council did not agree with Dr. Roget in the interpretation which he honestly put upon those resolutions, and that the intention was either themselves to introduce or force me to introduce such alterations as they might please to order on perusing the revise which I was to send to the secretary. Attempts like this to take advantage of my good faith excited in me such feelings as they must in every candid man's mind, and I thought that the best means of defeating such proceedings was to write plainly and openly my views of them, and leave no room for more mystification. I therefore dispatched the following reply to Dr. Roget :

*July 14th, 1836.*

"Sir,—I receive this moment your letter of yesterday's date, to which I hasten to answer immediately to comply with your wishes. I do not know what information the Council want from me, and therefore cannot give any. The Catalogue Committee ordered me to do certain things: I answered, I was not bound to comply with their orders. It now rests with the Council to say who is right, and, in case they suppose I am wrong, to refer the points in dispute.

"From your letter of yesterday it seems that the Council have made "a full concession to my wishes" in their resolutions of the 7th inst. If I be not mistaken in my interpretation they have only to state explicitly that the resolutions of the Catalogue Committee are to be considered as null and void, or refer the point whether I can be obliged to comply with them or any of them. Till this is done I cannot proceed with the Catalogue.

"As to the 2nd resolution of the Council, by which I am ordered to return the revises to the Secretaries finally corrected, I regret not being able to comply with that resolution. I am ready to refer this point also, if the Council differ from me.



“When I engaged to compile the Catalogue of the Royal Society Library, I never could think that so little confidence was to be placed on my judgment and qualifications, as that I should ever be insulted with an order of submitting my work to any revision. Why did the Council choose me if they did not think I was fully competent to perform the task? and if it be not because they suppose me incompetent, why should they wish me to send revises to the Secretaries? I am ready to complete the work according to my contract and on my own responsibility: this I have said over and over again. But I shall never consent for any one, be he who he may, to make any alterations in it. This I have a right to: but this point also I will submit to any reference. At the same time I will not stand on my right: I offer again to the Council to give up the work immediately on such terms as any two referees will determine. I never forced myself on the Council, and if they wish to rescind the contract entered into with me, let them say so openly and manfully, and not try to impose conditions on me, which they must feel I can never submit to.—I have the honour,” &c.

It was possible, however, that I might have been misinformed as to the views of the majority of the Council with regard to the real meaning of the two resolutions in question. As I wished to leave nothing untried in order to bring this discussion to an amicable arrangement, I thought that if I personally stated my case to the Council and heard what they had to say, we might come to an understanding. If they really meant to leave to me the correction of the catalogue, and only intended to look over the revise, which I had been desired to send to the secretary, and not to obtain other copies from the printer, to be scattered about as the first were, all would at once be settled. I was disposed to agree with them in appointing one or two responsible gentlemen as referees, and I should have objected neither to the secretaries, or one of them, nor to any other member of the Council or Committee: and upon a friendly and fair examination, I would have submitted to make such alterations in the catalogue as they might deem expedient, after having maturely considered any point, and heard me upon it. I therefore begged of Mr. König to inform the Council, who met either at one or



three, that I should be at the British Museum until four o'clock, and ready to wait upon them if they would be so good as to grant me an interview. Mr. König had the kindness to inform them of this, but they declined sending for me, and came to the following resolutions, which were communicated to me by Dr. Roget in these words:

*Royal Society, July 14th, 1836.*

“ Sir,—I have the honour to communicate to you the following Resolutions to which the Council have come, after having taken into consideration the correspondence which has past between us since their last meeting.

“ ‘ Mr. Panizzi having refused to proceed with the Catalogue unless the Resolutions of the Catalogue Committee of the 25th of April are to be considered null and void; and having also refused to permit any alterations to be made in the Catalogue,

“ ‘ *Resolved*,—That Mr. Panizzi be no longer employed in the formation of the Catalogue.

“ ‘ *Resolved*,—That Mr. Panizzi be desired to return, without delay, to the Secretary, the revises of the Catalogue, now in his possession.’—I have the honour,” &c.

