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Melivil Dewey

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# Melvil Dewey

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Seer : Inspirer : Doer

1851-1931

Biographic compilation

by

Grosvenor Dawe

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LIBRARY EDITION

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Melvil Dewey Biography  
Lake Placid Club, Essex Co, N Y

1932

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EMILY DEWEY

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The British Dominions and Possessions

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**TO**

those who, unconscious of their own  
genius, glowing with enthusiasm, and  
indifferent to personal gain, have  
striven and given for the advancement  
of humanity

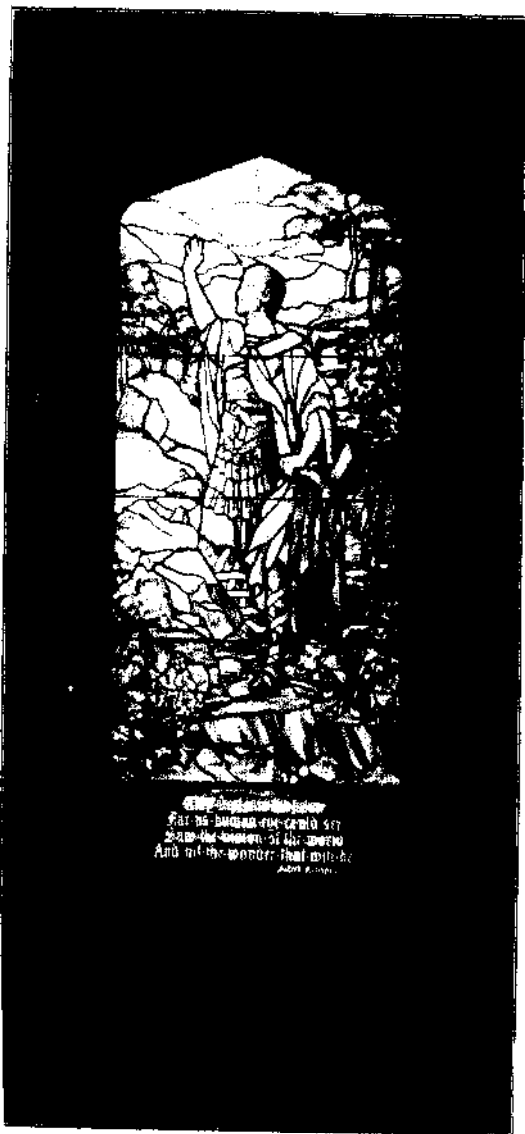


## Table of Contents

	Page
Explanatory Foreword.....	1
<b>Part i</b> The Man and his Way.....	9
The Picture Outlined.....	11
The Man-child.....	16
Three Years' Development.....	31
Amherst Days.....	46
His Loves.....	59
His Inspired Co-workers.....	77
His Enduring Friendships.....	88
Mosaic of Characteristics.....	103
Cheerful Eventide.....	142
Silence Comes Swiftly.....	151
<b>Part 2</b> The Man and his Achievements.....	155
Obviating Library Chaos.....	157
The Idea Conquering.....	170
Fighting for Progress.....	184
More Fighting Years.....	206
Lake Placid Club, N. Y.....	230
Library Evangelism.....	251
Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations.....	265
Boston Days.....	284
New York Days.....	290
Albany Days.....	295
Home Economics.....	303
Lake Placid Club in Florida.....	305
Lake Placid Club Education Foundation.....	308
Concluding Lines.....	310
<b>Part 3</b> Documents of Historic Value.....	317
Origin of Decimal Classification.....	319
Origin of First Library School.....	324
Pres. Barnard's Appraisal of Melvil Dewey.....	326
Henry Barnard blesses Melvil Dewey.....	330
Melvil Dewey to Andrew Carnegie.....	332
Melvil Dewey to Whitelaw Reid.....	335
Melvil Dewey to Theodore Roosevelt.....	345
Melvil Dewey and Herbert Putnam.....	353
Melvil Dewey's Resignation, 1899.....	358
Dorothy Canfield Fisher to Melvil Dewey.....	261
Association of American Library Schools.....	364
<b>Part 4</b> Bibliografy.....	365
Index.....	385

## List of Illustrations

	Facing Page
The Seer	
The Sower.....	1
Letter to C. W. Eliot, President of Harvard.....	10
Birthplace of Melvil Dewey in Adams Center.....	16
Milford Home of Annie Roberts Godfrey.....	16
Joel Dewey's Store in Adams Center.....	16
Toad Hollow Student Group.....	17
Joel Dewey.....	33
Ann Eliza Dewey.....	33
Amherst Library exterior.....	48
Amherst Library interior.....	49
Annie (Godfrey) Dewey at 4 ages.....	64
Melvil Dewey at 4 ages.....	65
Dr. Godfrey Dewey.....	80
Christening Ceremony.....	81
Birthplace of American Library Assn.....	x22
Financial Summaries of Melvil Dewey.....	113
Melvil Dewey in 1924.....	144
Lake Placid Club in Florida.....	145
Handwriting at 80.....	148
C. A. Cutter's letter regarding D C.....	160
Proposed use of numerals and letters.....	161
Library Classification System.....	176
Decimal Clarification; complete set, 1876-1932.....	177
Columbia College; Melvil Dewey's Office.....	192
First Library School in history.....	193
Albany home of Melvil Dewey.....	208
New York State Library School Instructors.....	209
Lake Placid Club; first building.....	224
Lake Placid and Whiteface Mountain.....	225
Lake Placid Club; Children's Playhouse.....	240
Lake Placid Club; Northwood School.....	240
Lake Placid Club; Agora.....	240
Memorial Chapel; Lake Placid Club.....	241
Melvil Dewey's Study.....	272
Lake Placid Club from the air.....	273
Boston business card.....	287
Melvil Dewey; water color by Mrs. Elizabeth Gowdy Baker.....	304
Emily Dewey.....	305
Life.....	317



They say that the seer  
Far as human eye could see  
Saw the vision of the world  
And all the wonder that it holds  
And all the wonder that it holds

The Seer



The Sower

Tiffany glass door in Memorial Chapel, Lake Placid Club

## Explanatory Foreword

Melvil Dewey's life was chiefly spent in the realm of the creative mind and in relation to the constant re-transmission of knowledge in all lands from all recorded past to all the years of an unmeasured future.

No two lives are exactly alike in purposes nor experiences. Therefore a story, or human document, is hidden in each. Many such stories are only of poignant interest to relatives; some are national in influence and establish an historical meaning; very few stories, like that of Dr Melvil Dewey, record activities that will exert a living power from generation to generation and touch the entire intellectual life of the world until 10 numerals cease to be used.

On March 7 of this year Mrs Emily Dewey, widow of Melvil Dewey, had as her guests in the Lake Placid Club, Florida, Mary Eileen Ahern of Chicago, Illinois, Walter S Biscoe of Albany, New York and the undersigned, of Lake Wales, Florida.

Each had been either a sincere admirer or a long-time acquaintance of Dr Dewey. Miss Ahern as editor for thirty-six years of 'Public Libraries' and 'Libraries', had long fought the battles of library expansion and politics by pen and by voice; and W S Biscoe had been a fellow student with Melvil Dewey at Amherst in the seventies, assisted in perfecting the Decimal Classification and remained in close contact with him through half a century of zealous effort; Grosvenor Dawe, as early as 1890 had adapted the Dewey library card index to the records of the Standard Dictionary; later as Secretary of the Society of American Authors he had corresponded with members of the Dewey family to establish the relationship of Melvil Dewey to Admiral George Dewey; and still later

## Melvil Dewey

became intimately acquainted in Florida with the continued dynamic influences of Melvil Dewey in his closing years, 1927-1931.

The four talked over the broad details of Dr Dewey's private and public life. They concluded that three friends and publishers should be questioned as to the advisability of recording at once the main outlines of his extraordinarily vigorous career. The responses were unanimously favorable; from Dr Hamilton Holt of Rollins College, Dr William Dodge Lewis of the John C Winston Co, Philadelphia, and George A Plimpton of Ginn & Co. The main outlines submitted to these three were arranged somewhat as follows, but in fuller detail:

- (1) Ancestry
- (2) Boyhood 1851-1869
- (3) Amherst College 1870-1876
- (4) Creation of Decimal Classification 1873
- (5) Boston residence 1876—83
  - a Readers and Writers Economy Co 1879
  - b Library Bureau 1882
  - c American Library Association and Library Journal 1876
  - d Spelling Reform Association 1876
  - e Metric Bureau 1876
  - f Aid in forming British Library Association London 1877
- (6) Columbia College 1883-88, librarian and professor of library economy
  - a Created first library school 1887
  - b Children's Library Association
  - c New York Language Club
  - d New York Library Club
- (7) Albany 1889-1905 Secretary of the Board of Regents of University of the State of New York to 1899 and State Librarian
  - a New York State Library School
  - b Home Economics (in 1899 with Mrs Ellen Richards and Mrs Dewey)
- (8) American Library Institute 1906

## Explanatory Foreword

- (9) Efficiency Society—National Institute of Efficiency—  
National Efficiency Society
- (10) Founded Lake Placid Club, Adirondacks, 1895
- (11) Founded Lake Placid Club Education Foundation 1922,  
with Seedsowing objects affecting twenty lines of  
national and international advancement
- (12) Establish Northwood School for boys, at Lake Placid
- (13) Annie (Godfrey) Dewey and Emily (Beal) Dewey
- (14) Founded Lake Placid Club in Florida 1927
- (15) Eightieth birthday
- (16) Miscellaneous interests

In all discussions of the original group and later in correspondence with large numbers of friends and admirers thruout the United States it was made clear that a biography was not planned just because of Dr Dewey's personal greatness but because since 1876 various movements of great significance to the records of the human race were begun and carried on, and because these movements were not the work of one man only, but also of those many who were associated with him) as enthusiastic helpers, or even as opponents of some of the things which he thought were requisite.

It is not necessary to explain how the selection of the biographer happened early in May of this year. It was a complete surprise to be summoned to the task of making comprehensible a gigantic mind and character.

On May 30, 1932 introduction to the documentary material took place in Lake Placid Club, New York. It proved to be an immense and confused accumulation of diaries, letters, press copies, essays, manuscripts of articles and speeches, bibliographic and personal records and official financial records with which no one living was fully familiar. When some order was established, the amazing discovery was made that Melvil Dewey had preserved letters, diaries and other data almost without a break from 1866 onward. Even memoranda in relation to trifles as well as major interests had been saved.

## Melvil Dewey

The profusion of material showd immediately that an adequate use of it was impossible in a book of 350 pages, as originally proposed. Consequently two lines wer determind upon, with the approval of Mrs Emily Dewey; tho differing from the general outlines discust in Florida:—

1 To weav a life story, the chief threds of which Mr Dewey and his frends would themselvs supply, with the least possible editorial interpretation and without any attempt to divert attention from the man to the method of delineating. The resulting fabric would show the man and his way; the man and his major achievements; some essentially historic documents; and a very full bibliography.

The purpose therefore, of this volume is to indicate that Melvil Dewey was a genius gifted beyond any of his immediate family or direct ancestors; that his strange ability consisted not merely in seeing a thing that ought to be accomplisht or that could be organized, but that there was combined with this a faculty for attending to the pettiest details necessary to bring a result.

It is determind to indicate thruout the book things begun by him that wil hav an enduring influence but whose full record is not yet available.

His caracter as a whole has been analized as fully as possible, particularly to indicate that he was not a superman. Special emfasis wil be laid on his dependence upon others.

In the first section of the book enuf incidents and illustrativ matter ar used to encourage others perhaps to dream dreams and see visions.

2 To throw all records into general order so that they could be preservd until 1951, or thereabouts, as source material for a correct mesure of the movements Melvil Dewey began but did not see brought to conclusion. Even in 1951 the records should stil be preservd for future generations because in their totality they

## Explanatory Foreword

cover a period of remarkable change in the mentality of the United States.

Particular point is given to the second recommendation because there have already arisen those who know not the intellectual awakening with which Mr Dewey was directly associated in 1876, leading to home and adult education, and also lifting library work on its technical and analytical sides into a profession. The reason for this second suggestion can be made clear in some pointed ways.

The American Association for Adult Education created in 1926 does not in any one of its annual reports make mention of the impulse toward adult education that was back of the work of Melvil Dewey from 1876 onward, and more particularly expressed when he was Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. In the annual report of the association for 1927-28 high commendation is given, and mention was made of a wide free distribution, of Dorothy Canfield Fisher's book 'Why Stop Learning?' When Mrs Fisher was preparing this book she corresponded with Dr Dewey, who had been her friend and a friend of J H Canfield, her father, the eminent librarian of Columbia. Her letter establishes the relationship between Mr Dewey's work and the book 'Why Stop Learning?' and it is considered important enough to quote in part as crediting to Mr Dewey some portion of the influence that he exerted and for whose recording he was personally indifferent. Mrs Fisher says:

**'I found you among the beginners of the extension movement, more clearly aware of what it ought to mean than most of its present advocates are. I would like to write something about you personally and your brain and what it has done to our generation and will do to the next. There are so few originating brains in any generation that they ought to be chronicled/**

With similar justice *to* the memory of Dr Dewey's activities, reference should also be made to a recent

## Melvil Dewey

volume dealing with education of librarians. Dr Dewey's name is not mentioned in either the text or the index tho, in the face of attack and derogatory reflections, he brought the pioneer Library School into existence, whose graduates in Columbia and at Albany between 1887 and 1926 were over 1400. Of the influence of this pioneer work J I Wyer, State Librarian at Albany, said when the School was returned to Columbia in 1926:

'It seems neither boastful nor inappropriate at the end of what perhaps will be the last formal attempt to set down the School's history and influence, to note the following facts:—At the date of its transfer from Albany to Columbia, July, 1926, there were thirty-two of the seventy-eight American cities of over one hundred thousand in which the librarian was or had been an Albany graduate. The libraries at thirty important colleges, including thirteen state universities, were in charge of Albany trained men and women. The state librarians in California, New York, Ohio and New Hampshire were Albany men.

'The School had furnished five presidents to the American Library Association and three secretaries, whose combined services total one-third of the Association's life. In 1926, Albany men and women were at the head of six of the fourteen library schools in the country, and were found on the faculties of six of the other eight. These facts and figures seem abundantly to justify the statement that the example, work and influence of Albany gave stimulus, direction and substance to the agencies and ideals which for a long generation recruited and trained leaders for a new calling/

A third plea for the justice of proper recognition of Dr Dewey's influence can, as later chapters will show, be placed at the door of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. The proceedings of the sixty-fifth convocation of the University in 1929 are designated as covering the twenty-fifth anniversary of the unification of the University of the State of New York and the Department of Public Instruction. Careful reading of this pamphlet shows no mention of the long, vigorous struggle which Melvil Dewey made to give dignity and

## Explanatory Foreword

permanence to the University of the State of New York, nor any reference to the Regents during the years of struggle between 1889 and 1904.

In the chapter entitled 'More Fighting Years' evidence will be found that, if it had not been for the arrival of Melvil Dewey in Albany in 1889 with a working plan in his hands, the Regents of the present day would not be able to look into the pit of condemnation whence they were digged, nor find the rock from which they were hewn. Governor David B Hill in five annual messages, ending with the message of 1889, specifically suggested abolishing the Board of Regents.

As this necessarily affects the history of the cultural development of the United States a fourth note of omission must be made. In 1924 a volume entitled 'The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge' was prepared for the office use of the Carnegie Corporation and made public. It covers all the general problems of libraries, library extension and the gifts of Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation for library advancement. Melvil Dewey's name was not mentioned.

Because the name of Melvil Dewey since 1876 has been directly connected with efforts to economize time and shorten the years of study thru simpler spelling, and also to save waste along all lines of publishing expense by eliminating unnecessary letters and words it will be easily understood why this measurement of the man's work will honor that phase of his life-long efforts. It has therefore been happily decided to act along lines of orthography suggested in the following letter from Dr Godfrey Dewey, received on Oct 1:

'Father's life-long devotion to the cause of improving English spelling clearly calls for recognition in the spelling that is to be used in the story of his own life. The National Education Association's "12 words and past tenses in '—t'", or the list of 300 words made famous by President Roosevelt's executive order

## Melvil Dewey

affecting only 1 or 2 words on the average printed page, are manifestly too little; while father's own more radical experimentation as on the present Lake Placid Club menus is just as manifestly too much.

'I suggest therefore, as an appropriate happy medium the use of the official recommendations of the Simplified Spelling Board Handbook, made possible by the interest and assistance of Andrew Carnegie, which represents the consensus of judgment among competent authorities as to a moderate degree of improvement suitable for immediate general adoption.'

Wherever a direct quotation is made from any of Mr Dewey's writings his spelling will be followed exactly, whether as a boy he spelt inaccurately or as a man he spelt according to a principle laid down; or as a pioneer he tried using new forms and went much further than he expected others to go in the use of simplified spelling. All other quotations will be used exactly as written originally. The Editor's comments or connectives will almost without exception follow the lead of the Simplified Spelling Board.

While many have helped or been interested in the preparation of this volume and all are thankful for the assistance given, there are two who should be mentioned by name as having rendered invaluable service; Dorcas Fellows, editor of the Decimal Classification, whose office is in the Library of Congress, and who has been actively interested in Dr Dewey's work from 1895 onward; and Robert Hood, secretary of Dr Dewey, who, in order to unlock much of the material that was hidden in Dr Dewey's personal shorthand—*takigrafy*—mastered the peculiar system by intensive study.

GROSVENOR DAWE

# Part 1

## The Man and his Way

To every man there openeth  
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,  
And the High Soul climbs the High way  
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And in between on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro.  
But to every man there openeth  
A High way and a Low,  
And every man decideth  
The Way his soul shall go.

John Oxenham

(This was found in Melvil Dewey's papers. It bore this statement in his own handwriting: 'Mrs J A Roebling gave me this'.)

Melvil Dewey

11

Alfred Center April 30<sup>th</sup> 70.  
Alleg. Co. N.Y.  
Mr. C. W. Eliot.  
Dear Sir.

I address you instead of your Secretary as I very much wish your own advice. I know well that this is presumption in a stranger but hope you will overlook it in this case and thereby confer a great favor on one who can repay you with thanks alone. Without consuming your time with apologies which I feel are due I will state my case. I am in my nineteenth year, enjoy good health, have been in school either as pupil or teacher since coming at school age, have parents in limited circumstances who will make only conscientious efforts to aid me in getting a higher education.

I have consecrated my life to educational work and design to cast my mite of labor or talent wholly in the balance for the improvement and elevation of our present system of instruction and schools. To accomplish most in this field I feel that it is of vital importance that I myself may receive the best culture and discipline. For guidance to this culture I have sought your advice and shall be very much influenced by it.

I desire very much to receive a course at Harvard and remain undecided from pecuniary considerations only. I took the liberty last year to address in regard to this you replied "no good student ever leaves

Direct Reproduction of Letter to C. W. Eliot

## The Picture Outlined

"It is the dreamers who move the world. Practical men are so busy being practical they cannot see beyond their own lifetime. It is trying to do the thing which cannot be done that makes life worth while. The dream of today becomes the custom of tomorrow. If there had been no dream there would have been no civilization and we would still be living in caves."

"Cecil Rhodes," Frances Evelyn Granville,  
Countess of Warwick

The life of Melvil Dewey (1851 to 1931) is a wholesome refutation of the narrow and down-pulling thought which finds in the behavior of the human being a counterpart only of the behavior of the balance of the animal kingdom—a creature limited by heredity, impelled by instinct and controlled by environment.

In the present day a philosophy is prevalent which denies to the human creature unlimited spiritual place in the eternal scheme of things but grants to it only the same place as an insect fortuitously procreated and hatched and only, by fortuitous chance, surviving to reproduce its kind. It is therefore refreshing to study the life of Melvil Dewey, who from boyhood dared to dream great dreams, vowed himself to definite lines of service and followed a gleam that carried him further and further away from mere physical existence into a world-wide mental influence.

On Dec 10, 1866, the fifteenth anniversary of his birth, he measured, weighed, appraised and recorded himself in his diary as follows:

"I have been weighing and measuring myself this afternoon and find that I weigh one hundred twenty-five pounds and am five feet and five and a fourth inches in height. In looking over my small stock of worldly goods I find that I have fifty dollars worth of clothing, fifty dollars worth of books and twenty-five dollars

## Melvil Dewey

worth of miscellaneous traps, so I am worth the delightfully small sum of one hundred twenty-five dollars.'

Each Dec 10 thereafter for ten years or so he kept these personal statistics, gradually increasing in stature and in financial value and purpose.

On Nov 15, 1869, before he was eighteen, he wrote as follows:

'I have now about fully decided to devote my life to education. I wish to inaugurate a higher education for the masses. The more I think of it the more I am convinced that our present system of educational institutions, especially the district and academic schools, are more than half failures. This should not be so. This *shall* not be so. If my life is spared and God permits, the people shall have this subject brought home to their conscience. I say 'conscience' for I believe it to be a great sin for those who have cont roll of youth to allow or rather indirectly compell them to waste so much time in acquiring so little knowledge. \* \* \* But the more I think of this great subject the more I feel a call to wed, to cherish and defend it. May the allwise Creator see fit to make me a willing instrument in his hands to advance this cause, the companion of religion.'

Then on Nov 18 of the same year he wrote:

'I am anxiously waiting for the day when I shall take my destined place, for it seems that destiny impels me to undertake this as a life work. For four or five years this idea has occurred to me very often and always with increased strength.'

On the night before his eighteenth birthday he thus communed with his journal:

'Tomorrow I complete my 18th year and have accomplished during these 18 years what I hope my children, if I ever have any, (and not only hope but expect) will accomplish better in fifteen or even less. I started to write 'twelve' but stopped because I feared it might be extravagant. As far as education or discipline and development of the mind are concerned I am very sure fourteen years might accomplish it all.'

It is not necessary to set forth here the various opinions that took form in this purposeful youth. They covered a wide range and wil be introduced at fitting points later.

## The Picture Outlined

There was however a period of self-communing late in 1869 that has great significance for those who knew him in the flesh as a combativ force:"

'If God sees fit to grant me life and health there shall be at least one man who will not fear or hesitate to cast his whole influence on the side of right in every crisis/

And in relation to orthodoxy he wrote on the same day:

'I can't comprehend or adopt very many of the orthodox views of our or of any church \* \* \* I have conscientiously chosen another field of labor and should feel myself unfaithful to my new espousal if I should devote much time to other business or professions. I believe it just as necessary and honorable to work in the suburbs (as I sometimes call education) of the Holy Field, as to be engaged more directly in this service. \* \* \* I think some power has continually pointed out and urged me on toward an educational mission.

\*I do not think as some enthusiastic youths are apt to think, that I can change our educational system as if by magic but if I can succeed in opening the smallest aperture in the great dam of error, quackery and ignorance that now so thoroughly obstructs the channel of educational improvement I shall be abundantly satisfied/

Working with his father at shoe-making during spare moments, running errands or working for small amounts, catching at education in a very haphazard way, yung Dewey never thereafter lost sight of his life's objectiv as one of service.

On his twenty-first birthday, at Amherst College, Dec 10, 1872 he started to list all books that he red making comments on each. In reviewing 'Memoirs of Libraries' he said (using a few of the breves then invented by him to save time) :

'The reading leaves me more than ever impressed w e importance of public libraries & I feel thankful for e strong interest in e work, that has come to me during e last year. My educational interest could hardly be much stronger than it has b b for several years—of course larger culture gives tone to all one's ideas and

## Melvil Dewey

aims, but the fact remains the same viz—my World Work—Free Schools & Free Libraries for *every soul*.<sup>1</sup>

What this expression of purpose included can be realized from the explanatory foreword.

From his earliest days until his latest, with great versatility, with an insatiable appetite for knowledge, making an everlasting quest for the most direct way towards an end, and in opening new fields for endeavor, he moved constantly forward. He was never happy unless there were obstacles to overcome. His temperament was such that if everything was running smoothly he was restless for fear something was wrong, or that time was not being fully used.

His selflessness to the end of his life was so supreme that nowhere in all the mass of material regarding his activities was a word found that asked for monumenting his career. Melvil Dewey forgot himself into immortality.

From a letter written in Florida on Dec 10, 1931—his eightieth birthday—can be quoted passages that illuminate the activities of a great seer, doer and inspirer:

'Today starts my 9th decade. When my Albany staff celebrated my 5th decade I felt fairly mature \* \* \*. Why! the world has more to worry about than ever before in human history I am busy & happy not because I am indifferent to these present problems but because my mind is skilled not to worry. I profit by De Stael's dictum:

"The Summit of human happiness is to feel each night you have made some progress toward a worthy ideal."

'40 years ago we counted 15 local, state or national organizations or movements of which the chief load was on me, and my wife had half as many more. Our physician fearing overstrain or possible break made us both turn over most of these jobs to associates.

'In all these most of the real work has been done by unusual loyal co-workers. My share has been like a gadfly, to prod others into action. So the world has always given me more than my share of credit. Many of these loyal associates have been generous

## The Picture Outlined

in saying that they wer inspyrd rather than stung into their activ cooperation. \* \* \*

'I hav never graspt the tho't that sum day I shd "retyr". \* \* \* My pet aunt used to tel me 60 years ago that her great ambition was to gro old beautifuli & she did. But mine is not to gro old at all in spirit & faith in the ultimat triumf of the best things/

The letter ended with a beautiful acknowledgment of the help he had recieved from his first wife, Annie Godfrey, and from his second wife, Emily (McKay) Beal.

As a miser of time, a master of detail, a pioneer, a zealot and a crusader he traveld onward towards the day when his last words wer dictated, Dec 24, 1931.

On Christmas Day, 1931 with every possible joy of life expressing itself among the frends gatherd around him in Lake Placid, Florida he gave us all 'good night' and early in the morning of Dec 26 he moved out and on towards whatever fields of labor await those who magnify life as a trust and glorify its tasks.

Said the Lake Wales News:

'This morning the great life of Melvil Dewey fared forth on the sea of Eternity. There was no need for moaning at the bar. It was glorious to depart as he did—no pain as the anchor of life was lifted—no sense of feebleness as the soul's sail was spread—no slackening of the joy of living while the harbor of this life imperceptibly broadened towards the tideless deep—and no space for greater deeds to be placed aboard his craft.'

This outline of his life and the details which wil be expanded in this volume show four major features:

1 He was gript with ambition at a very early age.

2 This ambition was to do something that would justify his existence in the eyes of Almighty God.

3 Every moment was precious and must be used to its fullest capacity.

4 Education must affect life from childhood to old age.

These four high-lights being visible in the entire balance of the picture, his self-disciplin, haste to perform, self-effacement and unstinted gift of all his powers can be understood.

## The Man-child

"Poor men's children receive a valuable training in going without superfluities and in avoiding excess; and this training comes in a perfectly natural and inevitable way, and not through artificial regulation or discipline."

Charles W Eliot in "A Late Harvest"

On the occasion of the annual reunion of the Dewey Cousins Association in Clayton July 9, 1932, Adams Center, in Jefferson County, was visited for the purpose of fotografing the original home of Melville Louis Kossuth Dewey (Melvil Dewey). The journey to Watertown afterwards, a distance of eleven miles, was accomplit by our modern method of travel in fifteen minutes.

Over this same route between 1864 and 1866, the date being unrecorded, M L K Dewey walkt the entire distance, loaded down with a bagful of nickels and penies that he had gradually saved by running errands, shoveling coal and shoe-making. His accumulations amounted to a little over \$10. His walk to Watertown was explaind by his passion to possess a book *on* which his hart had been set for several years, and for which he had done many long hours of work—Webster's unabridgd dictionary. It is a family legend that the boy was so weary from his long walk and the book so hevvy that he took train from Watertown to Adams Center, much to his distress; for it ment spending mony that was hard to come by. The contrast between the two journies is the difference between today and the times immediately following the middle of last century. Of this incident Melvil Dewey said in 1926:

'At last I had the most essential book. For 60 years my faith has been firm that for a boy to hav the habit of constantli con-



Birth Place of Melvil Dewey, Adams Center, N. Y.



Home of Annie Roberts Godfrey, Milford, Mass.



Store of Joel Dewey in Adams Center (Present Day)



Toad Hollow, near Adams Center, New York  
Melvil Dewey Taught in this schoolhouse in 1868, Aged Seventeen

## The Man-child

suiting a great illustrated dictionary is the biggest single factor in his education.'

Melville Louis Kossuth Dewey was born Dec 10, 1851, the youngest child of a thrifty family of pioneer stock whose limited means first upon them the hard conditions then existing for them and others in many parts of the United States, but more particularly in the inaccessible northern tier of counties of New York State. In that region was a mixture of Scotch, Welsh, English, Irish and German strains, out of which the solid foundations of the United States had been built after the Revolution.

The father, Joel Dewey, as with millions of other Americans at the time, was a great admirer of Louis Kossuth, Hungarian patriot. Kossuth was visiting the United States the year Melville Dewey was born. Years later Melville used 'Louis Kossuth' as part of his name when he understood why the name had been given to him. Then he dropped 'Louis' but continued the use of 'Kossuth' until he was twenty and then dropped that when he determined to shorten his name from Melville to Melvil.

Melvil tells of a nearly fatal accident which occurred when he was an infant:

'When about 2 years old, mother took me on a visit to Uncle Freeman Washburn in the next town, Rodman. When she was busy sewing, I slipped into the back yard, back of a board fence, where a big dog was gnawing a bone. Probably I tried to take it away from him. At all events he thought me a more tender morsel and proceeded to chew me up. As fate would have it, Doctor Hale, our own physician, had been called beyond Rodman and on his way home heard what he thought was a dog flying back of the board fence. A humane man, he stopped his horse and climbed over to stop the fly and found that the under dog was his baby patient. Meantime mother, who never feared anything, had mist her baby, looked out the window and regardless of the ugly dog, rescued me from his jaws. My shoulder was torn down, a piece was torn off my left eye where the scar still shows, and

## Melvil Dewey

the dog had set his teeth over my mouth. They pickt up the pieces and rigd up a babi they tho't wud anser.

'20 years later in Amherst my dentist, Doctor Vincent, sed, "By thunder, that is the most curius caviti I ever saw". Ther wer on 2 handsome front teeth, holes on the face that he sed lookt exactli as if the sharp teeth of an animal had bitten into them befor they came down from their pockets. It had never occurd to me befor, but I told him at once he had the solution; for I was bitten by a dog when 2 years old. He was qyt elated at his diagnosis/

Regarding Melvil's mentality it is reported in a letter recievd this summer from Mrs Eva A Bates of Water-town, N Y that her mother, Melvil's Aunt Cind (Cinderella) Bates, taught him as a child of four or five years old in a select scool which she was then conducting. Mrs Bates says:

**'Mother was fond of recounting tales of the select school in which she taught the primary grade. Cousin Melvil was one of her pupils and she used to relate how he could work a problem in arithmetic in his head quicker than the others could on paper. He was like lightning in his calculations. Another characteristic was his mania for system and classification. It was his delight to arrange his mother's pantry, systematizing and classifying its contents/**

Melvil's father ran a general store as wel as made boots. Some of the earliest recollections of the boy pertained to working at the bench in his father's store and being proud when he had learnd enuf from the shoe-makers whom his father employd, to make a pair of shoes and of boots for himself, 'doing every bit of the work, from crimping to the final finish'. This was an achievment of no mean caracter when it is recald that shoe-making machinery was entirely lacking in rural towns in those days.

It is impossible to state just when the aroud self-consciousness of the child led him to hate any waste of time. It may hav been when playing and working in

## The Man-child

his father's general store or prying into his father's business affairs or making all sorts of exertions to earn a little money for his relatively enormous dictionary.

At fourteen under the influence of the great wave of temperance advocacy which swept the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century he joined a lodge of Good Templars.

From fifteen years of age onward for ten years he kept a very disjointed diary. There are points in the diary however that reveal the unusual aggressiveness and self-determination which lifted him out of the usual thoughts of boyhood into manhood, before his time. He tells of lying on the uncut hides and calfskins in his father's store, enjoying the odor of the tanned leather. There in the dark, after the store had been closed for the day and thinking toward things to come, he thought so definitely that he visited Adams and bought bone cuff buttons with the initial R on each. This was a secret for his own soul; the R meaning to him 'Reformer'. To give point to this it is only necessary to read again the resolutions he made as he approached his eighteenth birthday.

Some of his entries would be a puzzle to the city boy of today. He was to go to a party but,

'Our cutter thill was broken, so I staid home.'

On a certain day in March he records this:—

'Wayne Babcock and I went off through the swamp over to Herbert Loveland's by invitation and sugared off in the woods. We got a kettle from the house and we made two or three pounds of wax.'

Another reference to this type of entry is May, 1867,

'To work in the garden this morning and this afternoon setting up a leach and helping mother clean house.'

On several days he was 'working the road'. **Then** one afternoon he escaped to North Branch and 'caught a mess of suckers'.

## Melvil Dewey

For the encouragement of youthful minds who may hereafter look upon Melvil Dewey as a guide or as a challenge, it may be recorded that his spelling and grammar at fifteen were imperfect not because of his later efforts to shorten the time used on words but because he just did not know any better. One day he records that it 'snowd and blowed very fast'. These slips, that showed him to be a real boy and not a marvel, continued until he was seventeen at least.

The first figure of speech in all these early records appears on Feb 15, 1867:

\* Pleasant today. School and home the same old story, as monotonous as the roar of Niagara.'

Once more in the same year the beauty of nature intrudes on his serious mind; for after recording 'Working and studying at the house today and this evening' he adds 'the song birds are holding a festival today, I think'.

His diary contains constant repeated entries that show his 'will to victory'. He occasionally mentions ball games, skating and shooting but his reiterated statement, written for no eyes except his own is similar to this:

'At school then at store studying.'

When school was out he still made entries such as these:

\* Working up an arithmetical review and Latin.'

On Jan 12, 1867 was this entry:

'Pleasant but cold. I staid in the store to-day and at home this evening studying. *The sleighing is good!*

### Activities

Here are various employments inside and outside his father's store that helped to fill his busy days:

Practicing telegraphy; tidying the store; reading Macaulay's 'History of England'; 'I like it very much.'

## The Man-child

Cleaning the yard; making shoes, picking up stones; plowing the garden; studying ches;

'I staid with Wayne last night and today until a quarter of seven p m. We amused ourselves playing chess and reading poetry chiefly. We played till nearly two o'clock this morning before we went to bed/

Cleaning the cellar and woodshed; drawing sand and brick; 'On the same day I finished volumie i of Macaulay\

Spreading ashes on the medow; making cheese; drawing gravel to the cemetery; drawing goods from the depot; splitting and piling wood; inventorying the stock of boots and shoes and lether; chopping up old boards—kept his days ful. Fixing for a new fence is also recorded:—

'This afternoon dug postholes, studied and played ball. In the evening in the store studying/

Washing windows and cleaning sewing machine;

March 9, 1867. 'Snowing this morning, pleasant this afternoon. I have been drawing wood to Brimmer today from John Heath's woods. The wood is Manford's and he had hired Lyman Sanders to draw it but he did not do it, so we drew it for fear the snow would go off and have to draw it on wheels/

He records a duck hunt, that is included here with such punctuation as he used:

April 13, 1867. 'Pleasant. I went a-ducking this morning down to Moulton's pond with C W Colony. We had a host of sport, Charlie crept on his hands and knees about ten rods to get a shot at a wild duck and then through mistake shot Moulton's drake, just as he shot a wild one flew down the pond and lit about twelve rods from me, I started to shoot and then thought I would wait until it came close as I had in rather a light load. I thought it was wounded but it flew away. A little while afterwards I saw three more ducks under the bank and shot at them, I wounded one but did not kill it. We went over to Moulton's and told him we had killed one of his ducks. He only charged us half a dollar for it and we sold it to Henry Brimmer for forty cents. This evening I went to singing school/

## Melvil Dewey

The schooling facilities in Adams Center and vicinity wer rather limited. The terms wer short, teachers wer constantly changing but by reason of the boy's enthusiasm for facts and the knowledge that he was able to secure in outline from his unabridgd dictionary he early showd unusual mastery of English words together with evidences of good reasoning.

When a little over fifteen he wrote:

'I attended a Teachers Examination today. I had no idea of teaching but entered the class to learn what I could. A S Cooley, the Commissioner, said if I wished to teach a school this summer he would give me a certificate.'

At seventeen, notwithstanding his haphazard schooling he was given a certificate of the third grade and became a teacher. His first opening was at Toad Hollow and he recieved \$1.50 a day for five days a week, in a twelv week term. Subsequent to that he attempted to secure additional knowledge at Hungerford Collegiate Institute at Adams, but before his studies there wer complete the bilding burnd.

Then with his small equipment of knowledge he took another examination and again recieved a certificate for teaching, which led him to a twelv weeks term at Bernhard's Bay, in Oswego County. The outstanding feature of the term was that his passion for knowledge brought out an almost pathetic desire to help the children become equally inspired. His emotional condition was so strong at the time that insted of having any sort of public performance at the end of the term, which was common in those days, he appears to hav had none of the parents present and to hav ended the final examinations with a prayer meeting, he and the children weeping together as they separated.

This report of his emotional outbreak in Bernhardt Bay must be permanently preservd as an evidence of idealistic devotion to his task. His diary says:

- 'We had a short general exercise, comparing life to the rivers

## The Man-child

on the Rocky mountains which starting within a short distance of each other, reach respectively the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic oceans. I then gave them a short account of myself, my intentions and the circumstance which sent me to them.

'After urging them all to be chieftians and giving them my reasons, we all kneeled and closed school with a heartfelt prayer. I was unable to contrroll my feelings & so I was a child with them and we devoted a half hour to a good cry. I havn't been so much affected at parting before in all my short life. One little girl, Emma Cook, kept near me when school was out and I saw she wanted to kiss me goodbye so I stooped down and kissed her. This was what the rest were waiting for & we had a time of kissing.

'Some of my boys, 14 years of age came with tears rolling down their cheeks and kissed me and tho it seems almost foolish I returned their marks of affection from a full heart. As I stood in the door and saw them way up the walk wiping their eyes and looking back so sadly I thanked God that I had not a single blow or cuff or any corporal punishment to regret. I never yet have inflicted any punishment upon one of my scholars and I am sure that it makes my reflections much pleasanter than if I had punished every deviation from duty. I suggested on Tuesday that I should like to have those who wished to do so, write me a letter to remember them by. They answered the next morning by giving me 42 and as I read them all over at home it makes me feel sad.

'When I left I shook hands with over 20 at the depot some of them coming nearly a mile. I looked, as I felt, for the last time on my schoolhouse and its surroundings with full eyes only made more dim when the train passed two little groups, living near the track, but away from the station, looking a sad goodbye from their childish faces. I must muse no more over these past scenes. Life is too active and earnest.'

Somte years afterwards he speaks of one of the little girls of that Bernhardt Bay group calling to see him and visiting his home. This is what his diary reveals:

'Oneida April 11, 1872. It seemed best for me to come here for the two weeks vacation and here I am. Sitting beside me is Jennie Marsden, one of my Bernhardt Bay children, and a sweeter, nicer 12 years old maid one would be troubled to find.

## Melvil Dewey

Smart and loving and modest to a fault I can hardly blame myself for liking Jennie a little more than the others. The look of affection and trust she gives me so bashfully is very precious and touches me deeply. She is to spend 2 or 3 days with me. I really enjoy her company. I am so jealous in my nature that it requires an effort to trust and believe in older people but there's no room left for suspicion of any 'motives' with Jennie. I mean to free myself from some of this distrust of people if possible. I know my own unworthiness so well I guess that I can hardly believe anyone does care particularly for me. Over-sensitive am I too for fear I should fail to take the gentlest hint/

His next educational move was influenst by his father's business. The store was largely conducted on a charge basis and was not profitable. This Melvil Dewey proved by inventories from time to time and at last persuaded his father to sel out. Of this incident he says:

'Our store had boots and shoes, groceries, hardware, fuel, feed and all farm supplies and most everithing kept in a cuntry store except dry goods, clothing and jewelri. During the Civil War father had perhaps a dozen shoe makers who made kip and long legd boots for the soldiers. \* \* \* His store was a God-send to the n'er-do-wels for 10 myls around. He did plenti of bizines to hav been a rich man for that tym, but he never cud refuse credit. The result was that poorli paid peopl whom nobodi els wud trust wud come to our store for groceries, food supplies, shoes, etc, and never paid cash and seldom paid anithing on account. Sometyms father wud get a fu days work from some of them or buy at much mor than valu some old cow, horse or pig, but most of this bizines was lost and wypt out all the profits of the store.

'From 13 to 16, I spent much tym in father's store. I kept store when not in skool or working on some of our land, of which father ownd ½ dozen pieces within a myl or 2. When ther wer customers, I waited on them, but most of the tym I had for reading, studi and digging into father's books to find out the real results of the bizines. I had studid bookkeeping in skool and tryd to improve store methods. I finalli made a complete inventori, to get rid of the ges work and my figures wer convincing that the store was a los rather than a gain, so I devoted my enerji for months to persuading father that it ought

## The Man-child

to be sold. It had grown into his life so it was veri hard for him to giv up, but by going back and forth between him and J Titsworth, a man who had some muni and wanted some bizines I got almost a consent and on the strength of that clozd the deal with Titsworth and at last got father clear of what had been a serious burden with no profit.

'Befor I sold the store, I took father's long lether roi in which he kept the promissori notes due him. Ther wer 155 of them and 133 wer outlawd and I dout if he ever collected the other 22/

After the sale of the store the family moved to Oneida. In 1869 by attending Oneida Seminary for a few weeks Melvil recievd further urge toward higher education.

As indicating his mental agility at this time tho he had no intention of praising himself, in his diary July 10, 1869, written in Oneida, he says:

'I have not studied very hard this term. \* \* \* Much to my surprise as I had made no effort, my standing was given as the best in school by something over 100, being 2671. 3000 is perfect on everything, an amount never obtained to my knowledge. I purpose to raise my standing at least 100 if I attend the Seminary this fall.'

From Oneida Seminary he almost drifted to Alfred *University*, to prepare for *college*. From Alfred, with some conditions, he moved finally to Amherst. There is no evidence in his records to show just why Amherst was selected.

Amherst at the time in view of its foundation principles was regarded as a scool of the profets, and Dewey alredy felt stirring within him a kinship with those people who would work for the accomplishment of high purposes. Mrs Emily Dewey states that many times in later life Mr Dewey said he chose Amherst because of its compulsory fisical education, being one of the first colleges in America to adopt it. Up to within two years of his deth he used dumbel and setting-up exercizes every morning, following the sitem that he had learnd in col-

## Melvil Dewey

lege. He had also considered preparation for Harvard thru Phillips Exeter Academy as shown by a letter which he wrote to Charles W Eliot, the young president of Harvard. This is included elsewhere to indicate the clarity of his purpose during the Amherst period. There is some evidence that he considered entering Rochester University but this is only shown by a partially filled application blank.

