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B. T. GALLOWAY, Chief of Bureau.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CATALOGUE
OF BOTANICAL LITERATURE IN THE
LIBRARIES OF WASHINGTON.

BY

ALICE C. ATWOOD,

Bibliographical Assistant, Office of Taxonomic and Range Investigations.

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY.

Chief of Bureau, BEVERLY T. GALLOWAY.

Assistant Chief of Bureau, WILLIAM A. TAYLOR.

Editor, J. E. ROCKWELL.

Chief Clerk, JAMES E. JONES.

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INTRODUCTION.

Two catalogues stand in the Bureau of Plant Industry library, one designated the Plant-Industry Catalogue and the other the Botany Catalogue. To give some idea of the scope of the latter and of the special features which it presents, in order that its use by botanical workers may be still further increased and extended, is the purpose of the present circular.

The "Botany Catalogue," as it is called for want of a better name, has been developed under the supervision of Mr. Frederick V. Coville and originated in an attempt, for which he was chiefly responsible, to enlarge and coordinate the collections of botanical literature in the libraries of Washington. The nucleus of the present catalogue was the botanical part of the catalogue of the Department of Agriculture library, to which it forms an extensive adjunct, especially in regard to literature not included in the Department collections.

The examination of titles with reference to the cooperative purchase of books among the different libraries necessitated some kind of a check list showing what books were already available and where they were located. Starting as a mere author list, chiefly used for the assistance of the Department library in cooperative book buying, it came to be generally consulted by workers in botanical lines, and as it grew it became necessary to enlarge its scope in many ways and to develop a subject catalogue along with it.

THE AUTHOR CATALOGUE.

The author catalogue now consists of about 50,000 entries, including botanical works contained in the Library of Congress, the libraries of the Department of Agriculture, National Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Geological Survey, Surgeon General's Office, and the private libraries of Dr. Edward Lee Greene and Capt. John Donnell Smith. The latter library is at present in Baltimore, but it is available to workers in Washington and will eventually form a part of the Smithsonian library.

Proof sheets are received daily from the Library of Congress, from which printed cards are ordered, comprising additions to the Library of Congress and the libraries of the Department of Agriculture and the Geological Survey, while a large number of typewritten and handwritten cards are added covering additions to the various libraries for which printed cards can not be obtained and also a large number of analytical and index entries. From July, 1910, to July, 1911, about 7,000 cards were added to the author catalogue and serial list, and as many more have gone into the subject catalogue.

INDEX ENTRIES.

While indexing has not been engaged in to any large extent, the index cards for American botany, issued by the Torrey Botanical Club, have been added to the catalogue, and a number of scientific serials, principally those published before 1800, have been completely indexed. In addition, much incidental indexing has been done upon subjects of special interest.

SCOPE.

The subject matter represented by the catalogue is much wider in scope than would be justified by a strict use of the term "botanical." The allied subjects of horticulture, tropical agriculture, fibers, gums and resins, pharmacology, special crops (cacao, cotton, rubber, etc.), seed adulteration and control, etc., have found their place in the catalogue, as well as voyages and explorations which touch upon the botany of a country, or which publish scientific results.

The biographical and bibliographical sides have not been neglected. The catalogue is unusually rich in biographies and bibliographies of botanists, gathered often from sources not generally consulted.

Bibliographical notes on special works and articles dealing with dates of publication of works issued in parts also form a valuable part of the material in the catalogue.

DESIDERATA.

In accordance with the original intention, the catalogue has been used as a basis of comparison in the purchase of botanical literature, and a list of desiderata has been formed both for works entirely lacking and for volumes lacking in sets. These desiderata have been entered on yellow slips designed especially for the purpose and filed in the author catalogue, so that the author catalogue not only represents botanical works available in Washington, but also gives information as to those not available and desirable for purchase by the Department or other libraries interested in the cooperative purchase of books.

SERIAL LIST.

Many important botanical articles appear in scientific serials or society publications, and even when a reprint is available it is important to have access to the original place of publication. At first,

a few entries for scientific serials or society publications, as they chanced to be referred to, were added to the author catalogue, but during the last year the matter has been taken up systematically, and a separate serial list has been made giving information as to the location of the sets in the larger libraries of Washington. The serial list consists of an alphabetical list, with full cross references, of general scientific serials and society publications, followed by a roughly classified list of serials under the headings "Botanical," "Horticultural," "Microscopical," and "Pharmaceutical." Serials dealing with plant pathology, pomology, and tropical agriculture are included under the heading "Horticultural."