These resolutions prove at once the value of the professions of the Council, “of meeting my wishes,” and the importance of the “full concession” they had made; for it is evident that they did not mean to meet my wishes at all, still less to concede any thing. They alone, of all men, or all bodies of men, could have had the coolness, in the face of the foregoing letters, to say that I had *refused* to proceed with the catalogue. My answer to this communication needs no additional remarks, and to that answer I beg to refer Your Royal Highness. I must here be allowed to make an observation on that delicacy of proceeding which distinguishes the body over which Your Royal Highness presides. There were eight members present at the board when these resolutions were passed, and I was refused a hearing. Of these, five were members of that very Committee of whose conduct I complained, and the other three I believe had never taken any part in this business, were not members of the Committee when I agreed to draw up the Catalogue, and had not heard read at the board the original terms of my contract. Such were the impartial



and well informed gentlemen who passed the foregoing resolutions, and who after all were driven to assign as the ground for those resolutions what was at variance with the truth. The following was my answer to Dr. Roget's communication :

*July 15th, 1836.*

“ I had the honour to receive last evening your letter conveying to me the resolutions of the Council of the Royal Society at yesterday's meeting, and I beg to make some observations upon them : *I did not refuse* ‘ to proceed with the Catalogue unless the resolutions of the Catalogue Committee of the 25th of April be considered null and void.’ In my letter of yesterday morning, I requested the Council to state explicitly whether I were to understand ‘ the full concessions which’ (as you stated in your favour of the preceding day,) ‘ the Council have made to *my* wishes,’ as declaring the resolutions of the 25th of April null and void, that being the point on which my wishes differed from theirs ; or, if not, that I COULD *not* (not WOULD *not*) proceed until either those resolutions were annulled, or a reference made to ascertain whether I were compelled to comply with them, or, if they ought not to be declared null and void, as being contrary to the terms of my contract, which states that *I* am to make the Catalogue, *not stating* that I am to make it subject to the revision of any individual. This, however, the resolutions passed in April last, clearly indicated as being *now* the desire of the Committee, and this I felt *impossible* to comply with, as injuriously interfering with my arrangements, to the prejudice of the work, increasing my labour to a great extent, and contrary to the contract of my being free in executing the plan of the Catalogue entrusted to my care.

“ I cannot forbear to point out to the Council what seems to me *unjust* : It lay with them to select a competent person to form their Catalogue, and when they had found such as, I suppose, they thought me, (or I should not have been chosen,) they contracted with me accordingly. Then surely the Committee had no right to interfere by passing the resolutions of April last, which, if agreed to, would take from me the responsibility and the credit of the work :



that credit I had flattered myself to obtain, as I have before stated, by fulfilling my contract with the strictest attention and industry.

“ If, however, as I am led to understand from the first resolution passed yesterday, the Council wish to rescind the contract made with me, I am ready to accede to their request on such terms as any two referees, which I still demand to be appointed, shall decide upon. I only beg to add, that as I have constantly answered your letters immediately, you will oblige me with a reply as early as convenient; and I have the honour, &c.”

This letter being addressed to an honest man, could not fail to make some impression against the justice of the resolutions of the 14th; the following was Dr. Roget's answer :

*Bernard Street, July 16, 1836.*

“ Sir,—I had the honour to receive your letter of yesterday's date, which, as I am about to leave town for a few weeks, I shall deliver to Mr. Children, to be by him laid before the Council at their next meeting.

“ It is, of course, impossible for me to anticipate what measures the Council will adopt on your letter being read to them; I shall, therefore, in the meanwhile, only observe upon it, that the decision which they came to at their last meeting, was founded on the understanding they have always had, that the formation of the Catalogue, by whomsoever undertaken, was to be under the superintendence of the Committee whom they appointed for that purpose. —I have the honour to be,” &c.

Here, at last, something like a reason for the conduct of the Council was for the first time given. Their decision, it seems, was founded on “ the understanding,” that the formation of the Catalogue was to be under the superintendence of their Committee. It was only necessary for them, therefore, to prove that “ the understanding ” had been made known to me, and that I either formally or tacitly had acquiesced in it. They would then have shown at once how groundless was my opposition; and either forced me to proceed according to that understanding, or have rendered me liable to the consequences of having refused to perform the contract on the terms agreed upon. I therefore wrote as follows to Mr. Children :



July 17th, 1836.