Besides his studies and his various labors he crowded in some general reading:

April 1, 1867. Pleasant. In the store today, this evening at home reading Scott's poems. I am in 'The Lady of the Lake' one of the finest poems I think that ever I read.'

May 29, 1867. Pleasant. In the store reading Macaulay as usual and writing this forenoon and planting corn this afternoon. Five of us planted four acres this afternoon. This evening reading Macaulay."

June 6, 1867. 'This morning I read H W Longfellow's poem 'Evangeline'. I do not like it as well as 'Hiawatha' but it is a fine thing. I enjoyed myself first rate. This evening at home studying/

His diaries show after 1867 constantly increasing attention to books. He mentions having reviewed his mathematics with the determination to then take up Latin and Greek. One evening when he was sixteen years of age he came home with a copy of Abercrombie's 'Intellectual Philosophy'. At the same time he criticized Macaulay's 'History of England' because it did not bring him up to the reign of Victoria. Later he determined to read Caesar thru 'tho poorly prepared to do so.'

He and his chum, Charlie Phalen, also began to dip into astronomy and they appear to have spent nights in the fields, identifying the stars.

Beginning in 1868, and always thereafter, whatever town he visited he would look over the local factory or factories in order to understand the processes that were

## The Man-child

used. In some cases he detaild these at length in his diaries. By 1869 he ownd eighty-five books. There was not a single volume of imaginativ caracter unless 'Paradise Lost' and Cowper's poems would enter that clas.

Dr Geo C Owens of Lake Placid whose father livd in Adams Center during Melvil's boyhood says that the boy was scarcely ever seen without a book in his hand.

The thrift practist in his home, among his relatives and in his community became so ingrained that to the last day of his life he could not bring himself to any free spending of mony except for causes, and then he spent mony or gave his services without any mesure. As he went out into life and opportunities occurd for secur-ing materials that would be useful back in Adams Center he appears to hav sent back clothes and other wearing apparel and in one of the letters from a nefew along in the '80's the boy says in a postscript:

'Mother sits here ripping up an old pair of pants that were once Albert Pratt's that you sent Allie when we lived in Oneida. Allie wore them as long as he could and I have just finished them.'

The correspondence of his mother and his father with him when he was out in the world constantly conveyd the idea of thrift, 'don't waste'. One of his father's letters advizes him to be cool and courageous in his outlays and to feel it no crime 'to make the best bargain you can.'

To giv some sense of the almost penurious condition that prevaild in his home territory at the time, a sister in writing to him regarding a cousin says:

'She has plenty of money and clothing, has earned \$3 a week ever since last September and has to my knowledge \$12 in money.'

The brother in another letter says:

'We calculate we are some on finance but Mitt takes the cake. She said when I gave her \$10; "That's more money than I have seen in a year".'

## Melvil Dewey

One letter speaks of a family of four that had livd, paid insurance and contributed to the church, with a cash income of a little over \$136 for a year.

The old folks who had livd thru such conditions wer never quite able to understand Melvil's activities in the world. They could hardly realize his devotion to causes. In their letters they frequently exprest the hope that pay was forthcoming for his hard work in the world. In one letter his mother says:

'My children all work too hard to live long. I am very much worried about you. I know you are taxing yourself too hard. I want you always to try to benefit the world but you cannot afford to do it without being well-paid. You are working hard enough to command big wages/

In other words, the purpose of life was constantly emfasized as 'Cash return' while the burning passion of the son who had gone out into the world was 'causes first and cash return afterwards.'

Looking back over the first two decades of his life it is evident that his parents had no definit feeling as to his powers other than that his life must be effectivly livd if possible, and every day spent in a sense of individual responsibility to Almighty God.

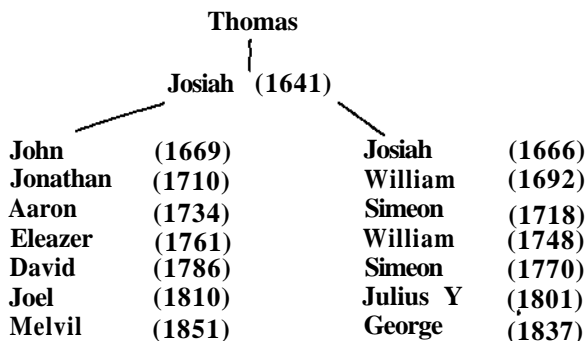
Melvil was the last child of his mother and up to the day of her deth in 1885 her letters always speak of him as 'her baby'. She had strong religious convictions, being a Seventh Day Baptist, and was very austere. The ordinary demonstrations of affection wer probably lacking, but what the boy faild to reciev from his mother he did reciev from his sister Mate, who was charged with his care and gidance and upbringing. A tone of very strong affection runs thru the letters that Mate (Marissa) wrote to him at scool, at college and also in later life. In the very slight autobiografical outlines which wer left by Melvil Dewey he speaks of her love for him.

## The Man-child

Joel Dewey married Eliza Green in 1832, who also came of a pioneer strain. Her immediate ancestors had reached Adams Center, or Green's Settlement in the vicinity, as early as 1805 from Berlin, New York. Charles Green and his child wife walked across the state beside the load of their household goods, she carrying in her arms two children, though she herself was only then seventeen years of age.

The Melvil Dewey ancestry was unbroken back to Thomas Dewey, who landed in Massachusetts in 1630 from one of the eastern counties of England where Huguenots had settled.

The general opinion of genealogists is that the name was Welsh rather than Huguenot in origin. When Melvil Dewey, seeking to abbreviate his surname, at one time called himself 'Dui', bankers and others with whom he had business dealings pointed out to him that this not being his legal name he could not sign it to documents. He found justification for himself in going back to the early records and discovering that Thomas Dewey was at one time called 'Duee', in documents still existing in Connecticut. Going back still further he found that the Dewi name in Wales is the pronunciation of David. Two branches of the family tree show the relation of Melvil and Admiral George Dewey in the following manner as to birth dates:—



## Melvil Dewey

The Dewey cult which raged for a few months after the Battle of Manila Bay brought out ancestral claims as follows: Scotch—Dewar and Dewey; Irish—Dewey; Swedish—Dewjansen; German—Duwig; French—Douett and Douai; Italian—Di Wi; and Russian—Dhjuhji;

Melvil's ancestors had been farmers until Joel, the Adams Center merchant. Eleazer was a teamster in the Continental Army; and Joel, Colonel of the fifty-fifth New York Infantry, by appointment of Governor Silas Wright Sep 5, 1844. Governor William H Seward had appointed him as Captain in the same regiment, Aug. 20, 1841.

By 1898, when the achievements of Admiral George Dewey attracted especial attention to the family, Thomas had been represented by 15,000 descendants;—among them some governors, army and navy officers\*, legislators, lawyers and other leaders; but chiefly taking very modest share in public affairs.

The comment on the family characteristics, set forth in 'Life of Rear Admiral George Dewey and Dewey Family History', 1898, is this:

'As a race, the Deweys have been sober, honest, industrious and long-lived; always in the van of progress; in the front ranks of the armies which have fought our battles, secured our independence, and upheld our liberties; in the advance guard of the pioneers, who have subdued the forests and built up the waste places with thriving towns and cities; foremost in the advancement of law, medicine, theology, science, art, and manufactures.'

## Three Years' Development

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no  
more.

"The Chambered Nautilus," Holmes

His speeches and other literary efforts between 1867 and 1870 were a mixture of grave and gay.

In 'Items' prepared for the Young People's Lyceum of the Adams Center High School, and read Sep 16, 1867, he included several misstatements of collegians, examined on their Bible knowledge. Three are quoted:—

"Mr Everett, the youngest son of the late Hon Edward Everett, describes the examination of a student on the death of Jezebel, and says that after prefacing his account of the tragedy with the remark that it was most important to preserve the exact words of the sacred narrative the examinee proceeded thus:

"And as he passed through the gates of the city, there looked out upon him two persons appointed for that purpose. And he said unto them, [Throw her down] so they threw her down. And he said, [Do it a second time]; and they did it a second time. And he said [Do it a third time] and they did it a third time; and they did unto seven times; yea, unto seventy times seven. Last of all the woman died also. And they took up of the broken fragments that remained seven baskets full."

'Another student describes the ascent of Elijah into Heaven in this wise;—"And then came two she bears out of the wood and said unto Elijah, [go up thou bald-head], and he went up."

'The same examinee after repeating the Samaritan's saying to the innkeeper, "When I come again I will repay", added, "This he said knowing that he should see his face no more"/'

## Melvil Dewey

Then on Nov 1 of the same year Melvil was selected for the Valedictory at the High School Exhibition. His topic was 'Our Future' and he was undoubtedly serious in all that he said—then being under sixteen. Some sentences pickt out at random must be preservd as prophetic in his own case:"

'From Adams Centre there may go another Lincoln, a Clay a Webster or a Washington who shall be an honor and an ornament to his native country.

'As was remarked by the late Edward Everett, "From the humblest village school there may go forth a teacher who, like Newton, shall bind his temples with the stars of Orion's belt,—with Herschel, light up his cell with beams of before undiscovered planets,—with Franklin grasp the lightning."

'But there may also be among us those whose future lot shall be cast with the criminal. \* \* \* God forbid, that any of our number should take the downward path, but may we all, ever go, "onward and upward".'

During the same year he had described 'Lyceums' and concluded:

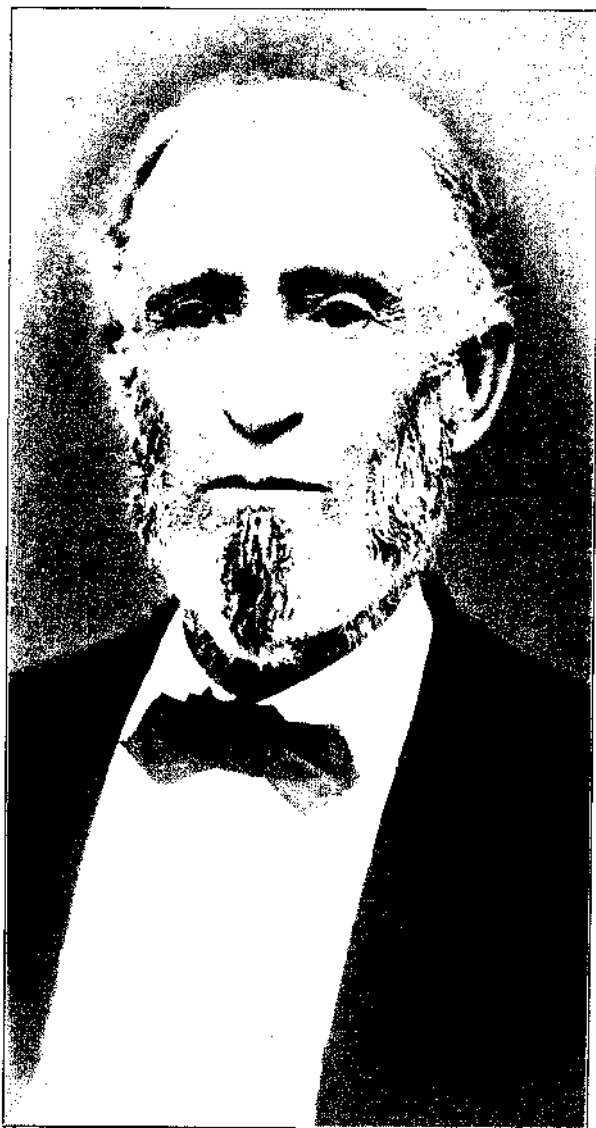
'Practice makes perfect in all departments and professions; but more especially to the department of elocution, does this old proverb apply, and in such society as ours, we may secure the requisite practice, in the most agreeable manner. In no other way, may we become graceful elocutionists, but by constant and unwearied practice.

'Let us then, in view of these considerations, avail ourselves of this excellent opportunity, for improving our manner, of speaking, writing and debate.

'The expense, is comparitively nothing, the benefit to be derived, invaluable.'

The next of the invaluable manuscripts of this precocious boy in 1867 coverd his affirmativ part in a debate on:

'Resolved: that it is the duty of all Christians and Good Templars to discountenance in all honorable ways, the manufacture, sale and use of tobacco.'



Joel Dewey

Feb. 22, 1810—April 1, 1889



Eliza Green Dewey  
Nov. 30, 1808—Oct. 24, 1885

## Three Years' Development

His research was exhaustiv as to the plant, its activ principles, its effects on the intellect, and on fisical conditions. He quoted from medical journals and from the American Eclectic Dispensatory, and dipt into words like empyreumatic oil, nicotia, saliva, volatil, acro-narcotic, and organic diseases of the hart. The argument gradually veerd around to financial waste and the boy went on:

'First, chewing:—Never having used the filthy poison myself, I cannot say positively, what quantity one of these gentlemen *chaws* per day, but will take the case of a victim with whom I am acquainted, as a standard from which to make our computations. This man uses from year to year, one ioc plug of filth, every 2 days.

'He has now used tobacco about 50 years. Suppose he placed the amount of his annual tobacco bill at 7% interest and continued to add his tobacco money, to this amount with its interest, at the expiration of 50 years, as any one will find who takes the trouble to figure it out, he has saved the modest little sum of \$7397.25. This for the common tobacco by a man who gives away but a trifle; what it would be, where a man uses fancy brands and gives away more than he chews, I leave you to conjecture.

'Secondly, smoking:—You call a man a moderate smoker indeed, who uses but 1 cigar in 24 hours, but followed up for 50 years, your moderate smoker has blown away in smoke, what with its interest, would have amounted to \$14,794.50/

His closing argument rested on the use of tobacco creating an appetite for strong drink.

This was deliverd before the I O G T Lodge No 70 at Adams Center, of which Melville K Dewey was a militant member.

Another subject delt with in the same year was 'Reading'; in which the sober youth delivers himself of two authoritativ statements.

'All read, more or less. From the urchin who has barely mastered his alphabet, to the silvery haired old man; from the cradle to the grave, with nearly all, reading is a favorite pastime.

## Melvil Dewey

It yields a pleasure, when all else is stale and distasteful to the mind. It guides, pleases and instructs, all in one.

'But I will not attempt to point out the beauty and utility of reading; that is too self-evident. My object is rather, to treat of what is read, for all my hearers, doubtless, already read and need no incentive to induce them to do so/

**His second dictum deals with fiction, of which at the time, he did not approve. At Amherst later he changed his mind. Said he at Adams Center:**

'The person who spends three-fourths of his leisure time, in reading those famous Ledger stories or the milk and watery effusions of Miss Braddon, Emerson Bennett, Miss Evans and a score of still poorer writers, is certainly spending his time very foolishly and unprofitably. Better by far be idle, than to store the mind with such trash, which is so much less valuable than the room which it occupies. Such people can readily give a synopsis of the last new novel but innocently inquire if Alexander the Great was an American or if Pharoah was one of the twelve apostles. \* \* \* But, urges one, this class of reading is more interesting and fascinating than the other. The person who makes objection, at once makes manifest, that he has been trifling with that deadly enemy of mental power "fiction". The taste for such matter is acquired, the same as the appetite for liquor or tobacco. If that person had spent a portion of his time, in reading some of our histories or scientific works, he never would have made that objection of interest and fascination; for truly, truth is stranger than fiction.'

**It is only fair to say that his introduction was modest.**

'I have selected this subject, not that I thought myself capable of treating it in that clear, methodical manner which it requires; but because I was impressed by its vast importance and by its shameful misuse.'

**The same year produced two papers on 'The Metric System of Measurement'. One was a composition delivered before the Adams Center High School on Oct. 9 and the other before the Hungerford Collegiate Institute at Adams on Dec 23, 1867. The papers differed**

## Three Years' Development

slightly but were very serious attempts to save time. To show how fully they had mastered the main points a quotation or two will suffice. First he explained the origin of the new system of weights and measures.

'In seventeen hundred and ninety, (1790) quite a number of scientific men from different nations met in Paris; and, in the year following, the government appointed a commission nominated by the Academy of Sciences, to prepare the new system. Their first work was to determine upon some unit of length, from which the units adopted might be restored if they should at any time be lost. They fixed upon the ten millionth (10,000,000) part of a quadrant of the earth's meridian (the distance from the equator to either pole) and having determined the exact distance, (as they supposed, but which later measurements prove to have been a trifle less), they marked it upon a bar of platinum and placed it among the National Archives, for preservation and future reference. This unit they termed a metre and from it they formed their units of weight, surface and capacity/

His first paper did not contain the 'nomenclature' as he dubbed it, and so in his second paper he added these simple statements.

'From this unit, which they termed a metre, all the units of the system are formed, the unit of surface being 100 sq metres, termed an are; of solidity and capacity, a cubic decimetre termed a litre; and of weight the weight of a litre of water at a certain temperature, in a vacuum.

'The scales they formed decimally, and the names, by prefixing the Greek word, deca, hecto &c in the ascending; and the Latin, deci, centi, etc in the descending scales, to the name of the unit. This constitutes the beauty of the Metric System. \* \* \* All is simple and harmonious, for length, it has one measure, \* \* \* for surface, it has one measure, \* \* \* for solidity or capacity, it has one measure, \* \* \* for weight it has one measure, with the gramme for its unit. Any person of ordinary capacity, can easily and perfectly learn the Metric System in a few minutes; while it takes hours of hard study to learn the old but imperfectly/

## Melvil Dewey

And he ends with a summons to reform.

'Spend a few moments in learning this system and thus help to spread one of the greatest of reforms, uniformity in measurement.'

During the year he lightened up a little by compiling or writing 'The Literary Star' for the Young People's Lyceum. Every line of it was in pen and ink. The motto was 'Onward and upward'. What newspapers call the mangled contained these announcements:

'Terms. Good attention, invariably in advance. Advertisements, inserted as parties may agree. Marriage notices, gratis if accompanied with cake.'

It is doubtful whether another copy was ever issued, as the editor was under heavy pressure then making shoes, emptying coal cars, running errands, thumbing his beloved dictionary, and yet keeping up with such classes as he could attend. He permitted two or three light items to get in—whether original or not, cannot well be said.

The world is ruled by three kings: Cash, Commerce, and calico/

Then back to seriousness.

'Be not afraid of hard study; it is the price of learning/

Then to semi-serious 'Follies'.

To remember the Sabbath day by working harder and later on Saturday than on any other day in the week, with a view to sleeping late next morning and staying at home all day to rest, conscience being quieted with the plea of not feeling very well/

At the end his zealotry as to time and its use had to blaze forth:

'Do we all fully appreciate the inestimable value of time? Another hour has gone to Eternity and when we look back upon it, can we truly say—it was well spent?

'May we not do something the *present* hour that shall cause us to look back with pleasure?

## Three Years' Development

'If we did but realize the importance attached to every moment of our lives how very differently should we appear?

'We have but one life to live and *that short* life is but a group of *hours*, yet we allow *hour after hour* of that *precious* time to drift over us, but partially improved.

'Truly it is not *all* of life to *live*.'

The following parody on Grey's Elegy was local and yet universal. The editor credited it to 'R\ probably Melvil himself as "R" was his symbol for "Reformer":

'Written in a village School Room.

The school bell tolls the knell of morning play;  
The romping boys wind slowly up the stair;  
The teachers, deskward, plod their weary way  
And Newt and Oscar commence a pulling hair.

Now fades the glimmering lesson on the sight;  
And all the room a solemn stillness holds;  
Save where Malone and Charlie scratch and fight,  
And injured teachers calmly (?) fret and scold.'

Only one manuscript has been found for 1868. On Jan 6 of that year M K Dewey wrote briefly on 'New Year's Eve' for the Hungerford Collegiate Institute. The jealousy of time runs thru it. Note:—

'There is no better time for meditation on the past, than the night before New Year's, in the silence of the night, with naught to disturb or excite the mind, watching the old year fade and die. More solemn than death of other friends; for them we shall meet again, but the old year is passing away forever. How many and varied are the scenes that crowd upon the mind "for there's many and many a picture that hangs on Memory's wall." For every hour unimproved, there comes a pang, when we think that another year is passing into eternity with so little accomplished for good.'

Three days before this his diary records a mournful fact that may explain his solemnity:—

'Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday I was sick and had to stay away from school Friday. My stomach was out of order;

## Melvil Dewey

caused I think by eating nuts and mince pie in the evening (after the tremendous dinner of a family re-union).'

The manuscripts of 1869 are plentiful—ten in all. They were all prepared for delivery before Oneida Seminary and here are the topics and sententious quotations:

### *Value of Time* (April 27, 1869)

'If time then be so precious at the close of life, why is it not just as valuable now? We can live as long and accomplish as much today as the last day of life and indeed we have no assurance that today is not the last \* \* \* Does it not become us to so improve the present, that we may look back without longing or regret and not feel compelled to say as do so very many, "Oh, that I could live my life over again"!'

### *Falling Leaves* (May 10, 1869)

Tew of us, who have not, sometime, watched the leaves. Some saw in them a type of life. We saw them springing forth as tender buds, enjoying their leafy childhood. Through many storms and heat and cold and bitter usage from the wind, they came to maturity and we saw the manhood of the leaves. Nobly they battle with life but time and the fierce sun are making inroads on their beauty. They have lost something of their vernal freshness but they still struggle with the wind and sun. A little longer and the bright green has given place to a sombre brown; we have reached the age and dotage of the leaves. They still cling to the branches but with a feeble hold. The next *zephyr* that passes through the grove will sever the frail connexion and our story of the leaves will be finished.'

### *Two Sides* (May 24, 1869)

'We make our lives happy or miserable, according as we look on the bright or dark side of our surroundings. \* \* \* And so through his whole life, he will not appreciate what he has because of what he fears. Such a one is to be heartily pitied. \* \* \* If we would make life happy, and indeed happiness is what we are all striving for, we must not dwell entirely upon the bitter things of life but with an unfaltering trust in "Him who doeth all things well" receive whatever Providence may bring to us as best, do our duty manfully and cheerfully and leave the rest with God.'

## Three Years' Development

In the next composition he describes a mother robin instructing her yung, and naming the various other birds and their faults and frailties and at last coming to man 'the most wonderful animal you will ever meet'.

### *What the Birds Said* (June 7, 1869)

'But yonder just beyond the meadow is the most wonderful animal you will ever meet. He is called man and is considered the noblest work of an all-wise Creator \* \* \* No other class of animals' in the wide universe vary among themselves in disposition and habits so much as men, who from the extreme of nobility sink down to and, in some cases, below the level of the brutes. \* \* \*

'Sometimes you will see them holding in the mouth a burning roll of weeds, the smoke of which gives forth a most offensive odor and rolling back in their very nostrils, pollutes\* the air for some distance around. \* \* \*

'I slowly retraced my steps homeward and tried to learn a useful lesson from little Redbreast's lecture and whenever I see a person bowing down to King Habit I always wish that they might hear what the Robin thought of the fell tyrant.'

The next composition was markt as an oration:—

### *Mind, the Measure of the Man* (July 9, 1869)

'Alexander Pope, that noble master of English verse was a humpbacked dwarf, unable for 12 long years before his death to even dress himself. Do we, while reading his matchless works with so much pleasure, think less of him because of his deformity? \* \* \* A moment's thought will convince the most prejudiced that dress does not afford the slightest clue to either character or merit. \* \* \*

'The majority of great men are of humble birth and have made their own paths to eminence. Indeed we rarely find a case where men of distinguished abilities have left children equaling or even approximating their greatness; \* \* \* Do we read of second Miltons or Shakespeares or Bonapartes or Newtons? Did the burning eloquence of Demosthenes or Cicero, survive with their descendants? Did the inspiration of Homer or Virgil outlive its original possessors? \* \* \*

## Melvil Dewey

'Another class, laying aside distinctions of looks, birth and property, take for their unit with which to measure men, the only part that survives the three score years and ten, the immortal mind.'

Again he returns to his denunciations of human frailties. Using the title 'Habits' (Sept 13, 1869) he looks at the cost of habits 'shading the eyes with a greenback'.

'Certainly God never made an animal with a natural desire to convert his mouth into a smoke stack.' \* \* \*

Then follow statistics as to the costs of 'this unhealthy, filthy habit' for fifty years.

Then on Sep 27—two weeks later he recognizes the humorous side of the continuous search for essay topics and so he writes:

### *Subjects of Compositions (Sep 27 1869)*

'You are amused to see the most slovenly person *in* the room mount the rostrum and with perfect composure read you a lecture on "Tidiness". \* \* \*

'He is followed perhaps by the tardiest boy in school giving a first class article on "Punctuality". \* \* \*

'Then one so shamefully lazy that he hardly summons the resolution to read, offers a treatise on "Industry or Energy". \* \* \*

'The teacher who corrects these efforts finds one which, after vainly trying to decipher, he attributes to some second Horace Greeley, who is said to be the poorest writer on the globe. He hardly knows whether to be more amused or disgusted when its author innocently informs him that it is on "The Importance of Good Penmanship".

'And so through the entire series, each one apparently choosing the subject least accordant with himself and practice. Nor is this confined exclusively to students and their compositions. Many sermons, speeches and lectures exhibit the inconsistency. I have thought of this thing many times and this is the only reason I can discover:—We that write these compositions must have subjects. Instinct and advice of teachers both tell us to write upon subjects with which we are acquainted/

## Three Years' Development

He gave some rein to fancy or perhaps to fact in his next composition submitted Oct 11, 1869:—'Who shall decide when doctors disagree'. This choice and personal touch is in one sentence.

'We are taught in our physiology and have it practically impressed at the tables of some boarding halls that students neither need nor should eat so much food as ordinary persons. The reason is very plain. The vital power used at the stomach to digest the food is just so much taken from the brain **and** of course etc. \* \* \*

The next composition was very definitely profetic of his life-long struggle for the use and adaptation of new ideas. His topic was 'Improvement'.

'There is a set of old fogies, who are continually croaking "let well enough alone". Never will they consent to any material change. The word itself is as hateful to their ears as felony or murder. \* \* \* Similar bug bears assail the ears of any who presume to submit an improvement to one of these sentimental old owls. Suppose the world had taken this advice, for unfortunately for the world it has always contained more or less of these nuisances. \* \* \*

'Today—our homes would be cabins of logs lighted and warmed by the blazing back log; our uncouth clothing rudely fashioned and made; our fields cultivated with the *unweildy* implements of a century ago; the grain harvested handful by handful with the sickle and threshed bundle by bundle with the awkward flail; the corn shelled ear by ear with a rusty bayonet or pounded in a barrel; a person able to read and write the exception and not the rule and a book almost as great a rarity as a school house. The stage coach would be our only means of communication; the elegance and speed of the steamboat and railroad, to us a dream more inconsistent than the successful navigation of the air; the wonders of the telegraph **and** cable, a madness more preposterous than a visit to Venus or to Mars or an evening's call on the man in the moon.

'Had the wants of humanity a voice **the continual cry would be Men! Men! Men! Not the weak and vacillating, not the coward or the traitor, but warm-hearted, broad-shouldered men,**

## Melvil Dewey

ready, willing, eager to stand foremost in the struggle for the right; earnest, energetic disciples of "Improvement"!

After the above declaration for improvement, his final composition at Oneida Seminary, leads back to 'The Metric System of Weights and Measures'; supplying much new material and clinching his arguments at every point. As this record will go into libraries the world over, that which the boy of eighteen argued so wisely and forcefully, is again quoted in part:—

'We have as measures of weight, avoirdupois, apothecaries and troy. These are not wholly perfect; for instance, when you buy medicines there are sixteen ounces in a pound but when they are mixed there are only twelve. In a hundred-weight of coal there are a hundred and twelve pounds but still a pound of coal weighs nearly a fourth more than a pound of silver; and a pound of feathers is heavier than a pound of gold. A bushel of buck-wheat weighs fifty pounds in Indiana but set it over the state line into Illinois and it weighs but forty. Carry up seven bushels of rye from Louisiana and in Missouri you will have but four. Instances of this kind might be multiplied by hundreds. All it can amount to, is to measure the force of gravity. This the *metric system* accomplishes by *one* unit with its four multipliers and three divisors. But this, important as it is, is not the chief merit of this system of weights and measures. Its great superiority over all others consists in the fact that all its scales are purely decimal and that the simple name of each denomination accurately expresses its value. You will better appreciate the advantages of the decimal notation, if you will recall some of the units of the American scale, as— $5\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $16\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $69\frac{1}{6}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $792/100$  \* \* \* These tables with their almost unending maze of fractions are a continual source of vexation and waste of time from the earliest school experience of childhood to the close of life. And yet after all the time wasted upon them, where one person is perfectly familiar with all their workings, nine are equally ignorant, except of the most common denominations. To master all this in the *metric system*, you have to learn one number and eleven words, an exceedingly easy half hour's task. \* \* \* By learning these eleven little words, you have acquired a system which measures everything that can be measured by the

## Three Years' Development

old, with less possibility of confusion or mistake, with much greater accuracy, and in many cases with one fifth the time and labor. \* \* \* Yet this difficulty must be overcome. The world is now so bound together by its railroads and its shipping that it cannot and will not long submit to so great an inconvenience in all its commercial transactions. But certainly the system can never be used by the people until it be learned by the people. Therefore let me urge each and every one of you who has not already done so, to make himself master of this subject, to cast his entire influence, be it great or small, on the side of its adoption, and to hope and expect to see the present awkward and inconsistent system of American and English weights and measures done away forever/

By December, 1869, he was teaching in Bernhardt Bay at \$3 per day. Quotation elsewhere from his diary will show the emotional strain under which he worked.

By 1870 he is in Alfred to prepare for Amherst. April 13 he attacked 'The Roman Notation' as:

'One of that very large class, which we might denominate life's unnecessary nuisances. \* \* \*

'The system itself is awkward in construction and almost *incapable of being used* in rapid computations. On the other hand, we have, in the Arabic or Indian notation, a method of writing numbers, accurate, simple, and probably as nearly perfect as man can invent. *That*, awkward and ambiguous, used only enough to compel everyone to be familiar with it; *This*, simple and accurate, in almost universal requisition. Why shall we not use it, then, exclusively.'

Particular interest belongs to the sentences quoted above, for they include his first recorded commitment to the fascination and value of Arabic numerals, out of which grew, at Amherst, his decimal system of classification in libraries—now used over the civilized world.

In Alfred he read 'Our Lyceum' to the Alleghanian Lyceum on May 21, 1870. He argued for strict parliamentary usage as *one* of the great gains to come from the voluntary gatherings of the students for mental improvement.

## Melvil Dewey

On May 25, 1870 he read to the Alfred students a description of 'Oneida Community'. Two very unusual features show out in this paper. He began the first evident use of his 'breves', or arbitrary use of letters in the place of words; and he made one comment upon the curious stirpi-culture then prevalent in the Community. His closing lines will illustrate both features:

\*E R. R. will doubtl greatly incre e no v vists & e world will soon know more v e peculiar beliefs & customs of e OC; But z we r not moralizg & h finished our hasty survey of bildgs & gnds w wil leave th to pursue e even tenor v th way/ (See footnote.)

Apparently his last public utterance in Alfred was on June 8, 1870. His subject was 'Life'—the self-realization that had siezd on his soul and controld each day's doings. It is here reprinted in ful and being in convenient form is fotografed to show the 'breves'.

'Life—a very narrow isthmus between the boundless eternities of the past and future. We look back, and the brain grows faint and dizzy in the vain attempt to comprehend the infinite. But altho our conception of the future is indistinct and we cannot understand its ways, yet a voice within us that may neither be hushed nor mistaken plainly says—of this future your existence is a part. As we pass thru this part of time called life, we feel deeply that life is very short, eternity very long. We see the sands of life flowing surely and with almost fatal rapidity from a fountain which to us is hidden. We cannot look within. We note the size of the reservoir and know that it might contain enough of the golden sand to supply the waste of a hundred. It is possible but not probable; yet how many use the time as if the fountain were inexhaustible. How much it *may* contain, how long the rapid wasting *may* continue, is a secret known to God alone. It is not less true and startling, because we can't see the little sands but it is much less regarded. Could we stand beside the little stream, knowing that at the very moment, the last moment of our life might be falling, I think it would impel

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(Footnote) 'The railroad will doubtless greatly increase the number of visits and the world will soon know more of the peculiar beliefs and customs of the Oneida Community; but as we are not moralizing and have finished our hasty survey of buildings and grounds we will leave them to pursue the even tenor of their way.'

## Three Years' Development

the most sluggish spirit to be up and adoing. If we have a work to do, and for what other purpose could we have been created, we must do it while the day lasts. From every walk of the broad earth comes up an earnest cry for laborers. As yet no field of usefulness is fully occupied. Choose your vocation to suit your inclinations, then turn your attention to that field, and the wants of the human family will earnestly demand your efforts. If life is *so short* and eternity so long, nothing but earnest, persistent endeavors will enable us to look back on a finished work.'

The preceding quotations, linkt without the slightest disarrangement of dates or omission of a single manuscript, show the boy amusing himself at the outset with Biblical boners and at last catching sight of life as a gift, a trust, and a responsibility.

## Amherst Days

Amherst, like the others, was to be a school of the prophets. From the days of the founders they (New England colleges) have been conscious of a world in need. From very early days the sense of a mission was impressed upon the student on every possible occasion. Amherst chose the device of a sun and a Bible illuminating a globe by their united radiance while underneath are the words "Terras Irradiant".

Patton and Field, "Eight O'Clock Chapel"

One of the od announcements of Amherst College in its early advertizing was that:

'The Massachusetts Agricultural College is within a mile and a half of it, and there are in the neighboring towns, the Williston Classical Seminary, the Mt Holyoke Female Seminary, and in Northampton, close by, a college for women is about to be established.'

Melvil Dewey's stay in Amherst from 1870 to 1876 sheds but little light on the college or its management. He was too preoccupied to pay much attention to his surroundings. He had gone to Amherst with the resolution to stay away from social affairs because of the need of economy. His diary comments are so unsatisfactory that they do not indicate either his first impressions or the studies that he took. He did say in his diary on July 13, 1870:

'I shall mingle in society very little during the next four years; In term time almost none. I shall take the course which I think will give me the most thoro culture and the greatest ability to do good.'

There is practically no reference to the character of Amherst as a college. He does occasionally refer to President Stearns and later to President Seelye. After his **sofomore** year he was in frequent contact with the

## Amherst Days

faculty as he approacht the re-arrangement of the library, but so far as reflecting local color he might just as well have been at any other college, assuming that the privileges of the library had been made available for him. No reference in all his diaries or letters exists as to the after effects of the Civil War; nothing as to the reconstruction thru which the country was passing; no comment upon public affairs after graduation except in one case he says:

'Town meeting today; did not attend; have no time for such things/

Rev C H Parkhurst, Amherst '66, was in Amherst as a tutor during Dewey's time. On *one* occasion and in connection with the same program, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Washington Gladden appeared, but Melvil makes no comments upon them nor did he refer to Henry Ward Beecher, Amherst '34, who also was present on a public occasion.

During the vacation period of 1872, just before returning to Amherst as a junior, he talkt into his diary as follows, tho there is no evidence that he had then been selected as an assistant librarian at Amherst:

'There's a score of things in my mind that I would like to think out here in my journal but I've acquired a vile habit of neglecting such matters. So many things come to me. Surely this age is the one when a man's ideas are strangely confused & unsettled. It's a very luxury to feel settled on any point. I'm quite delighted when I find myself come to definit decisions on any subject. It seems good to look at your decision & cling to it, feeling it is your own.

'My last recorded reading was Elsie Venner. Since that time I've read Thackeray's *Newcomes & Vanity Fair*, & more or less of Porter, Irving, Bible etc. Porter I value very highly & guess that it helped me to a couple good decisions this summer.

'One was to look over our periodical literature etc and cull out such articles as I am most interested in. It won't take too much time and will yield a good return. Real life is approach-

## Melvil Dewey

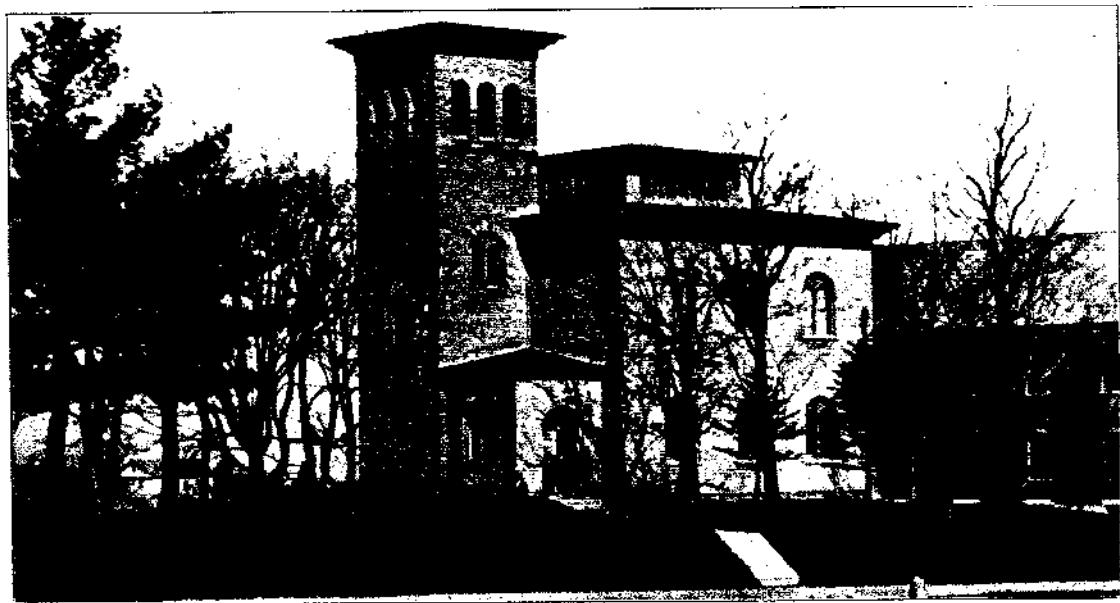
ing. Only 2 years more of college seclusion & then I'm to mingle more or less with the busy world & it's time I began to drift into it a little. For a long time I've read no current news & totally disregarded politics etc. I had very little interest in such matters & less time to devote to them so I left them entirely alone, I shall read the monthly summaries now & get a little *into* the world. My great object is of course, to familiarize myself with my own chosen (education) work. I shall also make a speciality of learning all I can in this direction by visiting schools, reading books & making inquiries etc.

°My second new departure is in a way of books & reading, specially public libraries. I propose to take extra pains to post my self on this subject as a very important branch of my main labors, as it seems to me I can exert a very great influence for good *in* this way. I shall certainly like the work.

'Special attention to these things with my regular college & social duties to both which I mean to be faithful will fill my time *pretty* thoroly. Then there is all my Latin sophomore year to be examined *Sc* I was so unwell at the end of the *term* that I went into neither of the annuals, letting my prize examination go for annual (as last year) in maths; & my Latin I let go indefinitely. We shall have a rigorous campaign (social) & I've an unusually large amount of business to attend to so I promise myself a very busy year. If I can only be spared good health I can do any amount of hard work, can endure anything almost. Without it I shall be miserable indeed & I shall make a very strenuous effort to keep it during the year. Yes during life.'

His letters to leading librarians and educators during 1872-3 and 1873-4 supplemented his visits to New England and New York libraries. His whole soul's enthusiasm was directed towards mastering what others had done well or done poorly or left undone, so as to formulate his own plans. Among his collection of letters was preservd a most cordial one from W T Harris, then Superintendent of Public Schools in St Louis; and years later Commissioner of Education for the United States.

It is evident by his accounts that at the opening of -his junior year he began work in the library, probably



Amherst College Library, 1873



Amherst College Library, 1873  
Interior view when Meivil Dewey was inventing his Decimal Clasification

## Amherst Days

without any regular salary. This would be the fall of 1872. Payments for his work at first appear to have been rather irregular. For instance:

'Nov, '72, work on library \$12/'

'March, '73, work on library \$18.'

'July, '73, present from Prof Montague for services \$50/'

'October, '73, library money \$25.'

'December, '73, library money \$25.'

He appears therefore to have begun work on a very irregular basis, or for no payment at all but received \$12.50 a month after a year's work. From that time on till graduation he appears to have received \$100 a quarter. Then after graduation there is an entry showing \$400 for a quarter. This entry is however not repeated at later times. It was during this latter contact with the library that he paid back to his father quite a solid amount. An entry on Dec 27, 1874 shows that Professor W L Montague made him a present of \$150 from the college in recognition of his extra work or services and that Melvil turned this all over to his father.

His work with the library as an undergraduate led to an arrangement that he should be assistant librarian and he remained occupied with it from the fall of 1874 to the summer of 1876. It should be born in mind however that the first steps toward library modernization took place before he was graduated. His Decimal Classification plan was formally presented to the faculty in May, '73 when he was a little over twenty-one years of age, but had doubtless been ripening in his mind during the preceding months of his attempt to handle the confused situation existing in the old library. On this point a letter to Prof Montague written late in 1876 after Dewey was out in the world clears up much:—

My dear Prof Montague. Your letter was forwarded to me in Phila and I sent you a very hurried answer during the conference. I now answer again. As I wrote you then I am so reduced financially that I shall be glad to accept anything not

## Melvil Dewey

an absolute charity. So if you see fit you may send me the \$300 which you tender. I will enter it on my account as a gift or partial payment. By the way it was a little awkward the way the trustees left that business. Some who knew of their action at commencement have congratulated me on getting the \$1250 telling me that they were informed that I received it. It is bad enuf to go without the money without being supposed to have it \* \* \*

I hardly agree with your reasoning that the college paid me for making this scheme. The idea I worked out 6 months before they engaged me at all and the idea is really the most valuable part of it. Beside I worked extra hours more than double enuf to have done all the work on the classification, as I told you repeatedly at the time. Other work forced me to let this lie untouched and I often complained that it was impossible to get any time to complete it so it could be printed. If you will recall the circumstances I think you will acknowledge that the classification is no more the property of the college than any of the books published by members of the faculty and prepared during their salaried time as college officers. In either case I think there will hardly be return enuf in the thing to make either party anxious to claim it. I shall feel very grateful indeed if I escape without positive loss beside my time. \* \* \*

How do you like the Journal 'my youngest', as they term it here? Did you get the bulletins regarding the metric system? I shall send you shortly some spelling reform matter which I hope you will look over carefully.

