

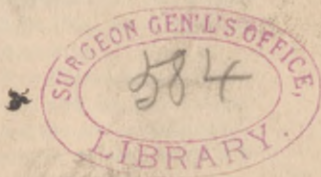
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BAD FEATURES OF
PERIODICALS

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BY

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BAD FEATURES OF PERIODICALS.

Numbering volumes :

It is in the publishing of periodicals that editors sin most frequently and grievously against good form; some of the bad features that characterize periodicals are as senseless as they are provoking.

To give successive volumes consecutive numbers is so plainly expedient that it is passing strange to find occasional failures to carry this through. Here are a few notable cases:

The *Record of Patents* issued in Belgium (*Recueil spécial des brevets d'invention*, Bruxelles) has no volume numbered 31; vol. 30 was issued in 1883, and 32 in 1884, as a result of mere neglect to count correctly.

The *Petit Moniteur de la Pharmacie*, published at Paris, began in 1857, and its first volume bears the number VI., for the editor claimed his journal to be the successor of the *Petites Affiches pharmaceutiques*, established in 1851, notwithstanding the fact that the latter continued to be published by his former partner.

The consecutive volumes of the *Journal de*

l'École Polytechnique are numbered in a most erratic way: Part 1 was issued in 1794; 2, 3, and 4 in 1795, 9 in 1797, 5 and 6 in 1798, followed by 12, 13, 14, 15, then 10 and 11, and vols. 7 and 8 did not appear until 1812.

Another French periodical has an annoying feature: the volume number of the title-page for the year does not coincide with the volume number on the separate parts.

Technical journals often adopt the vexatious plan of providing a title-page for the completed volume bearing different words from those on each weekly or monthly part, so that catalogers who examine only the bound volume might fail to enter the more familiar of the titles. Some journals have entirely different sub-titles on the colored paper cover and the white first page within.

Series:

The breaking up of a periodical running through a long series of years into "series" is another cause of perplexity not only to the librarian but to the scholar desirous of citing paragraphs from its pages. It would appear to be the ambition of each new occupant of the editorial chair to signalize his advent by beginning a "new series, volume 1," disregarding the fact that a large volume-number indicates respectable antiquity. This division into series is too common to need illustration, but a

few extreme cases will emphasize this unhappy feature.

The journal published by the Chemical Society of London was established as *Proceedings*, in 1843. After the issue of one volume the title was changed to *Memoirs and Proceedings*, in which form three volumes were published; it then became the *Quarterly Journal*, of which 14 vols. were issued. This was followed by *The Journal*, of which a single volume was published, when a "New series, vol. 1.: Entire series, vol. XVI.," was begun. 13 additional volumes were issued, and then the editor seems to have been seized with an irresistible desire to start a "new series." This series is not numbered (actually it is the third), and it continued only long enough to contain two volumes, and then another new series was begun, also containing two volumes. This brings the journal to the year 1878, when still another series was begun which happily is still current.

The complications which result from having four different volumes each numbered "1." can be imagined. The editors, in 1878, gave to the preceding and current volumes the numbers of the entire series, beginning with 1841, and disregarded the individual series. Only in this way could references be intelligently made.

The editors of the *Archiv der Pharmacie* re-

sorted to a similar expedient ; thus vol. 27, 3d series, is followed by vol. 228, being the number of the entire series.

The *Natuurkundige Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche-Indië* enjoyed seven series between 1850 and 1876, and the *Jornal de pharmacia*, published in Lisbon, begins a new series every four volumes, and is now (1896) in the tenth series.

To further mystify students, Germans adopt the ingenious plan of retaining the numbering of the first series of a periodical even after starting a second series, and assigning double numbers to each volume. In the case of the venerable and important *Annalen der Physik*, edited by Poggendorff, 1819 to 1877, each volume of the later series carries no less than three numbers — that of the first series, that of the second, and that of the third.

When we consider the great disadvantages of these "series," the difficulties of reference and of indexing, and especially with these awful examples before our eyes, it does seem surprising that the enlightened editors of the *American Journal of Science*, established by Benjamin Silliman in 1818, should begin a "fourth series" in this very year 1896.

Librarians and catalogers often experience great difficulties in tracing the history of a journal through its changes of title and its

many series, and rarely do they find any assistance on the title-pages or covers of the volumes. English journals often print on the current numbers the date of establishment, but American editors do not as a rule take this trouble, and to ascertain the dates at which series were begun, and the number of volumes in each, is nearly impossible without access to a complete file. A notable exception should here be named for the purpose of praising it and upholding it as an example: the Italian chemical journal, *Annali di chimica medico-farmaceutica*, conducted by P. Albertoni and I. Guareschi, published at Milan, prints on the title-page for 1885 the following exact information:

Vol. I. della Serie IV.