“Sir,—From a letter dated yesterday, which I have had the honour to receive this moment from Dr. Roget, I learn that a letter of mine to him of the previous day will be delivered to you, to be laid before the Council of the Royal Society; and I take therefore the liberty of addressing to you a few observations on Dr. Roget’s letter, as they may materially tend to settle the points now under discussion between the Council and myself. Dr. Roget states, that “the decision which they came to at their last meeting, was founded on the understanding they have always had, that the formation of the Catalogue, by whomsoever undertaken, was to be under the superintendence of the Committee whom they appointed for that purpose.” The understanding here mentioned explains their decision, which, however, they themselves would be disposed to consider unjust, if they were to find out that they laboured under an erroneous impression as to the terms under which I engaged to compile their Catalogue. I undertook to do so ‘in the mode to be agreed upon by the Committee,’ not subject to any revision or superintendence as to the execution of that *mode* or *plan*. This is the understanding I have always had as to the formation of the work, and I have acted under that impression, when I have appealed to the Council a month ago, ‘against being called upon to comply with the resolutions (of the 25th of April), not being bound to do so by my agreement, which, (as I then, and after have repeatedly declared, and as I once more beg to declare) I am ready to fulfil on my own responsibility to the utmost of my power, honourably and strictly, according to its letter and spirit.’

“I cannot help thinking, that the terms of our contract are misunderstood by the Council, not by me. I was to compile the Catalogue ‘in the mode to be agreed upon by the Committee,’ and I contend that the ‘*mode* having been agreed upon,’ it was my part to execute the work, not subject to any superintendence whatever. Will the Council do me the honour to point out where and when they have proposed, and I have agreed, that the formation of the Catalogue should be under the superintendence of their Committee?



“Feeling fully convinced that my view of the case is correct, the Council will see that I could not act differently, from what I have done. I never pretended, however, that my opinion was to be received as correct by them, and I therefore proposed that the point should be referred to two *competent* judges, and offered to abide by their decision. I went further, and offered, even should I be found right, to rescind my contract (thereby leaving the Council and Committee to interfere, revise, and alter *afterwards* as much as they pleased, both the plan and the execution of the work), on such terms as two referees would decide upon. This I am still ready to do.

“I now entreat you to consider for a moment, as a practical man and conversant with the subject, whether it be possible for any man to execute a work of this description, subject to any interference, and particularly to that of a body of men liable to be changed every year. Could I have undertaken the work under such conditions? Suppose the Trustees of the British Museum were to interfere with their officers in such a manner, would the collections be in better order, or the catalogues be better compiled? It is not more my interest than that of the Society, and of the Catalogue, that the whole responsibility should be left with me. I in vain did all I could to persuade the Committee not to adopt the *mode* of classification that they preferred; but I felt that in this case I must yield, however highly I might disapprove of the plan. But as to its execution, I feel I have a right to persist in not being forced to depart from my agreement.

“As I do not wish to be led, by my feelings, to say anything that might in the least be considered disrespectful to the Council, I have abstained from noticing the wording of the first resolution of the 14th inst. It seems extraordinary that the Council should consider me bound solely by their will, ‘that I should no longer be *employed*’ in compiling the Catalogue. Surely the power of cancelling a contract does not depend on one party alone; and under these circumstances, it appears to me that the Council were not justifiable in expressing themselves in such terms. But probably they forgot, at the mo-



ment, that we are mutually bound to each other, and that my *employment* cannot cease, without my consent, till the Catalogue be completed, as agreed in 1832. I need only add, that I shall be glad to hear as soon as convenient, what is their further determination on the subject, and I have the honour," &c.

The following is Mr. Children's answer:—

*British Museum, July 29, 1836.*

"Sir,—I communicated your letter to Dr. Roget, of the 15th inst., and also that to myself of the 17th, to the Council of the Royal Society at its meeting yesterday; and I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of the resolutions of the Council passed in consequence.—I have the honour," &c.

"*Resolved*,—That the Council see no reason to depart from either of their resolutions of the 14th instant.

"*Resolved*,—That Mr. Panizzi be again desired to return the revises of the Catalogue now in his possession, without delay.

"*Resolved*,—That Mr. Panizzi be requested to return the duplicate key of certain drawers, containing the MS. slips of the Catalogue, to the Secretaries."

To this communication I made the following reply, addressed to Mr. Children:

*July 29, 1836.*

"Sir,—In answer to your letter of this day's date, conveying the resolutions passed by the Council of the Royal Society at their meeting of yesterday, I have the honour to observe;

"As to the 1st,—That as the Council persist in preventing me from executing my agreement, I can do no more than I have done; and that with them alone will rest the consequences.