At Christmas time in 1874 he wrote from Amherst to his sister-in-law in Oneida, he having then undertaken full assistant's work in the library. His comments on work, horses, acquaintances, religious duties etc, give a light on his life:

'I shall spend all this vacation in harder work than during the term. I brag, you will remember when in O, that I should take life easier this year but I find myself crowded more than ever before. I don't overwork I think, for my horse saves me. I go out to her 3 times a day & feed & care for her in an affectionate, leisurely way & then I spend quite a little time in **the** saddle. I go out nearly every morning except Sunday &

## Amherst Days

am generally out from 4, or half past, til 6 when I hav tea. This is twilight, too dark to work & too light for a lamp, so I use the time for my xercise. I ride sometimes 15 miles or 20 at once—sometimes only 3 or 4. Usually I go 10 or more every day. I think it is all that keeps me up so wel as I am for I am very wel indeed this winter. It costs me, I find, just what it did for Dr Hall, my N Y fisician, so I call her my family fisician. \* \* \* My helth is so much improved that I think a great deal of her & shud hate to sel or leave her. \* \* \*

'You perhaps were right about my being in church with som nice companion. I hav met & made frends with more nice ladies in a single week this term than in all my college course before. The change is wonderful. They ar afraid of students a little but now I am quite a citizen of Amherst & enjoy it immensely. Don't understand me by any means that I accept all or half my invitations out, for I hav no time for party going; only occasionally. \* \* \*

'I shud add that the church is congregational. My own leanings with my present light ar towards the episcopal quite strongly. If I ever get time to investigate the subject I presume I shal com out a member of that church. Stil I care very little for denomination—nothing in fact, only as it affects their form of worship & I certainly like the grand service of the prayer book better than that xtemporized for the occasion by second rate parsons. I dare say this last confession wil sound far from orthodox to you but there is a difference in taste.

At this point he outlines in detail on three pages a plan whereby all family letters can be red and past along to the next on a list; in that way making one letter from each giv the family news to five without writing five letters.

His attitude toward denominational life appears to hav remaind unchanged in Amherst. He held to the broad aspect of things which he took on his eighteenth birthday. In fact it is an indication of his free thinking to find in one of the formal essays submitted by him in Amherst, of all places on earth, a very carefully workt up argument to prove that Mahomet was sincere.

## Melvil Dewey

**It was during the same year also that he prepared and delivered the essay on 'Regularity' which, as it indicated his later trends regarding the English language, is quoted in part here:**

An American looking at his mother tongue from the standpoint of a foreigner, must of necessity thank his lucky stars that he is not compelled to explore the labyrinth of the English tongue to reach the treasure of the English mind.

An important alphabet, combined in words apparently of studied irregularity, together with roots and infinitives, derived from so varied and numerous sources, containing and expressing delicate shades of sense which are fully appreciated only by the more carefully educated, make up a language which a student may justly dread to grapple with. \* \* \*

A language so very copious and so very strong, spoken by 2 such nations as England and America well warrants the opinion of the German philologist, that in the coming time, the English is to be the universal language. Great minds have tried with carefully developed plans to reduce the many irregularities to order and so to do away with the great objection to English. Their brilliant theories have been developed, tried, abandoned. 2 mighty nations of money makers are not easily bro't to the adoption of Utopian schemes. In its own time—in its own good way, the greatly desired end is accomplishing itself. We may each of us assist in bringing this about. \* \* \*

### Sensitiveness

**It will have been realized by the chapter on Dr Dewey's early days that as a youth he was very sensitiv. He was suspicious to a high degree of people older than himself. He doubted their approaches. It is not a surprise therefore to find that he carried over into his Amherst life the same sensitiveness. At one point in his diary he says this after the faculty had acted unfavorably on his volunteer shorthand classes:**

'Got my things mostly arranged so I could leave town very easily if they served me any more mean tricks.'

**Having always in mind the importance of saving spare moments Mr Dewey became interested in personal short-**

## Amherst Days

hand, studied Lindsley's takigrafy and became so proficient in it by Dec 10, 1873 that from that time on he made all his diary records, accounts, outlines of speeches, arguments etc by this sistem.

Running true to his idealism and finding that this time-saver was good for him he immediately turnd around to see if he could interest others. It is amazing to consider the enthusiasm with which he, even before graduation, approacht his fellow students and urged them to take up takigrafy. After graduation in 1874 he organized classes and reports in his diary in 1875 that he had signd up fifty-two men, out of the clas of '78. Then came up the question as to its being an approved subject, which led to the dispute with the faculty. Here is how the dispute was adjusted, according to his diary:—

Jan 27, 1875. 'Work in the library all day. Saw Burgess (This was the Professor Burgess whose influence wil be mentiond in the Columbia chapter, 'Fighting for Progress') in the morning & told him that rather than have the thing fall thru I would teach for nothing & work in the library for nothing what time I could spare the rest of the term. This costs me even the \$200 that my special division were to pay me so I shall sink about \$300 in the matter. The faculty accepted my offer and named the takig as a required study the rest of the term two days a week.'

At one time he had three classes in takigrafy going at once and was giving instruction four hours a day in addition to carrying on his library work.

The clas of '74 which began with ninety-five members but was reduced to sixty-six at graduation, included Hon Frederick H Gillett, eminent in the affairs of Massachusetts and in Congress, and Charles Sprague Smith whose educational influence thru Cooper Union, New York became widely known in later years. More than half of the original ninety-five exprest their determination to iether preach, teach or practice law.

Correspondence thruout the years shows Melvil Dewey's deep interest in his clasmates; and from time

## Melvil Dewey

to time they met. His only life-long intimate friend and co-worker was Walter Stanley Biscoe. Mr Dewey had no use for the merely social side of re-unions; and there is in existence a letter in which he vigorously protests against turning the annual banquet into a smoke-house.

He contributed liberally to the Amherst Centennial Fund in 1921 and also gave the means to establish a revolving fund for students to be named the 'Lake Placid Club Education Foundation Scholarship.'

Professor John Bates Clark, Amherst '72, whose eminent work in Columbia and elsewhere in the field of economics is world known, still recalls Melvil Dewey and in a recent conversation said:—

'Melvil Dewey, as I knew him during his college course and later, was full of enthusiasm for a number of good causes; and he was fluent and convincing in advocating them. His life was a term of fruitful service that will long be remembered and honored.'

During the six years in Amherst he set up a sort of defensive armor, which showed itself in assumed gaiety of spirits and quick repartee that afterwards became a habit thru life. His soul ached many times in Amherst and because of his sensitiveness undoubtedly we can explain the non-appearance of his name in the social affairs. His diary tells this tale:—

'My social expenses are less than other boys because I keep clear of nearly all of them and am satisfied.'

He kept programs of all college events from 1870 to 1876. In no public entertainment does his name appear as a participant. On July 9, 1874, the day of his graduation, his name of course appears as a candidate for A B and again as credited with a second class oration.

On two occasions he was lampooned. First where some sort of local ceremony was put on to exemplify

## Amherst Days

Hitchcock's Hobby (physical training). This is without date. It says at one point:

'Dewey will remain after the division has departed to attempt an oration on "Practical Jokes on Serious Subjects, or How I Didn't Get Married." Finally coaxed out by Phalen.'

Then in the class profecy of 1874 the names of Dewey and Phalen are again combined and this is what was said about them:

*'Dewey and Phalen,—*Still Dewey cracketh his little joke as he collecteth the five-cent fine for the too long drawn book from which the "solid men of Boston" have been culling those long orations, as in days of yore. Supreme he reigns here, but thinketh strongly, ay, too strongly, of leaving for that Paradise of bliss, that "Oneida Community" where all men are free and equal, and all women ditto. For there is Charlie, a ruler in the synagogue of the elect, who ever and anon sends Melville kindly invitation to be one of them."

He was perhaps too serious to be popular. Such notes! as these appear:

'Got Parker and Fisk to swear off from smoking for a week and got Parker's last cigar.'

Then he says after making a long evening call with friends:

'Talked with Bertie, trying to stimulate him to high endeavors in which I think I was quite successful.'

He belonged to the Antivenenean Society which, headed by the president of the college and by the athletic instructor, Edward Hitchcock, pledged the members:

'To abstain while connected with the institution, from the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage as well as from opium and tobacco.'

His watchfulness of money continued in Amherst; for we find a diary entry:

June 6, 1874. 'I walked over to Northampton from 8 to 10 in the morning taking it easy and saving 75c and getting some good exercise.'

## Melvil Dewey

It was during his Amherst stay that under pressure from some fellow members of D K E he undertook to handle the business side of the fraternity publications. He showed his adaptability and inventiveness by securing advertising and subscriptions in such a way as to put the effort safely on its feet. As to just what had been the conditions before and after, it is impossible to show from existing records.

Many pages of his Amherst diaries mention the affairs of Mrs S F Pratt, widow of a missionary, who appears to have been possessed of a moderate fortune and whose investments in Amherst were explained to Melvil by her. Quixotically he immersed himself in the problems of her business transactions and ran head-on into one of those irritating experiences which he was to meet with in business fields so many times thereafter. He tried to adjust her affairs with the man who had traded a house. He annoyed the man so much that he was ordered out of the house and for several days the poor youth suffered such distress that he could neither eat nor drink. The adjustment of the affair was not brought around by Melvil at all but by one of the professors who even appears to have based a series of four sermons on the trickery that had been practiced under the ancient rule of *caveat emptor*.

Melvil continued to live in the Pratt residence till he moved to Boston. Mrs Pratt had the greatest confidence in him and through him her affairs were brought into more liquid condition and her funds invested with Ginn Bros, on the basis of a loan, bearing interest. This transaction was entirely due to Melvil's interest in her financial outlook. One of his early letters from Boston in 1876, plainly defined his position as to her living beyond her income; setting out definitely the difference between using capital and using income derived from capital. All the financial transactions with Mrs Pratt are fully recorded **in Melvil's account books.**

## Amherst Days

In Amherst he had presented to him opportunities for usefulness in the Turkish missionary field, where several Amherst men had worked and whose sons had come back to Amherst. For a time he felt that perhaps his duty was to go to Turkey when he graduated. In doubt, he went to Professor Julius Seelye, later president, and asked advice. Mr Dewey reports that he said:

"I can't tell you, but if you are strong enough to adopt the rule of life that I have long followed, it would be clear to you when the time comes. I resolved many years ago that every question as to my work, as to where and what and when I should do things must be decided not by climate, social or other advantages or salary, but by the question, 'can I do more good so than in any other way?' I am now a professor in Amherst. I cannot tell where I shall be or what I shall do next year."

Professor Seelye said further:

'Think this over for a month, then come and tell me how you would like to make that your rule of life.'

In a month Melvil went back and told him that he hadn't doubted from the first that that was the best rule, and steadily followed it ever afterwards.

A little later Professor Seelye went to India for a year to preach to the Brahmans. Then he answered a general call that he should go to Congress, and later he was president of Amherst.

Regarding this conversation with Prof Seelye Melvil Dewey's limited autobiographical notes say this:

"I thought I would like to teach mathematics, study, practice and teach architecture where one could build his ideas into permanent form; but I always realized that out of a score of things that had greatly attracted me, I could do only one with one life and so I determined that my highest usefulness would be not to do any one of these things, but to stimulate others to take up the work. I thought I might on an average each year induce one person to do some important work that he would not have done except for my influence. Thus in 50 years I would really have accomplished 50 things instead of one by raising myself to the 2d

## Melvil Dewey

power, seeking out and inspiring and guiding others to do the work for which my one life did not give time. So, instead of 'teaching', I always use the word 'education' in naming my chosen profession.

Prof. Seelye is reported as saying further to Melvil after he had explained his educational purposes through library expansion:

'To me it is clear that you have laid out a new program which promises unlimited usefulness and which nobody else seems so well adapted to develop. We can probably get 20 men who would go to Turkey and do just as well as you, but we know no one to take up this new broad conception of home education.'

In this view Prof. Dyer and President Stearns, his two other advisers, concurred.

It has been already pointed out in the chapter on his characteristics that he was exceedingly exact, so that it is possible to tell now what he received and what he repaid to everyone with whom he had any financial transactions. Also it is possible to figure out what Flora and John and Susie, his various horses, cost him, even down to the oats, hay and currycombs.

As illustrative of this exactness a photograph is included of his statistical summary from 1866 to 1876. His earthly values increase in 1876 to such an extent because of business activities in Boston, that he records himself as solvent though at the time his obligations had not all been met.

## His Loves

'Life is growing real to me very rapidly this year and with the reality there come oftentimes touches of sadness. It seems to be a longing for a home, for "someone to love and to caress". I am inclined to think it's a marital feeling coming on. I believe the rule is that natures which escape an early falling in love, after about so much experience (varying greatly with different persons) and wandering about alone come to feel a loneliness and a desire for a home and for a family.' Diary—December 7, 1872.

In a letter written in 1930 Dr Dewey said:

'I hav always been curiusli indiferent as to *my* name being carid on or to praiz or monuments. Yu kno my concern has always been to hav my work & ideals survyv.'

There is not the slightest dout of Dr Dewey's sincerity in making such a statement. It can be only two-thirds true. He was indifferent to praise and he was antagonistic to monuments. But when he communed with himself in his diary he was expressing an urge that was natural to the Dewey family. Bearing in mind that the original Thomas Dewey of 1630 was represented by 1898 in 15,000 lineal descendants and that Melvil Dewey's grandfather Green had thirteen children and also brought up twenty-two others, it is evident that there was an aggresiv filo-progenitivness running thru the family history. It would hav been les than natural, if, combined with his desire to be of use in the world, there should not hav been the desire for progeny; for he came of a line to whom a large family was a cause for thankfulness.

Amy Sheldon Green, Melvil Dewey's grandmother, writing in 1850 to relatives in Ohio said:

## Melvil Dewey

'I feel that God has shown great mercy to me and my family. I have 13 children and they all enjoy very good health,—all professors (of religion) but one.'

Here and there thruout his diary, before 1872, had been increasing intimations that he was aware of himself and that he was very happy in friendships with congenial girls rather than with boys. At Amherst, whenever he could spare the time, he would call on girls, perhaps two or three in an evening, and then record in his diary that he must not stay up so late at night; and then stay up late at night the next evening just as before.

The diary entries from 1872 up to April 10, 1876 when he finally left Amherst, are full of references to various such friends. Scattered thru these references are three Marys and three Mays, two Alices, two Abbies and two Annas, Cora and Del and Hatty and Mrs H and Mrs T and Mrs C.

Here is a characteristic day early in 1875:

'Working in library; taught my class *in* takigrafy; correcting papers; went to a party. Took Anna home, then ran around and spent rest of evening with Mary E.'

Charlie Phalen, Amherst '74, his early friend at Adams Center and possibly the one towards whom he had expressed the highest esteem and confidence and love during early manhood, appears in the love-thought on Jan 29, 1875, when he came up from Oneida:

'I told him all about Mary E and also about the thirty-four-year old girl that I liked so much and half thought of wedding. After supper we went round to Mary E's and Charlie at my request watched her closely to see how old she was. He liked her very much indeed and was bound to marry her. Then **he made** me tell who the thirty-four-year old one was which I did much to his surprise and delight. We got to sleep in good season tonight but he did some tall advising to get married, urging how **cheaply** we could live etc.'

## His Loves

Charlie wrote him shortly afterwards as to the dangers of disparity in age and the thirty-four-year old girl is not mentioned again.

The following is taken from the entries for Feb 9, 1875:

'\* \* \* Evening I spent talking and reading with Mary E. Her mother spends the evenings with us and makes them so much more pleasant; charming old lady as ever lived, I think her. I guess I rather like her daughter too. Last night we had quite a talk and came near a misunderstanding, but she won't allow me to make a fool of myself in my usual way and I was glad of it.'

Two other entries appear regarding Mary E:

'We had a long talk and thought it best to look forward to a home next fall if feasible/

However by March the two decided on friendship only:

Mar 3, 1875. 'Working in library forenoon riding Flora in afternoon. Evening with Mary. We talked over our affairs and thought it best to call ourselves good or rather the best of friends and wait for the future to show if we could be anything else.'

This understanding with Mary came up again in 1878 and almost wreckt his marriage prospects with Annie Godfrey. A week after the friendship agreement with Mary he records two calls elsewhere, indicating that he was not deeply affected:

Mar 10 '75. 'Correcting '78 papers. Rode Flora an hour in the morning. Went to first church sociable in the evening after having a good time with Mrs H. We waste so much time when we get talking and having a good time that we swore off. Had a pleasant evening. Went home with Hatty D.'

A few days later he talkt very seriously with Rev H H Neill, Amherst '66, professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, and English Literature, with whom he was on good terms,

## Melvil Dewey

Mar 27, 1875. Worked in library all day. \* \* \* after playing one and a half strings with Neill and taking supper I went up and lay on his sofa till eleven and talked about morals, specially sexual morals. Was pretty tired when I got home so went to bed in the dark/

In March or April, 1875 he moved into the house of Mrs Pratt, widow of a missionary to Asia Minor or Turkey, mentioned in the Amherst chapter. Mrs Pratt was several years older than Melvil and gave him a great deal of admirable steady advice. He says:

'Talked again with Mrs Pratt. She told me all about her business and I find that there's a providence in our coming together. She needs me to look after her business and I need her to make me a better man. I never met a woman or man either before who seemed to me to be so thoroughly a Christian as she/

Nearly six years elapsed after his confession of the marital feeling before his marriage to Annie Roberts Godfrey, Oct 19, 1878. Notwithstanding his natural impulses in the intervening years, they were controlled by high-mindedness, a quick conscience as to right and wrong, religious sensibilities and social inhibitions, so that he reached the spring of '76 unattached.

The first mention of the admirable and unusually cultured woman who took his name in 1878 appears in his diary on April 18, 1876 where he says in relation to a visit to Cambridge:

'Came in on the 7.40 and went at once out to Harvard University Library to see John Fiske and talk with him about the Classification etc. He was greatly interested as was Mr Sibley, the librarian. They made me give a lecture, as they called it, to their first assistants and to the librarian of Wellesley College, who chanced to be there. We talked over four hours and they expressed great approval and said they thought they should use it/

Annie Roberts Godfrey in 1875 had been selected as **librarian of Wellesley by Henry F Durant, founder.** She

## His Loves

was then twenty-five years old and had come to her work from a sober and intellectual life in Milford, with many eminent social connections.

From Milford high school she had gone to Gannett Institute in Boston and later to Vassar, leaving there after her junior year to share in opening Wellesley College.

A light on her intellectuality is shed by a letter to Mr Dewey by Edward Bok in 1901, after a visit which she had made to Philadelphia. He said:

**'Mrs Dewey's enjoyment of her visit to us pales in comparison with our enjoyment of her. By Jove! You ought to be proud of such a wife as that. She said more in ten minutes than any other woman who has visited our house has in ten days.'**

Melvil wrote her on July 7, 1876:

**'At last I am able to send you a proof of the library scheme (the first edition of Decimal Classification). I shall be glad to answer any questions that may arise and more glad to receive any corrections or criticisms that may occur to you. I shall now be in my Boston office pretty regularly and can come out almost any day when you are to be at liberty.'**

He later mentions going occasionally to Wellesley, and with him also went C A Cutter. Annie Godfrey's interest in her work was extreme and she felt great personal responsibility to see that *the* best of everything should be in the foundation work of the library. Consequently she was present at the foundation meeting of the American Library Association in Philadelphia in 1876. All thru 1876 it was 'Dear Miss Godfrey' and 'Mr Dewey, Dear Sir'.

Miss Godfrey also was one of the party of American librarians who went to England in 1877 to aid in creating the Library Association of the United Kingdom. It is reported that she went at forty-eight hours notice; after having determined *not* to go. Her trip to Europe appears to have been a happy combination of research and personal interest; for in the letters written to her mother

## Melvil Dewey

while abroad there are constant references to Mr Dewey. In one letter she says:

'Of course people think we are just mere acquaintances.'

It was 'Mr Dewey this—Mr Dewey that/ One quotation will suffice to bring back a picture to those who knew him in his library days, showing him perfectly true to form in 1877:—

'Mr. Dewey is the life of the party, bundles up and takes care of everybody; would make a rush to the rails once in a while during the sea-sick days, and come back saying he became so interested in watching the beautiful waves that he forgot what he went for. A New York reporter, during the conference dubbed him the "frank and mirthful Dewey" which name he retains, with the "irrepressible Dewey" added. He is invaluable in such a party and he and Mr Jackson of Newton call themselves right and left bower and take the best of care of me. Mr Winsor (Justin) is also very pleasant and has taken me under his fatherly wing/

Mr Dewey's shorthand notes on the European trip were only disjointed entries from which he evidently intended later to develop a full report. Transcribing these notes, every now and then there was found mysterious reference to A R G, which being interpreted must have meant Annie Roberts Godfrey.

Immediately after the meeting in London was over, she wrote her mother on Oct 7 as to a ceremony at Guildhall:

'Mr Winsor was of course prepared, as our representative, but both Mr Poole of Chicago and Mr Dewey were called on at half a minute's notice and made the two best speeches of the evening, it was said; so we are naturally proud of our countrymen. I have yet to see Mr Dewey in any position where he is not equal to the occasion. \* \* \* Poor Mr Dewey is I fear, almost used up and will get very little rest out of this trip. It makes me thoroughly provoked to see how these 8 or 10 able bodied men let him do all the work, make all the arrangements and keep all the accounts. I think they might at least take a



Girlhood, Milford, Mass., 1867



New York, 1886



Albany, 1889

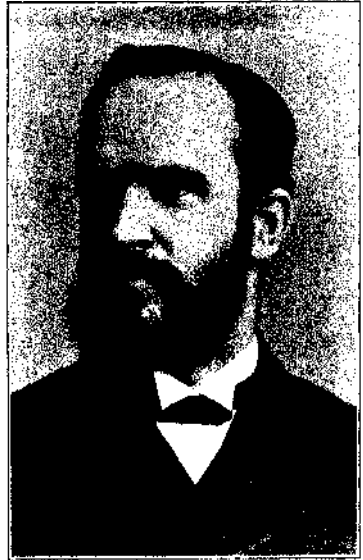


Lake Placid Club, N. Y., 1908

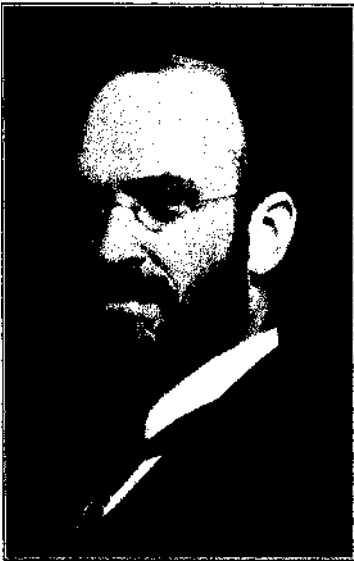
Anine (Godfrey) Dewey  
1850-1922



At Amherst College in 1874



At Columbia University in 1885



Secretary of Regents, V. S. N. Y.  
Albany. 1899



© Underwood & Underwood

At Lake Placid Club, N. V., 1922

Melvil Dewey

## His Loves

share, but he is so good natured and willing that they just wait round, and let him do the whole. When we go to Paris I think we shall have a smaller party and hope he will get some relief/

Leaving London Oct 19, 1877, with Melvil and the other delegates, she was back at her duties at Wellesley in November. Melvil thereafter was a frequent visitor; both progressing rapidly to the point of mutual friendly dependence. The major portion of the letters of those days were burned up because of a serious misunderstanding related to Amherst and Mary E. On Nov 6, 1877 she called him 'Dear Melvil'; on Nov 21 she dropped back to 'My dear friend' in sending her mother's invitation to him to eat Thanksgiving dinner with them, and adding, 'Write soon; if you can [come.it](#) will take a bigger turkey.'

It is easy to understand why Annie Godfrey hesitated and weighed and hesitated again. At one point in the correspondence she had evidently determined that Melvil Dewey would be a greater good to the world unwed. Part of a letter written Nov 25, 1877 has been preserved:

'On that summer day when we thought it would help us to be friends, your purpose of devotion to your life work was firm and strong. It called forth more of admiration and respect from me than I had ever felt for any man. Do you remember the story of Andrea del Sarto? A visitor came into his studio. It was after he was married and he was dabbling at some little thing. He looked up and said, "Once I worked for eternity, now I work for my kitchen." \* \* \* If there be between man and woman, earnest in the work of life, a calm strong friendship, may it not be ours? May we not be to each other that friend who shall call forth all that is best in our natures/

On Dec 5, 1877 she rebuked him rather severely. Yet at the end of the letter the precious soul, deeply interested in his welfare and knowing that he was working too continuously, concluded with these beautiful words:

'I am going to haunt you. Every night when the clock strikes ten I shall come to you in imagination, put my hand on your forehead, smooth your temples—a moment and whisper "good-

## Melvil Dewey

night". If you dare disobey you shall hear a little voice sing softly "good-night, good-night, good-night", over and over again, keeping time with the monotonous ticking of the clock. You may think it's conscience, but it's "me" and you shall know my power as a ghost.'

On Dec 10, 1877 she wrote a birthday letter from which two quotations must be made:

'I am glad that another year is added to your unselfish life; glad that it is a power for good; glad that you are my friend, that I may be yours, and trust that there may be many years of usefulness and happiness in store for you. \* \* \*

'Your crowded busy life is one to be envied in comparison (with mine), only that you are doing very wrong to put on more steam than any human machine is warranted to run under.'

In the last part of the letter was a transcription of Mrs Browning on 'Work'. The letter ended:

'Good-night, and may the good angels have power to keep you ever.'

The marriage finally took place on Oct 19, 1878 tho some of Annie's family opposed the union. One close relation said:

'No great success will crown his efforts in any line.'

Strange to relate, Benjamin Davenport Godfrey, Annie Godfrey's father, like Joel Dewey, also made shoes. He is credited with being the first to equip a shoe factory in America with machinery. He was very idealistic and in the panic of 1857 kept all his employes at work at great personal loss to himself.

At the time Annie Godfrey was a little over twenty-eight and Melvil a little under twenty-seven. She appears to have been so flustered in sending individual notes round to various friends in Boston, Milford and Wellesley that tho she announced her forthcoming marriage she neglected to name the man to whom she was to be married and also neglected to name the place chosen for the wedding. Several letters from her friends rallied her on this excit-

## His Loves

able condition and, curiously enuf, they all conveyd the idea 'I told yu so'.

On Melvil's side, with his tendency to hav several things on his mind at the same time, it is stated that in the forenoon of Oct 19, 1878 he was discussing books in the bookstore of Dana Estes & Co and became so interested in what he was doing there that he very nearly lost the last train for Milford.

The letters from frends on both sides wer most genuinly kind. The elder librarians joind in good wishes. Among the letters appear the names of Winsor, Poole and many others, his seniors by long years. One letter included an amusing effort on the part of C A Cutter to write the entire congratulations, not in simpler spelling, but in the new alfabet which had come out of Dr F A March's efforts in Easton, Pennsylvania.

From that time forward for several years the letters from Melvil's immediate family constantly made sly references to the survival of the name.

In 'The Chronicles of '74 Since Graduation' Melvil's letter, written in 1885 says:

To our great regret we have as yet no children/

The union was finally blest with one child, Godfrey. He was born Sep 3, 1887 in New York City and baptized Jan 8, 1888 by Cornelius B Smith, rector of St James Church, New York. His sponsors wer his parents, and Walter S Biscoe and Mrs Mary Bucklin Claflin, wife of Governor William Claflin.

The messages from all parts of the United States when the birth became known wer most cordial, and the boy was for some years cald the American Library Association baby. In fact news of the birth reacht the father at an American Library Association convention in Thousand Islands.

The child had arrived sooner than expected. The delegates wer on a post-conference voyage. A complete

## Melvil Dewey

file of the telegrams back and forth between New York and Montreal and other points on the St Lawrence has been preservd. The most curious telegram of them all was a joint message from fifty members of the American Library Association, dated from *Father Point*, Quebec, and saying:

**'Papa is well and happy, accept thanks for loan of him for this voyage.'**

Annie Dewey was thruout her life a most devoted companion, interesting herself in everything that possest Melvil; cooperating and aiding with restraining judgment when she felt it necessary. From the point of view of mental companionship and devotion to causes these two livd happily together forty-four years. Thru fair wether and thru foul they sustaind each other. She particularly exerted herself to keep from him as many as possible of the petty annoyances that arose from time to time.

Back in the Boston days she lookt after the majority of all his accounts and also workt at indexing in Harvard and elsewhere.

In the New York days she participated in the intellectual fases of Columbia and its contacts.

In Albany her house was open-house to the students of the library scool and to the increasing circle of national and international frends. In fact 315 (Madison avenue), as it came to be known among their hundreds of acquaintances, was a bright spot in the memory of ail who enjoyd its hospitality. Throwing off the cares of the office Mr Dewey would there mingle among the visitors with quips and cranks, with a word for everyone, with the Christian name of nearly every girl redily on his tung. Mrs Dewey would play for singing and dancing and even consent to all sorts of domestic disarrangements in order that the yung library students might feel at home away from home.

## His Loves

Mrs Dewey was just as great an enthusiast as Mr Dewey in using time. It is almost pathetic to consider the way in which these two united people drove themselves. There are still in existence the different sheets of paper on which in 1878 and succeeding years they wrote down their time-budgets, providing for the full use of each twenty-four hours. On Melvil's side were forty different resolves, among them:

'To think twice; accuracy in print; rise early and eat slowly; breathe deeply; dress well; be more patient; avoid scolding; behave with dignity, etc.'

It was a pitiful effort to standardize themselves, the papers being subjected to changes and interlineations as these two dear souls mutually discussed and met the different phases of life. On Annie's side appears this terrifying entry:

'Don't waste a minute.'

They fined themselves for slang. They also agreed that each would help the other in securing a more adequate command of English, studying definiteness of expression and the best way to say the best things.

After the trustees of Columbia dismissed Mr Dewey—only later to rescind their action—she approved the move to Albany.

When storms of political antagonism gathered around him in the Albany years, he being the subject of at least three hearings or attacks, Annie Dewey stood right by him, knowing that he had through his laborious life been contending for principles rather than for personal reasons or gain. She was heartily with him in this attitude toward life then and later.

His resignation from the Regents in 1899 as a matter of principle, had her approval. His resignation from the State Library in 1905 had more than her approval; for she felt that it would release him from a wear and tear that had been terrific from 1876 onward.

## Melvil Dewey

It was during this same time of strain and stress that the tinge of slander in sex matters reached her ears and his, with stories sweeping like storms among the library leaders of the nation.

No better place will occur in this picture of the life of an eminent seer and doer than here to quote two letters which Annie Godfrey prepared without his knowledge on June 15, 1906 and sent to certain leaders who would be at the next meeting of the American Library Association.

'Your mysterious anonymous letters warning Mr Dewey as though from a friend are transparent and despicable. I ask you now to write to \* \* \* and all others whose minds you have sought to poison, and tell them that you find you were mistaken and misjudged Mr Dewey; that you know now however careless and unconventional his manner, he is free from any impure motives or actions. They have been wholly the interpretation of your own idle imagination. If you do not at once make every effort to undo the harm you have sought to do and promise me that you will forever cease from further attempts against Mr Dewey, I shall not hesitate to set him right at your expense.

'Go to work at some honest occupation and earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. You will have less time to brood and plot mischief, which Satan always finds for idle hands. Mr Dewey knows nothing of this letter or the one to Miss———. I do not send it anonymously but sign my name in full as one who has supreme contempt for you and your methods.'

Annie Godfrey Dewey

The above scorching letter was written to a man; the following was written to a woman, all personal references being suppressed:

\* \* \* Women who have keen intuitions know by instinct that they can trust Mr Dewey implicitly. He has had so many proofs of this and is so sure of his own self-control, that unconsciously his manner has grown more and more unconventional and familiar. That he ever had an impure motive, or would take advantage of a woman's confidence is preposterous. He is incapable of it. Only pure minded women have ever attracted

## His Loves

him. It is most unwise for any man to pass the bounds of convention, and he has been frequently warned of the danger. Knowing that I was absolutely free from jealousy and understood him perfectly, he has doubtless gone farther than with a wife who felt it necessary to watch her husband.

'From boyhood he has followed the Quaker custom of calling people by their first names, both men and women, as his father did, who had the same frank open manner and trust in human nature. Any man who is forceful, outspoken, in earnest and is doing a large work in life is bound to have enemies and to be misunderstood. We have endured many such experiences together and passed serenely and safely through them, as we shall through this, almost the only form of attack left. No storms can disturb our mutual confidence and trust in each other. Our married life has been based on an intellectual companionship and congenial friendship stronger than the usual tie. A wife who has lived more than a quarter of a century with her husband is surely the best judge as to whether he is pure minded and respects women rather than the reverse.

\*I shall be much pleased, indeed it seems to me only fair that you should show this explanation to your informants whoever they may be, and to all who may know of this matter from your standpoint. I am sure you will be more than willing to correct any wrong impression. \* \* \* I should add that Mr Dewey knows nothing of this letter. The responsibility is wholly mine/

Very truly yours

Annie Dewey

After this incident, and in fact until the end of his life his consciousness of his own strength and freedom from evil purpose led to a serene indifference to convention in his every-day public relations with women.

Annie and Melvil exchanged postal cards daily, in shorthand, from wherever they might be. Four cards pickt at random from Melvil's accumulation begin 'My dear one'; 'My dear boy'; 'Dear old Boy'; and 'Dearest'.

When hardening of the arteries thretend Annie she went to Battle Creek Sanitarium. Her descriptiv letters of tests, treatments etc ar really amusing. Regarding one treatment she said:

## Melvil Dewey

'A lump of ice was laid over my hart (M D would say this was quite needless for a Boston girl).'

She was by some mistake put into a radiant bath to perspire just after a Swedish massage with cold cream. This is her humorous comment.

'The intense heat, instead of making me perspire, just greased me all over. I was in fifteen minutes and I expected to sizzle and fry before I came out. You (M D) said M has a glacé husband, but yu can take your choice any day of wife roasted, par-boiled, broiled, electric fried, arc-light browned or braised; everything but "stewed".'

One Christmas Day she recieved from Melvil a lovely picture of Lakes Placid and Mirror. The shorthand endorsement reveald a humanly humorous thought:

'Coming events cast their shadow before. This distant view of East Point suggests the time barely in sight when we shal liv in our little Moose Island kingdom.

'When wondering what I could giv yu for Christmas two men came in the office as if sent by fate. One offerd me another dog and the other offerd East Point as a dear sixty-six akers in which to pasture him. I took both. If yu like both, the dog wil keep trespassers off the land. If yu like niether, yu can cover the dog with the land and the land with a morgage.

'This is the land I long hae saut  
And mournd because I ownd it not/

Annie had realized in the days of courtship that Melvil was an intellectual giant, perhaps destind to affect the entire world of thought. The affection and loyalty which she gave to him in 1878 was strong nearly thirty years afterwards, as shown by the letters quoted. She had helpt to make his life longer and more efficient.

### Bravery in Illness

In her later years came the development of a cronic ailment that thretend her life. She quietly and bravely adjusted herself to the changed condition and kept right on with the fullest possible performance of her duties.

## His Loves

Then came a dimming of sight to the point of practical blindness. All that she then did was to cheerfully force herself to learn the tuch sistem of tipewriting, and the Braille sistem of reading for the blind. A characteristic letter written by her when seventy years old exprest her unwavering devotion to the lives of mutual service that they had sought to liv. She said in closing:

'We shal hav to celebrate our anniversary far apart this year. May we stil be able to carry out many more Club plans and keep up standards. I am feeling stronger. If I could only do more real good work. Love and heaps of it.

Yours  
AD'

It is impossible to state what was the last letter she wrote, but her last letter to Melvil who was at Chau-tauqua for a committee meeting and who remaind behind to lecture to the library scool, was tipewritten without sight on July 31, 1922, three days before her deth:

'Dearest

The Gallia chorus was given last evening very acceptably, doing Harry much credit. Several spoke of it and said it was a pity Mr Dewey was not here for it. Both the solos were well done. There was a big crowd and Oh, how we do need the Agora! People sat on the stairs and everywhere they could hang on by their eyelids \* \* \*.'

To the typed letter she added in tremulous shorthand;  
'It is lonesome without yu, Come home.'

For a long time she had known that her days wer numberd, and on one occasion had said to Melvil:

'I will be sorry to leav yu alone but if I can't work longer here I should like to get my next job started over there.'

On her last evening, Aug 2, she had been to a simfony concert and to a psicology lecture. She returnd home with Emily Beal, very happy, and retired as usual. At one a.m. she cald her nurse as she had often done before, because of the pressure about the hart, took the usual

## Melvil Dewey

remedy and refused to allow the Club physician to be called. An hour later the nurse called Emily Beal and also the physician. Annie was already unconscious, and at two-thirty the heart that had been so brave for almost seventy-three years ceased to beat. She had been writing and left unfinished in the machine some verses, and her last whisper to the nurse was:

'If anything should happen give Mr Dewey the verses in my typewriter.'

These are they:—

Let there be no sad thoughts when my soul takes its flight  
O'er mountains distant, beyond starry spaces bright;  
Time passes and much change doth bring to mortal man;  
Life's filled with pleasure, pain, sickness and health, the span  
Of years allotted to fulfill our hearts' desires  
Have past, much unfulfilled to which the soul aspires.  
Birth, marriage, death, the great triumvirate of life,  
Have past and with them ends the long and varied strife  
To which men weakly yield, or brave and strong, resist,  
And build the character which makes the soul persist.  
This universe reveals its wonders, great and small,  
Through telescope and microscope; we know that all  
Has been so ordered by a Will Divine, All-wise,  
Who sees the end desired, unknown to human eyes,  
And sets each life a task, a lesson which when learned  
Reveals the next step

The last line forever remained incomplete.

In 1916 the Lake Placid Club had expanded to establish a salt-water resort. This was named Riversea and located in Saybrook, Connecticut. The death in 1914 of Katharine L Sharp whose devoted life and work are referred to in another chapter, made it necessary for Mr and Mrs Dewey to invite in a new administrative aid. They learned of Emily McKay Beal of Boston who meeting motherhood and widowhood in a courageous manner had done unusual work in originating and developing the Beal Nurses Home and Registry in Boston where she had demonstrated quiet ability, perseverance and optimism. She had been one of the organization committee

## His Loves

of the Women's City Club in Boston, chairman of the building and furnishing committee, and three years on the executive and house committees. Mr and Mrs Dewey urged Mrs Beal to join with them in their plans and hopes and to assist with her own peculiar skill. She and Mrs Dewey became fast friends, devoted to each other and devoted to the cause or causes that constituted the very breath of life for Melvil.

Cedars and Whyt Birches were large houses on the grounds of the Lake Placid Club and in them as a sort of community household, for years Mr and Mrs Dewey had living with them Margaret Miller, May Seymour, Katharine L Sharp and others. So Mrs Beal and her son and, after Annie's death, her mother, Mrs McKay, lived in the same house.

The utter loneliness of Melvil, just as with the loneliness of his father and the twice repeated loneliness of his brother before him, prompted thoughts of a sympathetic companion. This brought about in a very natural way his proposal of marriage and the genuine impulse of Emily to care for Melvil's needs, to watch over him and to extend his life as much as possible. They were married on May 28, 1924 greatly to the satisfaction of all who knew them best. As far as it was possible for such a tempestuous soul to rest, his last years through Emily's loving watchfulness brought to him added peace, happiness and comparative serenity.

Till after his seventy-fifth birthday Melvil never actually realized age. In fact up to his eightieth birthday and to the day of his death he was abnormally youthful and, in a sense, calling to youth.

Melvil's heart was a battle-ground from youth to age because of the stresses to which he was constantly exposed:—Nothing possessed unless won by personal effort—church worship and religious ceremony imposed upon him in double measure—very early responsibilities first upon him by conditions at his home and gladly

## Melvil Dewey

assumed without counting costs—violent impulses to control—egoism of unusual strength, transforming itself into a very perfect altruism—male associates conflicting with him because of mutual mis-mesurements—and intellectual and business intimacy with women in carrying out the details of his constructiv visions.

Lying stricken with paralisis in Clearwater, Florida in February, 1927, Melvil dictated to a nurse what he thought wer his last words. Here is one sentence that wil properly close this chapter:

'As I look back over the long years, I can recall no one whom I ever intentionally wrongd or of whom I should, now, ask forgivness. Doutless, I hav made many mistakes but according to my light, I hav tried to do right and so if my race is run, I can go down into the last river serene, clear-eyed and unafraid.'

## His Inspired Co-workers

The immortality of Melvil Dewey will rest as much upon the friends who assisted in his work as on the importance of the activities which he initiated; some would possibly have perished otherwise.

James I Wyer, State Librarian  
Albany, New York

Careful search thru the mass of Melvil Dewey records serves to confirm James I Wyer's discriminating remark.

Quite early in the stay of Melvil and Annie Dewey in Boston their time budget shows this entry: 'Delegate more work.' As years went on and their acquaintance-ship, opportunities and responsibilities broadened, a number of choice souls gathered to them, attracted by the zealous purpose of Melvil Dewey, and captivated by the intricacy of the campaign which he would be obliged to carry on thru life in order to bring to pass the reforms that interested him.

His earliest intimate friend was Charles Phalen who went thru Amherst with him and who shared in discussion all his early hopes and dreams and aspirations. Unhappily Phalen died one year after graduation from Amherst.

His lifelong friend and co-worker arising from the Amherst period was Walter Stanley Biscoe of the class of '74. Mr Biscoe at the time of Dr Dewey's eightieth birthday, when reviewing the friendship of over sixty years, pointed out some of the important achievements of his friend. He named Amherst, Columbia and the New York State Libraries as owing their development to Melvil Dewey's initiative; and continued:

'These are lasting monuments in the tangible field of great buildings and masses of books, representing the literature of the world.'

## Melvil Dewey

Little did you think when in undergraduate days you were laying the foundations of the Decimal Gasification that you would live to see it known the world over and used in such distant countries as China, Japan, India and Australia.

The American Library Association, launched at the Philadelphia Exposition, when you were two years out of college, has been copied in all civilized countries/

The admiration was mutual. Confirming what Mr Wyer intimated, it is possible to quote from a letter written to Mr Biscoe by Melvil Dewey in 1929 in which he traced carefully their contacts for nearly three score years: They wer freshmen together. Dewey had 'conditions' in Latin, Greek and mathematics. Biscoe was a clas monitor, as one of the four standing highest in scholarship. Both entered D K E together; both vied in mathematics; and in freshman and sofomore years each took mathematics prizes.

Regarding the Decimal sistem Melvil Dewey said:

'When in our junior year I devyzed the Decimal Gasification, \* \* \* yu wer my 1st as you hav always been the best Sc most loyal co-worker.'

When Mr Dewey left Amherst for Boston, Mr Biscoe became librarian in Amherst and stayd til Melvil Dewey was cald to Columbia in 1883. At Columbia Mr Biscoe was made senior librarian, and later one of the instructors in the Library School, whose curious history is recorded in the chapter 'Fighting for Progress'.

Continuing his letter of appreciation, Mr Dewey said:

'We started a skore of other things which hav proved veri useful & in everi one yu wer always a simpatetik & valued tho over-modest associate.'