The serial list will be further enlarged and compared with other libraries in the city and promises to be a valuable adjunct to the catalogue.

ARRANGEMENT.

The author catalogue is arranged alphabetically as a dictionary catalogue, but editions and translations are arranged chronologically after the original edition, the original title being penciled at the top of the card in the case of a translation or edition with change of title. Cross references are made from differing titles to the original. In the case of voyages and explorations of which there have been a great number of editions or translations, cards for the earliest edition with the English translation and possibly some other important editions are filed in the catalogue, and a card giving in brief additional editions and translations available in the Library of Congress is filed with them. Authors treated as subjects (biography and bibliography) are found in the author catalogue, not in the subject catalogue; the same is true of institutions, botanical gardens, etc.

THE SUBJECT CATALOGUE.

The subject catalogue has grown very rapidly since its inception, and it is the intention to make it as complete as possible. It represents a few subjects for which no cards appear in the author catalogue, such as atlases and general bibliographies of countries, entries which are of use only on the subject side; on the other hand, only a portion of the Torrey Club index cards have as yet had subject entries made for them.

ARRANGEMENT.

The subject catalogue is a semiclasses catalogue, divisions and subdivisions of large subjects being made within the alphabetical arrangement. Names of genera are arranged under the family, the family names appearing in their regular alphabetical place. Small geographical divisions are arranged under the country to which they belong, as, for example, under "Germany" will be found "Germany—Bavaria," "Germany—Munich," "Germany—Prussia," "Germany—Rhine Valley." The United States is arranged first under the United States as a whole, then under large divisions, as "New England," "Southern States," "Rocky Mountain Region," etc., and then under

the individual States. Towns, cities, counties, etc., appear under their respective States, as in the case of Germany. In the same manner as the United States are arranged Great Britain, Canada, West Indies, Chinese Empire, Australia, and other similar divisions.

Some of the other large subjects are also subdivided, as "*Materia medica*," by countries; "Plant names," by languages; "Plant anatomy" and "Plant morphology," by names of families; "Plant nutrition," by names of plant foods used; "Alkaloids in plants," by names of the individual alkaloids. Examples might be multiplied indefinitely.

GUIDES.

To facilitate the use of the subject catalogue a special system of guide cards has been adopted. Blue guide cards are used for main subjects standing in regular alphabetical order and buff guide cards for subdivisions of subjects. It will, of course, be understood that guides are not supplied for every subject, only the more important being so indicated. The systematic headings can be readily distinguished, as all names of genera are in red, while all other headings are in black.

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS.

Cards are not multiplied for editions and translations in the subject catalogue. A card for the original or earliest edition is inserted, with a note referring to the author catalogue for other editions and translations. The only exception to this rule is in cases where the recent edition is the most important, as is the case with textbooks and reference books. In such an instance the card for the latest edition is filed, with a note referring to the author catalogue for earlier editions.

RELATION OF THE BOTANY CATALOGUE TO THE PLANT-INDUSTRY CATALOGUE.

When the Botany Catalogue was installed in the Bureau of Plant Industry library it soon became evident that there was some unnecessary duplication in the subject catalogues of the Plant-Industry Catalogue and the Botany Catalogue. It was then decided to cut out of the Botany Catalogue the subject of plant pathology with its allied subjects, which is so fully and carefully treated in the Plant-Industry Catalogue; in the same manner were treated such subjects as sugar cane, sugar beet, sugar-producing plants, and nitrification. The Plant-Industry Catalogue turned over to the Botany Catalogue all subjects dealing with systematic botany, plant life history, general horticulture, and such special crops as the Botany Catalogue had already treated more or less fully. Cross references in the subject catalogue refer to the headings used in the Plant-Industry Catalogue. The line of demarcation between the Plant-Industry Subject Catalogue and the Botany Subject Catalogue may not seem to have been drawn very logically, but it is the result of the varying use of the

two catalogues, and appears to be practical if not in accordance with theory.

The catalogue is only a tool for the use of the worker in botanical literature, and the desire is to make it as complete and workable a tool as is possible. The daily use of the catalogue constantly suggests improvements in both plan and execution, so that its present usefulness is limited only by the amount of time and labor that can be devoted to it.

Approved:

JAMES WILSON,

Secretary of Agriculture.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *July 24, 1911.*

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