"As to the 2nd, respecting the return of the revises, I beg to say that I consider them my own property, having been returned to me by the gentlemen who made their remarks upon them. They are, moreover, documents of the highest importance for justifying my conduct. As, however, I wish to convince



any impartial person that I have always endeavoured to act with all possible deference to the Council, I am ready to relinquish my claim, and return them immediately, provided they be previously examined by two mutual friends, who will either declare that those corrected revises show that I have acted according to my instructions, or point out in what, and how far, I am blameable. You cannot fail to perceive that, were I to return the revises without taking a step like the one proposed, I might be charged at a future time with not having done my duty as bound, both in sending the Catalogue to press, and in declaring I could not make the requested alterations, and I should be deprived of the means of disproving the charge. If any simpler manner occurs to you of guarding my interest, I will readily fall into your views, and give up the revises at a moment's notice.

“As to the 3rd, respecting the key of the drawers containing, as you know, the manuscript *slips* of the Catalogue, according to custom, these slips are the property of the writer: I will, however, waive my right, even in this instance. But before returning the key, I beg you will have the goodness to meet me at the Royal Society, that we may count how many thousand titles the drawers contain. If you do not like the trouble of counting them yourself, we might appoint a person authorised by us both to do so, and take his word as to their number. I shall be happy to proceed as early as convenient with these arrangements, and have the honour,” &c.

Upon this Mr. Children wrote to me the following letter:

*British Museum, August 1, 1836.*

“Dear Sir,—I am sorry that I cannot comply with the proposals contained in your letter of the 29th ult., as I do not feel myself at liberty to take any step without the express direction of the Council, before whom I shall lay your communication at the earliest opportunity, though I fear there will not be another meeting of that body for some time. I regret that that or any other cause should delay the termination of this unfortunate affair, and am ever, dear Sir,” &c.

That the importance of this key, which I was called



upon to return, may be fully understood, it is necessary for me to state, that upon my undertaking the compilation of the Catalogue, I asked for some desks or drawers, *with a private key*, in which to deposit my papers, particularly the *slips* of the Catalogue, to which I wished no person to have access for two reasons. 1st. Because, if any slip were lost, mislaid, or misplaced, it might be the cause of serious errors and great loss of time. 2dly. Because, as I was to be remunerated according to the work done, every one of those slips would be, at the conclusion of my labour, the representative of somewhat more than eightpence, and I had a right as well as an interest to take care of every one of them. I found shortly after, that it would be convenient both for Mr. Roberton and myself, that he should have a duplicate key of the drawers appropriated exclusively to my use, and at my request a duplicate key was procured, and was by me delivered into Mr. Roberton's hands, he being then paid partly out of my own pocket as my assistant, under the most solemn and specific pledge on his part, never to allow any one either to have possession of that key, or access to the drawers, without my consent. This promise was given so solemnly, was so often reiterated, and, as Mr. Roberton has repeatedly told me, was so religiously kept, that I never could have suspected him to be capable of breaking it.

On receiving Mr. Children's letter, I expressed to a Member of the Council my regret at the inconvenience to which the Council might be put by their not having access to the drawers; but I was told that no inconvenience would be felt, as the duplicate key in Mr. Roberton's hands would be made use of, without caring for the terms under which he had obtained possession of it. I immediately took the step mentioned in the following letter to Mr. Children:

August 2, 1836.

“ Dear Sir,—I called this morning on Mr. Roberton, to whom, when it was agreed he should assist me, whilst I was compiling the Catalogue, I had given a duplicate key of the drawers containing my manuscript slips, on the *express condition and on his word*, that he would not allow either that key, or the contents of the drawers to be used by any person without my special permission, to ask him whether he recollected his promise, and to request that at least till



the titles be counted he should adhere to it. He could not deny this understanding; but not daring to admit its correctness, he refused to give any answer on the subject, being evidently afraid of displeasing the Council by speaking the truth.

“ I beg to inform you of the circumstance, feeling certain that, when the terms are known on which I allowed Mr. Robertson to have the duplicate key now in his possession, no gentleman, either in his private capacity or as a member of the Council, will tempt him to break his word by endeavouring to have access to the drawers without my consent, and to make use of the key in question before the titles are counted. Your own delicate and honourable feelings will suggest to you better than any words, the impropriety of a proceeding which I do not even contemplate as possible.—I remain, dear Sir,” &c.