When Mr Dewey went to Albany in 1889 as Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, and State Librarian, Mr Biscoe came there as senior librarian and brought with him a group of traind Columbia assistants.

## His Inspired Co-workers

When Mr Dewey left Albany in 1906 Mr Biscoe did not follow him, for the excellent reason that he held the position of senior librarian in Albany and remained on duty for forty years altogether, exceeding the legal age of retirement.

Melvil Dewey's appreciative letter closes with these words:

'Tho' you have & deserve your reputation as the most modest & least self-seeking of American librarians you have shared a large part in the modern library movement that has spread to many other nations from the centers where we have worked together & sown seed that has already brought forth abundant fruit.'

At the time of separation in Albany in 1906 Mr Biscoe who had lived with the Deweys, both in New York and Albany, wrote:

'My own relation has been such both in the library and at your home that when you leave Albany it will make a great blank in my life which nothing will ever replace.'

Two other co-workers whose acquaintance with Mr and Mrs Dewey began in 1887, at the first library school—Florence Woodworth and May Seymour—showed such aptitude for library labors that they became early involved in instructional work.

Florence Woodworth of Washington University in St Louis, began lecturing on library school collections and in the direction of practice work, as early as 1889, and continued directly connected with the New York State Library School till 1925. For thirty-three years of that time she was the director's assistant in the school.

The above lines express nothing of the love which each generation of students of the school felt for Florence Woodworth. The correspondence of Florence Woodworth with Dr and Mrs Dewey was almost continuous, whenever they were absent. She lived with them practically seventeen years in Albany. At times when the Deweys were in Lake Placid and Miss Woodworth's

## Melvil Dewey

responsibilities kept her in Albany, a letter was sent almost daily expressiv of devoted frendship for both. Two or three years after Godfrey Dewey was born in 1887, much of Miss Woodworks correspondence delt with his childhood pranks, ailments etc.

In all her correspondence only one scolding letter was found;—the occasion was the proposal of Melvil Dewey to open up a summer scool for librarians in the Lake Placid Club. Her letter fairly sputterd with anger at the thought of his overworking himself and overworking those who wer helping him to bild up the scool at Albany.

At the time of Florence Woodworth's retirement from scool in 1925, under the leadership of Frances Dorrance of Wilkesbarre of the clas of '18, a travel fund was raidd for her as an evidence of the affection with which all regarded her. Dr Dewey not only contributed to this fund but offerd Florence Woodworth a permanent home at the Lake Placid Club should she desire to come to that center of culture after returning from abroad. She is at present living in Paris.

The second frend of those days was May Seymour, a Smith graduate, daughter of Judge Louis Seymour of Binghamton, New York. Miss Seymour held a Columbia certificate thru the Library School instruction given in 1887-8. She returnd to Columbia College next year as a cataloger.

In the twelfth edition of the Decimal Gasification issued in 1927, Melvil Dewey says of May Seymour:

**'Except a year in charj of clasification in the Osterhout Library she was with me 34 years, from her entrance to the 1st Library School clas in 1887 til her deth, June 14, 1921. At New York State Library, clasification was her department til she was made director's assistant. For 32 years every item of work on new editions past thru her hands. For each of editions 4-10 she did all editorial and much constructiv work, secured expert cooperation, cald attention to faults or omissions, and sought the best availabl compromize where doctors disagreed,**



Dr Godfrey Dewey  
Only Son of Melvil Dewey, Born Sept. 3, 1887



Family Group at Lake Placid Club  
Christening Ceremony

## His Inspired Co-workers

devoting to this vast labor rare skolarly industry and a loyalty for which no words of thanks can be adequate. She shared my faith in its immense usefulness, did the hardest work, and deserves the gratitude of all who profit by this invaluable labor-saver. I often askt that her name appear on the title-paje of the book to which she gave so much, but she persistently refuzed.'

Between 1902 and 1904 she was associate editor of the American Library Association Catalog which Melvil Dewey always regarded as a monument to her ability and industry.

She moved from Albany to Lake Placid when Mr and Mrs Dewey establisht their permanent home there in 1906.

Many of the most exacting calculations and detaild work in developing the tecnique of the modern library ar directly traceable to the passion for exactitude which characterized the entire life of May Seymour. In the Lake Placid Club records it is quite evident that the tipe of work done by Miss Seymour attracted the amused attention of her associates. At the time of some official banquet the place cards showd caricatures, hitting off the peculiarities of each of these devoted co-workers on Melvil Dewey enterprizes. In the case of Miss Seymour a picture shows her waving away interruptions and stating: 'I shall be there in six and three-eighths minutes.'

Miss Seymour died indirectly, from a tooth infection, on June 14, 1921. The Lake Placid Club files show expressions of simpathy from abroad and all over the United States. In announcing the deth to many frends, Mr Dewey said:

'From the erly dreams of this great Club she has been closer than any one else, saw the vision, and loyally workt for its fulfilment.

'In these first hours we can only faintly realize what her loss wil mean. Not 1 secretary, assistant or associate in 1000 has workt so closely in so ful sympathy and with such wonderful

## Melvil Dewey

loyalty. I hav often said that the 1000s of notes I hav in shorthand for things to be ritn and work to be done cud be handled by no one living except May and myself.'

President Butler of Columbia once wrote Melvil Dewey that May Seymour would hav no equal in America as the private secretary of a university executiv, and that no matter where Mr Dewey was she could be counted on to anser a question with the same skil as if she had consulted with him.

In another testimonial Melvil Dewey said:

'She \* \* \* shared fully my enthusiastic efforts to make English much earlier the world languaj by simplifying its speling and weeding out its absurdities.

She did nearly all the work on my code of "editing rules" which several leading authorities of the country pronounst the most scholarly and reasonable code that had yet been written. \* \* \*

By birth and training pre-eminently a scholar, she had an impatience of inaccuracy or mental sloppiness or indolence that made her a terror to the incompetent.'

In the Seymour papers ar simply hundreds of memoranda covering in exact detail the method by which results wer reacht in working out library problems.

After her unexpected deth it was found that on the day of her deth she had prepared a wil and also given directions to her brother, providing for a good-citizenship fund in the Binghamton Public Library in memory of her father; an art fund in memory of her mother; and the balance of her property, after disposing of certain legacies, was to go to the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation. Florence Woodworth said at the time of May Seymour's deth:

'May has been a wonderful, unselfish friend to us all and the world will not seem the same without her.'

Another co-worker who was connected with all the efforts of Melvil Dewey thru the years directly or indirectly, was Katharine L Sharp who recievd the Regents

## His Inspired Co-workers

library certificate in 1891, graduated in 1892, was made the Regents examiner for Chicago in 1893, had charge of the comparative library exhibit, a marvelous feature of the federal exhibit at the World's Fair in Chicago, 1893; then became Director of Library Science at the Armour Institute of Technology.

In 1896 she was extension lecturer on library economy for the University of Chicago. Then when the School of Library Science was moved from Armour Institute to the University of Illinois at Urbana, Miss Sharp became head librarian of the University of Illinois as well as occupied with raising the standard of the School leading to the degree BLS. After ten years' contact with and knowledge of the whole library effort in the United States Miss Sharp moved in August, 1907 to Lake Placid Club to undertake as vice-president, many features in the development of that great institution. In a letter as early as July 18, 1892 Melvil Dewey wrote:

'We would prefer you to any one else to start libraries and get things in good order.'

In 1897 Mr Dewey wrote her urging her not to work too hard, adding:

'You can do great things for librarianship in this country in the life that is before you if you would not cripple it by doing them too fast. \* \* \* I use no argument as to your personal happiness; for I believe you care a great deal more for doing the greatest possible good and so I speak simply on that plane.'

Of her work in the great library field warmest testimonials are in existence from many parts of the United States. Greatly to the sorrow of all her friends Miss Sharp died June 1 as the result of an automobile accident May 28, 1914, when the guests who had assembled for the marriage of Godfrey Dewey went for a pleasure drive together. Several were seriously injured. Melvil Dewey was also in the accident.

The shock of Miss Sharp's death was such that Annie Dewey in a letter June 16, 1914 says:

## Melvil Dewey

**'Mr Dewey has been struggling with laryngitis, bronchitis and finally pneumonia as a result of the nervous shock and strain of the tragedy.'**

Other letters at that time speak of the accident to Miss Sharp as a very severe blow.

Just as the letters of May Seymour and Florence Woodworth, Miss Sharp's correspondence breathes devotion to the ideals which were driving the lives of Dr and Mrs Dewey.

A bronze tablet by Lorado Taft has been placed on the wall of the rotunda of the Library of the University of Illinois to commemorate her services there and in Armour Institute.

Katharine Sharp's will named Melvil Dewey as executor and trustee of a 'J W Sharp fund' to be created with the residue of her estate, about \$20,000; and left it to his judgment for one of the following purposes viz :

- 1 Study of the cause and prevention of pneumonia.**
- 2 Loan fund for college students**
- 3 Library extension**

A life interest in this fund went to a relative. Mr Dewey favored for the future, a loan fund for college students.

She also left her entire collection of books to the Lake Placid Club library.

At the annual meeting of the Illinois Library Association in October, 1914, Frances Simpson presented a very complete appreciation, recognizing services of Miss Sharp:

**'It is fitting that we should on this occasion of the annual meeting of the Illinois Library Association suspend for a little time our more formal and regular business to do honor to the memory of Katharine Sharp, because she was in every sense an Illinois librarian.'**

In a portion of the appreciation Mrs Browning was quoted. The words of the poet applied equally to all of these devoted co-workers and friends who toiled cheer-

## His Inspired Co-workers

fully in order that Dr Dewey's work in the world might endure beyond the life of any of them.

'What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil  
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,  
For all the heat o' the day.  
God did anoint thee with his odorous oil,  
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns  
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,  
For younger fellow workers of the soil  
To wear for amulets.'

The devoted work of Dorkas Fellows who took May Seymour's place in 1921 as editor of the Decimal Gasification, runs back to 1895, she having graduated two years afterwards from the New York State Library School. She worked in the State Library School for years. From 1911 to 1918 she gave instruction on accessions, on shelf work and cataloging, and again for four years from 1922 to 1926. For a number of years she gave instruction at the Chautauqua summer school for librarians.

Her genius for carrying on and developing the Decimal Gasification was recognized by May Seymour before her death in 1921, and also by Melvil Dewey. In fact May Seymour requested that Miss Fellows should carry on her work. Miss Fellows has brought out editions eleven and twelve under Melvil Dewey's supervision, and in a true sense edition thirteen also; correspondence regarding edition thirteen having taken place as recently as December, 1931. As editor of the D C, market expansions have taken place in the last few years particularly as affecting the use of the D C in meeting foreign conditions, as outlined in the chapter "Obviating Library Chaos".

She has taken the keenest possible personal interest in corresponding with all parts of the world regarding the present biography of Melvil Dewey and the mentioned in the introductory chapter, her assistance is here

## Melvil Dewey

again acknowledgd; for not only was she completely in sympathy with the library reform and advancement that has grown out of the vision of Melvil Dewey in the '60's but she was also alert with almost a partizan earnestness to hav Mr Dewey's great caracter recognized by thousands of readers. Since moving D C editorial offices to the Library of Congress in 1927 she has livd in Washington.

In naming W S Biscoe, Florence Woodworth, May Seymour, Katharine Sharp and Dorkas Fellows—those who wer inspired co-workers—the thought has been to show exactly what Mr Wyer intended to indicate;—that their loyalty, self-forgetfulness and enthusiasm renderd the development of Melvil Dewey's great ideas much easier than could possibly hav been the case otherwise.

It has been stated that contrary to a certain fase of absent-mindedness as affecting clothing, personal appearance etc, Mr Dewey would seldom forget the details of a plan, which he had projected and for which he had made some one else responsible. In passing on responsibility unquestionably a large number of the brilliant ideas which he developd and which in a sense sparkld from him, and for which he in the long run receivd credit, wer due to these frends who stayd close to his side when he was visioning the things that could be and ought to be.

It is impossible to do complete justice in this abbreviated volume to the frendliness that existed between those who carrid so much of the burden of library evangelism without a tinge of jealousy. Letters from Florence Woodworth to Dorkas Fellows, from Dorkas Fellows to others of the group, and from May Seymour to Kate Sharp etc, ail breathe the sincerest idealism as related to the gospel of libraries and the influence of the library upon the broader life of the United States that is yet to be. In their blazing enthusiasms, in their patient working out of trying and petty problems of tecnique, in their willingness to make many unrecognized contribu-

## His Inspired Co-workers

tions to the revolution of mind, for the adult particularly, that Mr Dewey dreamd of,—they wer all spiritual kin to each other and kin to Melvil Dewey and hence share in such glory as his great life may be entitld to. The end of this chapter can best be approacht by quoting from the simpathetic and understanding letter which Frank P Hill of Brooklyn wrote to Melvil Dewey at the time of the deth of Annie Dewey:

'Just at a time when you are trying to throw off some burdens you are obliged to take on additional ones. You have indeed been visited by affliction during the past few years.

'First Miss Sharp, then Miss Seymour and now Mrs Dewey. Three of your staunch friends, strong helpers and loyal co-workers have been taken away when you most needed them; and I can realize in a measure what the loss of these splendid women means to you and to Lake Placid.'

In other words, Annie Dewey and Emily Dewey too, can also be rankt as frends, in summing up the influences that made Melvil Dewey great. Their frendly interest in his plans and his efforts, their willingness to weigh new ideas and to discus their merits, was frequently as impersonal as the contributions made by the frends alredy mentiond. They fully understood his devotion to ideals and simpathized with his willingness to serv his day without thought of personal gain or advantage.

## His Enduring Friendships

Friendship should be surrounded with ceremonies and respects, and not crushed into corners. Friendship requires more time than poor, busy men can usually command.

Emerson

Annie Dewey at the World's Congress of Representative Women held in Chicago in 1893 said this regarding the active part then taken or to be taken by women in libraries.

'Mr Dewey always esteemed very highly the work of women in libraries. He found their sympathies to be very alive in relation to the patrons—particularly the children. He found women naturally alert in relation to the essential details which would continue to make the library a place of order rather than of disorder. He found among them the finest spirit of cooperation in gradually standardizing the mechanics of the library.'

The preceding chapter is intended to convey the idea that the greatest development of library technique and efficiency that the world has ever seen came in the years between 1876 and the present, and that this development would have been impossible without the devoted co-workers therein mentioned.

Apart from the four women mentioned there were hundreds who because of Melvil Dewey's positiveness, because of his ability to define exactly how a thing should be attempted, and also because of his respect for women as intellectual equals, found in Melvil Dewey a sympathizer and inspirer. It has been given to few men in the history of the United States to have such enthusiastic followers.

To give particular point to the preceding statement it is only necessary to realize that according to the last

## His Enduring Friendships

census there are now 25,000 women acting as librarians in the United States.

Two women can now be mentioned without risk of having others seem to be unrecorded.

The first of these is Mary Eileen Ahern, who between 1896 and 1931 edited thirty-six volumes of Public Libraries (later Libraries), and who all through the years recorded or upheld the activities and superior devotion of Melvil to his boyhood ideals. It was she who in Florida last March aided in outlining the remarkably active career of Mr Dewey. Her correspondence with him endured through decades.

The final issue of Libraries which was made an honorary edition in recognition of the work of the editor, appeared in December, 1931. In that issue Melvil Dewey joined with all the leading librarians of the present day in praising the work of this librarian militant' as he called her. She gave her especial care to the interests of the small libraries, and their own peculiar technical questions.

A second outstanding friend whose regard lasted over the long years was Theresa West Elmendorf who died at Buffalo in 1932. She shows all through her correspondence running back to the '50's a complete confidence in the fairness, real interest and judicial attitude towards questions of library policy submitted to Dr Dewey.

Early in 1896 she explained the problems presented in preparing a new finding list. In this letter is a sentence that then and till his death large numbers of librarians agreed with:

**'It was borne in upon my consciousness with new emphasis how glad I was that you were living. The instinct is always to tell you all that I know in the library way.'**

In a letter received by the biographer and dated as recently as the eighth of August of the current year, she says:

## Melvil Dewey

'It so happened that we had a good many points of contact in library matters and we did not always agree. I used to go home to Milwaukee after having had opportunity to talk with him, aflame with a new thing to work out. Practically it was almost never to do the thing he was trying. It was more like the little flame that comes from the clashing of flint and steel/

At the time Mr Dewey took charge of Columbia he was confronted with the necessity of cataloging and classifying tens of thousands of books. He appears to have consulted his wife, Annie Dewey regarding assistants and as a result, six seniors from Wellesley College, thereafter thru all of Melvil Dewey's life spoken of as the 'Wellesley half Dozen,' came down and by one year's work lifted the burden of details off Mr Dewey's personal shoulders. Correspondence was carried on with these all thru the years.

Since the death of Mr Dewey one of the 'Wellesley half Dozen' has sent in some reminiscences of those early days. Mrs Martha T Buckham says this:

'As I think back upon the days in 1883 when Mr Dewey took six Wellesley graduates to work in Columbia Library, I am more impressed with his amazing daring. At that time, Columbia College was almost as hermetically sealed to women as is a monastery, and the advent of a group of young college women, appearing in the sacred precincts, must indeed have given occasion for dire forebodings.

'Mr Dewey's courage and daring were further shown in his introduction of six absolutely untrained workers, to aid in putting into shape the accumulation of volumes which Columbia Library possessed. Trained workers in those days there were none, and long and patiently did Mr Dewey and his able co-worker, Mr Biscoe, train the willing, but ignorant six \* \* \* Under the leadership of our Chief we inaugurated a new era of those library methods which have spread throughout the world.

'To one of the "Wellesley Six," Mr Dewey's enthusiasm, courage, and optimism have always been an inspiration in her life, and she is glad of this opportunity to voice her gratitude that she had training under him.'

## His Enduring Friendships

The names of these students should be included in the history of American libraries, as applying the Decimal Gasification for the first time to a large library. They were: Alice Ayers (Mrs Benjamin D Smith); Mary M Deveny (Mrs E A Wasson); Adelaide Eaton (Mrs Adelaide E Abbe); Winifred Edgerton (Mrs Winifred E Merrill); Nellie F Page (Mrs Helen Page Bates); and Martha Tyler (Mrs Martha T Buckham).

Of the six, Winifred Edgerton (Mrs F J H Merrill) was the first woman to receive a degree from Columbia. She was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1886. The title of her dissertation was 'Multiple Integrals'.

As early as 1886 Melvil Dewey delivered an address on 'Librarianship as a Profession for College-Bred Women'. This striking address was delivered before the Association of College Alumnae. One significant element was that it evidently prepared the way for the opening of the first library school in Columbia in 1887.

At the time of preparation for the World's Fair, correspondence written in June, 1892 shows he hotly contended that Miss Mary Salome Cutler should be chairman of the permanent committee for the International Library Exhibit, insisting that the honor proposed for Miss Cutler should not at all be settled because of sex but solely because of ability; and, with a typical sweep, he said to the executive committee of the American Library Association:

'Now let's drop all this childish business and devote our time and strength to the best meeting and the best library exhibit on record.'

From time to time throughout his long career he asserted the right of woman to an equal place with man in the work of the world. In the same speech he quotes this remarkable statement:

'Would a father say to his son, "My boy, your mother and I are lonely without you; you must stay at home, go out to

## Melvil Dewey

afternoon teas and parties with us, and keep us company in the big, empty house. I have enough for us all, so there is no need of your bothering your head about supporting yourself." Would he expect his son to be happy under such circumstances? Why, then, his daughter? "It would distress you," says the writer of a powerful article on "The waste of women's intellectual force," "to have a group of idle sons, 30 or 40 years of age, hanging around your home; you would not expect them to be contented, and you would probably blame yourself for having somehow erred in their training. But you like to have a group of idle daughters about you. You think it very strange if they are discontented, and you rarely feel that to them, as well as to their brothers, the real opportunities of life should have been widely opened." '

In the speech delivered before the World's Congress of Representative Women in 1893, Mrs Melvil Dewey said:

'I am asked to say a few words regarding women in libraries and their essential part in our system of education.'

In the paper she frankly uses the word 'profession' and in referring to the creation of the American Library Association in Philadelphia, 1876 she says:

'From the first the liberal spirit of the founders has given woman a position in this profession which has seldom been equaled in other lines of work/

'It was said the other evening that "there is no sex in truth", & surely the qualities that command success belong alike to men & women & among the first essentials are definite & high ideals in our pursuits.'

Again she spoke out:

'Since the very inception of this modern library movement in the organization of the American Library Association, woman has stood side by side, hand in hand with man, his friend & helper, his acknowledged equal. It is true that the world does not give her equal compensation but this is not the librarian's fault.'

## His Enduring Friendships

This leads naturally to a discriminating appraisal made by Theresa West Elmendorf a few weeks before her own death:

'He had a large, generous attitude toward the thought and work of woman. It was to me one of the signs of his real bigness. He did not find it necessary to "talk down" to us. He talked as from a level without any sense of that patronage or condescension that lesser men, consciously or unconsciously, very commonly use toward us.'

Before closing these brief references to the friendship of women for Melvil Dewey in his advocacy of professional life and broader participation in public affairs, mention should be included of the group of women who through the years aided his work as secretaries. To mention each is unnecessary but to refer to the experiences of one may be safely regarded as picturing all. Grace Hewitt (now Mrs Towle of New Preston, Connecticut) for fourteen years at Lake Placid Club, says these things:

'It was an honor and a privilege to be asked to work with him. \* \* \* My only regret is that I could not have done more for him. \* \* \*

'20 years ago he said, "If women ever get sensible and wear dresses to their knees to give them greater comfort and ease in getting about, no one will criticize or even turn to look at a passing woman."

'20 years ago he foretold the slump which was sure to come from the improvement in machinery and methods unless something was done to stem production. His solution was shorter hours and fewer days for the working man, giving him more time for leisure and a different slant on life.'

Then referring to the humorous situations as they will sometimes occur, Mrs Towle says:

\*I recall one morning he came into one of the offices at Forest Hall and I was trying out the first portable typewriter I had ever seen. He paused to look it over and then said, "I wondered what typewriter had a kitten last night".

## Melvil Dewey

'I don't believe there was ever a member of his staff who did not feel at ease in his presence. He always called each one by his given name and was always ready to listen to the smallest suggestion that might come from some of his assistants. He enjoyed seeing a clerk grow from a minor position to an executive. His "boys and girls" as he called them have been greatly influenced in their work in many fields thruout the world; \* \* \* If it were possible to get a list of men and women who have at some time been on the staff of the Lake Placid Club you would find today they are occupying positions of trust and profit and that Melvil Dewey was a guiding influence in their lives. \* \* \*

'He always said that there was only one truly great man in a million. \* \* \* He himself was the millionth man. He was one of the most modest men living. It has only been in recent years that he permitted the use of his title (Dr) conferd upon him by Alfred and Syracuse. He preferred to be called and known as just Melvil Dewey/

### Frendships of Men

Giving deliberate consideration to the long life of Melvil Dewey it seems just to state that he made only a few intimate frends among men, after leaving Amherst and making his entry into business life in 1876. This is partly explaind by the fact that the hurly-burly of life, in many lines of activity, working on his reserv force from many directions left no time for intimacy. But part of the reason is surely found in the fact that he was so desperately in earnest to accomplish certain desired results in one short life that he had practically no time for the social amenities that ar so essential to the smooth journy of the average human being from the cradle to the grave.

Also unless frends who liv in different parts of a city, a state or a country make deliberate efforts to get together, the occupations of life tend to keep them apart and away from intimacies that ar essential.

As has been implied in one form or another several times in this volume, Dr Dewey's very eagerness tended to irritate. Undoutedly he felt thruout life rather relievd

## His Enduring Friendships

at the failure of mere friendly conversationalists to gather to him to spend time talking about nothing.

His acquaintances ran up into hundreds and probably thousands; for his jounies at home and abroad as the library evangelist at gatherings of men and women and his seventeen years' devotion to the educational interests of the state of New York brought him into the presence of many who honord and revered him for what he was doing or trying to do rather than for those elements of gentleness that would bring a response of gentle amity from others. In a letter to George William Curtis written March 29, 1892, he made this frank statement:

'The price of achieving great results is often that we make some enemies whose personal notions must be over-ridden.'

He had his eye on the peak of his endeavors so definitely that his feet trampld and sometimes stumbl'd over obstructions that could hav been avoided.

A few loyal frends however wer in contact with him thru life.

David P Todd, Amherst '75, later in charge of Amherst College Observatory, was one whose friendliness has continued to the present. Both he and Mr Dewey had a humorous way of dealing with serious matters; and they enjoyd occasional correspondence. In Prof Todd's letter of December, 1931 he pictures in a humorous vein Melvil Dewey carrying the Decimal Gasi-fication into the empirean library; indicating also that the library at the lower end would hav cards printed on asbestos.

As the years went by he lookt back with the greatest joy to his acquaintanceship with the two Ginns, Edwin and Fred B, of the, old firm of Ginn Brothers in Boston, now carrid on as Ginn & Co. They wer the first to extend to him a hand of fellowship when he visited and later settld in Boston; they wer the first to listen patiently to his enthusiastic dreams and purposes; and they wer the first to offer him financial aid with which he could

## Melvil Dewey

establish himself with them in creating the Library Journal. In his diary April 19, 1876 he says this:

'Went out to Harvard again this morning and talked with them about the scheme etc. John Fiske said they had all been talking about it and the more they talked of it the more they were convinced that they must use it. Mr Abbot was brought round by Mr Sibley and spent two hours talking it over. He gave me much to my surprize, the strongest commendations I have yet received from anyone. I came in and got dinner at 3, talked with Fred Ginn till 5 then with Mr Cutter till 6 *about starting a library bureau and publishing a library monthly*. After supper talked with Mr Ginn till 9/

His diary April 20, 1876 says this:

'Got up an hour late and did not get into the store till 9. Had proof from Hartford and spent most of my time getting it ready to go back. Wrote some letters, talked with Mr Heath, the New York agent who came this morning and contrived to spend the day without doing very much. I have today a headache and must have a care. Received a long letter from mother Pratt this morning. Got lost going to the depot tonight, bringing up in the eastern station. After supper, having talked with Cutter till 5.30 / *went over to Ginn's and talked with him and Fred about the library enterprise and they agreed with me to undertake it as a private matter, Edwin Ginn taking half and Fred Ginn and I each one-fourth interest in it; I to take the entire management of the matter and draw \$2000 salary from the firm (we j) for my annual salary/*

Mrs Emily Dewey states that Melvil frequently spoke of those early days in Boston in a way to indicate that the Ginns expected him to work for them and that there was desk room made available in the office of Ginn Brothers. However he became so occupied with the secretaryship of the American Library Association, Metric Bureau and Spelling Reform Association that he was prevented from settling down to routine work. He never worked for nor drew a salary from the company.

It is positiv that his memory of the Ginn Brothers was one of the highest esteem and his welcome from

## His Enduring Friendships

the Ginn family was always cordial. To the Ginns he also brought some solid investments. Correspondence with Edwin Ginn as recently as 1906 shows the active friendship that had endured over thirty years. In that letter Edwin Ginn invited Mr Dewey's interest in world peace.

The friendship of Melvil Dewey for F Leypoldt and R R Bowker in New York was amazingly strained at times owing to the annoyances that were involved in the early months and years of the Library Journal. In fact correspondence survives from 1886 between R R Bowker and Annie Dewey thanking her for intervening between him and her husband to prevent suits arising from disputes that were even then seven years old. Her sensible intervention and the letters that passed between the three were worthy of large minds and souls. At the time when Melvil Dewey's eightieth birthday was celebrated R R Bowker said of him:

**'Melvil Dewey has been the Edison of the library field in the fertility of his inventions and their useful, practical application.'**

From the bookkeeping point of view alone he was promptly prosperous, for payments for services to various associations and for editorial work were voted and recorded even though not forthcoming. It is curious to look back upon the situation in those days and realize the way in which he rushed into work along lines that he felt were necessary and then only found his way out with difficulty.

D C Heath of Ginn and Heath and later of D C Heath Co was also an enthusiastic friend in the Boston, the New York and the Albany years.

Another lifelong friend was George A Plimpton, Amherst '76, who coming out of college shortly after Mr Dewey's removal, was introduced to the Ginns by Mr Dewey, entered the service of Ginn Brothers and has been at the head of Ginn & Co for years. Mr Plimpton's friendship for Mr. Dewey was so genuine that when the Lake Placid Club was faced with difficulties in some of

## Melvil Dewey

the early years of this century, the practical help given by Mr Plimpton amounted to \$35,000 in order that the recreational home that Mr and Mrs Dewey wer developing might pas safely over the shoals and get to plain sailing.

George A Plimpton was pledgd to the D K E by Melvil Dewey in June, 1872. Of Melvil Dewey at the time Mr Plimpton says:

'When I got to know him later, he took a very earnest view of life. He was a natural-born leader among the men of his time, **both** in the D K E Fraternity and in college. I think he indulged in no athletic sports.'

Lifelong frendship and esteem existed also for the Watermans, L E and Frank his nefew. L E Waterman was associated with Mr Dewey's enterprizes in Boston, more as a salesman of the Readers & Writers Economy Co. His particular interest was the distribution of stilo-graphic pens the stock of which he is reported to hav carrid in his pocket. Mrs Emily Dewey's recollection of Mr Dewey's conversation is that L E Waterman suggested the idea of capillary action in the fountain pen, while employd by Mr Dewey and that being urged to proceed with the improvement, out of that has come the universal convenience of the fountain pen. Frank Waterman, stil activly in business, on every possible occasion had frendly contact with Mr Dewey in both Lake Placid Clubs, New York and Florida.

H E Davidson, who was associated with the very early days of the Library Bureau, is a surviving frend of the present day. The correspondence back and forth soon after Mr Dewey left Boston for New York City had stormy elements in it because details from Boston sawdthe nervs of Melvil Dewey while he was overburdend with the details and the struggles of Columbia University. Mr Davidson in various letters since this biograpy was decided upon speaks of frendship and respect. Both men

## His Enduring Friendships

forgot the irritations of the beginnings as they moved towards results and achievements.

In Public Libraries Mr Davidson said this regarding the Boston days:

'The thousandth detail that Mr Dewey wrought out into almost exact completeness shows his vision \* \* \* These things hark back to the little offices in Boston at 1 Tremont Place, and to the young man fresh from college who was its dynamic force. How much is owing to his zeal, to the optimism that knew no obstacles, to the vision that optimism fed upon and to the inspiration that radiated from it, we shall never measure, but certain it is that his unquenchable ardor with which he inspired others not only to cooperate but to pick up the thought and translate it into individual initiative brought a library renown which will always belong to Melvil Dewey, creating a heritage for those who have or will come after/

Feb 10, 1932 H E Davidson wrote to Mrs Emily Dewey:

'The passing of Dr Dewey came as a great shock. Something has gone out of life which seemed a fixture to me. A star has fallen and the world is poorer indeed. It is almost exactly 55 years ago January, 1877 <sup>that</sup> I became associated with Dr Dewey.'

Both Henry Barnard, the first United States Commissioner of Education and author of many volumes on education, and F A P Barnard, President of Columbia College, approved most cordially of the combative capacity of the young man and they enjoyed him to the full; but they were too far removed from him in age to have been intimate. The three rather fulfilled the old idea of young men for war and old men for counsel.

His Columbia days produced one life-long friend, President Nicholas Murray Butler; and though their paths diverged considerably, each admired the other for sincerity and courage. Mr Dewey felt almost a proprietary interest in the marvelous development of Columbia in the eleven years of Seth Low (1890-1901), and the thirty-one years of **Butler**.

## Melvil Dewey

The plans for creating the Standard dictionary brought Melvil Dewey and I K Funk of Funk & Wagnalls together. Their friendship was long-continued and intimate. The correspondence which passed between them relative to the dictionary itself and the problems of spelling in general would make a volume.

Rev Chas H Parkhurst, the militant Presbyterian whose powerful attacks on entrenched public wrong in New York City a generation ago are well remembered, was also a lifelong and truly intimate friend. There was real affection between these two men of kindred spirits. They loved to struggle for an idea and to overcome obstacles, as those who remember the Parkhurst campaigns in New York can realize.

He was always deeply interested in the adult educational work of Bishop John H Vincent at Chautauqua and in his son George E Vincent. A letter from the latter says:

**'I like to lay stress upon your capacity for friendship and all the personal obligations which your friends feel toward you.'**

In addition to these friends who were intimately connected with his various efforts there were in the early days of library development in the United States a few sincere friendships between Melvil Dewey and the elder librarians.

Correspondence preserved with the twenty-seven leaders who called the library conference in 1876 shows deep interest in the eager young man who had come among them to arouse the whole library world to new action. It would hardly be fair however to say that all these elders were inspired, for frequently what the seer saw was something that these elders themselves could not see. They found that his character carried with it a certain unyieldingness when convinced or when seeing far ahead. While they recognized his mental activity, his overwhelming advocacy of a cause, they did not always recognize the sincere man that lay deeper than the surface. A market

## His Enduring Friendships

exception was Frank P Hill, now consultant librarian of the Brooklyn Public Library. He always did understand when misunderstandings were rife.

As indicated elsewhere Melvil Dewey's irritability and sensitiveness must have combined to keep many somewhat remote from him, who would have been his friends; but a pioneer blazing his way through new territory has no time for ceremony. This is no reflection upon their respect for his intellect nor his personal respect for them.

Probably the most intimate of all the friendships of those early days among the elder librarians was that of C A Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum and later of Forbes Library, Northampton, Massachusetts, a gentle, thoughtful, kindly soul who is mentioned elsewhere in connection with Annie Dewey at Wellesley College and with Melvil Dewey in the spread and use of his Decimal Classification.

While Mr Cutter was not many years the senior of Melvil Dewey he leaned heavily on him when president of the American Library Association. A letter from Mr Cutter to Melvil Dewey written May 1, 1889 says;

**'Moreover I rely on you to assist with your good eyes & un-failing memory a purblind and forgetful president who will have difficulty in "recognizing" the speakers. The thought that you might have failed to come freezes my blood/**

Correspondence with F M Crunden of St Louis and their occasional meetings showed a very sincere feeling for each other. Mr Crunden was a practical idealist, born in England four years in advance of the birth of Melvil Dewey. His civil services were as great in St Louis as his services in the realm of books and Melvil Dewey said after his death:

**'We have discussed a thousand matters but never once have I heard from his lips an argument or suggestion based on selfishness.'**

It is easily understood therefore why the souls of these two men clung together; for whenever they met they knew that neither need be suspicious of the motives of the **other.**

## Melvil Dewey

Among the elder librarians can also be placed James H Canfield who after scholastic experience became the librarian of Columbia. The friendship of Canfield was particularly shown in the trying months from 1905-06 referred to in the letters of Annie Dewey in the chapter 'His Loves'. Dr Canfield's daughter, Dorothy Canfield Fisher has continued the affectionate regard which her father felt for Dr Dewey.

While Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress can scarcely be regarded as belonging to the elder nor to the younger librarians, there was a very friendly feeling between the two. There was much correspondence on subjects ranging from getting a cataloger for the Minneapolis library; as to whether typewriters should be used in writing library cards; and what were the reasons for or against the use of the Decimal Classification system in the Library of Congress.

When Herbert Putnam wrote Melvil Dewey at the time of his eightieth birthday he said:

**'What surprises me is that the occasion finds us so nearly contemporary with only a decade between us; for your activities were conspicuous long before mine had any significance.'**

It can be safely said that all members of the Regents were his friends in the strange combative years in Albany from 1889-1906. His correspondence with all of them was friendly; but perhaps two stand out more clearly than the rest as intimate with him—Pliny T Sexton of Palmyra and Bishop William Crosswell Doane of Albany.

In later years the friendships that developed among librarians were frequently those of the younger group who because of the feeling akin to reverence which they felt for Mr Dewey honored him as a courageous pioneer in an almost ancient history. Actually dozens of letters have come in mentioning some particular friendly, kindly incident where Mr Dewey stopped to lift up and encourage some younger person who perhaps was despairing in the line of work he had chosen.

## His Enduring Friendships

Mr Dewey had a friendly way of naming the younger generation of librarians when selected for service in the various states, as the 'library bishop' of Nebraska, 'library bishop' of Ohio *etc.*

But this reverence from the younger people pleasing to it was, was not the intimate friendship that Melvil Dewey's eager soul had been forever seeking and seldom finding.

Such friendships among men as grew out of the development of the Lake Placid Club will be referred to elsewhere.

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### Mosaic of Characteristics

**Who never wept knows laughter but a jest;  
Who never failed, no victory has sought;  
Who never suffered never lived his best;  
Who never doubted, never really thought;  
Who never feared, real courage has not shown;  
Who never faltered, lacks a real intent;  
Whose soul was never troubled, has not known  
The sweetness and the peace of real content.**

**£ M Brainerd.**

As this volume is the story of a man from childhood to old age, there is not a page or a chapter but that indicates some one or more of his characteristics. Yet to group certain of these in one place may better please the average reader than to await the fragments scattered thru the book.

Physical characteristics would naturally come first, then mental and spiritual (if it is possible to keep the three apart) then proofs of simple human interests; then minor references to business and financial trends or tendencies, as these will be enlarged on in dealing with his achievements.

On the page facing 113 will be found a direct reproduction of Melvil Dewey's summary of himself and his interests between 1866 and 1876, written in his diary of

## Melvil Dewey

the latter year. The table shows that in ten years he grew six inches and one-quarter; his weight increast from one hundred twenty to one hundred seventy-four pounds.

His powerful appearance as a youth may be understood by looking at the picture taken when he was an undergraduate at Amherst.

In all the correspondence that has come since the biograpy was announst there ar few references to his early personal appearance. Dr Guy Hinsdale, once a student at Amherst while Melvil Dewey re-organized the library and taught takigrafy (shorthand), wrote as follows from White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia:

'Personally I remember him as a tall, black-haired, 'active man of rather high nervous temperament.'

His diary shows many communings as to personal appearance, good clothes etc. Possibly these communings led him to cover his aggresiv chin with a beard. Once by accident at a convention a barber shaved him clean while he drowzd. The story goes that his appearance was remarkably changed. One of the delegates suggested introducing him to Mrs Dewey as another person. She was glad to meet Mr . . . and then looking at him directly realized that it was Melvil and exclaimd:

'If I had ever known that you had a chin like that I never would have married you.'

Georgia Benedict who was a scool girl in Albany in 1892, givs an interesting reminiscence regarding her call for *Amadis of Gaul*. She wanted it from the State Library because it was commended in Don Quixote. Her reminiscence runs this way:

'The Amadis is not often asked for by little girls. My request was referred to the Director, and I was ushered into an office where a black-haired, black-bearded, black-eyed gentleman in a pepper-and-salt suit was working away with a kind of furious quiet at a big desk. I was struck by the speed and accuracy of his movements. It was like watching a fine machine, an electric machine—the air about him was vibrant with energy.'

## Mosaic of Characteristics

She secured the book, then describes his characteristics as follows:

'His decisiveness, the sparkling darkness of his face (dominated by his vivid eyes), his intense energy impressed me deeply. Indeed, I was a little awed, and am still, in recollection. I had come into contact with an immense force, too briefly to feel that force as personal and kindly, only as strong.'

### Frequent Ailments

Notwithstanding the long life of Dr Dewey and notwithstanding the fact that he only had two serious illnesses—tifoid fever at Amherst, pneumonia at Lake Placid Club in 1914—it is quite evident from his diaries that he often felt ill. Every little while there was something wrong with him,—cof, difficulty in breathing, catar. On August 1, 1872 he says:

'My helth during the year has not been so good. Indeed I have had more sick days, headaches etc, than any other year of my life, unless when I was sick so long in 1867/

Reference to his '67 diary only mentions his having a very severe cold; but in one of his entries he says:

August 21, 1868. 'Dr Potter examined me thoroly and told Charlie privately that he thought I would not live two years.'

In 1874 writing to his brother Manford he says:

'My helth is about the same as when in Oneida. I am all right when loafing about but I feel the lack of tone & fire when I settle into the traces for substantial work. \* \* \* I am losing time in the library right along. \* \* \* To be sure it cuts out so much salary but \* \* \* I would wear a ragged coat & liv in a garret if I ed hav my old strength & helth. All my energies ar bent in this direction now.'

Then as with the letter to his sister printed in the Amherst chapter, he describes horsback riding as his cure-all:

\* \* \* I hav had three N Y positions open starting at \$2000 now. I cdn't & daren't touch any of them for want of helth. So

## Melvil Dewey

yu see I feel like making some pecuniary sacrifice to restore myself.'

Quite early he was troubled with what was supposed to be sensitivness to dust, but which in later years showed that he was subject to hay fever, or cold. His brother in one letter as early as 1881 appears to hav recieved a letter in regard to 'asthma' and replies:

**'You are a chip of the old block/ I hope you will never be a wheezer, for they never die/**

In later years, during the European trips particularly, his frend and cronicler W S Biscoe, makes frequent entries like this:

**'Mr Dewey was very tired and had to lie down.'**

In a letter written to a nefew he says:

**'I am fighting laryngitis which has floord me now and then in recent years.'**

**On his fifty-first birthday Mr Dewey refers to his condition and says:**

**'I seem to be getting better of my bad stomach which I think was simply due to nervous exhaustion and overwork.'**

**As late as 1924 he reports:**

**<sup>c</sup>A New York cold which I get whenever I go down there/**

### **Maintaind by Mind**

Undoutedly the forward-looking tendency of his mind reacted upon his body. In 1927 when many frends congratulated him on his seventy-fifth birthday he wrote :

**'58 years ago when I taut my 1st scool, before I was 17, we thot yung folks must be under 30. After that a girl had started down old maid lane. 40 was middle age, and 50 was sure enuf old. But old age has kept about 10 years ahead of me. Now I count as old only those over 85, soon it will be 90. Chasing old age has been for me like trying to catch up with my shadow.**

**But the world has lernd that we ar no older than we feel. It is our hart and our head, not the kalendar that determine our age.**

## Mosaic of Characteristics

My wife says I look 50, "act like 60" and am recorded as 75. Take your choice.

'The secret of my perennial youth is becauz I hav from childhood always workt fast and long hours, but hav never worrid. I hav always been a total abstainer from liquor, tobacco, tea, coffee and condiments, and hav been a small eater and larj sleeper. I used to tel my college classes that the old rule was 6 hours for a man, 7 for a woman, 8 for a child, 9 for a fool. I like 10, perhaps becauz I believ so firmly in decimals, of which I hav been a life-long advocate and activ missionary. I was born Dec 10, 1851, the anniversary of the deposit of the prototyp meter in the Palace of the Archives in Paris. In 1872 I devized my Decimal Clasification and publisht it 1st in 1876. \* \* \* I am so loyal to decimals as our great labor-saver that I even like to sleep decimally.<sup>1</sup>

Then again when his eightieth anniversary was commemorated last December in Lake Placid, Florida, he wrote to many frends refering to his fisical condition in the following words:

'Melvil Dewey is not a watch that wears out to be discarded, but lyk a sun dial wher no wheels get rusti or slip a cog or get tired & long for rest.'