Vol. CXL. della Serie 1 (*Giornale di farmacia*).

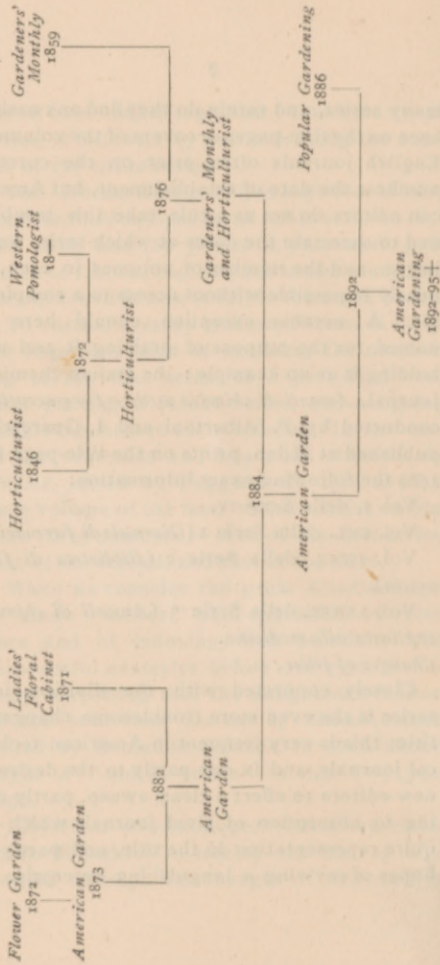
Vol. LXXX. della Serie 2 (*Biblioteca di farmacia*).

Vol. LXXIX. della Serie 3 (*Annali di chimica applicata alla medicina*).

Changes of titles:

Closely connected with the division into series is the even more troublesome change in title; this is very frequent in American technical journals, and is due partly to the desire of new editors to effect a clean sweep, partly owing to absorption of rival journals which require representation in the title, and partly in hopes of reviving a languishing enterprise by

PEDIGREE OF "AMERICAN GARDENING."



issuing it under a new and more attractive name. A single example, and a particularly flagrant case, will suffice.

The *American Builder* had no less than four titles in two years. It is called the *American Builder* from January to March, 1893; the *Architectural Era* from April to November, and the *Builder and Woodworker* in December of the same year. Twelve months later, however, in December, 1894, it again changed its title to *Architect, Builder, and Woodworker*. Under this title the many-named journal appeared for 13 months, and at the end of this period it was merged in the *National Builder*, of Chicago; at last accounts it is called the *National Builder and Woodworker*, but it would not be surprising to learn of several more changes between the writing and the reading of this paper.

The ancestry of periodicals which result from the union of several may be graphically shown by drawing up a regular genealogical chart; *American Gardening* affords a good example (*see* opposite page).

Irregularity of publication:

Even those periodicals which are not broken into series and which do not change their titles furnish another source of vexation to the librarian by great irregularities of publication. Beginning volumes in the month of December,

or of February, preventing coincidence of the volume-year and volume-number, causes confusion. Learned societies in every country issue their transactions very irregularly, according to the supply of literary material; while this is reasonable, the editors do not take sufficient pains in numbering volumes and fractions of volumes, and often cause librarians hours of vexatious research—vexatious because unnecessary.

The publication of journals in parallel sections is confusing enough, but when these sections are broken up into series and these series do not terminate in the same year, the confusion becomes worse confounded; this is actually the case with the *Annales des sciences naturelles* in the two sections "Botanique" and "Zoölogie."

The English periodical entitled *The Entomologist* has the peculiarity of having been dormant for 22 years, being suspended from 1842 to 1864; since its resumption it appears with commendable regularity.

This irregularity in issue of scientific periodicals I have attempted to elucidate by compiling chronological tables showing the date of publication of each volume of about 500 journals; these tables accompany the "Catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals" published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1885,

of which a new edition is now being prepared.

Change of size :

The change in size of a periodical, usually from an 8vo or 4to to folio, is a source of inconvenience to those keeping files. The change is sometimes made with good reasons and after careful deliberation; thus the long-published *Dingler's Polytechnisches Journal* recently changed from 8vo to sm. folio in order to secure larger pages for illustrations of plans and machinery.