It was a long time before I received an answer to this letter. Meanwhile I was informed that even before the receipt of my letter of the 29th of July, that is, before it was known what answer I should give as to returning my key, the duplicate, which I had so confidentially placed in Mr. Robertson's hands, had been resorted to, he having been induced to break his word, and my property having, therefore, been taken possession of in a surreptitious manner. It then appeared that *my* key, which I had been asked to return, was never wanted, but that the asking for it was merely a covert attempt by the Council of the Royal Society to take my property from me; for, had I given up, without any observation, the key containing the slips, it would have been tantamount to my acknowledging that I had no claim on the Council, for the slips contained in the drawers. Could I have foreseen that Mr. Robertson would ever have been induced to give up the key, I should not have intrusted him with it; this, however, might not have been of much advantage to me, since the parties who could so far forget themselves as to prevail upon a man to break his word, might very consistently not have hesitated in breaking open the drawers in order to possess themselves of their contents.

Nearly three months afterwards, that is, on the 27th of Oct., I received the following from Mr. Children:—



“Dear Sir,—I communicated your letters, addressed to myself, of the respective dates of July 29th, and August 2nd, to the Council of the Royal Society, at its meeting this day, and have the honour to forward a Copy of the resolution, which was passed in consequence.—I remain, dear Sir,” &c.

“*Resolved*,—‘That in consequence of Mr. Panizzi having refused to return to the Society the revises of the Catalogue, with the corrections made by the Members of the Library Committee, and the duplicate key of the drawers, containing the slips, the Council decline to enter into any further correspondence with him on the subject of his letters.’”

For the Council to say, on the teeth of my letter of the 29th of July, that I *refused* to return the revises and the key, requires an incredible assurance. The fact is, and, however disagreeable to me, I must state it, that this unfounded assertion was made by the Council in order to avoid the necessity of settling their accounts with me. They could not, as gentlemen, say that I refused to give up the key: there could be no mistake as to that: the refusal was a bold invention of the person who proposed that resolution, and whose name, did I happen to know it, I would here insert, that his assertions might be in future received with the confidence which they deserve. With respect to “declining any further correspondence with me,” whose only fault it was to have firmly, as well as respectfully, defended my right, I will say that so gratuitous an insult would never have been allowed had not Mr. Baily filled the chair at that meeting. As I was to be paid by the number of titles, the Council, by taking possession of the slips, and refusing to count them, deprived me of the means of substantiating my claims; and thus took the most decisive step against the possibility of being compelled to pay what was owing to me. The refusing to have the titles counted, after having taken possession of them in so unworthy a manner, could leave no doubt as to the object of these proceedings. I felt that I had no remedy; I determined, however, not to allow their glaring misstatements to pass uncontradicted, and I wrote the following letter to Mr. Children:



Oct. 28, 1836.

“Dear Sir,—I beg you will excuse the trouble of this letter, but, as it was to you that I had the honour to address the one in which the Council discover what is certainly not in it, I cannot forbear addressing to you this answer to their incorrect assertions. In my letter of the 29th of July, far from refusing to return the revises or the key of the drawers containing my slips, I expressly said, that, *the revises should be returned at a moment's notice, as soon as either my suggestions were adopted, or any other means devised by you of guarding my interest, as I then explained; and as for the key, I requested that the contents of the drawers should be ascertained, in the way most agreeable, and as soon as convenient to yourself before returning it.* If you had said you had counted the titles yourself, or if you promised to do so, I would then, and I will now return the key immediately.

“It is the more vexatious to be treated as I am in yesterday's resolution, as it was in deference to the wishes of the first officer of the Royal Society that the titles were not counted long ago. On the 4th of July, 1833, I wrote to the treasurer an official letter, requesting that the titles should be then counted. He replied on the 7th, in most friendly and flattering terms, suggesting that this should not be done till after the printing of the Catalogue. Now the Council will not allow me to have anything more to do with the work, and, taking advantage of my acquiescence in the wishes of Mr. Lubbock, avoid to comply with so just a request, as that the contents of the drawers should be ascertained! And as a pretext for such conduct, they say I *refused* to do what on the contrary I offered to do, on such terms as might be most agreeable and convenient to yourself, their Secretary!

“I can well understand, that the Council must be anxious to decline any further correspondence with one whom they have unjustly used, whose arguments and facts are more easily misstated than answered, and whose fair proposals it is less difficult to evade, than honestly meet.



“Excuse once more the trouble ; but I could not let such glaring misstatements pass uncontradicted, and believe me always,” &c.