### Fisical Recreation

An interest which developt in Amherst and was carrid over into later years was horsmanship. He would giv days at a time to figuring out the merits of a certain horse before purchasing or trading. Ultimately realizing the helthfulness of horsback riding he regularly provided for time in his schedule so that he could refresh himself out-of-doors. In the time-budget agreements drawn up with Annie Dewey, horsback riding three times a week was provided for, she being an excellent horswoman.

In his Albany days he indulged in a rapsody, explainin that he had lookt in various directions for a satisfactory form of exercize:

Trends urged me to try the bicycle, but after careful investigation I concluded that my neck was too valuable to risk on a high wheel. So I bought a tricycle and found it nearer a solution than

## Melvil Dewey

anything except the saddle horse. Then came the "safety" and two years ago I tried it, though convinced that my tricycle gave practically the same pleasure. After a week I realized that a new world was opening to me, and as the months pass the priceless value of the new exercise has steadily increased in my estimation. It has done more for my helth and pleasure than the best of the 15 saddle horses I have owned, and at about one-twentieth the cost. It might have been much less but I indulge in the luxury of the latest and best pattern whenever improvements are made, selling the former wheel for what it will bring. It costs about \$25 a year to gratify this fancy for the last new thing in wheels instead of riding the same mount for several years as is entirely practicable/

The described benefits of the bicicle fild seven tipe-written pages. Some distribution of this paper must hav taken place; for he argued that if one of a party in a wilderness should find an abundant spring and fail to tel others he would be voted an outcast; and so he proceeds to argue that he must tel others of the spring of helth that he has found.

He urged all the fellow workers in the Regents office, the State Library and in the Library School to own and use bicycles, he arranging for their purchase at wholesale and then supplying them without profit on part payments by the minor employes. He carrid this matter so far as to hav a bicicle shed bilt on his property at 315 Madison avenue, when it was found impossible to accommodate the bicycles in the State Capitol.

On both trips to Europe with W S Biscoe in 1889 and 1891, Mr Biscoe occasionally includes in his records of the trip the statement that 'Mr Dewey was visiting a bicicle store', or 'Mr Dewey very nearly completed his plans for a bicicle'. It would appear that while in Europe he bought a tandem. Whether he and Mr Biscoe rode it there is not recorded but his idea of the bicicle was involvd with the idea 'save time and helth'.

In the chapter devoted to Amherst it was pointed out that his choice of the college was due to compulsory fisical training. He often thought of care for his body in

## Mosaic of Characteristics

the earlier years and in fact in later years, but his tendency was to pass the matter over as soon as it had escaped his busy mind and thus go for long periods without any particular attention to the maintenance of life. Just as with his resolutions in Amherst regarding early to bed, so with his resolutions to exercise daily; he did not keep his self-made pledges. Throughout life, here and there appear new resolutions to take better care of himself. This however, can be said in relation to his physical equipment. Without a good body, basically sound, he could not have kept up year after year the mental drive that characterized all his days in Boston, New York, Albany and Lake Placid.

To approach his mental and spiritual characteristics is not so easy as the physical. The physical was visible. The mental and spiritual could only be realized by considering in the long run what he did, how he devoted himself to what he did and the permanency or impermanency of the effect of what he did. Mentally he was amazingly alert. He wanted to know; he forced himself to make sure of a point whenever it arose. This eagerness to know even antedated the purchase of the unabridged dictionary mentioned in the boyhood chapter; for if he had not been eager to acquire knowledge he would not have been self-disciplined enough to toil and to save for that purpose.

### Youthful Thoroughness

His tendency from youth upward was to go full speed ahead with a new idea. He made it a point to understand a subject thoroughly.

We have already seen that he went 'aducking' as a boy. A few years later at Amherst while convalescing from typhoid he became intensely interested in the whole subject of guns and revolvers, their construction, their improvement etc. On more than one occasion he went through factories in Hartford and elsewhere. Even some of his most serious correspondence at that time was with manu-

## Melvil Dewey

facturers of guns as to rifling, triggers, the best form and shape of shels etc.

In his boyhood he had a temporary interest in ches, working away at it til he continuously exceld his competitor, after which time his interest in the matter appears to hav dropt; or was never mentiond again.

Among his boyish interests was croquet. It appears that in competing with the teacher who was temporarily in Adams Center, the teacher seemd to lay down rules 'always in his own favor'. The next entry shows that the boy found the printed rules, masterd them and when the teacher attempted to decide contrary to those rules the boy showd him :

'That the cat in his yard did not hop that way/

In Amherst also he used billiards as a form of recreation and playd quite frequently with Professor H H Neill. He dropt it as a play in public for fear of being considerd a 'loafer':

'We concluded, or rather I did, and Prof Neill agreed with me, that it was not a good plan for one to play billiards at the hotel and so he has got thru with that amusement. It's a fine game but I can't stand the loafers that put their heads into the door, and all those things. It makes me feel too much as if I were one of their class. I shall try to get my recreation in some better way till I can have a private table; then shall play, for I think it one of our best games.'

To the end of his life, a quiet game of billiards or pool gave him great pleasure. He had a pocket billiard table in his study at Whyt Birchus and when tired working at his desk would play.

He had a lifelong interest in fountain pens, from the earliest creation as stilografas up to the perfected and beautiful pens of today. He frequently would hav on his desk a group of fountain pens in addition to 5 in his vest pocket with different shaped barrels so as to avoid cramping from the continuous use of one only. He had a

## Mosaic of Characteristics

habit of giving away fountain pens that he had thoroly tested.

His comments upon the books he red would create a book. The earlier years deal almost exclusivly with library matters but at one point he mentions Henry Esmond. He gave an interesting evidence of individual thinking :

'Esmond is so uniformly spoken of z excellent I selected it f vacatn & feel amply repaid. I like Thackeray—The Newcomes suited me pretty well. Then Vanity Fair w e inimitable Becky Sharp pleased me still more & Esmond bears e palm. There's many good things in it & always th is high mindedness showing culture & "quality". Trix dazzles w her beauty but I never f a moment wavered in giving my affctn to her mother—e noble Rachel who in e end spends her Indian summer on e banks of e Potomac as Henry Esmond's bride. My intention is to give e bk a second & more careful reading & then I will speak of it at length.'

Jun 18, 1872: 'Aft qu a litl thot o e subj I came to e cone th sprg tt th w no bettr means of relax & enjoy than a real gd novel or poem, some imag wk o another. So I decided to keep something of the sort on the tab contin'y and wh I needed a trip shorter or longer into another world to just catch *it* up & read a ch. (See footnote.)

### Seeking Facts

His tendency to go to the bottom of the subject servd him in good sted when he was chosen to assist in the Amherst library. He was not content to find the contents of the library inaccessible and subject to shifting and change. So in that period his diary shows a round of visits to the nearest good libraries he could find. Pages of his diary ar taken up with the methods used in Boston, Hartford, Providence, Albany and New York. The purpose to reform the whole library sitem was not consciously present in his mind at the time. All that he was

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'After quite a little thought 011 the subject I came to the conclusion this spring that there was no better means of relaxation and enjoyment than a really good novel or poem, some imaginativ work or another. So X decided to keep something of the sort on the table continually and when I needed a trip shorter or longer into another world to just catch! it up and read a chapter.'

## Melvil Dewey

seeking was a thoroly good and improved method of caring for the books in Amherst.

Similarly following his boyish interest in the metric sistem he visited, when he became a man, all manufacturers in the east who wer producing metric materials. In keeping with the purposes of 1876 he became involvd in the efforts of the American Library Association, Spelling Reform Association and the Metric Bureau. In each of these lines he thoroly masterd the problems or blazed a way toward new methods; for by this time he was creating a new field of knowledge for others hereafter to study.

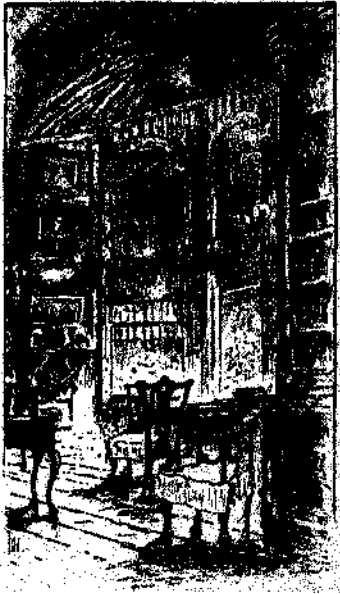
The passion for knowledge stayd with him thruout his life. In a letter recievd in July from Margaret Miller, a former secretary, she reverts to the condition that pre-vaild in his dining-room in the Lake Placid years. She **said:**

'There was seldom a meal at White Birches which was not interrupted by dictionary research. We argued constantly about pronunciation and derivations' and I can still see Dr. Dewey dashing from the dining-room, his napkin sailing from his vest, in his search of accuracy in his favorite Funk and Wagnalls standard unabridged. This enthusiasm for words and their accurate use was infectious and all of us who were associated with him have caught the habit of peripatetic meals.'

A tipe of his throness in any subject that interested him was furnisht by the reserch which he made in Albany when it was proposed that the cobble-stones surrounding the capitol should be superseded by some other form of pavement. As this would affect the street fronting his home at 315 Madison avenue, he went into the entire subject of materials for paving and finally issued a printed circular to all other property-owners in the neighborhood urging them to concentrate on the one form which he thought was best.

No matter what subject came up he was always determind to understand it fully. So when it came to

Birthplace  
of the  
American  
Library Association  
1876



Rooms of the  
Pennsylvania State Historical  
Society

(Building no longer standing)

# Financial Summary

25.00  
 75.00  
 100.00  
 27.00  
 9.00  
 1320.00  
 425.00  


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 1981.00

BORN	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	CLOTHING	BOOKS	MISCEL	CASH	ASSETS	LIABILITIES	TOTAL
'66	15	5'5 1/2"	120	50	50	25		125		
'67	16	5'8"	130	110	80	35		225		
'68	17	5'10"	147	105	80	30		215		
'69	18	5'11"	150	116	129	55		300		
'70	19	5'11 1/2"	160	107	45	80		220	150	
'71	20	5'11 1/2"	166	125	70	105	(70)	370	700	330
'72	21	5'11 1/4"	168	138	87	185		410	1360	950
'73	22	6'1"	165	175	80	170		425	1850	1425
'74	23	5'11 1/2"	170	172	138	615	125	1050	2410	1360
'75	24	5'11"	173	155	142	70	293	600	1677	1107
'76	25	5'11"	174 (145)	104	4194	246	4544	4544	4544	Subtotal

In making estimates for the final inventory a  
 correction of less than 5% made the assets & liabilities  
 just balance

Financial Summary Prepared by Melvil Dewey Showing His Affairs from 15 to 25

## Mosaic of Characteristics

installing an organ in Agora at the Lake Placid Club, tho at the time he was seventy years of age, he set to work to understand organ construction, the merits and demerits of various devices, until when the installation of the \$30,000 organ took place he appears to hav argued many points with the manufacturer and the workmen and to hav held his ground.

### Forthrightness

The forthrightness of his diaries is startling at times. Here is how he welcomes a new member to the household:

April 6, 1867. 'My sister Marissa who lives with us was delivered of a fine, helthy boy about one o'clock this morning. He has blue eyes like his father and mother. The yung gentelman balances eight pounds and twelve ounces. De Choice thinks he is nothing short of an Angel and I don't know but I think the same. Success to the youthful Green!'

With a touch of chivalry he records at a later date escorting a girl who was the subject of slanderous talk:

'This evening I went to singing school. There was only a few out; we sang until about 10 o'clock and then sat down and talked over the town scandal. \* \* \* Mrs Elder G. . . . for some unknown cause took a pique at the Good Templars and commenced calling them all the mean names she could lay her tongue to. It is all that is talked about lately. \* \* \* She commenced slandering Mary H's character. She called her a street walker, an abandoned woman, a common prostitute and all such epithets she could call to mind. \* \* \* Mary H . . . is universaly regarded as a very model of virtue and no one doubts of her innocence. \* \* \* The matter will probably be cleared up and we shall know the truth.

'I took Mary H . . . home tonight.'

On Jan 1, 1867 a local wedding took place and he commented:

'Jennie E H . . . was married today to Frank B . . . of Mass. Arthur and Ellen Marson went as far as Utica with them. Jennie was a very good girl and I hope she wfll enjoy married life and prove *true* to her husband.'

## Melvil Dewey

A scrap of paper remains on which he rebuked a student—or it might well have been a professor—in Columbia, who evidently had been careless:

'I picked up these pieces in the hall & infer that you threw them on the floor. My time & that of my assistants is too valuable for this work. Still we prefer to do it rather than have the building so disfigured.'

### Miser of Time

Before it dawned on him that he would do something very definite along the lines of his purposes—and it is clear that this realization did not come to him fully till he was between nineteen and twenty-one—his characteristic attitude was 'don't waste time'. In the mutual agreements which he and his wife later drew up in 1878, 1881, 1888 etc, their 'don'ts' mainly affected the full use of every minute in some progressive manner or another. Time was to him—and later to Mrs Dewey—a sacred trust for which an account would have to be given. With his peculiar ability to speak and to speak with fluency, it is not surprising that he should have first thought of becoming a minister or a missionary. But whatever plans entered his mind in not alone his early years, but his middle and closing years, it always was to have each day carry away a burden of something accomplished. There was an intentness and feverishness about it that separated him from the great mass of people to whom one day is frequently as another.

As he progressed mentally, as shown in his diary,—he became a most violent protestant regarding waste of time; and he turned his attention in an irregular fashion to every subject that would help secure a short cut to knowledge. Thus early he became a non-conformist in spelling; for he argued to himself that the characters in the English word should indicate its sound and that the sound on the other hand, should indicate the spelling. So strong a non-conformist was he that he questioned early in his boyhood all established authority as to

## Mosaic of Characteristics

language and then under the pressure of his convictions began the development of what he called 'brevés'.

Later he invented or used new characters that would stand for two or more letters; for instance *rj* for 'ing' and *sh* for the 'sh' sound whenever sibilant. These are shown in very early correspondence with his elder brother Manford.

The same passion for abbreviation and for efficiency prompted him to adopt, shortly after manhood, a system of personal shorthand. On Dec 10, 1873, his twenty-second birthday, he began writing all his personal notes, his diaries and proposed replies to correspondence in this shorthand system. Saving of time was a passion with him, a passion that remained burning and alert till the last day of his life in 1931.

He was also throughout life an editor, so curiously unconscious of editing that he had a tendency to mark letters reaching him either redundant as to language or too extended as to details. Even the letters which came on his eightieth birthday show this editing to eliminate unnecessary words, as he red them over in his Florida study.

A type of his opposition to redundancy may be seen by quoting from a letter written in 1930 as to the use of the new name 'Lake Placid' in Florida in the place of the former name 'Lake Stearns'. One sentence from the letter will suffice. An assistant wrote this:

'We realize that it takes a long time for map makers to learn of the authorized changes of names in any State, but if your map is to be used later or is to be revised it will be a grateful service if you could arrange to have the 2 bodies of water whose names have been changed as indicated above correctly designated.'

Melvil Dewey dashed his pen through the proposed letter and the result was this.

'We realize that it takes a long time for map makers to learn all authorized changes of names in any state, but if your map is to be revised the 2 lakes should be correctly designated.'

## Melvil Dewey

In the chapter of 'His Loves' mention has been made of the letter to his associates which he dictated while stricken in Clearwater, Florida. Viewed as part of the story of the man nothing could more perfectly exemplify the restlessness and everlasting urge that characterized his life, for within a few weeks thereafter he was huddled over heels in the details necessary for establishing the Lake Placid Club in Florida; and he was planning and negotiating and dreaming of the things yet to be even as if he were positive of twenty years or more of life yet to come.

The paper which he dictated to the nurse also shows the survival of his hatred of waste in writing or space. The good nurse wrote out in full: 'Third of February, nineteen hundred and twenty-seven'.

From the copy which remains it is evident that as soon as Melvil Dewey was able to sit up and read what had been written he vigorously drew a line through the entire date and abbreviated it to '3 Feb 1927'. However when Dorkas Fellows saw this years afterwards she said:

**'He could not have been just exactly up to his usual efficiency for what he ought to have written in order to be true to his system was "3 F 27"'**

### Contradictions

But added to the encyclopedic character of this mind, as it became fuller and fuller even to old age, was the ability to use it all in practical ways. Having in a sense first of all human knowledge into ten groups his mind was forever classifying new knowledge. The various editions of the Decimal Classification and the hundreds of articles he wrote or speeches he delivered or conversations he took part in, all represented a rounding out by definite knowledge. This through his life would explain his inventiveness in library matters and the exactness which necessarily had to express itself in standardization of library and business methods. Yet in here appears one of those contradictory conditions which make it impossible for

## Mosaic of Characteristics

the average man to understand a genius. He laid down rules in all sincerity and yet was not amenable to rule. Amusing illustrations of this occur constantly thru his life.

It is delightful to realize that there were some very human contradictions in Mr Dewey. Because of the complexity of library management he attempted to standardize every motion, yet he never did standardize himself. One of his rules of conduct for others was that they must always have available pencils and a memorandum pad of prescribed size. Yet on an important occasion in a convention of librarians he pulled out the back of an envelope for notes and was rallied by the librarians who were seated around him.

Though he insisted on a place for everything and everything in its place, in his later years being greatly annoyed by the impossibility of getting dental plates to fit, he had a way of removing these wherever he might happen to be and then when meal time came several of the household would have to hunt high and low to find this necessary dining-room equipment.

It is also related that when he was heading the efficiency work and leading a campaign during the World War on both sides of the Atlantic, suddenly a visit was made to him by an eminent member of the Efficiency Society. The visitor's card being sent up to Mr Dewey's office he looked around and suddenly realized that his own office was worse than a bear's den and thereupon every loose paper was swept into clothes baskets and hidden before the caller was received. It took a week to straighten things out.

Illustrative of this is a letter from Berne A Pyrke written while Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets at Albany:

'We are living in an age where there is a tendency for human beings, like commodities, to become standardized so that each unit will be like all the others. Dr Dewey offered stern

## Melvil Dewey

resistance to the standardization process. He had as strongly marked a personality as any person of my acquaintanceship/

The contradiction was that Mr Dewey attempted to reduce everything to sistem and then applied it to others.

### Procrastination

This unconscious tendency to be superior to all law that he himself had laid down made him also a procrastinator. Looking back on the violent correspondence which took place among F Leypoldt, R R Bowker and Melvil Dewey in the early days of the Library Journal it is quite evident that he did not and could not produce material on the schedule of time essential to a periodical that must be issued at a given date.

What follows is not stated in order to excuse procrastination but only to explain it. In Boston, in New York and in Albany every new week saw more responsibility gathered around him til he was in such a snarl of detail that to do all that he had promist to do by the time for which he had given his promissory pledge, was impossible. Consequently he seemd to form the habit of letting things go by that wer not too urgent. A perfect illustration of this is given in a letter written as recently as Nov 9 of this year by Mary Emogene Hazeltine:

'He was always very busy, \* \* \* This made him rather irresponsible as a correspondent.

'When the A. L. A. met in Lakewood on Chautauqua in 1898, I was the local chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, and early in the days when it was necessary to know something of the plans of the A. L. A. I found it almost impossible to get any word from Mr Dewey, secretary of the A. L. A. at the time. When it came to the point where the local committee actually had to know certain things for the sake of local arrangements I took rather drastic methods in getting information from Mr Dewey.

'I sent him an important letter special delivery and followed it by a telegram, asking immediate reply to special delivery letter just mailed. He replied that I did just the right thing to go after him, and that he was glad that I had brought the matter to

## Mosaic of Characteristics

his attention thus drastically. After that he was very prompt in all of his answers and from that time on he adopted me as one of his daughters, as he called it. I seemed to have gained his confidence by the special move that I made to bring important matters to his attention. All of my relations with Mr Dewey from that time on were on the same good business basis and fine friendship.'

The strain of the situation can only be sympathetically understood by those who have the ability to create an idea as well as to attend to details. Details essential to the carrying on of a complex business or plan or purpose are the most exacting things in the world. Detail demands time, concentration and as far as possible shutting out of all interfering thought. Consequently if we picture Melvil Dewey busy with the American Library Association, Library Journal, Metric Bureau, Spelling Reform Association (and the increasing floods of correspondence that began to gather around him when he became known as a creative leader) we can easily understand the neglect of something, which grew more and more pronounced as he moved onward from simple beginnings towards complex conditions.

### Official Rectitude

In 1899 an official of the Library Bureau wrote to an official in Albany a letter regarding supplies, from whose letter one sentence ought to be taken as indicating the exactitude of Melvil Dewey when a procedure might be open to question.

'You know Mr Dewey leans backward a bit in his desire to be perfectly straight as to letting Library Bureau directly or indirectly get any business of the State Library, Albany.'

His hatred of nepotism as hindering the advancement of the general group of employes was genuine. In a letter written by James Russell Parsons, Jr in 1894 to the Albany Evening Journal, appear these sentences:

'You also speak of the relationship between Mr Dewey and Mr Gallup. Permit me to call your attention to the fact that, before

## Melvil Dewey

marriage to Mr Dewey's niece, Mr Gallup received an appointment in the regents' office during Mr Dewey's absence in Europe and contrary to his expressed wishes, and that this connection by marriage has retarded his advancement. Indeed it may be truthfully asserted that if the regents and other friends had not recognized his exceptional administrative abilities he would either have resigned long ago for a wider field or still be working for a ridiculously small salary in comparison with his deserts.'

Relativ to nepotism it also happens as an interesting incident that a nefew wanted Mr Dewey's influence to secure Chauncey Depew for a public address. The warm reply to the nefew contains sentences like this:

'It was well enough of you to ask my introduction to Mr Depew because I was your uncle, but when you ask me to interest a politician to take a share in a thing of this sort, it was the height of absurdity.

'In the first place, I know no politician; in the second place; you are under bad advice and you want to get rid of that notion just as soon as you can, of trying to accomplish things by political influence or political "pull". I know of no greater curse to a young man in which to begin his career than to hope to get things not by his merit but by his "pull". Don't let anybody get this awful folly into your head. Go like a man with your own request and get it. It is a thing that I hav never done in my life and have accomplished a great deal more than most people who rely on those things. Stand on your merits and do not belittle yourself and your cause by trying to drag in some fool politician. Nothing would cause me greater regret than to have you think this was the way to accomplish things. The way to attain good results is to know what you want, be sure that it is right, and then go ahead, confident in the merits of your cause, despising all tricks of the wire puller and the ward heeler who wants to "see" a man or wants somebody to go with him. Let me tell you, young man, when anybody tries that with me or with most men it creates a prejudice against the cause that they represent.'

### Wit and Humor

As illustrativ of the lightning rapidity with which Mr Dewey's mind discerned the humor of a situation Rev

## Mosaic of Characteristics

Ernest Cushing Richardson of Princeton, New Jersey recites the following in a letter written in the present summer:

'On a post-conference trip to the Dells of Wisconsin, some of us had been off on a boating trip and returned to the narrow and elastic board which connected dry land with navigable water across shallow and grass grown water. The spring board landing stage was especially wobbly and I stepped briefly off into the shallow water and back again. Mr Dewey was seated with a lot of other librarians at a table near the shore and called out "Hey there, Richardson, I did not know that you were a Pedobaptist." The double meaning made this a perfect pun and it was, I think, a credit to the librarians that it brought down the house. They understood it, or at least someone did and all joined in the laugh. At all events it was instant and to my mind one of the very few perfect puns that I have met with personally in a lifetime. I add that it took emphasis from the fact that I was then identified with a Theological Library.<sup>1</sup>

As wil hav been seen in an earlier chapter, at sixteen he was excedingly fond of humorous stories, jokes, conundrums, boners etc, and this interest in the whimsical and humorous way of saying things stayd with him thru life. In fact among his papers wer found funny stories accumulated by the hundreds, some gatherd more than a half a century ago but all carefully tho needlessly preservd; for another characteristic faculty of Mr Dewey was that no matter what subject came up and the opportunity was appropriate for making humorous comment upon it, he could cap every situation with a fitting joke.

When he was going thru the terrific strain as Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York he stil had time for humor and its enjoyment, and here ar a few selected boners that in Regents examinations wer preservd by him:

'Sixty gallons make one hedgehog.

'A mountain range is a large cook stove.

'The feminin gender of friar is toastress.

## Melvil Dewey

'A vacuum is a large empty space where the Pope lives.

'The purpose of the skeleton; something to hitch meat to.

'Achilles was dipped in the river Styx to make him immoral.

'Climate is caused by the emotion of the earth around the sun.

'Pompeii was destroyed by an eruption of saliva from the Vatican.

'Longfellow was born in Bangor, Maine, while his parents were on a trip to Europe.

'Lincoln was the finest man that ever stepped his foot on the presidential chair.

'George Washington married Martha Custis and in due time became the father of his country/

His enjoyment was in pure humor and wit. In none of the numerous accumulations was found the kind of story that is said to be peculiarly appropriate to a stag gathering. From that point of view he was distinctly unsophisticated. It will already have been discovered from the chapter on his increasing powers of mind, that mingled with his humor was a most extraordinary seriousness of purpose. Therefore his humorous side was undoubtedly a safety valve for him just as it had been for Abraham Lincoln.

### Power in Argument

In the two chapters in the group devoted to the man and his achievements will be found constant proof of his courage and his versatility in meeting attacks and his ability to think several moves ahead of his antagonist. The same chapters conveyed the idea of persistency. He would not be turned aside and hence, in a sense, the record that he made. Reference to the absence of worry, earlier in this chapter permits also a reference to his curious ability to forget the trouble that was past. Like a hurdle jumper, the hurdle just ahead was the thing he hurried towards. The hurdles past were of no consequence whatsoever.

There is one other mental characteristic that must not fail of specific mention—his peculiar ability in conversa-

## Mosaic of Characteristics

tion or conference to overwhelm contrary opinion or opposition. St Clair McKelway, well known in the journalistic history of Brooklyn in last century, stated that Mr Dewey's ability to present a subject was so great that he could get unanimous action from the Regents at one meeting and at the next, possibly only six months after, give the opposing arguments such force as to again produce unanimity of action though flatly contradictory to the earlier decision.

Incidents occurred in his life where financial groups determined to say 'no' to everything that might be said; and yet out of such conferences Mr Dewey would emerge with a unanimous 'yes'.

In 1882 Sarah F Whiting wrote Annie Dewey a newsy letter regarding life at the Wellesley College. She included this typical description of Melvil Dewey:

'The library progresses again well. Mr Dewey carries all before him with Mrs Durant. If he should want all the books rebound or to have them lie on their sides as I saw in a German library, all would consent and think it was just the thing, except perhaps Miss Hawes who is not much for innovations and is rather swamped by so many digits.'

This ability was not due to any trickery or evasiveness nor from any personal desire to whip opposition. It was explicable only by the personal intensity with which Mr Dewey could believe things and set himself on fire with the conviction that these things ought to be. His persuasiveness was therefore involved with the ability to see ahead, the ability to believe in the desirable end, and the ability to go into battle without any sense of self-doubting.

Yet a favorite expression of Melvil Dewey when he was undecided on a question was 'when in doubt, don't'. So that he must not be regarded as lacking in caution when caution was reasonable.

His ability in speaking extemporaneously and gracefully has already been referred to when Annie Dewey re-

## Melvil Dewey

ported an incident in England, stating that Mr Dewey was equal to any occasion. Cald on quite unexpectedly many times in his public life he was always redy with a wel-rounded argument or an adroit response or a graceful congratulation or condolence.

### Nervous Irritability

Letters both receivd and sent, preservd from 1876 up to the tirrie of his living in Albany show him to hav been exceedingly sensitiv. He must hav sufferd excruciatingly from anything that lookt like criticism or reflection on himself. In fact during those years of sensitivness he never knew enuf to let wel enuf alone. There ar parts of his correspondence that ar pitifully trivial, in relation to some slight or fancid wrong.

A curious feature of his life after sixty was that suffering from the same sensitivness he seldom allowd himself to attack when attackt. Many interesting letters never maild, show that he exhausted his steam by writing the scathing letter that ought to be written and then held it.

A nervous irritability—it may hav been a corollary of his sensitivness—between 1876 and 1905 appears all thru his records; it was doutless due to the extreme strain under which he was working almost day and night. To understand some of the nervous irritability which affected Mr Dewey thru so large a portion of his life it is necessary to realize that even before he left Amherst he had placed himself under too hevvy a burden of responsibility resulting in a constant strain, each day seeing left undone those things that he in his judgment thought should hav been finisht. From that time on for many years he dragd around with him unfinisht detail no matter how thoroly he tried to organize his life. In a mesure this can be accounted for by the peculiar tipe of genius which he represented, a tipe very seldom found.

## Mosaic of Characteristics

The combination of vision as to a thing that might be done or invented and the ability *to* settle down on the minutiae necessary to bring that vision to pas.

In brief he saw the things that wer not and then made them exist. Such a combination necessarily wore on his control and resistance, for while a vision may be instantaneous, just as he declared was the case with the invention of the Decimal Gasification, detail takes hours; detail cannot be brusht aside. Detail is the old man of the sea forever on the sholders of those who are charged with it. The combination of vision and detail ment a burning up of his vitality that affected his nervs more than it affected his general fisique.

He became so irritable in his correspondence at times, that naturally he did not show good judgment. A tipical incident was a letter to one of the Regents, actually one of his employers, in which he begd him not to come into his office and waste his time, expressing himself something like this:

**'When you come in my office we waste 2 hours in talk over matters that could be disposed of in 2 minutes if you would only form the habit of writing down what you want me to consider and sending it to me by mail.'**

The esteem of this particular Regent continued for Mr Dewey, notwithstanding such tendencies in his middle years. His gentle rejoinder to Mr Dewey's letter was that it was Mr Dewey who did the talking; which was probably true.

This same man, Pliny T Sexton of Palmyra, when there was a possibility of Melvil Dewey going to Chicago University in 1892 wrote as follows:

**'For myself personally and as a Regent, I shall greatly regret your leaving us, if such shall be your decision. The cause of education in New York state can but suffer a great loss therein. Probably some one else will be raised up to carry on the work; but there can be but one "Dewey."'**

## Melvil Dewey

Those who knew what he was doing in trying to overturn and rearrange the educational system of New York State together with other responsibilities in the library and in library schools and by correspondence, realized that Mr Dewey must not be measured simply by an explosive tendency. It prompts us to wish as President Roosevelt said in relation to some other man in 1903:

**'I wish that every torn cat in the path did not strike him as an unusually large and ferocious lion/**

### Seriousness

The straightforward mind of the boy of fifteen, already a man in his definite self-determination shows out in many entries. Two make his devoted purpose clear:

**Dec 11, 1866. 'We have a lodge of Good Templars here numbering about seventy members, all determined to do something for the great Temperance Reform. I was one of the seventeen Charter members and served two terms as an officer, the first W A S, the second W O G. May prosperity attend the cause/**

Later he worked up a remonstrance against a local tavern for irregularities. His diary says:

**'The Excise Board refused to relicense and \* \* \* gave the Board one regular damning.'**

His membership in the Good Templars was taken with such a sense of local responsibility that 'the Dewey kid' had enemies, a fore-shadowing of his restless, combative life.

Space will not permit including further evidences of his seriousness except to mention that a member of the Good Templars Lodge was accused of violating his obligation. 'I preferred the charge' says the boy in his entry of Jan 29, 1867.

### Spiritual

His diary shows that he had many struggles with himself but he never appears to have had a fear of life.

## Mosaic of Characteristics

Looking within he felt that there must be expression without and it showed thruout all his boyhood.

On Feb 11, 1870 after feeling that a 'great dreamy dizzy future looms up before me' he adds:

'I must not, I will not allow myself to consume the God-given time in such reveries. The world is a great mass of untouched work and while I am attacking it I have no time for such reflections.'

In the same year he appears to have had many other periods of depression chiefly because he could not clarify his thoughts; but all such depressed periods led to a clearer determination to be of service. He stated to himself on one occasion:

'Whichever way I turn I see something that sadly needs improvement and as this is so with myself it is also true with the rest of the world and its people.'

Again he says:

'I should like to make astronomy a speciality if I had not a greater life work.'

His conscience was disturbed at taking Old Homestead Bitters, tho he had a doctor's prescription as authority. He led his father into membership with the I O G T and they appear to have discussed liquor and tobacco very thoroughly, for Melvil Dewey wrote years afterwards:

'When I first began meddling with the store, I got father in a corner and made him repeat his strong position that Bill . . . across the street who sold whisky, altho he didn't drink it himself, was a bad citizen. Then he repeated his strong attitude against tobacco as a vice & I said if liquor and tobacco are both wrong & . . . is a sinner for selling liquor, you have no right to sell tobacco & cigars in your store as you have for so many years & I am going to clean out the whole store. I went to the other store & told them if they would take our stock off our hands at cost, we would never sell tobacco again & they would have the entire business. They did so & father didn't veto my half-handed proceeding, so that put us morally right.'

## Melvil Dewey

Inferentially, his father could not possibly consent to destruction of the material; nor Melvil iether perhaps.

### Kindness

A letter to Dr W F Poole in 1892 shows that a librarian in a neighboring city had been detected in a fault and that the knowledge of this had gone over the United States. Melvil Dewey wrote:

**'His fault is grievous, but I believe his penitence sincere, and that he is trying to bear his penalty manfully. I am sure the truest hearts in the A. L. A. would all feel a new appreciation of your leadership in library matters if you, the Nestor of us all, would go up to . . . and give the poor fellow a warm hand in our behalf in these days of sore trial.'**

Papers show that in 1888 some poor boy in New York—the name was very foren—was guilty of petty larceny to the extent of thirty cents. The Court of Special Sessions of the Peace entrusted the boy to the custody of Melvil Dewey. He was a sincere believer in the latent possibilities of human nature and in giving the second chance.

Here follows an extract from a letter written in 1906 to a yung man in Lake Placid who was becoming a drunkard:

**'If you can get started so as to let liquor alone entirely it will be the greatest thing that ever happened to you. Then come back and work for me and I will give you, besides the regular wages I pay the other men, \$10 for each three months you go without touching liquor. I would much rather give you \$40 a year extra and have you let it strictly alone. I write this note to let you know that I shall be very proud if you carry it through successfully and very sorry if you should slip back.'**

The story is told by Dorkas Fellows that a little boy named John McDonald, only eleven years old and very poorly clad, came to Mr Dewey in 1890 and askt him for a position. Mr Dewey lookt him over and told him that

## Mosaic of Characteristics

he couldn't hav a boy around the library looking as he did:

'John went off, got some new clothes, came back and again askt Mr Dewey for a position, and Mr Dewey, presumably because he liked John's spirit, gave him one as page. John ('Little John' as we knew him, in distinction from 'Old John' and 'Black John') workt in the Library (except for the time he was in the Spanish War) til 1906, when he died as a result of an operation for appendicitis.'

On the occasion of his funeral Dr Dewey and many of the library staf wer present. George F Bowerman of the Public Library, Washington, D C, mentions that in 1893 he visited the World's Fair in Chicago in day coaches both ways equally as much to meet Mr Dewey as to see the exposition, and said in a letter to Mr Dewey in 1931:

'You were kind enough to give me two hours of your time at the end of which I was definitely headed towards librarianship. \* \* \* A library school course would have been impossible except that you gave me a position in the Regents office.'

'I remember particularly your own kindness and the kindness of Mrs Dewey in inviting me to your home; and I remember that, in a day before installment purchases were common you lent me the money with which to buy a bicycle.'

Another one of those men who rose from the ranks thru Melvil Dewey's kindness and thru ambition was Judson C Jennings who became president of the American Library Association in 1923-24. He entered the State Library at Albany as a page April 15, 1889 and except for a year when he attended Union University remaind in the State Library til Aug, 1903, holding meanwhile the positions of page, shelf curator, reference assistant and sub-librarian (reference) in charge of main reading room and loans. Meanwhile he took courses in the Library School (as staf members wer in those days encouraged to do) & apparently he fulfild all requirements for graduation except payment of matriculation fee. Aug, 1903 to

## Melvil Dewey

Sep, 1906 he was librarian of Carnegie Free Library, Duquesne, Pennsylvania, when he returned to New York State Library as director's assistant. Then in 1907 he went to Seattle as public librarian.

### Generosity

There was one other outstanding feature of his mental-spiritual life—the desire to share with others the things that he had. Just as Albert Shaw of the Review of Reviews recently said very truly regarding Melvil Dewey:

'His work was his play. I suppose he was right in giving me credit for having started the game of golf on the old rented Brewster pastures (in Lake Placid). He was quick to see that those pastures, and the game of golf, were indispensable to the future of the Lake Placid Club. He set about the task of creating a golfing center; and it delighted him to have other men come to play on his golf courses. But it would have been impossible to think of Melvil Dewey as finding any fun in playing a game of golf himself. The same thing, of course, could be said of all the remarkable provisions for recreation and sport for all seasons that took form by virtue of his creative imagination, and his habit of getting things done.'

His hospitality to earnest students had particular opportunity to express itself during the years in Albany. Literally hundreds were taken into 315 Madison Avenue. Expressive of that which hundreds would say, Asa **Don** Dickinson writing this summer, said:

'We students were so much at our ease with him that we made the welkin ring with popular songs as soon as we had come clear of the city streets. Melvil Dewey had a pleasant habit of taking the whole library school out for a drive in installments of two or three. He had a team of good horses in 1902 and 1903 that he drove with a dexterous hand. This phase of his cordial good will to all with whom he was associated will be of interest and should be mentioned.'

**If** there was a vacant **seat** in his carriage in **the day** of horses **or** in his automobile in **later days**, **he always**

## Mosaic of Characteristics

wanted to pick up someone who would get pleasure from an outing long or short.

### Financial Probity

Reference has already been made to his thrift in small matters. However, he gave to causes liberally. Typically, half the cost of the organ in the Community church at Lake Placid was met by Dr Dewey.

A peculiarity that stayed with him throughout life was a willingness to beg—not for himself. To beg—for others—he was not ashamed. His long correspondence with Andrew Carnegie covering from 1890 was peculiar in its effort to interest Mr Carnegie in certain phases of library expansion and schools for librarians. This is referred to in fuller detail elsewhere; but when he finally secured the full support of Mr Carnegie in the matter of spelling reform he clearly stated in writing that the generosity of Mr. Carnegie meant nothing to him. He was not seeking any association with the funds. It was altogether for the cause; and this leads to defining very exactly the almost quixotical self-denial to which Mr Dewey subjected himself.

When he was teaching at Bernhardt Bay for twelve weeks, out of his own pocket he paid for fifty new spellers. When his enthusiasm for the shorthand he used—*takigrafy*—gripped him, then he wanted his fellow students to get the benefit of it. When the faculty raised a question of giving credits for such instruction, it will be found in the Amherst chapter that his diary records his donation of both time and instruction.

His activities in Boston with the Readers and Writers Economy Co and the Library Bureau loaded him down with \$22,000 worth of debt that was still hanging around his shoulders as late as 1892. Yet the treasurer's report of the American Library Association from 1887 to 1889 contains this reference to Melvil Dewey on July 1, 1888 :

Tor expenses of secretary's office from Jan 1, 1885 to May 25, 1888—\$23.22.'

## Melvil Dewey

When he started the school for librarians in Columbia he received nothing additional to his salary as head librarian of the college.

When he took up his work in Albany as Secretary of the University of the State of New York and also as State librarian, it will be found that year after year the Annual Report of the library in its financial portion has this statement in varied form included, 'No salary', and the following is quoted as a footnote from the Report covering 1894:

'A The director receives a salary as executive and financial officer of the University but nothing for his work as director of the library. He receives \$50 a month for extra services in the library school but this is not paid from the state appropriation but by fees of those instructed and therefore is not included in the total paid by the state/

In his later years when through his generosity and the loyal assistance of those involved with him, he had built up the immense value of the Lake Placid Club, he accepted no personal salary and when at last he gave every form of his accumulated properties to the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation it was provided that only dividends on \$60,000 of stock a year should be available for Mr Dewey himself. During the last year of his life he did not receive a cent of personal income. He created enterprises worth millions of dollars, or that benefitted hundreds of millions of people the world over.

This statement as to his financial self-sacrifice will indicate what has from time to time been brought against him as an accusation,—impracticality. Yet with his hard training as a boy and his severe experiences through life there was on the part of Dr Dewey a very proper recognition of the place of money and of finance in the development of any idea. However he never could be brought to place personal financial considerations ahead of the cause. The cause itself must be supreme. The financial consideration could and would be met as the

## Mosaic of Characteristics

need arose. With such a tife of faith, he strode thru the years of life, advocating those things that should make a richer world and relegating the financial side in a sense to the background.

The Library Bureau, which he created in Boston in 1882 as an outgrowth of the Supplies Committee of the American Library Association, proved itself, as years went on, to be a great factor in modernization of all fases of business. While he had nothing to do with its later development, when the business details thretend to invade on the time necessary for creativ work of his own the Library Bureau as is wel known, came to be a great business organization and its recent consolidation with other forms of office efficiency has involvd a \$15,000,000 corporation.

Among the papers of Melvil Dewey wer a number of wils made by him and by Annie Dewey, showing originals, codicils and finally the last wils. The first wil was written on a letterhed of the American Library Association in Mr Dewey's takigrafy. This was drawn up Aug 31, 1877 and markt 'to be used in case anything happens to me; otherwise not to be written out'. This wil provides for the repayment of a loan of \$200 made on his office furniture by Isaac Pratt. It also defines what is to be done with payments that may or may not be made by the trustees of the Metric Bureau. It goes on to say in relation to the Bureau, the Spelling Reform Association, Amherst Library, Library Association, and Cooperation Committee of the American Library Association :

'I have not and do not wish to receive any compensation for work from any of them/

In that memorandum he says this regarding Amherst College:

'The Amherst College Library in justice owes me \$550 balance on salary never paid, tho I was assured by the committee of the trustees that it would be so paid at commencement 1876.'

## Melvil Dewey

In order to protect a loan made to him by Mrs S F Pratt, whom he calls Mother Pratt, he provides for the disposition of his life insurance. Reference is made to this wil only to indicate how careful Melvil Dewey was to see that those who had trusted him with mony in any form were protected.

Many reciets for insurance premiums wer scatterd thru the Boston personal correspondence and ar an illustration of the financial stresses in those early years. It would appear as if every one of the policies, when mature enuf to hav any loan value, was used for that purpose to the limit.