The *American Builder*, named in the preceding paragraph, had the audacity to increase its size in the middle of a volume (in April, 1893); as that special volume had three titles, those binding it will find a large opportunity for contemplation. *

Pagination :

Erratic methods of pagination abound; probably none is so extraordinary ("asinine" my friend called it) as that which obtains in the journal issued by the Entomological Society of Breslau, established in 1847: the *Zeitschrift für Entomologie*.

The first three "Jahrgänge" (or years) form together a small duodecimo volume, bearing the date 1847-49; the pagination runs as follows: 1 to 2; 1 to 6; 1 to 24; 3 to 4; 7 to 12; 25 to 40; 1 to 8; 13 to 14; 9 to 20; 41 to 52; 21 to

24; 15 to 18; 53 to 64; 19 to 26; 65 to 72; this closes the volume. Now the reason for this is as follows: the work treats in four different sections of (1) Administration of the society; (2) Lepidoptera; (3) Coleoptera; and (4) Diptera; these sections follow in irregular order, and each has an independent pagination. This amazing scheme extends through 6 vols. to 1852; vol. 7, for 1853, was never published; vol. 8, for 1854, begins as before, and continues until 1891. It is needless to say there is no index to this triumphant example of how not to do it. Perhaps our astonishment at the stupidity of the editor will be abated when we note that his name was Assmann.

Besides the bad features noted the publishers and editors of American technical journals indulge in vagaries that are not classifiable; these cannot be pointed out in detail in the limits of this paper. One example will suffice. Vol. 22 of the *Engineering and Building Record* has on its title-page the legend of the new series begun a month later, thus the running titles and the title-page do not agree.

Americans are by no means the only nation guilty of similar eccentricities. The *International Journal of Microscopy*, published at Bath, England, assigned wrong numbers to its successive issues in 1893 to '94, creating much confusion.

Owing to the difficulty of determining the date of the death of periodicals (for failure to receive the numbers by no means denotes cessation of publication), it is unfortunate that the editors do not make brief announcements of the final issue in the last number published. A few journals have had the grace to print their own obituary notices, to the great convenience of the bibliographer.

Having so frequently spoken deprecatingly of American technical journals, it gives me pleasure to mention with commendation a feature of the *Iron Age* for January, 1896. To commemorate the 40th year of its publication the editors give a summary of all its changes of title and of form, the dates of these changes, the number of volumes in each series, etc.; this is made clear by excellent reduced facsimiles of the first pages of each series.

Idiosyncrasies :

Every cataloger meets with idiosyncrasies of the publishers of periodicals that seem especially adapted to vex; I here name a few of recent experience:

A certain German journal changed its name of *Zeitschrift* to *Zeitung*, and soon after changed back again; the two words fall in different alphabetical positions.

More than one American technical journal is guilty of similar stupidity.

One German annual is published in two parts, and the second part has an independent title in addition to the comprehensive title.

Sewing and binding :

So long as the custom prevails in European countries of issuing books unbound, it is unfortunate that the manufacturers of these books do not sew the signatures more substantially. Handling a French quarto of 800 pages sewn with very fine thread inevitably leads to destruction even in most careful hands; and to part with a newly acquired volume for a ten days' sojourn at the bookbinder's is rather aggravating.

The damage done to books by careless binding, especially by mixing up signatures, by close trimming, etc., has been fully discussed by Blades in his pleasing essay on the "Enemies of books."

The question of binding is here referred to the Grolier Club, of New York City, whose members are connoisseurs in this branch of the fine arts.

Defects in lettering:

Not only is binding an important factor in the make-up of books, but lettering is too often carelessly done. Sometimes the chief words of the title are not well chosen; sometimes the date is omitted on a periodical when the volume number is given, and *vice versa*; again,

thin volumes are occasionally lettered lengthwise from head to tail, instead of from tail to head, making it difficult to read the titles on the shelves. There can be no excuse for omission of catch-letters on the volumes of encyclopedias, yet some works so arranged are met in every library.

Pamphlets, covered with paper only, should have brief titles lengthwise on the backs to facilitate reference. College catalogs too generally omit this, and it is necessary to take from the shelf a whole row of pamphlets in order to find the one desired. Parts of periodicals should also be distinctly lettered, and the paper cover changed in color at the end of each volume to prevent confusion.

As has been shown, these "bad features of good books" are not confined to any age nor to any nation; only a tithe of them have been here indicated, and my hearers will remember special idiosyncrasies of books that have passed through their hands, greatly swelling the list.

Finally I feel that this sketch of some bibliographical blemishes contains little that is novel, and that it should be presented to an assembly of the guilty publishers and ignorant editors rather than to an audience of those who are sufferers from the defects narrated.