In answer to which I received the following communication from that gentleman :—

*Copy from the Minutes of Council, 3rd Nov. 1836.*

“Mr. Children read to the Council a letter, received by him from Mr. Panizzi ; dated British Museum, 28th of October, 1836, and addressed to him.

*Resolved*,—“ ‘That, with a view to the final settlement of any pecuniary claims which Mr. Panizzi may have on the Society, Mr. Children be requested to superintend the accurate determination of the number of slips which have been prepared by Mr. Panizzi for the Catalogue.’—A true copy,

J. G. CHILDREN,  
Sec. R. S.”

“ British Museum, 14th Nov. 1836.

“ *Mem.* These minutes have not yet been *confirmed*.

J. G. C.”

If to determine accurately the contents of the drawers was not requisite and just in July and October, why was it acceded to in November ? And if it were so in November why was it refused in July and October ? Why was I not allowed to be *then* present, or to have some one assisting at the reckoning ? As to the stress laid on my letter being addressed to Mr. Children, the Council ought to have recollected that my letters were always directed either to Mr. Children, or Dr. Roget ; yet, on that pretext, *they did not insert the last one in their minutes, nor print it like the rest*, for the use of the members of the Council, although they printed the resolution to which that letter gave origin.

This is the last communication in writing which I have received from the Council of the Royal Society ; I have never been informed whether the foregoing resolution has been yet confirmed. All hostile resolutions were immedi-



ately communicated to me, without any *salvo* as to their being unconfirmed: they were injurious to me, *ergo* they were binding. Before I received this last resolution in writing, I was verbally informed of its tenor by Mr. Children, who at the same time refused to receive the famous key, which I offered to return; this key not having been claimed since, I take the liberty of enclosing it to Your Royal Highness. He also asked me whether I objected to Mr. Shuckard's counting the titles; I said that I could have no objection. Mr. Children has since told me that the titles were somewhat more than 24,000; on which I observed, I wished he would write rather than speak to me on the subject. He has not written to me, neither has any thing been communicated to me by any other person. Three months have elapsed, many meetings of the Council have been held, but nothing has been done with respect to the Catalogue, or to my claims on the Society: nothing at least has come to my knowledge, save that passage in Your Royal Highness's address, which has compelled me to lay the whole facts of the case before Your Royal Highness and the Society at large.

The situation in which I am now placed is such, as to preclude me from any remedy. The Council, knowing the precise number of titles which I have catalogued, know to a fraction how much they owe me; and as they do not pay the balance, there can be no doubt they do not mean to pay it, unless they be compelled to it. Now they are well aware that I have not the means of compulsion, in as much as I cannot prove how many thousand titles they took from my drawers; I am therefore stopped *in limine*, and cannot even make a claim upon them. Possibly there is some legal means of obtaining redress; but in a country like this, justice is not a luxury for a poor man to indulge in; and the Council, having at their disposal the funds of the Royal Society, can amuse themselves, without personal trouble or loss, with a law suit which I have not the means of sustaining. As for public opinion, I am not so silly as to think that any one will care a rush about my loss, and the injustice to which I must submit. Moreover, a powerful body like the Council, who do not scruple at trifles, will find it very easy to misrepresent the case, and to raise an outcry against an *alien* whose wrongs may be made a subject of sport and ridicule. All this I know: the Council know it too. Had I been an English-



man, well connected, with good interest, assisted by powerful friends disposed to see justice done to me, I should never have had to submit to the treatment which the Council have nobly dared to use towards me.

At present were I to stoop to be patronized by great men, and through them to crave as a boon what I claim as my right, I might receive through a *job*, what I do not get through justice. But although the Council may glory in their achievement in retaining what they owe to me, they shall never have the power of exulting in my having condescended to beg of them to act honestly. It is no small pride for me, that the Council of the Royal Society do not disdain to appropriate my property to the increase "of their limited funds," by means which I have no doubt are justified, in their opinion, by the end which they have in view—the advancement of natural—if not moral—science.