In 1908 Melvil Dewey outlined for completion at some later time his wil as affecting the Lake Placid Club tho at that time the institution was of small proportions. In that wil appears this expression, significant of his general attitude toward mony:

**'I believe my wife and son share fully with me the belief that beyond ample provision for health and comfort, money is of value only as it can be used for doing good.'**

In the Daily Press-Knickerbocker and Albany Morning Express of Oct 31, 1900 appeared an interview with several professional men as to whether mony affected their choice of work. 'The Way to Happiness' as set forth then by Melvil Dewey was:

**'I do not think that money, or honor, or power should be the incentive when a young man adopts a profession. He should choose his calling according to his talent and ability to confer the greatest good upon his fellow men and thereby confer the greatest happiness upon himself. \* \* \* If we proceed from the apparently selfish point where we desire the greatest happiness to ourselves, then we shall secure this happiness in the world, by engaging in a work of some kind that wil help others while helping ourselves,—that is the true calling for us if we have the choosing. Money is certainly not to be put first.'**

In closing any specific reference to the financial characteristics of this great educator it is right to refer to

## Mosaic of Characteristics

the courage with which he would undertake financial responsibilities great or small. Thru no process of reasoning by timid souls could the achievements of his life be attained. From beginning to end he dared out where others had never ventured.

In his early years he committed himself to responsibilities that ran into hundreds of dollars; in his middle years with equal lack of hesitancy he committed himself to responsibilities for thousands of dollars; and in his later years to responsibilities that aggregated millions.

His brother, Manford, writing him as early as 1901 when Lake Placid Club was only a fraction of its present size, could only find a word to fit and that was 'plunging'. The analogies must here seem contradictory. He would venture out on a gossamer thread and always land. He would move forward as if there were solid ground beneath him, and behold it was there. Without irreverence, he often laughingly asserted in later years, when a Club problem was met and overcome that the Lord was an honorary member.

When Melvil Dewey entered Amherst he decided to pay his own expenses; in other words:

'To accept money from father wholly as a loan.'

He appears to have handed his father all the money received for teaching at Bernhardt Bay and to have regarded nothing as his own except his clothes and his books. He says of his father:

'He was not inclined to like the idea but I guess I pretty nearly converted him/

He stated later in his diary that his father and mother spent more money on his education—casual though it was—than for the three other children together.

On Dec 10, 1870 Melvil Dewey began keeping on loose sheets exact accounts with himself. These loose sheets cover three years Dec 10, 1869; Dec 9, 1870; 1871 and 1872.

## Melvil Dewey

Thereafter from Dec 10, 1872 up to December, 1876 he kept personal accounts in a bound volume, still in existence.

Immediately after leaving Amherst in 1876 for Boston he opened in permanent form a journal and ledger; so that it is possible now, nearly sixty years after, to follow every receipt and expenditure for all the lines of activity in which he was involved.

With the information at hand an accountant could show exactly the status of Melvil Dewey's finances, obligations, involvements etc, as if his affairs were still current.

There are amusing elements in the loose sheet accounts between 1869 and 1872:—

Dec 10, 1870. 'I have on hand not 1 cent. Due me from Mack Sheppard \$12; Dwight and Eddey \$10. I owe Father \$151.50; Wm & Deady \$12.15; M J Dewey \$5.50. This estimate made with the understanding that what money Father furnishes me since I entered college is a loan. *Poor—Penniless—Penitent!*

The next year's account shows him generous as to the silver wedding of his brother to the extent of \$10; and yet so close as to credit himself with thirteen cents arising from the sale of a broom. The same year shows entries; for carrying slate \$2; winning the Walker mathematics prize \$15; working as an usher \$4; and yet spending \$2 to hear Mrs Siddons.

The accounts from 1871 to 1872 show such an item as tape for clothes 5 cents; a balance of 10 cents in February, 1872; a loan from L C Seelye, son of President Seelye, \$20; a loan of 70 cents from W S Biscoe and cash for carrying coal, 50 cents. His total receipts in 1873 by reason of two large loans secured outside the family were \$2042.46. In 1874 his total expenditures were \$960.38; in 1875 \$1205.22; and in 1876 just before leaving for Boston he shows himself as obligated for debts and loans to the extent of \$3510 all of which he repaid in the most exact fashion in the few following years.

## Mosaic of Characteristics

### Thrift

His hatred of wasted time spread over into a hatred of wasted material. Possibly this arose from the strict economy that had to be practiced during childish years.

The mother writes to him out in the world.

**'If you have any cast-off clothing do not give them to strangers. Send them to Mitt; they will do her a great good. When your old shirts give out send them to me; I can fix them up for your father. He is wearing some of your old ones now.'**

In his business years not a scrap of blank paper ought to be wasted. Among the oddest of these evidences found in his files was a piece torn from the lower half of a letter received by him. On this small scrap of good quality material he first worked out a series of abbreviations for book sizes. This having been crossed out he used another portion of the letter for working out certain library rules; later he crossed this out and used the reverse side for a rather full letter in taktigraphy.

He would save printed and uncanceled postcards, though the purpose for which they were printed might have disappeared. Among correspondence of his there was found a postcard which he had held in his desk for twenty-one years before using it, then writing his shorthand marks around the printed portion of the back and then addressing the card to his correspondent.

But this hatred of waste was not to the extent of miserliness. Economy in small things permitted him to be generous in large ones. For instance, he sent many contributions back to his home, assisting nephews and nieces, and giving liberally of his own money to the causes that he championed, until he gave away his all.

An amusing evidence of his thrift showed in correspondence as recently as 1929 with a manufacturer of pianos. It would appear that seventeen years before a member of the Lake Placid Club turned in a piano for which she received a due-bill from the manufacturer.

## Melvil Dewey

This she never used, but finally handed it to the Club. Mr Dewey's argument was:

'Yu hav had the use of the capital for 17 years but yu havn't had the sale of a new piano as yu pland. At 6% annual interest \$250 doubls in 12 years, & in 17 wud amount to over \$600. Of course it isn't yur fault that the due-bil hasn't been used. Write me what yu wil allow the Club if we order another piano.'

Here is a form of begging that wil cause amusement: It was a circular letter written from' Lake Placid Club:

Who wil pay for Park Island? There is a sunken island only a few yards from Mirror Lake Park. There is so little water over it that cost would be small to raise it a foot above high water and to cover with gras and shrubs.'

'A bridge would connect with the Park, archt so boats and canoes could run under without ducking heds. All over the world a little island reacht by an archt bridge is the most attractiv feature of the finest parks.

The Club wil giv the island if some public spirited frend of Placid wil giv the cost of raising, planting and bilding bridge. This ought to appeal to someone as a beautiful memorial to some frend.'

### The Child-man

He was an enthusiast in the sense of the word's origin. His boyhood diary constantly speaks of duty to God and while he was entirely free from any denominational dogmatism his sense of relationship to the giding power of the universe accounted for his enthusiasm,—God in him.

Because of that driving enthusiasm Mr Dewey never mesured obstacles in terms of finality. Niether did he ever permit one obstacle that had been surmounted to hinder him from going ful speed toward the next. His life was a life of obstacles met and obstacles surmounted. And while it was proper in the first chapter to speak of him as man-child—for the child was father of the man—it is quite correct to speak of him in his advanst years as the child-man, for a child's enthusiasm and a child's

## Mosaic of Characteristics

inability to see obstacles, a child's cheerful acceptance of each day as it came, made him instead of an old man a man of youth. One of his admirers in the Library of Congress, D J Haykin, who received the last letter ever dictated by Melvil Dewey, says of a simple contact with him:

'It was not until about two years ago, however, that I met him in person for the first and only time. It was my good fortune on that occasion to spend an hour or two in his company. My impressions of Melvil Dewey, the man, are based largely on that one meeting.

'I was struck above all by his youthfulness and the sense of power which emanated from him. Nothing of any moment appeared to escape his notice. His comments on what he saw or heard were positive, sometimes humorous, never unkind. He interpreted situations and things in terms of action . . . the mark of youth! His approach to problems was always characteristically youthful, he disregarded the difficulties involved; all he saw was the need for action, not for a moment doubting that the problem could be solved. An old man would be prone to see the difficulties in the way and the need for further consideration and caution. It was obvious that Melvil Dewey was not an old man. His speech and air of complete self-confidence made *one* realize that here was a man with the courage of youth, with clear vision, and with the will and power to transmute plans into reality.'

### In General

There was no psico-neurosis in Melvil Dewey even up to eighty, causing a conflict between the wil to do and the fear of doing.

He had a wil to victory but yet he did not hav insight into all the factors of opposition. Douthless many of the struggles that he went thru in life with those who opposed him, wer due to his under-estimate of antagonism. In fact it is correct to say that he had no objectiv realization of difficulty or of deth. He himself declared that he did carefully weigh all chances, but this was certainly

## Melvil Dewey

a form of self-deception. *When an idea appeared right to him it was right*, and he would attempt to bring it thru successfully into fruition. His unquenchable spirit and his positiv convictions made him an exceedingly difficult one to oppose.

Elsewhere it has already been indicated that Melvil Dewey was so constituted that he knew little of rest. The moment a thing was done would be the moment for beginning something else; there was no serenity. It is true that in his last years he credited his long life to freedom from worry; but worry (or anxiety) was his shadow from beginning to end. He was always over-extended by a new enthusiasm or by the tasks that wer multiplied.

He was too eager to be content with success. He was too creativ ever to be serene.

He stood defeat at times and yet retaind his influence. His way to leadership was by affirming, not by denying. His sense of authority made him a leader, or vice versa, and hence a benevolent despöt in matters where he saw far ahed into the field of adult education. One of his great elements of leadership was that he educated followers.

There was a simple mental characteristic in Mr Dewey that served to keep him disturbd. His tendency was to pour out to a mere acquaintance all his plans and thus push up some obstacles in carrying his plans thru; yet he frequently cristalized his own plans by talking them over. Many times during his life this tendency to confide in people or to overrate the dependability of people rose up to embarrass him. It wil hav been seen in the chapter regarding his boyhood that he was suspicious of people then and that he determind to overcome this bad habit. It would hav been wel for him in Boston, New York and Albany if in many cases after that time he had weighd the characters of others more judiciously.

## Mosaic of Characteristics

Spiritually speaking Melvil Dewey did not hold grudges. There wer thousands of annoying incidents with human beings thruout his restless, pushing life, but these became forgotten. This peculiar tipe of greatness can be understood for the very reason that he was constantly moving forward towards the next achievment and therefore constantly permitted the ded to bury their ded. To look back however on many of the irritations to which he was subjected it is only just to say that some of them he brought upon himself.

He was thruout life a teacher,—not merely a teacher of detaild knowledge but a teacher who could fire the enthusiasm for learning to glow on after the teacher was absent. As with all great teachers however, he had some unhappy experiences and suffered from mocking unteachables.

He did not want to waste time on the unpurposeful. A favorit expression all thru the years of the Library School was 'You cannot polish a pumpkin'.

Melvil Dewey and those nearest and dearest to him in his work wer idealists, forever reaching toward the thing unattaind and when attaind, stil forever reaching forward to something else not yet attaind. It is impossible to sum up the life of the man and his frends without understanding that in the face of all hindrances and down-pulling tendencies life recievd its only glory from reaching forward and attempting to move onward and upward forever.

If he had remaind in the introspectiv state of mind of his youth his extraordinary influence and record in world affairs could not hav been. When he had a thing before him to do he did not dout the rightness of doing it, and hence his strength. Yet with this absence of self-douting was no evidence of personal conciet. The man never knew that he was a genius; there was no actual realization on his part of iether fame or prominence. He was positiv only that time was fleeting and he must

## Melvil Dewey

use it. The blending of the mental and the spiritual is so fine here as to be almost indistinguishable. Just as Annie Dewey said in a diary entry of Feb 18, 1901:

'One who does not know the inspiration of working for an ideal misses one of the chief charms of life.'

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## Cheerful Eventide

Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die, and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joy of life and the duty of life. Both life and death are part of the same great adventure.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1918

The warning that Melvil Dewey's life on earth was to end came in February, 1927, in Florida. The tifoid fever from which he recovered as a youth, the pneumonia from which he recovered at sixty-three—were just incidents in life. Ah effusion on the brain was the call and a warning. Of it Dr Dewey said in part:

'Cuming bak from spending a day at Rolyat with Dr W H Seely we stopt at the Don Cesar, Pasa Grille, & went to the top of the bilding; he says 3 steps at a tym, but I dout it. Cuming down I was chatting with the owner, started for our car & found that I had no left leg. \* \* \* Dr Bowen chekt over reflexes \* \* \* & sed it indicated a slyt effusion in the brain & if there wer to be serius results it wd sho in a fu hours. . \* \* \* Next morning they sent an ambulance & moved me carefuli to Dean Alvord's hous. Several Club peopl wer on the big porch of the hotel when they carid me thru with a sheet over my hed, but I poked my nose out & sed, "I am not going to the cemeteri but to Dean Alvord's." \* \* \* The left leg has never been under perfekt control since & I hav been careful to avoid over-strain. \* \* \* I hav asumed that this lyt shok was a warning to be careful & hav gone on with all my work/

His semi-humorous way of facing facts stayd with him at the time, tho his good sense told him he needs must

## Cheerful Eventide

set his house in order; that his influence on the picture of his life was near its end; that he must gather up loose ends. Without any ability to go back and change that which had been done he must look forward to the things that might be done.

Hence when first stricken he wrote to his associates on Feb 3, 1927, dictating to a nurse that which he thought might be his last words:

**Harbor Oaks  
Clearwater, Fla**

To my Associates in mani good cauzes:

If I must finish my life work, now, I am veri sori becauz for my fourth  $\frac{1}{4}$  centuri, I had pland so mani splendid things which I kno wd be of great servis.

But I am profoundli grateful that I hav had 75 years with so much of the supreme joy of hard work; so litl pain & so mani opportunities to help make a betr world. The rich legacy I leav yu is the chance to cari to fruition thez movements we hav started. 'Cari on—Don't giv up the ship!' The ryt thing always succeeds in the end. I leav no defnit instructions becauz I believ supremeli that yu will be gyded to the wizest solution of yur mani problems. I hope on the other syd I may kno how loyally yu cari on.

As I look bak over the long years, I can recall no one whom I ever intentionally wrongd or of whom I shd, now, ask forgivnes. Doutles, I hav made mani mistakes but according to my lyt, I hav tryd to do ryt and so if my race is run, I can go down into the last river serene, clear-eyed and unafraid.

God bles yu all & help yu to complete the good work in which I wanted to share longer. **Melvil Dewey**

PS—With the faces of my immediate famili ar gatherd thoz of a skor of close frends. I am grateful for the trust & affection which has made my work easier & my years happier. I wish that my ashes may rest in the altar of the Club Chapel in the midst of what I hav luvd so wel. Let ther be no monument except the Club itself. If ani ar moved to gratitude becauz of what has been done in the past, let them sho it by providing some of the mani things I hav pland to round out the added attractions we hav pland for our great Club home.

## Melvil Dewey

Such extraordinary vigor and purpose still survived in his gigantic mind, that even after Dr Dewey's stroke he began to put into final form a dream—that the Lake Placid Club should have a southern branch located in Florida because of the mild climate and its easy accessibility from the north. So we see him, with the knowledge that the picture of his life must soon be ended, industriously weaving and working that there might remain in the south, a harbor and a haven for those to whom the rigorous winter of the north was too exacting. This is more definitely mentioned in part two of this volume, devoted to the man and his achievements.

Before his next birthday and realizing by his improving condition that some time might yet be left, he deliberately summarized what he called 'Relative importance of work the rest of life'. In that statement he used this vital sentence:

'Mani can make muni but no one can make tym.'

Then in the fall of 1931 he wrote the following:

### Credo

What 80 years' experience has taught me to believe.

Creed usually means religious belief but the 2d dictionary meaning is 'that which is believed'. From tym to tym I jot down here things which after long thought I have come firmly to believe.

1 A better world cannot be attained by soldiers, police or moral legislation. We must somehow make people prefer, & voluntarily, the better things; & this is education.

2 We are spending vastly more than ever before & to make people education has become a fetish & almost a religion. We are getting great results but nothing like what we ought to get for the money spent.

3 If a public water supply is tainted, instead of building costly filters or adding protective chemicals we should first test every stream that leads to our reservoir & prevent anything injurious getting into our supply in the first place, work for prevention rather than cure of the



Melvil Dewey in 1924

© Underwood & Underwood



Melvil Dewey's Winter Home, Litlloj. Lake Placid Club in Florida

## Cheerful Eventide

difikulti. As we must go bak to the veri orijin of our water suply, in education we must remove the prymari obstakls.

4 Experts with long studi determind that the chief influence on the chyld's lyf wasn't the father nor the mother nor the teacher nor the preacher; but it was the reading. Most peopl confuse education with skools. The skool is usuali in youth for a limited cours when the pupil considers his skool as the main bizines of lyf. They speak of finishing skools & of completing education when they mean merely finishing the preliminary preparation with which to comence lyf which is the real education, & we hapili speak of the last day of skool as comencement. 50 years ago I sumd up my credo in the slogan 'education at home for adults thru lyf.

We hav 5 tys of skools; elementari, sekundari, kolej, profesional & teknikal, & universiti. Ther ar also 5 tys of home education:

a Libraries; or reading books, magazines & papers.

b Museums; or seeing, including the education that comes without the intervention of an artificial languaj, but seeing.

c Studi clubs, or mutual help, the education that comes wher a group with comon interests giv each other stimulus & asistance.

d Extension teaching wher outsyd of the skools, a leader helps others to understand his subjekt betr. This includes evening, summer, vakation & corespondence skools, lektures, sermons & teaching in its broadest sense.

e Tests & credentials, the intelektual yardstik which mezures progres & stimulates ambition to go forward.

Libraries ar the chief & central faktor of thoz 5 elements of home education.

5 Universal education by reading is praktikal only thru free publik libraries wher a traird librari staf can without cost giv to everi aplikant at least aproximateli the book that then & there & to whom it wil be most valuabl, either for information or for inspiration. In 1876 I adopted this slogan later adopted by the American Library Association & mani others, 'the best reading for the larjest number at the least cost'.

## Melvil Dewey

6 When I very early gave up the idea of the ministri & foren missions, convinst that lyf wd be mor useful in organyzing & advancing home education & chiefly libraries, I realyzd that libraries wer useles unles peopl ed reali read, not simpli passing illiterasi tests by pronouncing words lyk a parot but by reali taking the author's meaning from the printed paje. Living in Massachusetts from my entrance in Amherst colej in September, 1870 til I was cald to Columbia, June, 1883, I was veri proud that my state took 1st place at the World's Fair for its education, but horifyd when I found that it was losing in illiterasi. This ment intelektual bankruptsi & I organyzd a group of about 20 experts larjli principals & teachers in normal skools who had best oportuniti to diagnose the elementari skool obstakls. After months of studi the comitee unanimsli synd a report that in their jujment each chyld that went from kindergarten to universiti thru our skools lost a year over the complexities & absurdities of compound numbers, & that this awful waste ed be cured by the complete adoption of the international metric weits & mezures.

They also agreed that a greater waste was due to English speling, not alone in the speling classes, but reaching into everi other subjekt with constant runing to dictionaries, corekting exersyses & chiefly in adling the brains of children who naturali **lern** from analoji. This carefuli chosen comitee of 20 experts agreed that complete adoption of the metric sistem & of syentifik speling wd together save at least 3 years of skool lyf.

It was clear therfor that universal education thru reading & libraries ed never do satisfactori work til we removed the 2 chief obstakls. Therfor at the Philadelphia Centennial wher we organyzd the American Library Association, we also started the Spelling Reform Association & the American Metric Bureau whose function was to remove the awful handicap of our speling & weits & mezures.

**After** 50 years of constant studi, work & wyd experience **I believ** mor firmlu each year that to remove thez 2 obstakls is the **chief** work befor American educators. Sensibl speling & weits & **mezures ar** therfor not fads or special interests outsyd libraries **but** ar the absolutli esential preliminari to complete succes in our **librari** campein.

## Cheerful Eventide

At the time of writing this credo Melvil Dewey had no realization that the announcement to the world in permanent form of the things that he had dreamd and hoped and dared would fall as a responsibility on other hands and another hart.

His eightieth birthday fell on December 10, 1931. Because such length of days is unusual the former students of the New York State Library School conspired together to present him with a birthday volume expressiv of their love for him and their pride in the work to which he had led them. Also frends in Florida chose to commemorate the day in somewhat similar manner. The day was beautiful; the spirit of the occasion was sweet. Melvil Dewey was actually embarrast by the messages that came from far and near. When the volumes of letters had been more or les formally presented Melvil Dewey stated that as he had sat and listend to what was said and red, he askt himself, 'who is it they ar talking about'? And in refering to the Decimal Gasi-fication said in genuin humility that its labor-saving value and its development was largely due to enthusiastic co-workers who had developt it and carrid it forward. He stated that he had never wanted the name Dewey attacht to it in the early days of its creation, and he would hav wisht it otherwise.

After Dec 10 he kept his usual stream of corres-pondence going and by reading back into the letters of greeting he seems to hav been reminded more and more of the frends of his youth. He wrote a long letter that coverd in a general way the outlines of his life. This is partially quoted in 'The Picture Outlined'. The letter finally was extended to ten pages in length and he referd humorously to the fact that the decimal thought was following him stil. This formal letter was maild to many frends together with individual letters of transmission.

In the chapter His Enduring Frenships reference was

## Melvil Dewey

made to the Wellesley half-Dozen. This is what Melvil Dewey wrote the survivors of the group on Dec 17.

To my wonderful Wellesley ½ dozen of 1883.

Read my 80th birthday mimeo for I kno yu wil all be interested. In all this flood of congratulations I never forget my hapi famili of 48 years ago.

I cherish the hope of having yu all here at our Fla branch as we wer at the parent Club. It wd be simpli delytful to repeat that famili parti & we must not wait too long. Louise left us long ago. Helen is down with cerebral hemorhaj. I just tryd to cheer her up by writing her that I had a similar atak 5 years ago but hav been in betr helth ever since.

I am as bizi as ever & shal be til the end, but I think of yu ofen & wil now & then send yu sumthing in print to tel yu what we ar doing. I hav had meni 100s on my staf in thez 48 years but never can hav eni qyt the same as our dear group that workt hard together in 'starting things' in old Columbia that we found so much asleep. Isn't it wonderful how it has grown.

My dear wyf Emily joins in much luv to yu all.

On Sunday the 20th of December, having no stenografer available for the day, he wrote the last long letter by hand. It was so characteristic that a portion of it is here reproduced:

with 2 yr- hōm adres. Emily & myself  
v box v longjournies.  
betr cm down } 2 wks now before  
1 Feb. w a talk out our  
remaining questions. rgt MBQ shu v  
start sed h e cm wd v. Picked i  
& all DC, h main thing } DC & resky  
niv strength ed 1/3 h h e cm comb  
later. do not feel hurried, i ceps  
effyrid.

## Cheerful Eventide

This typical note was addressd to Dorkas Fellows, editor of the Decimal Gasification and referd to edition 13 publishd in 1932. It is a demonstration of the activ interest of Dr Melvil Dewey in the same subject—library efficiency—for sixty years. Translating his breves, the above extract from his letter says this:

'What is your home address? Emily is sending box of tangerines. Better come down for two weeks now before I Feb. We can talk out our remaining questions. Write W S B (Biscoe) when yu start so he can come with yu. Pretend it is all D C but main thing for D C is rest and new strength for edition 13 which wil come out later. Don't feel hurrid. It cripples efficiency.'

This is a perfect illustration of the thoughtfulness which Dr Dewey displayd to his last days, and his indirect way of conferring a benefit.

On Tuesday the 22nd of December he had begun to reciev the early arrivals of Christmas cards. One came from Seymour Van Santvoord of Troy. The acknowledgment shows exactly the imaginativ wit that was such a characteristic of Melvil Dewey:

Dear Mr Van Santvoord

Yur charming picture of 7 wyz duks heded for 7 Lakes (the name of Lake Placid Club property in Florida) reminds me that those not with them ar the gees. Everi woman lyks to be cald a duk but resents being a goose.

Isn't here a moral lesson suggesting that if yu escape sum of the northern rigors & come down to 7 Lakes yu wil folo the wyz exampl of the duks; for nature teaches them they wil liv longer & hapier to avoid the extremes of our northern winters.

It wd be a great delyt to hav yu share sum of this wonderful June-in-winter. I mail my 80th birthday mimeo.

Cordiali

Melvil Dewey

The notebook in which the letters dictated on Dec 21, 22, 23 and 24 wer taken down by his secretary, has been preservd.

## Melvil Dewey

The final letter of his life was address to David J Haykin of the Library of Congress, thanking him for his good work in connection with the Decimal Gasification and wishing him success in life.

It must hav alrely been apparent that as with the majority of people who achiev results in the world, Melvil Dewey started with a very pronounst ego. He appears during his youth to hav had but little understanding of other people and his relations to them, except as contributing towards some end which he himself was seeking.

However, thru the severe experiences of organization and business enterprizes he soon began to realize that all the great purposes and dreams that had come to him in youth could not possibly be carrid thru by himself alone and hence there came a noteworthy transformation of spirit so that the egotism dropt wel out of sight and in its place grew up the general feeling of joint effort and of altruism.

This transition lasted or affected his life from twenty-five up to practically seventy.

At that time it is evident he began to realize that what he and others had pland could not be finisht in his life-time. And hence such characteristic entries as appear in wils, letters and communications in the years from 1920 onward. Thus the most lovable fase of his life began in which he realized that unfinisht work would hav to be left to others to carry on.

His life was a complete picture of those noteworthy human transitions which beginning with T come to 'we' and gladly realize the supreme importance of 'they'.

## Silence Comes Swiftly

There is no death!  
What seems so is transition.

Longfellow

In the chapter entitled 'The Picture Outlined'<sup>1</sup> reference was made to Christmas day spent at the Lake Placid Club in Florida.

It had been a very happy day. To add to the happiness a telegram had come from Lake Placid Club in the Adirondacks saying 'Praise to the Lord, the snow has come'. The significance of this will be understood when it is realized that the world's Olympic Winter Games were to be held in a few weeks; and without snow they would be as nothing.

There was no indication that the day would be the last day of Melvil Dewey on earth. He walked around the beautiful estate. He took part in the friendly gaiety of the dinner. In a perfectly natural way he captivated conversation with his sparkling comments. It is true that he retired early, but only to talk elsewhere till midnight with a friend.

A letter from Emily Dewey to members of her family gives the essential details:

'We had several personal guests over the holidays as well as Club members. Dr Dewey was special well on Xmas day; talked with a friend till midnight & the following morning came into my room at 6.30. We were talking over Club problems when I noticed a thickening in his speech & cautioned him to keep quiet. He made several inconsequential remarks & I realize now that even then he was practically unconscious. Cerebral hemorrhage caused complete paralysis of his left side. He died at 10.15, a blessed way to go with no noise of going & no pain or mental anguish.

'Very simple services were held at the Presbyterian church at

## Melvil Dewey

Lake Placid, Fla. The church was crowded, some people motoring 150 myls to attend. At the same hour a service was held in Agora at the northern Club attended by 387 employees, members & friends. His son, Godfrey, came to Fla & after the service we took the remains to Orlando for cremation. When I arrived at the northern Club about 2 weeks later we had a short commitment service on Sunday, (Jan 10, 1932), when Melvil Dewey's ashes were deposited in the crypt under the altar in the Club chapel beside those of Mrs Dewey & his 2 grandsons/

Dr William G Clinton of Miami spoke in the Presbyterian church in Lake Placid, Florida. Selecting those elements of Holy Writ that would be comforting instead of saddening, Dr Clinton's subsequent remarks were full of that conquering Christian faith which denies mere physical embodiment to the life of the spirit:

'No man can bury Melvil Dewey. He lives. No undertaker can enclose his great soul. \* \* \*

'This, I think, would be his word to us this morning, "Carry on!" He was a dreamer, that is true. But here is the strange thing. In this one man were combined in rare proportion the spirit of the dreamer and the spirit of the doer, so that in a very large and fine fashion he has been enabled during his earthly life to make his dreams come true. \* \* \*

'There are some people who perhaps have been saying, "It is too bad he should go now". It's not. If he had finished every task he would have been unhappy. The thing that has always drawn me to him was the fact that when he had gone far beyond the natural life of man he dreamed out this great work here in Highlands County. That, to me was the most fascinating thing for a man of his age. He has always been sowing the seed and watching it blossom into beauty. I think he would say, "Carry on! continue the good work," for his passion was to make this a better world in which to live. I think also that his purpose was to make it a lovelier world in which to live. I am sure therefore, that he would say, if his still lips could speak, "Carry on! Carry on!"' . . .

'Then the other word he would speak this morning to us is this, "Be glad,—rejoice". And why shouldn't we? This is no time for sadness and tears. This is the time for rejoicing.'

## Silence Comes Swiftly

'Dominated by fear, there is little of the triumphant, militant, glorious note of victory in our hearts and in our churches. I believe if Dr Dewey were to speak to us he would say\* "Sound the note of victory".

'So, if I could say just one word this morning, it would be this:  
' "Be glad! Be glad! Be glad and rejoice,—it is the crowning day."

Lure of all far countries called him,  
Seas enticed and skies enthralled him,  
Knowing neither fold nor fastness,  
Breaking futile bonds that galled him,  
Only venture led him captive with her spell.

'Because I believe with all the faith of my heart, this great soul who was continually lured by all far countries, who was enthralled by sea and enticed by skies; this man who broke all bonds that galled him and was only led captive by venture; this man whose soul has gone out of the earthly house into "the house not made with hands",—continues to march, planning new tasks and discovering greater fields for service.<sup>1</sup>

The wholesome view of death surrounded his passing; for all who knew him rejoiced that he should have passed on without the long or sometimes brief and painful process of detachment which is so common as the end draws on. One day dreaming of the things yet to be done, and the next day unconsciously dropping the flaming torch of ideals into the hands of others—he went.

\* \* \* On what errand blest  
Has his impulsive heart now turned? No rest  
Could be the portion of his tireless soul.  
He seeks some passionate goal  
Where he can labor on till Time is not,  
And earth is nothing but a thing forgot.

Charles Hanson Towne, describing Theodore  
Roosevelt in 'Pilot and Prophet'.

' "How then do you account for his success?" we asked.

' "It is simple," he replied, "He simply forgot him-

## Melvil Dewey

self. When he spoke, his imperfections were lost in the glow of his enthusiasm. When he organized, the fire of his faith burned away all obstacles. He abandoned himself utterly to his task; and the task molded him into greatness."

\* \* \* 'It is Emerson who somewhere says that the average . ;.n of men fret and worry themselves into nameless graves, while here and there a great unselfish soul forgets itself into immortality.'

Bruce Barton's  
"What Makes Men Great" 1926

## Part 2

### The Man and His Achievements

'His remarkable achievements will be a worthy record of a career that was projected straight through our American life in its cultural aspects. Mr Dewey was not a politician, and he was not a scholar in a particular field of research. He was simply a man with a great vision of the better world possible for a maturing country.'

Albert Shaw,  
Editor, Review of Reviews and World's Work



## Obviating Library Chaos

"My heart is open to anything that is either decimal or about libraries. In fact I hardly think I could have entered life with any comfort except on the tenth of the month for my interest & faith in "decimals" is unlimited."\*

Melvil Dewey's Diary, Mar. 7, 73

It is now necessary to approach a subject that is technical in the biography of Melvil Dewey:—The arrangement of books in libraries in a way to provide easy accessibility for all future time.

The subject can be of interest to the non-professional reader, by putting the problem in the form of a question:—If one were confronted with the task of arranging and numbering 50,000 or 500,000 or more books on library shelves, in order to find them again at once when needed, how could it be done?

Prior to the time of Melvil Dewey, when public or circulating libraries were not at all common, some libraries were arranged by sizes of books so that no relation of subjects was possible; some by authors' names alphabetically arranged; some by book titles alphabetically arranged; some even by colors of bindings; and few on any scientific basis adaptable by more than one library.

It has already been shown that Melvil Dewey, occupied with the care of the Amherst College library and confronted with problems that meant waste of time, devoured all possible available literature on libraries, visited many libraries in New York and New England, and found in none of them a satisfactory answer to his problem; namely, how to place books in a library in

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\* 'My heart is open to anything that is either decimal or about libraries. In fact I hardly think I could have entered life in any comfort except on the tenth of the month; for my interest and faith in "decimals" is unlimited.'

## Melvil Dewey

such a simple and understandable manner as to make them immediately accessible in the general classification to which each book ought to belong; and *with no future need to re-number* even if the shelves over-flowed.

Feb 11, 1873. 'My great interest centers in \* \* \* libraries and in bookmaking.'

About this time he also reports his first talk with C A Cutter and remarks as an interesting point that:

'He puts books on the horse under horse and not under zoology.'

He visited the New York State Library April 1, 1873 and says:

'They arrange the books alphabetically paying no attention to subjects/

Before attempting to explain what he did let us consider what the world has said about him and his plan. Some of the comments arise from the expressions of good wil on Dec 10, 1931, his eightieth birth anniversary; and some hav been written since his deth.

An article appeared in the Library Journal of Dec 15, 1922. It described the League of Nations Library and says:

'It was agreed that the Brussels expansion of the Dewey Decimal Gasification should be adopted.'

As far as such a thing is possible, the world stamp of approval has thus been placed upon the Dewey invention.

Supreme appreciation has come also from the International Institute of Bibliography:

'Thirty-six years have passed since a lucky chance placed at our disposal a copy of your splendid classification system whose conception, as simple as practical, opened suddenly to us, not as librarians but as bibliographers, a road towards the aim we had in mind, the building of a universal catalog of the whole bulk of ideas men had, since centuries, tried to perpetuate in

## Obviating Library Chaos

writing. \* \* \* Our bibliographical needs required an infinitely expandable classifying system. The D C (Decimal Classification) offered the ideal solution and events have substantiated our enthusiastic adherence to your ingenious scheme. From about 8000 items in 1894 the D C has grown to include in the C D (Classification Decimale) 72,000 items in 1931, with possibilities of unlimited combinations of numbers over-reaching many hundreds of millions! And D C and C D are conquering the World.<sup>1</sup>

H LaFontaine, Secretary General  
International Institute of Bibliography

The above words of praise have been introduced in order to help the non-professional reader to realize that something extremely significant in the history of the human race originated in the active brain of Melvil Dewey. We shall now add a few comprehensive comments upon Melvil Dewey and his system as recognized in the United States.

Praise of Dr Dewey came from the Library of Congress.

'When I lectured at Albany last December I took great pleasure in stating my great admiration for the Decimal System and my earnest conviction that there was no one to whom the library world owed so great a debt of gratitude as to Dr Melvil Dewey.'

Clarence W Perley, Chief classifier,  
Library of Congress, Washington, 1925

One says that Dr Dewey enlightened the whole field.

'Who among us can specify exactly the place that Dewey, who prepared a place for everything, holds himself? He needs no wreath of laurel (583.931), no stained-glass window (729.84), no pyramid (913.32). Go into any library and look around. From 010 to 999 the books are there in serried ranks, drawn up in regiments of knowledge, marshalled according to his plans of organization. He has made the lights so shine that the whole field is equally to be surveyed.'

Roger Howson, Columbia University Library, 1931

Melvil Dewey's  
35-character notation

applied to

Book Classification

by  
C. A. Cutter

With an enlarged edition of Dewey's Index.

Boston:  
Economy Company.

Facsimile of cover prepared for a pamphlet combining the Dewey  
and Cutter systems in 1879

## Obviating Library Chaos

Another discovers his place among the great inventors.

'No honor is too great to be conferred upon a man who has classified the world's knowledge and has thus made available to humanity that which would otherwise have remained a bewildering maze incapable of conquest by the average mind. Your contribution is of such primal and universal significance to the higher interests of mankind that it may in all appropriateness be ranked on a parity with that of the "Wizard of Menlo Park".'

C P Baber, Kansas State Teachers College, 1931

Another states that the influence is definitely felt and expanding.

'The greatest of your contributions to American libraries is the Decimal Classification, and it must be a great satisfaction to you to realize that your classification is today going stronger than ever before, thanks to recent arrangements for placing the D. C. numbers on L. C. (Library of Congress) cards. Fifteen years ago it was my privilege to introduce the D. C. to the sub-continent of India, and as one of my students of 1915-16 has recently been appointed Librarian of their "Library of Congress", the Imperial Library at Calcutta, I look for the adoption of the D. C. by many Indian libraries, as these become more completely organized. Long before my day here at Pennsylvania, the D. C. was installed in this Library, and it has served us so well during the growth of our collection of 750,000 volumes that a change to another classification has never seemed worthy of serious consideration/

Asa Don Dickinson, University of Pennsylvania, 1931

Geo S Godard, State Librarian of Connecticut, who has admired Melvil Dewey since 1886, wrote a birthday letter applying thruout the alfabet, a list of qualities or powers or attributes from A - Z and ended:

'Whether we consider you as one or all of the above, you have been and still are our Library Patron Saint.'

Another finds the library now to be the center of every college campus.

'The Library of Marietta College honors you as the greatest pioneer in the scientific classification of libraries. We feel that

## Melvil Dewey

all modern library service owes its beginning to orderly and scientific classification. By the work of the great pioneers the library has become the "center" of every college campus.

'One is reminded of a passage from De Senectute:

"Among other courtesies to Lysander while his guest, Cyrus showed him a certain carefully planted park. After admiring the stateliness of the trees, cultivated soil, and the sweet odours emanating from the flowers, Lysander then remarked: [I marvel not only at the industry, but also at the skill of the man who planned and arranged this work.] [But it was I,] Cyrus answered, [who planned it all; mine are the rows and mine the arrangement, and many of those trees I set out with my own hands]."

George J Blazier, Marietta College Library, 1931

All readers are now ready to consider the whole plan in simple detail. Just as has happened with other geniuses who have benefitted the world, so did it happen with Melvil Dewey; that turning his whole thought *on* a problem, concentrating on it day and night there suddenly came from somewhere the inspirational solution. The world's history is full of such incidents.

In our modern way of speaking, he followed an urge and a gleam. What was it? That all fields of recorded thought could be roughly classified into ten. That each of these could be again classified more finely into ten and that each of the resulting 100 could be classified still more finely into ten; or by using the Arabic numerals and holding each numeral in its correct place in relation to the other preceding numerals, a thousand classifications of knowledge came into sight. Some of the principles involved had to be arbitrary because nature has not determined to arrange everything on earth in groups of ten. But granting the arbitrariness, Mr Dewey's inspiration was this:—that all books could be thrown into classes somewhat as Bacon did with knowledge in the time of Elizabeth.

# Obviating Library Chaos

The following are the Dewey classes:

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>0</b> General works   | <b>5</b> Pure science |
| <b>1</b> Philosophy      | <b>6</b> Useful arts  |
| <b>2</b> Religion        | <b>7</b> Fine arts    |
| <b>3</b> Social sciences | <b>8</b> Literature   |
| <b>4</b> Filology        | <b>9</b> History      |

Outline of the first 100 divisions in the Dewey Decimal Classification system follows:—

## 000 General works Prolegomena

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>101</b> Bibliography                      | <b>300</b> Social sciences <b>Sociology</b> |
| <b>020</b> Library economy                   | <b>310</b> Statistics                       |
| <b>030</b> General encyclopedias             | <b>320</b> Political science                |
| <b>040</b> General collected essays          | <b>330</b> Economics Political economy      |
| <b>050</b> General periodicals               | <b>340</b> Law                              |
| <b>060</b> General societies Museums         | <b>350</b> Administration                   |
| <b>070</b> Journalism Newspapers             | <b>360</b> Associations and institutions    |
| <b>080</b> Polygraphy Special libraries      | <b>370</b> Education                        |
| <b>090</b> Book rarities                     | <b>380</b> Commerce Communication           |
| <b>100</b> <b>Philosophy</b>                 | <b>390</b> Customs Costumes Folklore        |
| <b>110</b> Metaphysics                       | <b>400</b> <b>Filology</b>                  |
| <b>120</b> Special metaphysical topics       | <b>410</b> Comparative                      |
| <b>130</b> Mind and body                     | <b>420</b> English Anglo-Saxon              |
| <b>140</b> Philosophic systems and doctrines | <b>430</b> German and other Teutonic        |
| <b>150</b> Psychology                        | <b>440</b> French Provençal                 |
| <b>160</b> Logic Dialectics                  | <b>450</b> Italian Rumanian                 |
| <b>170</b> Ethics                            | <b>460</b> Spanish Portuguese               |
| <b>180</b> Ancient philosophers              | <b>470</b> Latin and other Italic           |
| <b>190</b> Modern philosophers               | <b>480</b> Greek and other Hellenic         |
| <b>200</b> <b>Religion</b>                   | <b>490</b> Other languages                  |
| <b>210</b> Natural theology                  | <b>500</b> <b>Pure science</b>              |
| <b>220</b> <b>Bible</b>                      | <b>510</b> Mathematics                      |
| <b>230</b> Doctrinal Dogmatics Theology      | <b>520</b> Astronomy                        |
| <b>240</b> Devotional Practical              | <b>530</b> <b>Physics</b>                   |
| <b>250</b> Homiletic Pastoral Parochoial     | <b>540</b> Chemistry                        |
| <b>260</b> Church: institutions and work     | <b>550</b> Geology                          |
| <b>270</b> General hist. of the church       | <b>560</b> Paleontology                     |
| <b>280</b> Christian churches and sects      | <b>570</b> Biology Anthropology             |
| <b>290</b> Nonchristian religions            | <b>580</b> Botany                           |
|  | <b>590</b> <b>Zoology</b>                   |

# Melvil Dewey

<b>600 Useful arts</b>		<b>800 Literature</b>	
610	Medicin	810	American
620	Engineering	820	English Anglo-Saxon
630	Agriculture	830	German and other Teu- tonic
640	Home economics	840	French Provencal
650	Communication Business	850	Italian Rumanian
660	Chemic technology	860	Spanish Portuguese
670	Manufactures	870	Latin and other Italic
680	Mechanic trades	880	Greek and other Hellenic
690	Bilding	890	Other literatures
<b>700 Fine arts Recreation</b>		<b>900 History</b>	
710	Landscape gardening	910	Geografy Travels
720	Architecture	920	Biografy
730	Sculpture	930	Ancient history
740	Drawing Decoration	6 {	940 Europe
	Design		950 Asia
750	Painting		960 Africa
760	Engraving		970 North America
770	Fotografy		980 South America
780	Music	990	Oceania and polar regions
790	Amusements		

The preceding points are the technical tasks of the trained librarians, thousands of whom will read this volume. But when it is realized that Mr Dewey's discovery or invention or inspiration, or whatever it might be called, has expanded the use of libraries, has resulted in producing a uniformity of treatment applied to hundreds of millions of books and has taken library arrangement out of all chaos into light, then the immensity of this contribution to wisdom and experience can be realized.

Let us suppose we wish to place or to find a book descriptiv of French Equatorial Africa (967.2). Under the Dewey system this would fall under History (9), Africa (6), South Central Africa (7), and then with figures beyond the decimal be located exactly in relation to any other books on French Equatorial Africa. But that is not all! In any library in any part of the world where the Dewey system is used this self-same book would be found in the self-same classification and related to similar books whether in Australia or India or Japan or England or America.

## Obviating Library Chaos

It is not necessary for the reader to study the Dewey Decimal system. A moment's thought will show the unprofessional reader however that the system must be governed by a constant exercise of reason. For instance a book on Inns (hotels) could not be properly grouped with Inns of Court (law courts).

In nearly sixty years the Dewey idea has been adapted to thousands of small or private libraries, to filing systems, clippings etc.

In the Library Journal of Feb 15, 1920, Dr Dewey contributed a definite statement as to the when, the why and the how of his discovery in Amherst in the '70's:—

'In visiting over 50 libraries, I was astounded to find the lack of efficiency, and waste of time and money in constant recataloging and reclassifying made necessary by the almost universally used fixed system where a book was numbered according to the particular room, tier and shelf where it chanced to stand on that day, instead of by the class, to which it belonged yesterday, today and forever. Then there was the extravagant duplication of work in examining a new book for classification and cataloging by each of 1000 libraries instead of doing this once for all at some central point.

'For months I dreamed night and day that there must be somewhere a satisfactory solution. In the future were thousands of libraries, most of them in charge of those with little skill or training. The first essential of the solution must be the greatest possible simplicity. The proverb said "simple as a, b, c," but still simpler than that was 1, 2, 3. After months of study, one Sunday during a long sermon by Pres. Stearns, while I looked steadfastly at him without hearing a word, my mind absorbed in the vital problem, the solution flashed over me so that I jumped in my seat and came very near shouting "Eureka"! It was to get absolute simplicity by using the simplest known symbols, the arabic numerals as decimals with the ordinary significance of nought, to number a classification of all human knowledge in print.'

Between 1873 and 1876, the date when the first edition of 'A Classification and Subject Index for Cata-

## Melvil Dewey

**loguing and Arranging the Books and Pamphlets of a Library' appeared, there had been three years practical experience in adapting the new method to an old library.**

**In the preface to the first edition, tho at the time Melvil Dewey was only twenty-four years of age, he speaks with authority and yet with modesty. Such sentences as these appear in the preface:**

'The impossibility of making a satisfactory classification of all knowledge as preservd in books has been appreciated from the first and nothing of the kind attempted. \* \* \*

'In arranging books in the classification, as in filling out the scheme, practical usefulness has been esteemd the most important thing. The effort has been to put each book under the subject to the student of which it would be useful. The content or the real subject of which a book treats, and not the form or the accidental wording of the title, determines its place.

'The class number serves also as the location number and the shelf number in common use is entirely dispensed with. \* \* \* Thus all books on a given subject are found standing together and no additions or changes ever separate them.' Throughout the catalogues the number of the book shows not only where it is but what it is. \* \* \*

'The arabic numerals can be written and found quicker, and with less danger of confusion or mistake, than any other symbols whatever. \* \* \*

'The author has no desire to claim original invention for any part of his system where another has been before him, and would most gladly make specific acknowledgment of every aid and suggestion were it in his power to do so. With these general explanations and acknowledgments he submits the scheme, hoping it may prove as useful to others as it has to himself.'

**The development of the idea was not solitary. W S Biscoe, Amherst '74, joind forces with Mr Dewey in elaborating the scheme in 1875-6. Mr Biscoe states that the Amherst professors helpt on subjects but not on classification. They wer askt what subjects would fall into their various lines and then these wer placed by Messrs Dewey and Biscoe.**

## Obviating Library Chaos

The young men also studied alphabetic catalogs of various libraries so as to provide for a comprehensive list of subjects to be classified. Neither he nor Mr Dewey, so far as Mr Bischoe can recall, had any thought of laying down a system that would be world-wide in its application. They were simply trying to solve the problem of the Amherst College Library. But when that was solved the mind of Mr Dewey leapt beyond the Amherst situation out into the wider world. Yet again both of them were looking through American eyes solely so that in the first classification there was very little room left for foreign requirements. Before the Dewey Decimal system became widely known abroad it had to be expanded here, as fully as could be reasonably done.

Dewey and his helpers necessarily took into view here the comparative unimportance, let us say, of Asia; yet at the same time to Asia, it and its library material would occupy the prime point of consideration. So in the field of religion the minor emphasis in America might properly be on 'other religions'; whereas in the country of those other religions the prime importance of their full treatment might subordinate the Christian religion. Just one more illustration will suffice. The original Dewey Classification assigns class one to philosophy and class two to religion whereas in Japan philosophy and religion would all be regarded as the same class. These references are here included in order to make clear that adaptation of the Dewey system has taken place in all parts of the world but that the underlying principle of Dewey's original classification has been persistently maintained, because it uses the universal language of Arabic numerals and meets a need for a system felt wherever records of human knowledge are accumulated in any form. This leads naturally to mention of proposed locality expansions now in process of elaboration.

In November, 1929 correspondence with Dr Dewey was initiated by Wm Alanson Borden, who was engaged

## Melvil Dewey

in library work in India, 1910-1913. Mr Borden had evolved an outline classification by which the libraries of any country could give to that country the place of chief prominence under those subjects in which locality was a feature of special importance, i.e., religion, language, literature, history and geography. He wished, however, to take his subdivisions from D C and therefore laid the matter before Dr Dewey. D C having already been adopted on every continent and in many countries and being used more than all other systems combined, was obviously the vehicle by which Mr Borden's idea could best be carried throughout the world and thereby accomplish his purpose. Before Mr Borden's death in November, 1931, the main features of the combination had been agreed on and on Dr Dewey's death the following month the determination of minor details only was left to D C editor to bring about the most serviceable results possible for a world-wide constituency.

The table below shows the dates of the thirteen editions of D C, where published, and the editorial assistant:

<i>Edition</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>and Place</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Copies</i>
1	1876	Amherst	W S Biscoe	1000
2	1885	New York	«	500
3	1888	« «	"	500
4	1891	Albany	May Seymour	1000
5	1894	"	« «	2000
6	1899	"	" "	7600
7	1911	<b>L P Club</b>	" "	2000
8	1913	"	" "	2000
9	1915	«	" "	3000
10	1919	"	" "	4000
11	1922	"	Dorkas Fellows	5000
12	1927	"	" "	9340
13	1932	"	Fellows & Getchell	8000

From the point of view of librarians as well as the general public the studious and enthusiastic efforts of

## Obviating Library Chaos

Melvil Dewey may claim a definite place in the literature and the history of the United States and of the world; for, as pointed out by Fremont Rider in the poem 'M D of the D C' the youth of the '70's faced the increasing chaos of accumulated recorded knowledge and said, 'Let there be order' and behold order has come.

Nearly 46,000 copies of the unabridged D C have been called for and are found in all parts of the world. The later editions approximate a demand for 10,000 copies. There were only forty-two pages in the first edition. In the thirteenth just issued there are 1647 Pages. In addition to the unabridged there have been many tens of thousands of condensed or abbreviated forms distributed, covering: Short or Abridged D C, edition 1-4, 1929; Outline (or Primer) D C, 1921; D C Sections, D C Divisions, D C Description, and Extracts.

Before introducing the reader to comments upon the Decimal Classification system the world over it is proper, now that Mr Dewey has passed on, to quote from the letter which he sent to a number of friends on his eightieth birthday. The letter which proved to be his farewell communication said this regarding the D C:

'This was my chief work in Amherst from 1873 to '76. It was a radical departure from established methods but without advertising or agents its great efficiency has carried it to 14,000 users in 20 nations. The Library Survey of 1926 found that this great labor-saver was used in 96% of public libraries & 89% of college libraries reported in the U. S. and 56% public libraries of England. Cutter system in only 20 public & 4 college; Library of Congress system in only 3 public & 14 college.'

The next chapter will deal with the gradual recognition of Melvil Dewey's plans.

## The Idea 'Conquering

'What, however, appeals to me most about your life work is that the Dewey System will be used a hundred—yes, a thousand—yes, a million years from now. It is not only universal as to time, but is applicable to any nation. \* \* \*

'Your work surely has those eternal features which insure you a truly eternal life.'

Roger W. Babson, 1931

The general public is not interested except in results. The result of the Dewey Decimal Classification has made the storage and use of books easier the world around—so much is of interest to all. But some material must be inserted that will have technical significance for the librarian.

It is interesting to know that the system was not rapidly recognized, the first large library to which it was applied being Columbia College in 1883.

It might have been assumed that because of the friendship and later marriage of Annie Roberts Godfrey to Melvil Dewey, the library at Wellesley of which she had charge, would have been prompt to take up the Dewey system. She wanted it and wrote a rather vehement letter in 1876 to Henry F Durant, the founder of Wellesley. Yet it was only in 1883 that the Dewey system became applied there.

While the Amherst plan did not secure immediate recognition, and perhaps it is well that this should have been so, since it was acknowledged as originally intended for Amherst alone, and needed development through trial, nevertheless by 1893 at the time of the World's Fair in Chicago, Horace Kephart, Librarian of the St Louis Mercantile Library, reported it in operation either in **ful** or modified at the following important libraries:—

## The Idea Conquering

University of Chicago; New York State Library; Columbia College; Detroit Public Library; University of Pennsylvania (much modified); Georgetown University; Lehigh University; Worcester Free Public Library; San Francisco Public Library; Cleveland; Buffalo; Milwaukee; New York Free Circulating; San Francisco Mercantile; Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts; New Bedford Public; Bowdoin College; Lowell City; University of Vermont; Wellesley College; Maine State; New York Y M C A; Pratt Institute; Newark Public; Hartford Public; Oberlin College; Hamilton College; Bangor Public; Toledo Public; Woburn Public; Iowa State University; St Louis University; University of the South; Los Angeles Public; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Colby University; University of Rochester; Kansas State Historical Society; Salem Public.

One of the strange features of the report made by Mr Kephart is that Amherst College under W I Fletcher reported 'Dewey system much modified, disregarding the decimal plan'. As the decimal plan was Dewey this is tantamount to saying that a prof et is not without honor save in his own country. And interesting to relate, up to the present time a much modified form of Dewey is in the Amherst library, where he sought the solution of a very real problem in library administration.

It is important to quote from remarks at the 1876 Library Conference in Philadelphia by Lloyd P Smith of the Library Company of Philadelphia, his subject being 'The Qualifications of a Librarian'. On page seventy-one of volume one of the Library Journal he says:

**'All the book-learning in the world, however, will be insufficient for the practical duties of his place unless the librarian has also the organ of order. His motto should be, "A place for every thing and every thing in its place." There are various**

## Melvil Dewey

methods of securing this condition of things in a public library. That of the Philadelphia Library, which has not changed in 145 years, is to number the books consecutively as they are placed on the shelves, but in four series, according to size—namely, folios, quartos, octavos, and duos, each series beginning with No. 1. In other words, the accessions catalogue corresponds with the books as they stand on the shelves. In the catalogue the size of the book is appended to its number, which thus becomes the shelf-mark forever. The more modern plan, as you are all aware, is to arrange the books on the shelves by subjects, each book receiving a shelf-mark different from the accessions number. A partial combination of the two systems, which I will not trouble you to explain in detail, and which has lately been adopted in the Philadelphia Library, has been attended by good results. *I am inclined to think that the system of our brilliant and indefatigable Secretary, Mr Dewey, which you will find explained in the Report of the Bureau of Education, is the one we shall all have to come to in the end!*

The Dewey system was available at the Conference by reason of the fact that it was included in the volume 'Public Libraries in the United States' specially prepared for the Centennial Exposition by John Eaton, United States Commissioner of Education. However reference to that enormous volume was more or less difficult and therefore few consulted it.

For the interest of librarians and for historic accuracy there is included therefore condensed reports on discussions which took place at the same conference, when Melvil Dewey was urged to explain, not for the recognition of himself but, for the recognition of the Decimal Classification:

'Mr Smith (Lloyd P Smith) said he had carried away from the Convention of 1853 but one idea of special value—that of Mr Folsom's card catalogue.

'He felt that the most valuable idea which he should carry away from this Conference would be the system of cataloguing and classification devised by Mr Dewey. Would Mr Dewey favor the Conference with a description of his method?

## The Idea Conquering

'Mr Dewey.—While I acknowledge the compliment which has been paid to the Amherst method, I must beg to be excused from presenting its claims before this meeting—not that I lack faith in its merits, for the more we use it the more we are convinced of its great value; but the prominent part which I have had in calling this Conference makes me unwilling to use any of its time for a matter in which I have so much personal interest. I have therefore asked several friends who had proposed to call the matter up that they would not do so. Those interested will find explanations in the Government Report, and I shall gladly furnish any additional information at any time. \* \* \*

'Mr Capen (Edward Capen, Librarian, Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts)—On several occasions since the opening of this Convention, we have heard the plan of our Secretary alluded to as one of great value, as the discovery of the age, in fact, in regard to library management. But every attempt, thus far, to draw it from him has resulted in postponement, as I have fondly hoped, only for a favorable opportunity to disclose it. It now seems that we may adjourn without having our curiosity gratified. For one, I must express myself in terms of great disappointment, and hope that our friend will suffer our many entreaties to prevail over his modesty.

'Mr Dewey said he was willing to answer any questions or give any explanations that the Conference might require, and being again called upon, briefly described his method. In answer to inquiries he further said;

"We do not claim that our scheme solves all the difficulty of cataloguing and administering a library. We only claim that it helps very much in many respects, without any corresponding loss. \* \* \*

"Our system won't make folios and sixteens fit the same shelf without undue waste of space; it won't secure a perfect regularity in the sequence of the different colored bindings at the same time that the books are minutely classed by subjects; it won't remedy leaky roofs nor entirely atone for defective ventilation. These things, and others that I might mention, are out of its province.

"There is one objection to our system which does not apply to the common method of numbering shelves and books. In the common system this book which we find to-day at the end of this shelf nearest this window, will (may) be found just there ten

## Melvil Dewey

years from to-day, and, knowing its place, we might in this special case come in here and get the book in the dark. In our system, new books on this subject coming in would probably make it necessary that this book should dress down the line and make room for the new recruits, so ten years after we should be unable to find the book in the dark."

'Mr Smith.—I should like to say that the number of people who visit our libraries in the dark is not large enough to make this objection very formidable.

'Mr Dewey.—This was the only point on which we had any doubt in adopting our plan some three years ago. After actual trial we found that the difficulties were mostly imaginary, and since I have been here I have been surprised and delighted to learn that a number of the largest and best managed of the Western libraries, as well as some in the East, and in England, use this same principle of which we had a fear, and which I term, in distinction from the absolute location on a given portion of a given shelf, the relative location. Among these libraries are Cincinnati, Chicago, St Louis, and San Francisco, and I no longer doubt that the library of the future is *to assign numbers to its booh, which are permanent, and not to its shelves, which are liable to frequent changes*. The librarian should be able to marshal, arrange, and manage his books as a commander does his troops. Each book in the relative location has its space relatively to its fellows, and the library can be arranged in any building, on shelves of any length, or on the floor if necessary, without confusion or disarrangement.'

Out of the conference held in Philadelphia grew the American Library Association briefly referd to elsewhere. The proceedings of the conference will be found reported in volume one of the Library Journal beginning on page ninety and running to page 145. It will be found that the remarkable awakening which can be dated from that time was entirely due in its origin to the persistency, youthful enthusiasm and blazing zeal of Melvil Dewey. C A Cutter of the Boston Atheneum said at that conference:

'I suppose of late years many persons have desired a meeting **of librarians; but the credit of** independently conceiving the **idea,**

## The Idea Conquering

of expressing it with such force as to win a hearing, of talking over those of us who were incredulous or indifferent, and of bringing us together in this Convention from which we have received so much profit and enjoyment, is incontestably due to our energetic, enthusiastic, and persuasive Secretary. And more than this; he has, I understand, defrayed all the preliminary expenses of circulars, correspondence etc. It is too much to be indebted to him for energy *and* money. Let us pay both as far as possible; the first by gratitude, the second in kind. I move that we tender our thanks to the Secretary for all his services; and I suggest that each member, on leaving, pay him one dollar/

Correspondence surviving from those days shows that many of the elder librarians were at first disinclined to have anything to do with what might be only a 'flash in the pan'. Justin Winsor advised Mr Dewey that he would have to look after all the correspondence.

There survives a copy of the 'Call for a Library Conference'<sup>1</sup>. The names of the elder librarians signed to the Call are the following, it being clearly stated by all of them that all correspondence was to be with Melvil Dewey: Justin Winsor, Boston Public Library; J L Whitney, Boston Public Library; Fred B Perkins, Boston Public Library; C A Cutter, Boston Atheneum; John Langdon Sibley, Harvard University Library; John Fiske, Harvard University Library; Ezra Abbot, Harvard University; S F Haven, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester; Reuben A Guild, Brown University Library; J. D Hedge, Providence Atheneum; Addison Van Name, Yale College Library; Franklin B Dexter, Yale College Library; A S Packard, Bowdoin College Library, Melvil Dewey, Amherst College Library; J Carson Brevoort, Astor Library; F Saunders, Astor Library; W S Butler, New York Society Library; W T Peoples, New York Mercantile Library; Jacob Schwartz, Apprentices' Library, New York; S B Noyes, Brooklyn Mercantile Library; H A Homes, New York State Library; Lloyd P Smith, Philadelphia Library Company; James G Barnwell, **Philadelphia Mercantile**

## Melvil Dewey

Library; John Eaton, Bureau of Education, Washington; Wm F Poole, Chicago Public Library; Charles Evans, Indianapolis Public Library; Thomas Vickers, Cincinnati Public Library; John N Dyer, St Louis Mercantile Library.

It is not necessary to explain how one by one small and large libraries began the use of the greatest simplifying influence ever exerted on the libraries of the world. One paragraph quoted from Dorkas Fellows, the present editor of the *Decimal Classification*, explains why the modern library with its inflow of material and its outgo thru present day demand for books, must have elasticity instead of fixity in arrangement:

'While decimal notation has been applauded for various reasons and its simplicity has undoubtedly been a large factor in spreading the use of D C thruout the world, there is another feature of the system which seems to me of greater fundamental importance, i. e. that it revolutionized library administration by substituting for the almost universal fixed location on shelves the principle of relative location, which has been the essential element of all later systems of classification, whatever their notation or arrangement/

The *Decimal Classification* has been also remarkably recognized for the grouping of exclusively technical papers, pamphlets and books; as for instance—Engineering, Agriculture, Medicine, Office Economy etc.

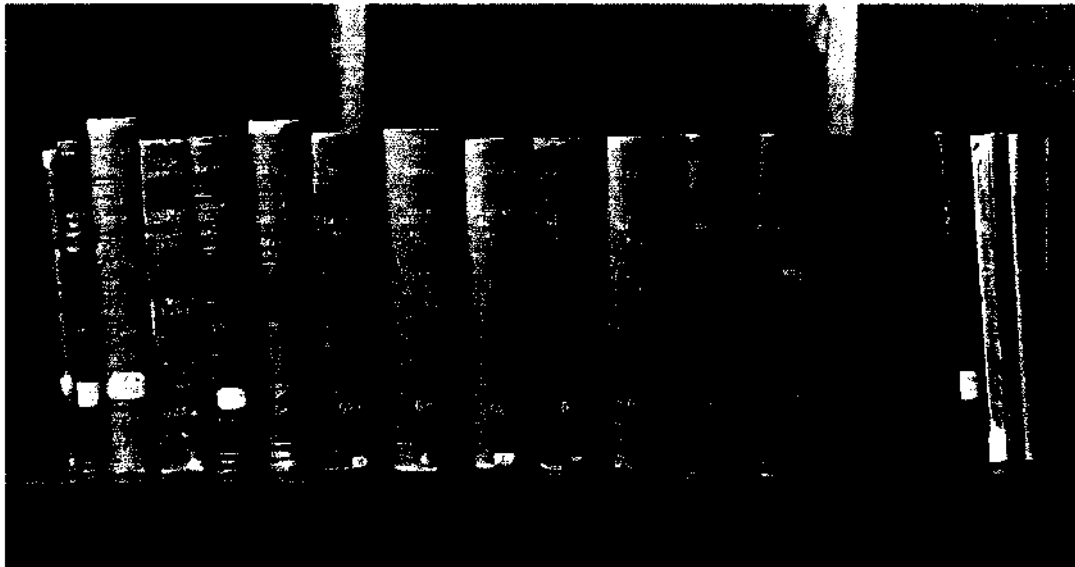
When the celebration of Dr Dewey's eightieth birthday took place in Lake Placid, Florida, there was present Dr Thomas G Lee (since deceased), President of the Quest Society of Florida. Dr Lee who was one of the world's famous teachers in biology and embryology, said this to Dr Dewey:

'The numerous testimonials of librarians definitely appreciating the great work begun by you leads me to claim that I also am a Fellow-of-the-Craft. In the early nineties, while a graduate student at Harvard, I became interested with a fellow student in the attempt to expand the *Decimal Classification* to cover Zoology, Anatomy and Biological work in more detail. My com-

Original idea of May 1873

## Library Classification System

Select the main classes, not to exceed ~~ten~~ <sup>five</sup> and represent each class by one of the <sup>most significant figures</sup> ~~ten~~ <sup>five</sup> digits. Divide each of these main heads into not more than ~~ten~~ <sup>three</sup> subordinate classes, and represent each sub-class by a digit in the first, or ten's, decimal place. Subclassify each, or any, of these <sup>light</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>(hundred)</sup> classes, into not more than ~~ten~~ <sup>three</sup> sub-classes; and assign to each, one of the digits in the second decimal place. Thus the sub-classes may be increased in any part of the library without limit, each additional decimal place increasing the minuteness of classification tenfold. Arrange the classes numerically, (omitting the decimal point but arranging as if it were written after the first figure) and the books of each class alphabetically by authors, in such that class - the books standing in the same order on the shelves as the titles of the same in the catalogue.



Decimal Classification and Relative Index. Complete Set from 1876 to 1932

## The Idea Conquering

panion, Dr. Herbert Haviland Field, later went to Europe and conducted a campaign among the Universities. After much effort Switzerland was agreed upon as a neutral ground, free from the national jealousies of the other countries—and the Concilium Bibliographicum was started at Zurich. Scores of thousands of cards were issued relating to the literature of biological subjects and all arranged under the decimal classification, and subscribed for by the leading universities of the world.'

It has been shown elsewhere in this volume that C A Cutter who originated the Expansive System of Classification, and Melvil Dewey were very sincere friends. In fact during part of Mr Dewey's life in Boston 1876-1883, C A Cutter and six others joined with him in establishing the Readers and Writers Economy Company. In view of the fact that Melvil Dewey in the early days of the Decimal Classification system possibly failed to realize fully the important engine of reform which he had invented, he had a tendency for awhile to hunt for something better; though he could not have hunted then nor now for anything simpler.

C A Cutter was so candid an admirer of the Dewey Classification, that on June 28, 1876 he wrote a letter (reproduced in facsimile in part) to Annie Godfrey as follows:

'Mr Dewey has explained his system to me and we have talked it over several times. I have brought against it all the objections I could think of, and he has answered nearly all. I think it is plain that the defects of the system are defects that it shares with all other systems and that it has some merits which no other system has. Of course it is possible that use may develop some inconveniences which I cannot foresee, but those that I do see are balanced by greater conveniences. If I could start a library I should use this system; and I intend to try it in our projected extension, designed to hold 125,000 volumes.'

Yet in 1879, three years afterwards, we find these two friends trying to roll their differing systems into one. They prepared to issue a pamphlet in which Melvil Dewey is guilty of a thirty-five character notation made up of the

## Melvil Dewey

ten numerals and twenty-five letters of the alfabet, omitting o. To prove that this actually was dreamd of, a fotograf of a pamflet cover prepared by Mr C A Cutter is included in this volume as an illustration. The original working form of this cover shows the hand-written corrections by both Cutter and Dewey with this statement:

**Adopted; To be published Nov 22, 1879.**

W P Cutter, nefew of C A Cutter, wrote July 12, 1932:

**'I do not think that the pamflet which was planned was ever issued. At least I have never seen a copy. It is true that my uncle at first attempted to use a notation comprising both numerals and letters; and at least one library, that at Winchester, Mass. was classified, using such a notation; they still use it. But he soon found that it was not practical.'**

There was some mention of such a method in the Library Journal of that year but there is no evidence in the Dewey documents that anything further came of it. It is mentiond here only to indicate that in the years immediatly following 1873 when Dewey had demonstrated that there was a simpler way, there was a serch for various methods that would obviate old difficulties of re-numbering books every time they wer shifted from one shelf to another.

To show the spirit of cooperation which Mr Dewey felt in all endeavors towards library improvement, at the time of searching for the best ways it is only necessary to point out that the Library Bureau in 1882 while Mr Dewey was stil in activ control of it, publisht 'Classification of Books' by Lloyd P Smith, librarian of the Library Co of Philadelphia. This method of Classification was alfabetical by the vowels a, e, i, o, u, y with subclasses that wer alfabetical in small letters followed by divisions that used Arabic numerals and by subdivisions that used Arabic signs as wel as Roman numerals.

## The Idea Conquering

Tho the introduction to this book specifically mentions Melvil Dewey (Dui then) and considers his sistem unsatisfactory no protest was made by Mr Dewey in publishing the book. The six divisions with the limited vowels wer:

Religion, Jurisprudence, Sciences and Arts, Belles Lettres, History, Bibliography and the History of Literature.

When subclasses wer approacht then the smaller letters from a to z wer to be used. When divisions in the classes wer approacht they wer to be represented by i, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. When subdivisions wer to be approacht they wer indicated by arbitrary signs and Roman numerals from IV up. Contrasting at this date two or three of the classifications we find 'dramatic amusements' in the Decimal Clasification in 1882 was 792; 7 being Fine Arts. The Smith method in 1882 for 'dramatic amusements' would be 1x2 or Oe. It would mean therefore that 'dramatics' would be found iether in Sciences and Arts or in Belles Lettres. 'Franchise' under the Dewey sistem would be 324; while under the Smith sistem it would be Ii, Up6, or Uy6.

### Universal Shorthand

The non-professional reader wil perhaps now understand that where professional librarians get in the habit of using numbers to signify certain groups of knowledge they naturally hav developot a sort of universal shorthand among themselvs so that it is not necessary to write out in ful what they want their assistants or their stenografers to enlarge. Along this line J I Wyer, Director of the New York State Library, said in July:

**'I have myself come to use the D C numbers in much of my personal and official work, chiefly that which stays in my own office. \* \* \***

**My memory retains a good many of the three figure equivalents, 973, American history; 511, Arithmetic; 016.97, Biblio-**

## Melvil Dewey

graphy of American history; 901, Philosophy of history. I sometimes use these abbreviations in matter to be copied by my secretaries who have, of course, at hand the D C schedules.'

At the time of Dr Dewey's birthday Dec 10, 1931, a student, Mary Elizabeth Krome of the Florida State College for Women, sent him a birthday letter in which however the numerals of the Decimal Clasification took the place of words. A sentence or two wil serv to show what is ment:

'815 is more in order today than a simple 816.'

This curious statement means:

'Oratory is more in order today than a simple letter/

Another sentence wil necessarily prove interesting:

'The 900 of 020 must indeed be dark before 1873/

Miss Krome was complimenting Dr Dewey this way:

'The history of library economy must indeed be dark before 1873.'

This particular letter however has an interest beyond that of being unique in its composition. After its arrival Dr Dewey in his own hand fild in a considerable number of the translations.

The numbering sitem is frequently used among librarians for menus at banquets etc. In the closing chapter of this volume wil be found an editorial of the *New York Times* wherein DC numbers ar applied to the various lines in which this pioneer and genius exceld.

It must hav been apparent to the reader of this volume that Melvil Dewey was temperamentally desirous of seeing the thing done at once that could or ought to be done. His creativ powers urged towards tangible shape immediatly. He was in harmony with John Hay who said, 'If a thing is right and proper to do, it does not make it criminal to do it promptly.'

## The Idea Conquering

### Waiting for Victory

However there was also in the Melvil Dewey temperament a willingness to wait a lifetime or longer for the recognition of a right idea. His trust in the prevailing power of the right thing was sublime.

Those librarians who have access to volume one of the Library Journal will find that Melvil Dewey introduced at the Philadelphia conference of 1876 the subject of cooperative cataloging, making the point that if 1000 copies of a book are sent to 1000 different librarians the best judicious work of each librarian was necessary to catalog and classify the book correctly for local use. In the discussion which arose after the presentation of the subject 'The Preparation of Printed Titles for the Common Use of Libraries' it veered around to the possibility of having such titles printed at the Congressional Library. Mr Dewey said:

'I have been informed that Mr Spofford is in favor of something of the kind but does not think it possible to attempt the matter in the Congressional Library at present.'

Further along in the discussion Mr Smith (Lloyd P Smith) thought that the universal catalog should come from Washington in return for the copies of new books sent there.

That discussion and the intrusion of a definitely practical idea into library economy took place in 1876. A committee was formed and the subject was kept alive from time to time through more than half a century.

In a letter written to Herbert Putnam in January, 1925, Melvil Dewey again pointed out that as the Library of Congress was doing the equivalent of cooperative cataloging through its printed cards and these cards bore the classification marks of the Library of Congress, they could very easily be made to bear the more popular Decimal Classification marks. One paragraph from Dr Dewey's letter runs back in essence of thought to 1876:

## Melvil Dewey

'100s of libraries weep and wail because DC numbers ar not on yur printed cards. I know enuf of practical affairs to realize that it wud cost something to add them, but it wud be an immense help to the 1000s of people who use DC. Yur people must examine each book enuf to know what it is about; that is the main cost. To set the few figures wud be almost nothing and it wud be absolutely no more cost for cards and press work, so the only extra expense wud be translating LC symbols into DC digits.'

The long-desired result was attained in April, 1930, when under the auspices of the American Library Association and as a result of funds provided for a period of years by that association, and by liberal subscriptions from many libraries D C numbers appeared on Library of Congress cards. During the period of operation since that time these numbers have been printed on cards for more than 75,000 copyrighted publications, thereby giving immesurable help to thousands of libraries using the Decimal Gasification sistem. Just as Dr Dewey professed, such centralized and cooperativ cataloging would reciev ultimate recognition. Appreciation of this work is shown by the fact that within the period covered subscriptions to Library of Congress printed catalog cards (which serv as the means for distributing DC numbers) hav increast about 20%, which is much more rapidly than ever before and attributed mainly to this added feature. It is expected that by facilitating use of the sistem this new procedure wil further the use of DC tables, which wil stil be needed for books for which Library of Congress does not furnish cards.

The Decimal Gasification soon after its announcements in the seventies as applied to libraries, also became applicable to the filing of pamflets, clippings, pictures, manuscript notes and other material. There ar thousands of private users.

The non-professional reader wil also understand easily that while the arrangement of books on shelvs

## The Idea Conquering

and in alcoves under the Dewey system in a sense would make it easy for a constant user of a book to go to the part of the library in which that book would be found, thus developing in a sense a memory system for the library; yet nevertheless no library would be complete unless there were a catalog of all the books in the library arranged on cards with each card bearing the Dewey decimal number so as to direct the runner or the reader to the right place in the library.

The immediate result of the creation of the Decimal system was the determination on the part of Mr Dewey to help the libraries of the United States and of the world to become standardized as to catalogs, accession books, and shelf-list records, and as to methods of making those records. Out of this purpose grew the Committee on Cooperation of the American Library Association, which he operated at no profit to himself in Boston. Out of that grew the Readers and Writers Economy Co as a means of manufacturing and distributing time-saving devices for librarians. Out of that finally grew the Library Bureau whose catalogs of equipment quickly overleapt mere convenience for libraries and have resulted in changing the business methods and equipment of every modern office.

It will thus be realized by those who have followed the simple outlines of Dr Dewey's life up to this point, that the infant who constantly was setting his mother's pantry in order became the youth who protested against waste of time in education. Then under pressure of circumstances developed a use of Arabic numerals that has affected the reading of all the world through improved accessibility. Yet this was not all that came from the idealistic youth. The development of one idea led to the evolution of others and the direct influence of Melvil Dewey is now felt in every office that uses modern methods or devices from loose leaf systems up to permanent cabinets.

## Fighting for Progress

Extracts from unprinted minutes of Columbia College:  
Nov. 5, 1888. 'Mr Mitchell presented the following resolution which was referred to a Special Committee (Seth Low, Charles M Da Costa, Edw Mitchell):

"Resolved: That it is the pleasure of the Trustees to dismiss Mr Dewey from his office of Librarian from this date."

Dec 3, 1888. 'Resolved: That the resolution referred to this Committee be laid upon the table.

'Resolved: That the suspension heretofore ordered be and hereby is revoked.'

Jan 7, 1889. 'The resignation of Melvil Dewey, Chief Librarian and Director of the School of Library Economy, was presented and accepted.'

The underlying meaning of these extraordinary and contradictory resolutions was that Melvil Dewey, being convinced of the importance of having trained librarians, had dared to introduce women students into the classes of the School of Library Economy in Columbia. President F A P Barnard of Columbia was absent at the time through illness.

The Nov 5 resolution was introduced with the approval of the acting president. The trustees claimed that there had been no consent to have women in classrooms. Technically this was correct. However Dr Barnard had long favored the classroom instruction of women students, though the trustees allowed them no such privilege; in the face of his pathetic eagerness to extend women's scholastic sphere. After his death Barnard College in Columbia University rose to justify his wisdom. He had verbally agreed with Mr Dewey that women could join the Library School. Correspondence between Mr Dewey and Dr Barnard, which is still in existence, shows clearly that Mr Dewey was not acting ahead of official approval.

## Fighting for Progress

In a letter marked 'important and confidential' dated Feb 7, 1887, Mr Dewey said to President Barnard:

'As you have said, the trustees look on you as my friend and committed to the library as to the woman question. All points to the great wisdom of the plan you had last meeting; to throw this on Low. He says if *you* wish it he will give his time and strength to the problem and believes he can take us thru in triumph.'

And Seth Low did. So it is evident that the committee to consider the dismissal of Dewey was not accidentally chosen.

It was during this struggle between conservatism and liberalism in Columbia College that one of the trustees is said to have remarked:

'Boards are long and narrow and made of wood.'

Another of the bitter remarks of that day was that the trustees were like South Sea savages studying a ship's compass.

Strangely enough on the very day that Melvil Dewey was elected chief librarian of Columbia College May 7, 1883, this item appeared in the press as a dispatch from New York:

'The Trustees of Columbia College to-day received a report from the committee appointed a short time ago to consider a plan by which the standard of female education in this city might be raised. This committee, of which Dr Dix was Chairman, was appointed when the Trustees refused to allow co-education at Columbia. The committee's plan is that young women shall pursue their studies outside of the college wherever they choose; that they shall be examined by the college professors at proper intervals, and that at the end of the fourth year, or on the completion of any prescribed courses, the students shall receive certificates stating the subjects which they have pursued and with what success.'

Therefore the seed of Melvil Dewey's difficulty was planted the day that he was elected. It took about 4 years to mature.

## Melvil Dewey

Before his election there had been considerable correspondence between President Barnard and Mr Dewey running from March 29, 1883 til three days before his election. According to W S Biscoe Columbia College Library, prior to this time, had a librarian and an assistant, *who was also janitor*, and the library was open about 500 hours a year.

As Dr Barnard had been acquainted with the many activities of Mr Dewey thru the Metric Bureau, the Library Journal etc., it is not surprizing that he should hav favord Mr Dewey's selection. Also according to Geo A Plimpton of Ginn and Co, Professor Burgess who had left Amherst to go to Columbia, was much interested in the Decimal Clasification, and:

'It was largely thru his influence that Dewey was called to Columbia as librarian.'

During the time when hostility was taking definit shape the correspondence between Mr Dewey and President Barnard frequently mentions, as already indicated, the importance of arousing Seth Low's interest in the library. There ar many letters stil in existence adrest to Mr Low, preceding Mr Low's suggestion for the committee to investigate the librarian. Mr Low's letters show markt frendliness for Mr Dewey and correspondance continued actively between them after Mr Dewey left Columbia. Mr Dewey urged Mr Low to giv his enthusiasm to education insted of to politics.

At the time Seth Low was Mayor of Brooklyn Melvil Dewey and he frequently took long walks together, extending even from 49th St, New York City to Brooklyn bridge. On the occasion of a trip abroad by Mr and Mrs Low, Melvil Dewey persuaded her to tack up on the inside of their stateroom door a few words that would every day remind Mr Low that his greatest opportunity of service in this world would be represented by the presidency of Columbia.

## Fighting for Progress

In order to show by documents that the antagonism of the Trustees was real, the following letter from President Barnard, written nearly two years before the dismissal, is historically important:

Dec 12, 1886

My dear Dewey

Mr. Silliman has turned up in a new phase of opposition. He took the ground, yesterday, that the admission of *women* to the School of Library Economy would be contrary to the expressed wish of the Board of Trustees. I denied this; but he is bent on forcing this question; and if (as he will) he brings it before the Board at the next meeting the School is probably ruined. Should the proposition to exclude women prevail, my opinion is that the resolution establishing the School had better be repealed; and that notice thereto now be given immediately to applicants of this probable result. We must give the public such an account of this change of front as we can. In the end it will probably lead to a re-establishment of the School on a better basis than it has at present.

There seems to be no general interest in the School among the Trustees and some, I think, disapprove it. Let them have their way for the time being.

Yours truly

F A P Barnard

President Barnard was directly responsible for the conduct of the library as part of Columbia College. This is shown in detail in a letter to Seth Low printed in the documentary division of this biography. In addition to his daily visits there were simply hundreds of notes, still in existence, that passed back and forth between the President and Mr Dewey. All of them were handwritten, and in view of Mr Barnard's increasing years, the effort to have the library properly equipped must have been a severe strain. Curiously enough the President of Columbia in those days past on petty questions of shelving, painting, signs etc. Two or three quotations from Dr Barnard will give an idea of the irritation to which

## Melvil Dewey

he was subjected by the efforts of the trustees to embarrass the librarian.

May 30, 1887

'I shall not stir another finger in this matter. I have been snubbed all I want to be \* \* \* I am thoroughly discouraged and disheartened. I think the best thing the trustees would do now would be to discharge all the library staff except Mr———. It seems now to be run only for his benefit.'

July 9, 1887

'I think that I can set these things right hereafter without an explosion, but not without some plain talk.'

Unfortunately the explosion had to come because Mr Dewey was battling for a principle.

Dr Barnard's annual report for 1887 says this of the school opened in January 1887:

'The number of applicants was three times as many as had been looked for. By clearing out the old library hall and pressing into service as furniture a number of discarded tables and desks it became possible to provide with tolerable comfort for twenty.'

Commenting upon the enthusiasm of the students he says this:

'A fact exceedingly encouraging to those with whom this scheme originated has been the intense interest manifested by the students of the school in their work, and the untiring industry with which they have followed it up; many of them often remaining at the library to a late hour of the night, engaged in writing up their lecture notes or in practising the methods taught in class.' \* \* \*

'A well-qualified librarian is therefore of as much importance as the library itself and the librarian's office has risen to the rank of a profession.'

In view of the conditions it is interesting to note that President F A P Barnard, tho devoting several pages to the description of the school, never once intimates that any of the students are women or girls. Thruout the report he writes as if the students were of such a sex as that favored by Columbia College.

## Fighting for Progress

One of the students in that first school, Frank C Patten, now of the Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas, says under date of Aug 15, 1932:

'I remember very well that old room with the alcoves all around two sides, having a table and chairs in each one, where we were assigned to places for library work in connection with the school. For lectures, etc, we met in the open space in the north end of the room. The building was an old one and the floor we occupied was roughly furnished. But our class was imbued with a pioneer spirit and did not mind any of the inconveniences or the temporized facilities.

I remember that we were a little surprised when we appeared in Mr Dewey's office late in December, 1886 \* \* \* supposing that all was in readiness for the school to proceed. This was not the case, however, and we waited with patience and confidence in Mr Dewey with his magnetic personality and great enthusiasm. I don't remember how long it was \* \* \*. We students did not know much about what the real difficulty was and did not learn, as I remember, until quite a long time afterwards/

In a letter written in 1916, Melvil Dewey described the initial difficulties of the school. It shows Mr Dewey's amazing self-reliance in an emergency:—

'I am not old enuf to giv much time to reminiscences, but the Library School is so near to my hart that I dont forget its anniversaries.

There wer strong reasons for remembering Jan 5, 1887, for it markt one of the sharpest battls of my life, for what I knew to be ryt. Perhaps on this 30th anniversary, now that the other actors in that littl drama hav gone into the silens, I may tel yu in confidens that 24 hours before I was to meet the 1st clas I was formally notfyd by the chairman of the committee on buildings, and representing the trustees, that I wud not be allowed any room in Columbia for my new school because the ist clas, like all that hav succeeded it, proved as I always expected, to hav more women than men. The crisis sent Pres Barnard home ill, for he saw no escape from what seemd a final reking of my plans. It took the faith, not of a mustard seed, but of a whole mustard plaster, but I never for a moment faltered in my faith that the Library School wud be born and liv and gro. They assured me

## Melvil Dewey

that I cud not and shud not. Dr Barnard tried all the afternoon, with all his powers as president, and finally gave it up as impossibl, and ill with mortification sent for his fisician.

I sent for the janitors, told them as I did the 1st class, when they arrived, that there were 20 when I only hoped for 10 & that I cud find no room larj enuf and so must utilize the store room over the chapel, thus inspiring them with a littl enthusiasm for meeting emergencies. They moved out the packing boxes, cleaned and scraped, ran in temporary wires, got some broken down tables and nailed on missing legs, picked up odd chairs, where we cud get them without encountering the police, sent a truck for some more to my hous in N Y and with smiling face, without giving a hint of the volcano on which we all stood, I welcomed the 1st clas and launcht the 1st library school. Later the enemies of women in Columbia pland my Waterloo, past a private vote with the trustees to suspend me for a month, and appointed a committee with Mayor Seth Low of Brooklyn as chairman to report whether I shud be expeld from the University for admitting women to its instruction.'

At this late date we can overlook part of Mr Dewey's argument during the heated hearings of 1888, 'that the women students had not come into any *classroom*'.

Melvil Dewey in 1916 further said this:—

'This was only one of many stirring episodes in both Columbia and Albany. I was father, nurse, 1st aid to the injured, and was more than once askt to be undertaker for my pet library school. In those stormy days I grappled with many serius *undertakings*, but never one that involvd, *its* burial. So yu see I am as little likely as anyone living to forget the annual Jan. 5, when we kindld a fire whose lyt wil surely be seen down thru the generations.