It would be an empty boast were I to say that the pecuniary loss which I must needs submit to is indifferent to me. It is no such thing; yet I can conscientiously say, that I should never have taken the trouble of writing on this subject, had the pecuniary loss been the only consequence of the conduct of the Council towards me. But, after the observations made by Your Royal Highness, were I to submit without stating the whole truth, I might be suspected guilty either of unwillingness or incapability of fulfilling my contract, and that I could not brook. I have offered over and over again to the Council, through the secretaries, to refer our disputes to any two competent judges; the consciousness of their being in the wrong has made the Council shrink from this fair proposal. I can and will do no more. If, however, Your Royal Highness considers it no more than due to the character of the Royal Society, that the transactions between the Council and myself should be thoroughly and openly investigated, I will readily and cheerfully submit them to the consideration of a tribunal so constituted. If, on the contrary, Your Royal Highness be advised that no further steps need be taken in the matter, I shall have my own opinion of the conduct of the Council, and the Society at large, as well as the Public, will be at liberty to form their own. They will perceive that a contract was entered into between the Council of the Royal Society and myself for the performance of a literary work: That the Council broke the terms of that



contract: That they refused to state by what right they did so: That they would never answer my proposals of referring to arbitration any point in which they thought I did not act in accordance with our agreement: That, after the rudest and most uncourteous proceeding, they stooped to having clandestine access to private drawers containing the proofs of what they owe to me, and have now the meanness not to pay their debt, which by their dishonest proceedings they are aware it is out of my power legally to claim.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Sir,

Your Royal Highness's

Very obedient and very humble Servant,

A. PANIZZI.

*January* 28th, 1837.



*The following LETTER will explain the reason of the delay which has taken place in the publication of these pages.*

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

BRITISH MUSEUM,

Nov. 4, 1837.

SIR,

THE Address which I have the honor to lay before Your Royal Highness was printed at the end of last January, but was not put into circulation, as I was advised previously to lay it before Your Royal Highness, which advice I most cheerfully determined on following, as giving me an opportunity of showing the respect which it has always been my duty as well as my inclination to profess for your illustrious person. As Your Royal Highness was at that time indisposed, months passed ere I could with propriety forward a respectful letter, then ready, with the enclosed; and afterwards, the unwillingness I felt to intrude myself on Your Royal Highness, more especially during the fatal illness of His late Majesty, as well as during the months which immediately followed that national calamity, induced me to post-



pone, more than would have been otherwise necessary, the fulfilment of my intention. I was not moreover without some hope, that Your Royal Highness might have by other means been informed of the treatment I had received, and (for the honor of the Royal Society) by seeing my grievances redressed, spared me the painful necessity of proceeding further in the matter. As, however, it does not appear that Your Royal Highness has been made acquainted with the conduct of the Council of the Royal Society, I myself am, most reluctantly, compelled to call Your Royal Highness's attention to the transactions detailed in the enclosed printed letter, which shall not be circulated before the middle of this month, so that Your Royal Highness may previously have leisure to become acquainted with its contents.

I have the honor, &c.

A copy of the Address was at the same time sent to each of those members who were not upon the Council when the transactions of which I complain took place, that they might not accuse me of making them responsible for proceedings to which they were not parties.

His Royal Highness not having taken the least notice of my respectful communication, I must suppose that he, as well as the gentlemen just alluded to, approve of the conduct of the Council. Had His Royal Highness or any member of the Council in-



quired into the facts, it would have been found that for cataloguing *about* (as they assert) 24,000 titles, for which I was to receive about £720, I have been paid less than £477. Should they be of opinion that I was entitled to no more, why did they withhold from me the *precise* number of titles I have catalogued? why not state the amount paid to me, as well as what they deem due for Mr. Robertson's assistance, (for a period of fifty-one or fifty-two weeks, which I cannot give with accuracy, having been deprived of my papers,) and call upon me to state what I claim further? I should then have had it in my power to make a demand upon them, which, if incorrect, they would have rejected. BUT THE COUNCIL HAVE FOUND IT EASIER TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE TITLES THAN TO ACCOUNT FOR THEM, (WHICH IS ALL I REQUIRE,) AND THUS HAVE DEPRIVED ME OF THE DOCUMENTS BY WHICH ALONE I CAN MAKE A CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE AMOUNT OF MY CLAIM.

A. PANIZZI.

BRITISH MUSEUM,  
November 27, 1837.



...into the fact, it would have been found that  
...cataloguing done (as they assert) 124,000 titles,  
...which I was to receive about £750. I have been  
...less than £475. Should they be of opinion  
...I was entitled to no more, why did they with-  
...from me the precise number of titles I have  
...inquired why not state the amount paid to me,  
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...CAN MAKE A CORRECT STATEMENT OF THE AMOUNT

A. BAZIN

British Museum  
November 27, 1857