'In those erly days when I started the A L A (American Library Assoc) Library Journal, Library Bureau and Library School I dreamd dreams and saw visions and most peopl said I was chasing a rainbow. But the sleepy old world finally got its eyes open and admitted that we caught at least the trailing garments of our rainbow. When one studies the best library work of the country and analyzes the library progress of recent years, he wil find that the library school's children (or grand children;

## Fighting for Progress

for a 2d generation is wel in harnes) now ar alredy the leading force in American librarianship, and their exampl has stimulated popular education thru public libraries in every civilized cuntry of the world. \* \* \*

I am always profoundly grateful about these library matters, that the Lord let me be the particular Moses to lead those particular children of Israel into the promist land; for I dout if the skeptics who in speeches and in the public pres ridiculed the erly days, any longer dout that while the world stands, librarianship wil hold its place very near the hed of the useful and worthy professions, and that no sane man wil suggest giving up this training school any more than they wud those for law, medicin or theology, or think the public libraries anything but close competitors of the public school.'

A New York letter written to the Chicago Tribune in 1887 Just after the new School of Library Economy opend, doubtless past under the notis of the trustees of Columbia and servd to concentrate the attack on Mr Dewey:

'Columbia College is said to shut its doors pretty obstinately in the faces of women, but in one department, at least, it is doing them a great deal of service, after all. The new school of library economy, opened in January, affords what women need most, and for which they owe whoever offers it them most gratitude, a chance at good training in a new and remunerative bread-winning pursuit.

'Mr Melvil Dewey, the Librarian of Columbia, has a hobby, and it is that librarianship, which is growing into a distinct and recognized profession, will offer in the near future advantages to educated women hardly to be excelled in any other field. "You know," he said yesterday, "women like literary work, and they are finding their way into it without help. In Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, and Tennessee they have women for their State librarians, and in two or three Territories besides. It's not nervous work, like the schoolteacher's, and doesn't push a timid girl into contact with the rough side of the world such as a business woman has to endure. \* \* \* In the library of the future, the free library, the greatest missionary force of the age, there is going to be a great opening for women's

## Melvil Dewey

work/ I don't mean by the ideal free library a big central book collection in this city or any city, but smaller ones, so scattered as to bring the reading-room within half a mile of every workman's home. I expect to see great numbers of them spring up within a decade, and to find women in them doing aggressiv educational work to fight the growing illiteracy of the age.'"

It is not exactly correct to charge all the trustees with unity of feeling in antagonizing women students solely. The truth of the matter was that Mr Dewey because of his forthrightness and energetic activities in standardizing the library of Columbia, had hurt the feelings of some of the professors by putting all libraries under one control, with Dr Barnard's approval, and even by daring to collect fines for books held too long by any one of the professors. Beyond that also the library reports had been written with a vigor and expression of personality that shockt some of the professors of those days. The crime of making a report vivid and interesting was very real to some of those formal minds. A quotation from a Report of the Special Committee on Printing says this:

**'Appended to the Annual Reports of the President are long and boastful statements and details with regard to the Library which in the opinion of your Committee are not in accordance with academic propriety and the dignity of the College.'**

Further than that also; in order to get out some printed matter in a hurry Mr Dewey had on several occasions cut across lots instead of moving slowly thru the beaten and decreed path. Letters written by the professors of Columbia to President Barnard ar stil in existence and show almost without exception a willingness to crucify Mr Dewey.

In volume two of Library Notes, publisht in 1887, **appears a** report of the committee on the School of **Library** Economy presented at the ninth meeting of the **American** Library Association at Thousand Islands:



Melvil Dewey's Office in Columbia Library 1883-1888  
Where the First Library School was Planned



First School of Library Economy. Class of '88

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

(1) Mrs. Salome Cutler Fairchild (Fac); (2) George Catlin; (3) Harriet Sherman Griswold; (4) Kate Bonnell; (5) May Seymour; (6) Frank Chauncey Patten; (7) Annie Brown Jackson; (8) Mary Wright Plummer; (9) Jane Elizabeth Stott; (10) George Watson Cole; (11) Richard F. Armstrong (Hon.); (12) Melvil Dewey (Fac); (13) Martha Furber Nelson; (14) Florence Wtdoworth;

(15) Mrs. George Watson Cole (Hon.); (16) Harriet P. Burgess; (17) Annie Eliza Hutchins; (18) George H. Baker (Hon.); (19) Frances S. Knowlton; (20) Eliza S. Talcott; (21) Mrs. Melvil Dewey (Hon.); (22) Walter Stanley Biscoe (Fac); (23) Eulora Miller; (24) Lilian Howe Chapman; (25) Lilian Denio; (26) Harriet Converse Fernald.

## Fighting for Progress

'Let us with the utmost cordiality, and gratefully, express our thanks to Mr Dewey for taking this additional step in advance, and for inaugurating and carrying to a successful issue a movement that is of the greatest importance when regarded in the light of the influence which it will exert in raising the standard of librarianship among us, and in the education of the people of the country.

'We ought also to express to Columbia College the thanks of this Association for its readiness to allow its well-informed and energetic Librarian to carry out his plans for the benefit of education, and our admiration of the faith which made it willing to second a new movement by lending its name, affording its support, and giving from its resources to make it successful.'

The word 'Readiness' in the above, if seen by the Columbia trustees, must have been regarded as 'poetic license'.

In the same issue of Library Notes, Mary Wright Plummer, one of the students, referring to the enthusiasm said:

'Perhaps no body of instructors ever had a more expectant class or one more ignorant of the subject to be entered upon than were most of the members of the School of Library Economy on the 5th of January last. It is almost a wonder that the ferment of energy and enthusiasm with which we listened to and attempted to follow our instructions did not burst out the walls of the super-annuated building, for it was a clear case of new wine in old bottles.'

Confirming the restless energy which must have been involved in that first school we quote from some unsigned notes which have been found. Undoubtedly they were written by Mr Dewey:—

'It is doubtful, however, if this School ever acquires a wide reputation for cultivating repose. In fact, some of its best work will be just the opposite; and while we shall guard against the feverish spirit that unduly wastes energy, we hope to cultivate so much of fever as makes the pulse beat quicker and firmer with enthusiastic zeal for the great life work opening out before our pupils. For 2 years we have proved that with such a fever,

## Melvil Dewey

physical health has improved in both quality and quantity. We shall jealously watch the health of our pupils, but we count a chief gain of their course that each shall go out, not in the spirit of *repose*, but in that of a great *awakening*] that none shall fall back into that partial lethargy which curses so many libraries today and contents itself with doing its required work, while there *sleeps* ?L capacity for doing double good. And when our every pupil is, each in his own sphere, doing his *all* and his *best*, according to the strength that has been given him, then we shall feel that our first skirmish line has begun the march. At the end is sure and glorious victory. At this peculiar time in library history, as never before since the first book was written, the fields are white already to harvest, and the air is full of hope.

'There is just before us a magnificent work, the extent of which will be realized by most librarians only step by step as it is almost done, tho some of those slowest to see and accept the possibilities will then be among the best workers. Such work, if we read history aright, has not been most promoted by the spirit of repose, but by enthusiastic action. We classify our Library School under *dynamics*, not statics. \* \* \* In short, we will not admit on any terms any candidate not willing to do the hardest work, not only in the School, but constantly thereafter. Whatever else it may accomplish or fail in, the School will not send out a race of dawdlers.'

In the first annual report of the School of Library Economy dated June 20, 1887 and address to President Barnard, Mr Dewey mentions 183 lectures given before the School; 108 wer given by the regular library staf; 72 by Mr Dewey, 26 by W S Biscoe and 10 by G H Baker. Other lectures to the total of 75 were given to the helpless students; not counting lectures in other parts of the college to which students went, nor the Saturday morning talks in the main library itself.

Some of these early volunteer lecturers wer:—

Dr J S Billings—National Medical Library, Washington; R R Bowker—Publishers Weekly and Library Journal; Hon Mellen Chamberlain—Boston Public Library; Ellen M Coe—New York Free Circulating Library; F M Crunden—St Louis Public Library; C A Cutter—Boston Atheneum; J Edmands—

## Fighting for Progress

Philadelphia Mercantile Library; W E Foster—Providence Public Library; W I Fletcher—Amherst College Library; Albert R Frey—Astor Library, New York; C R Gillett—Union Theological Seminary Library; S S Green—Worcester Free Public Library; Dr Reuben A Guild—Brown University Library; G Hannah—Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn; Caroline M Hewins—Hartford Library; W C Lane—Harvard College; J N Larned—Buffalo Public Library; Appleton Morgan—Pres New York Shakespeare Society; C Alex Nelson—Astor Library, New York; W T Peoples—New York Mercantile Library; R B Poole—Librarian, Y M C A, New York; Dr W F Poole—Chicago Public Library; G H Putnam—G P Putnam's Sons; E C Richardson—Hartford Theological Seminary; F Saunders—Astor Library, New York; J Schwartz—Apprentices Library, New York; A R Spofford—Librarian of Congress; F Vinton—Princeton College Library; J L Whitney—Boston Public Library.

Judging simply from the records and not now being able to speak from actual knowledge of Mr Dewey's teaching methods, it would appear that with his driving dynamic energy he would come into a classroom and show such eagerness and enthusiasm regarding the drab details of handling books that his influence was inspirational. A letter recieved from Charles H Brown of Iowa State College Library since the determination to edit a biography was made, mentions the fact that Mr Dewey's influence lifted the librarian entirely out of the feeling that he or she was only handing out dirty books to dirty brats, but that insted the placing of a book before a child might possibly open a doorway to knowledge and affect its entire life.

Mr Brown added:

'The present day developments in adult education were accurately forecasted by Dr Dewey and the dependence of adult education upon public libraries carefully described twenty-five years before the term came into general use.

'Although Dr Dewey was keenly interested in the orderly arrangement of books and effective cataloging, nevertheless he emphasized continually that books were for use. From his lectures

## Melvil Dewey

we appreciated the fact that library work was not simply a matter of dull routine; it had for its purpose the furnishing of an opportunity for an education to every man, no matter whether he had gone to college or not/

So far as official appreciation of Mr Dewey's work appearing in the annual reports of Columbia College at that time, there was none. The report of the acting president of Columbia College for the year 1888-89 says this:

'At the beginning of the present year, Melvil Dewey, Chief Librarian, resigned his office, and George H Baker, formerly Assistant Librarian, was elected by the Trustees Librarian of Columbia College.'

That was all; but Melvil Dewey had planted his mustard seed in faith and its branches have spread over the entire world.

The acting president of Columbia in 1888 submitted to the Regents in Albany a letter offering them the school. This appears in the first minutes recorded by Melvil Dewey in Albany.

His advocacy of woman's right to education received its triumphant approval by Columbia when in 1926 'the stone which the builders had rejected' was brought back to build the scholastic walls of Columbia, thru the union of the New York State Library School of Albany and the Library School of the New York Public Library. Fortunately Melvil Dewey lived long enough to see Columbia acknowledge its error and welcome the results of his pioneer work. He was therefore present at the dedication of Columbia School of Library Service. At the urgent invitation of his long time friend President Nicholas Murray Butler he spoke about the strange conditions that had surrounded the Library School effort between 1883 and 1888. Commenting upon this President Butler said in Columbia Alumni Notes, 1926:—

'Those of you who did not hear Melvil Dewey's speech at the formal opening of the School of Library Service, missed a rare

## Fighting for Progress

opportunity to get a glimpse into Columbia's recent past. Before he began to speak Mr Dewey asked me whether I thought it would be becoming in him to tell the exact truth as to what occurred some forty odd years ago. I assured him that we should all be glad to hear the story exactly as he remembered it, that our sense of humor would protect us from taking offense, and that in any event beyond three or four of us who are senior in service, there would be no one of his hearers to whom it would not be a complete revelation. I greatly wish that every one in this company might have heard Mr Dewey on that afternoon. It would be quite impossible for me to give you as accurate and as amusing a notion of the Columbia College of my own undergraduate days and immediately thereafter as Mr Dewey gave in that address. The incidents he recounted and described are from our point of view not only amusing and amazing, but quite impossible. The account which he gave of his formal trial, charged with the offense of having admitted women to the University without authority, was, in view of all that has happened since, ludicrous in the extreme. As I listened to him and realized how absolutely true to life was every word of what he said, it seemed to me that he must be talking of another world and another place, so far has Columbia come in one relatively short lifetime.'

Forcing the door of Columbia College for women students in 1887 by Melvil Dewey, in the face of opposition from the trustees of those days, gives interest to the statistics of attendance by students at Columbia University in the last forty years.

Tabulation Showing the Proportion of Men and Women Registered in Columbia University (Exclusive of Summer Session and University Extension Students) after Melvil Dewey's Struggle and Dr. F. A . P. Barnard's death.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Pet</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Pet</i>	<i>Total</i>
1890-91 . . . . .	1,748	97-3	49	2-7	1,797
1900-01 . . . . .	2,657	85-3	429	14-7	<b>3,086</b>
1910-11 . . . . .	3,662	63.1	2,231	37.9	5,893
1920-21 . . . . .	5,316	54.6	<b>4,425</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>9,741</b>
1930-31 . . . . .	8,361	<b>48.4</b>	<b>8,915</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>17,276</b>
1931-32 . . . . .	8,600	49.1	8,928	50.9	17,528

To the School founded by Melvil Dewey and removed to Albany students came from nearly every state and

## Melvil Dewey

from foren countries, including: Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Germany, Holland, Nova Scotia, Norway, Philippine Islands and Sweden. Graduates hav held positions in nearly all forty-eight states and in many foren countries, including: Australia, Burma, Canada, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Norway, Philippine Islands, Scotland and Switzerland.

By 1912 the effort to train librarians had safely past its first quarter of a century. This was commemorated by the New York State Library School. It issued a pamflet which reminded the world of the difficulties under which the first scool was started. In the administrativ history of the School it was brought out that the conditions imposed by Columbia College wer these:

**1 The conduct of the scool should involv no expense to the corporation.**

**2 That instruction in the scool should be given by members of the library staf in addition to their ordinary duties.**

**3 That the scool should be conducted in the library bilding with such accomodations as could be found there.**

This authority was given on May 5, 1884, and James I Wyer director of New York State Library has said:

'The resolution and accompanying conditions look suspiciously like a polite and diplomatic way of suppressing the whole business, and doubtless the trustees supposed that long before the end of the two years their versatile and energetic librarian would have turned his attention to other things.

'Not so however. The trustees knew neither the man nor the importance of his idea. The two years' notice was given and it was hoped to open the school at the beginning of the school year 1886-87. Here however other opposition developed, an opposition significant and interesting even at the present day. Failing to kill the enterprise by damning it with faint permission, a vigorous and bitter fight was made against opening it at all because, forsooth, it would bring petticoats upon the sacred campus of Columbia College. This objection, doubtless urged with all the zeal and energy which mark both sides of the same question

## Fighting for Progress

which, in other phases, is still with us, caused the postponement of the opening until January 5, 1887.'

When Melvil Dewey attended the opening of the School of Library Service of Columbia University in 1926 he unfortunately did not prepare a written speech and he spoke so rapidly that only a few lines wer reported back by the stenografer. This truly humorous item is in one sentence:

**'I distinctly remember we cald it first the Library School of Economy, thinking of getting the most possible out of the appropriations not available.'**

Almost a similar limitation was placed upon Melvil Dewey in Albany when the Regents voted for the library scool, moved there from Columbia in April, 1889, to be re-establisht in Albany. It is not necessary to reprint all the resolutions but one wil suffice:

**'Resolved: That the director of the library be authorized to employ such assistants as are found best fitted for the work and are willing to give their services for satisfactory time without other compensation than the instruction and supervision furnished by the library/**

In view of these statements combining the similar attitude of Columbia and Albany it ment that the promoters of the original scool effort wer compeld to make bricks without straw. They had their regular duties to perform and rather than hav the experiment fail they gave their evenings, holidays and vacations to unselfish and enthusiastic efforts for the scool without extra compensation beyond the supreme plesure of establishing a great work.

Pres copies of Melvil Dewey letters show correspondence with Andrew Carnegie in 1890 subsequent to a personal call made upon Mr and Mrs Carnegie late in April or early in the month of May of that year. Mr Dewey had in a letter drawn the particular atten-

## Melvil Dewey

tion of Mr Carnegie to the way in which the library sentiment was expanding and also to the need for trained librarians. He did not however enlist the sympathy of Mr Carnegie, strange to say. It will interest those who have come out of library schools in the last forty years to know that Mr Carnegie at the outset felt that librarians did not need training, as they were easily found. He said in a letter May 15, 1890:

'Your interesting visit was the first I had ever heard of the school for librarians. I was interested in all you said, but you misunderstood me, if you thought I had made a positive promise to contribute funds. This is a matter which requires much consideration. I have taken occasion to inquire of several parties about the supply of proper persons for libraries, and find that there is no difficulty in getting persons naturally adapted for this work. We employed one for the Braddock's Library who gives entire satisfaction; and Allegheny has got one. In Baltimore, I was told, that it was really wonderful how many of their young assistants developed into splendid librarians/

Mr Carnegie's general indifference to library schools at that time did not however prevent him in later years from making special contributions.

In 1904 at the request of President Charles Franklin Thwing he made a gift, out of which has come the Library School of the Western Reserve University at Cleveland. In 1905 as a result of the earnest presentation by Miss Anne Wallace (now Mrs Howland) of the needs of the southern libraries he made it possible to establish a library school in Atlanta, now in operation at Emory University. In 1911 because of urging by Dr John Shaw Billings he made the Library School of the New York Public Library then possible.

In 1925 the Carnegie Corporation arranged to carry forward part of the admirable work begun by Julius Rosenwald for negro students at Hampton Institute. There is now in operation there a library school well equipt.

## Fighting for Progress

In making the plea to Mr Carnegie for the school Mr Dewey very properly said in his letter of May 12, 1890:

'For four years I have made personal sacrifices in carrying on this work. The practical good accomplished has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Many of our best librarians look upon the successful continuance of the School as by far the most important element in modern library progress. \* \* \* for nearly nine-tenths of all our pupils are women. \* \* \* The prominent librarians that come to us from outside practically *give* their services & I entertain them all during their stay at my personal expense so that little is required to keep up this department. We must, however, pay them something more than mere car fares if we are to ask them to continue the service of the past four years permanently. \* \* \* I have for many years struggled with my limited means to do what I could for these pupils in the firm belief that some one would feel it a privilege to give us the means to secure needed help. We have carried the burden by working nights & holidays & after regular office hours. My best teacher who has been with the School from the first, two months ago reached the limit which we had feared & was compelled to go to Florida.'

These quotations from the letter are included to indicate the strain and personal difficulty to which Mr Dewey had been subjected in the early days of library school preparation. Taken in connection with the misery he suffered in Columbia, it will be seen that when he faced a crisis he would go thru mud and blood and sweat to achieve a result.

Since the death of Mr Carnegie the interest of the Carnegie Corporation in all phases of library life, experience and expansion has carried forward the unparalleled generosity of Mr Carnegie in making the library the accessible university of the reading public after school years.

Dr Dewey has said that during the European trip of 1877 when the Library Association of the United Kingdom was founded he had urged the need of a library school but found that 'it was not practical till it could be

## Melvil Dewey

hitch on to a university or state'. The determination to start such a school had been in Melvil Dewey's mind as soon as the conditions were favorable. Therefore when he addressed the American Library Association in Buffalo on Aug 16, 1883 he was only speaking of something that he felt was necessary in carrying out the great reforms of library practice, if changes were to be made nation-wide and world-wide. One of the reported incidents of that presentation was this:— He had leapt along the mental highway as usual with his swinging similes of words and had convinced nearly all the librarians that the school idea was wise. At this point however the elderly W F Poole of the Chicago Public Library, rose and very vigorously opposed the idea and ended with the mollifying statement:

*'Of course I do not wish to throw cold water upon the scheme/*

This opened the way for a quick-witted speaker to remark:—

*'It seems to me that the gentleman has thrown a whole Poole.'*

At the Buffalo meeting Mr Dewey is said to have read an outline of his plan. The manuscript cannot be found. Fortunately Mrs Henry J Carr, now of Scranton, Pennsylvania, compiled several years ago a little booklet covering the broad features of this important discussion. It is reprinted in the documentary section.

Melvil Dewey in 1905 prepared an article on 'The Future of Library Schools'. He clearly showed his doubts as to a multiplication of schools regardless of professional needs. He said prophetically:

**'Our oldest school has moved steadily for 20 years toward an ideal but is still far from its attainment. We need in English-speaking America \* \* \* thoroughly equipped graduate schools for the highest training. To cover the country satisfactorily one should be on the Atlantic seaboard, in Boston, Washington or preferably New York. One should be in Chicago as perhaps the best library center of all, because within 1000 miles on all four sides**

## Fighting for Progress

are to be found the greatest number of new, rapidly developing, aggressive libraries. The third is needed on the Pacific coast to care for the immense territory west of the Rockies, and for this no location is so good as at the University of California with all the libraries of San Francisco at its doors for study and standing on the very shore of the Golden Gate which will inevitably, for centuries to come, be the great center for an immense portion of the earth's surface.'

At the time he indicated that tho the Library School was in Albany, because it had followed him there, nevertheless he did not fully approve of its location. A brief quotation will give his reasoning:

'Sooner or later the school will be a target for those impatient to inherit the space it occupies. Its opponents' question "why a school is kept in the capitol any more for one profession than for another" sounds very plausible. The atmosphere of the capitol is quite the reverse of what should be chosen for a school. Finally and most serious; the danger that the school may sooner or later be involved in politics makes it most unwise to locate it in the capitol. The state ought to support the training of professional librarians just as surely as it does that of professional teachers, but what school man would consent to have his normal school carried on in the office of the superintendent of public instruction in the capitol building?'

Further along in the same argument he says:

'I feel more and more strongly that a graduate school should be in a university atmosphere, that its students should be mingling with other university graduates and should have all the facilities of a great university just as the professional and technical schools are usually best carried on as departments of a university and not as independent institutions.'

As early as 1903 Herbert Putnam wrote Dr Dewey from Washington, favoring the raising of requirements for admission to the library schools. He said in part:—

'In advancing gradually the requirements for admission to your school, the Board of Regents have done the greatest and the most practical service to libraries that has been done in this country.'

## Melvil Dewey

I have rejoiced at every such advance. I should feel dismayed if there should be any retrogression. \* \* \* I write this as the librarian in succession of three libraries where I have been called upon both to choose assistants and to recommend them to others. At present the certificate of the School, with particular commendation from its authorities, is the best credential that any applicant can bring to me for employment in the technical part of our work. If the standards are to be dropt it will not be for the best.'

During 1888 because of Mr Dewey's rising reputation in the library field he had been invited to give such time as he could to supervizing the removal of the library in Albany to the new Capitol. He showed such complete adaptability to the work that steps were taken to secure his services permanently in Albany. It was during this period, before his election, that he wrote the letter to Whitelaw Reid which will also be found in the documentary division. This letter had been submitted to Henry Barnard, former commissioner of education, to Seth Low and to several other friends all of whom agreed that such steps as Mr Dewey outlined would mean much to the educational system of New York State.

Then on Dec 20, 1888 Mr Dewey presented his resignation to Columbia. This was accepted on Jan 7, 1889 as shown at the beginning of this chapter.

As soon as Mr Dewey had become settled in Albany as State Librarian and Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, the Library School of Columbia was bodily transferred to Albany in April, 1889 and remained a part of the library work in Albany till 1926. In the meantime the value of the library school idea had begun to spread in various directions over the United States.

It is not necessary to include in this volume, nor would space permit, a history of the development of library schools in the United States and abroad. So far as our country is concerned these are matters of record in the

## Fighting for Progress

various issues of the Library Journal, other library or literary periodicals and in a report prepared for the Carnegie Corporation by Charles C Williamson in 1923.

A list of the meetings of the Association of American Library Schools will be found in the documentary division.

In foren countries there hav been cases where the library scool and library conferences wer almost similar in caracter. Whatever form the education of librarians has taken in any part of the world, it has only servd to confirm Melvil Dewey's original contention that the librarian must hav training, should be tecnicly aware of the problems of library management and should be fired with enthusiasm regarding the library as a means of opening the mind of the world to broader and more comprehensiv life. Yet with the modesty that caracterized Melvil Dewey's effort—for he was always more interested in things to be done than in things alredy done—it is right to quote from a letter written in 1905 to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler of the University of California. The library pioneer said in that letter:

**'My interest is in the best results. I shall be delighted if you make a school that we have to admit to be better than our own for I care more for the general good than for personal reputation.'**

In a conversation with J I Wyer, in September 1932 at the annual meeting of the New York Library Association in Lake Placid Club, he brought out a point somewhat as follows that all thoughtful people wil approve:

**'Many years ago, Dr Dewey told me that of all the things he had attempted in the library world from 1873 onward none gave him serener satisfaction than the Library School originated in Columbia and carried to Albany. If I can interpret him now, it was because library classifying and other tools of the profession were inanimate materials, while the graduates of the School, year after year, were living creatures flaming with zeal for a world in need of the good that books could bring them. He regarded each new graduate as an added fulfilment of the cause to which he had pledged himself when he was a junior at Amherst.'**

## More Fighting Years

Governor David B Hill in his message to the legislature of New York in 1886 proposed the abolition of the Board of Regents. Part of his message contained these words:

\*I think there is no necessity for the official existence of the Board of Regents. Its corporate name is deceptive and misleading. Its powers and duties can be entrusted to other and appropriate hands without detriment to the public interests thereby saving to the state the annual expenses of its maintenance and dispensing with the anomaly of a two-headed educational system and confusion—that of divided and sometimes conflicting superintendence in the same public school.<sup>9</sup>

His messages to the legislature in 1887, 1888 and 1889 wer of similar import except that he specifically recommended the powers of the Regents be transferd to the Department of Public Instruction.

We now approach a period of seventeen years during which Dr Dewey was forst out into a field of activity that necessitated years of conflict.

It has been shown in the chapter 'Fighting for Progress' that near the end of his stay with Columbia College he had been cald upon to advize the state government tecnically regarding the State Library at Albany and that by reason of his contact with new problems there he strongly recommended in writing to Whitelaw Reid an expansion of the duties of the Regents of the University of the State of New York directly in the face of repeated messages from Governor Hill proposing to abolish the Regents. This important paper printed in the documentary division had been submitted to Henry Barnard of Hartford, Conn, first United States Commissioner of Education, and to others. Mr Barnard wrote a letter to Mr Dewey on Dec 6, 1888. As it was written by pen

## More Fighting Years

and givs no evidence of having been copid, some expressions in that letter should be preservd in this biografy. He praisd the general plan of Mr Dewey if selected for the secretaryship of the Board of Regents. He exprest unqualified confidence in the fitness of Mr Dewey to:

'Concentrate, reorganize and vitalize both the old and the new functions should your plan of new agencies and concentration be adopted.'

Profetically he advized Mr Dewey that:

'Should the trustees of Columbia College fail to see the importance of the School of Library Economy to the institution, the city and the country, and not give your successor adequate cooperation and support you can in six months develop a similar school in Albany/

This became true by April, 1889, except that Henry Barnard's idea of a 'normal class of librarians and curators of museums of natural history' was not fully carrid out; tho both Melvil Dewey and he had recognized the educational advantage of museums (seeing) as second only to libraries (reading).

The letter shows that Mr Barnard had been in tuch with educators at Albany since 1837 and he praisd the work that had been done under conditions of difficulty. Yet he realized that a new day was dawning and went on to say this:

'Your intense earnestness and power of work and of getting willing work out of others will be an inspiration all along the old lines of office work. Even if nothing new should be at once attempted, your way of doing things will be a new era in its administration. But you can't help introducing a progressive element into the management of the Library which as I understand, falls into your direction as the agent of the Board and your success there will be contagious and will be felt in every library when its librarian visits the Capitol/

The letter closed with these words:

'Without intending to do them (earlier educational officials) any disparagement, I feel quite sure that more school men of

## Melvil Dewey

every grade of work will visit Albany to see what you are about and get familiar with your aims and methods and go away "bit with enthusiasm" in five years after you are once in office than in any decade within the past fifty years.'

An additional letter from Henry Barnard, aflame with fervor, is printed in the documentary division.

Mr Dewey arrived in Albany in January, 1889 to fil the duties of Secretary of the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York and also those of State Librarian. Notwithstanding cautionary remarks by frends like Henry Barnard and others as to his duty to his family, he was so eager to handle the affairs of the State Library as a means of reaching the adult mind of all of New York state, that he consented to be State Librarian without any salary beyond that of Secretary to the Board of Regents. The records as mentioend elsewhere under the general chapter of 'Characteristics', show year after year 'no salary' as State Librarian.

In order that there may be no misunderstanding, this is what David B Hill said in recommending the abolishment of the Regents.

'As ex-officio members, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Their principal functions are to visit and inspect colleges and academies, and to report thereon annually to the Legislature; to confer such honorary degrees as European universities usually confer; to approve the incorporation of colleges and academies; to have the care of the State Library, appoint its librarian and make rules for the use of the books; to have the care of the State Museum of Natural History; to establish and regulate the Regents' examinations and teachers' classes in certain academies and academic departments of union free schools, and to distribute to such academies and departments the money annually appropriated for the purpose from the Literature and United States Deposit Funds.'

Governor Hill then stated that the group of Regents was generally regarded as a purely ornamental body and



315 Madison Avenue, the Hospitable Dewey Home in Albany



New York State Library School Instructors, 1895

Reading from left to right: Edith Davenport Fuller, dictionary cataloging; Dunkin V R Johnston, bookbinding and reference work; Florence Woodworth, library school practice; Melvil Dewey, director; Mary Culler Fairchild, loan work and book selection; Ada Alice Jones, cataloging; W S Bisce, advanced classification; May Seymour, library editing and printing.

## More Fighting Years

that membership in the Regents was a sort of pleasant retreat for respectable gentlemen of literary tendencies.

These were the responsible men who by direct descent from the plans of Alexander Hamilton controlled in 1888 the University of the State of New York.

**David B Hill, Governor, ex-officio.**

**Edward F Jones, Lieutenant-Governor, ex-officio.**

**Frank Rice, Secretary of State.**

**Andrew S Draper, LL D, Sup't of Pub Instruction, ex-officio.**

**Henry Rufus Pierson, LL D, Chancellor—Albany.**

George William Curtis, LL D, L H D, W	New Brighton.
Francis Kernan, LL D	Utica
Martin I Townsend, LL D	Troy
Anson J Upson D D, LL D	Glens Falls
William L Bostwick	Ithaca
Chauncey M Depew, LL D	New York
Charles E Fitch	Rochester
Orris H Warren, D D	Syracuse
Leslie W Russell, LL D	New York
Whitelaw Reid	New York
William H Watson, M D	Utica
Henry E Turner	Lowville
St Clair McKelway, LL D	Brooklyn
Hamilton Harris, LL D	Albany
Daniel Beach, LL D	Watkins
Willard A Cobb	Lockport
Carroll E Smith	Syracuse

We now see that Governor Hill, in his repeated declarations up to the 1889 message must have been unaware of the purposes of Melvil Dewey; for in less than six months the legislature of 1889 passed an act, chapter 529, revising and consolidating the statutes relative to the Regents and the University and Governor Hill approved the bill. This was the first step toward making the Regents a power for increased good in the state. This bill repealed all or parts of seventy laws of the state.

David B Hill on Jan 1, 1889 declared **that the Board** of Regents should be abolished. On that same day Melvil

## Melvil Dewey

Dewey assumed his duties as Secretary of the condemned board.

On Feb 19 of that year Governor Hill vetoed a bill affecting the St Lawrence University because he opposed special acts; but did favor a general act affecting all institutions of the same type. The argument is reported to have been that of Melvil Dewey.

We are very positive as to the new influence by Feb 25, when David B Hill vetoed a bill entitled 'An Act to Incorporate the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn'. The reasons given for vetoing were that such incorporating powers rested with the Regents themselves, and said:

**'If the general statute is not broad enough to permit the Regents to do all that the interests of colleges and academies call for, they should be amended.'**

Here again was the influence of Melvil Dewey.

The clearest evidence of David B Hill's recognition of the merit of the Board of Regents as presented to him by Melvil Dewey appears in his annual message of 1890. His renewal of previous recommendations covered eleven points or measures. In those eleven there is no mention of the Board of Regents.

The Albany Argus on July 14, 1889 in referring to the twenty-seventh convocation of the University of the State of New York said:

**'The extension of the University has been great and its reconstruction has been complete. \* \* \* The new law has brought into harmony the relations between the government and the Regents. This was the work of Melvil Dewey. \* \* \* Heretofore the Regents were only trustees of the State Library, the law libraries and the State Museum. Now these departments are turned over to them exclusively. \* \* \***

The Albany Argus of the same date then went on to say:

**'They are also presented with increased appropriations by the State to develop those departments and are authorized to establish local libraries and local museums, as well as to institute**

## More Fighting Years

schools for library instruction and systems of examinations for the higher degrees in learning—post graduate courses of study, if they elect to do so. The relation of the examination systems of the board to the professions of law and medicine are also made the same. For several years it has been the case that all intending students of law must pass the Regents' examinations in advanced English branches, before they could specifically begin the study of their profession, whether in an office or at a law school. The standard of learning and culture of the bar has thus been increased. By the last legislature all intending students of medicine are required to pass the same examinations. The examinations for entrance to either profession are held at such times and in such places, in the State, as will meet the convenience of intending students. Law and medicine are the two professions which the State can require to conform to conditions of antecedent knowledge, before their practitioners are permitted to undertake them. The entrance standard now demanded by the State has been raised higher than it was for a century before in this Commonwealth, higher than it yet is in any other State/

Amendments to the above chapter (529—1889) appear in 1890, and by 1892 a comprehensive university law was passed. Regarding this Senator James T Edwards, principal of McDonogh School, Baltimore, Maryland, said before the convocation of the University of the State of New York:

'The University law, passed in 1892, is a model of condensed, accurate expression, of wise, statesmanlike, educational legislation, so comprehensive in its sweep and far reaching in its provisions that any commonwealth might be proud to possess such a compendium of school law. The 12 pages of this remarkable document embrace a marvelous condensation of 70 statutes, and yet, herein are clearly set forth all the important provisions relating to our higher education. It is an interesting comment on the fairness of this bill and the thoroughness with which it was prepared that it did not receive a single amendment and passed unanimously in the senate, and with scarcely a dissenting vote in the assembly.'

The mass of material still in existence in relation to Melvil Dewey's Albany days shows sheet after sheet of

## Melvil Dewey

studies, interlineations etc while he perfected this legislation. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography directly credits Mr Dewey with this work in the following words:

**'Perhaps his (Melvil Dewey's) most important and far reaching single contribution to educational progress is the careful revision and amplification of the laws of New York pertaining to higher education, including libraries, passed in 1892 as the university law.'**

It is an interesting thing to note that tho Mr Dewey was entirely committed to unification of the educational sistem of New York State yet he was obliged to oppose unification in 1894. There remains in existence a copy of a letter 8 pages long written by him on April 26 of that year to Hon Chas R Skinner, Department of Public Instruction, opposing:

- 1 Snap legislation.**
- 2 Repeal of existing laws without careful study.**
- 3 Action affecting 11,000 scools and tuching every hamlet in the state.**
- 4 Educational laws il-considerd as being more dangerous than any other kind of law.**
- 5 Failure to let the statutory revizion commission do the work or direct it.**
- 6 The careless assembling and its failure to eliminate duplicated verbiage.**
- 7 Because it had not been studid; therefore should not pas.**
- 8 Disturbance of jurisdiction of the Regents without consultation with them,**
- 9 Because A S Draper agreed as to the delicacy of the task of clearing up the scool laws of New York.**

The closing six lines of Melvil Dewey's letter ar as follows:

**'These in summary are the reasons why I decline to favor the passage of this law as you ask me, and why I think the best interests of education demand that it should now be referred to the statutory revision commission rather than passed by the senate.**

## More Fighting Years

**I file this statement with you that I may be on record as not approving by my silence what seems to me pernicious legislation.'**

Almost immediately after reaching Albany Mr Dewey had taken the lead in bringing together a meeting of state librarians in St Louis, May 1889, and among the resolutions adopted by such a group was this:

**'Librarians must not turn into politicians to get money during legislativ sessions thereby leaving their posts of duty.'**

This meeting was significant as the first step toward a uniformity of state laws governing libraries. It also embodid the lifelong conviction of Melvil Dewey that a state librarian should be honord with a salary similar to that paid to other state officers in the same state; tho as it has been shown he had not himself in mind.

What happend in these seventeen years of activity is a matter of record preservd in unimaginativ Regents' minutes, in a series of annual reports of the State Library, and in many bulletins and pamflets. Only a few high lights will be necessary to convey the impression that a spirit of determination and loyalty to public interests cannot be extinguisht.

At this point figures of speech ar in danger of confusion. Dewey was a spirit on fire. The original meaning of enthusiasm was within him. At the same time he must hav been as irritating as the fretful porcupine, because in the midst of all his doings he gave niether thought nor attention to political considerations, somehow holding to the zelus conviction that the thing that was right to be done could be done without paying any attention to office-seeking or office-holding psicology.

In one sentence therefore, the seventeen years may be sumd up as years of constant conflict combined with years of executiv efficiency; the two loads serving to wear down the splendid spirit of a man to whom childhood's needs and the enlightenment of the adult wer a passion. The amazing thing is that he was able to stand

## Melvil Dewey

the strain as long as he did, for men swayed by personal considerations were on his trail immediately and remained on his trail till 1906 when he left Albany. Later in commenting upon his living there he referred as St Paul did to 'fighting with beasts at Ephesus'.

Throughout all these years of strife the genuine interest he felt in childhood was nevertheless shown in every possible way. One incident of his service can be confirmed in thousands of homes:—With his own hand year after year he signed the Regents' certificates, by tens of thousands, arguing that if a child had worked for the scholastic honor of the certificate the least the Secretary could do instead of using a rubber stamp, would be to sign that certificate. The office of the Board of Regents specially reported this information in June, 1932 regarding the certificates signed for high school students only from 1888-1899:—

1888	11033	1894	28843
1889	13005	1895	34559
1890	11692	1896	22735
1891	16864	1897	26197
1892	21077	1898	32948
1893	23227	1899	37254
Total		279,444	

Part of the stormy weather that Mr Dewey went through was due to the fact that through his influence in the Regents office he kept it away from all appointments for political reasons only and therefore was regarded as the enemy of those who wanted public position for reasons other than fitness. At the same time the department of public education was politically reachable through local and other leaders, and hence the struggle in the later Unification act to take power away from the Regents.

Watching out for anything that could be criticized in the performance of duties by Melvil Dewey, three major attacks and a number of minor ones are part of the **Albany** history. He was dragged into a hearing as to

## More Fighting Years

his purchase of a home in Albany, the purpose being to poison the public mind with the thought that he was grafting. He showed that the home was heavily mortgaged and so the attack shifted toward his buying bicycles at wholesale and urging the employes of the Library to ride them. Examination proved that this was a fruitless lead for he had only the thought of saving time and increasing outdoor enjoyment; and he also made it convenient for students financially weak to buy on instalment that which they otherwise would have to pay for in lump.

Then the attacks ran to the use of the Decimal Classification in the Library School. After he had confessed that he was the author and that he was interested in the sale of the book his enemies thought that they had him for malfeasance in office. But when he proved that recognizing the delicacy of the situation, he had at his own expense given the various editions of the Decimal Classification to the Library School students, his enemies were once more confounded.

A sample quotation from one of the several reports on Melvil Dewey during his stay in Albany is sufficient to picture the result whenever this self-sacrificing man was attacked. This was stated by a sub-committee of the joint committee of the Senate and Assembly appointed to investigate the State departments in 1895:—

'A man endowed with the progressive spirit, energy and will displayed by Professor Dewey might be expected to incur opposition if not hostility, to his conception of duty and responsibility of office. It was therefore apparent that in order to arrest and prevent the execution of his plans under the sanction of the regents to place the work of the University and the management of the library upon a different plane, it was necessary to create a sentiment of disfavor and prejudice by recourse to charges reflecting upon personal conduct complicating official relations. It was charged that Secretary Dewey had used his office for private ends, and these charges were made with such directness and publicity that it became a matter of most serious import/

## Melvil Dewey

'For the purpose of placing before the legislature the nature and scope of the charges, it will be necessary to refer to communications submitted to the committee appearing in a newspaper published in the city of Albany and which are contained and set out in full in the proceedings. It was charged by the said newspaper, The State, that Secretary Dewey had committed offenses derogatory to his office in specified particulars. Witnesses were summoned before the committee to testify and their testimony will be found in the minutes of the proceedings annexed to this report, to which reference is made to sustain the conclusions of the committee and to define the animus and nature of the accusations. It will clearly appear as your committee believes, that not a single charge involving the integrity and official conduct of the accused was sustained. In weighing all the testimony taken and that could be obtained from witnesses produced, and allowed to testify with the widest latitude, no other result could be reached by the committee than that the charges were not only not sustained, but that by the means and spirit *in* which they were brought and persistently prosecuted, they were vexatious, frivolous and detrimental to public interests. \* \* \*

So it went on year after year and the newspaper clippings of the period speak of 'Charges against Dewey', 'After Dewey's scalp', 'Tempests in the Regents' circle' etc.

Passing over many details regarding petty attacks, it is a fact that this great servant of knowledge who at seventeen had been inspired with the thought of educational improvement, finally fell into an impossible situation with the Regents themselves and not thru any fault of his own. Governor Theodore Roosevelt being aware of Mr Dewey's educational passion, invited him to be a member of a state commission to study the educational conditions and organization of the state. Mr. Roosevelt said regarding this commission:

'The University convocation at its annual meeting in July, 1899, requested the Governor to appoint a commission for the purpose of recommending a practicable plan of unification, and in accordance with this suggestion the following commission was appointed: Frederick W Holls, Daniel H McMillan, Judge

## More Fighting Years

Joseph F Daly, William Kernan, Robt F Wilkinson, and the Secretary of the Board of Regents (Melvil Dewey) and the Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction (DE Ainsworth). All were men of the highest standing, of trained capacity, and specially interested in the whole subject. I cannot too heartily thank them for their invaluable and wholly disinterested labor for the public welfare.

'This commission, after careful consideration, has arrived at suggestions embodied in a report suggesting statutory changes which, if adopted by the Legislature, will give effect to the system which they recommend. What they propose is the creation of a Department of Education, including both the University and the Department of Public Instruction, of which a single officer, known as the Chancellor of the University, shall be the responsible executive and administrative head. The University is, of course, continued, and has its oversight extended to cover the entire field of education, so that its real authority and opportunity for public service will be much increased.

'The plan proposed is simple, effective and wholly free from political or partisan considerations. It deserves the cordial support of all friends of public education, and this means of every patriotic citizen of the State.'

At the same time the Regents had appointed a special committee for similar research, to which group Melvil Dewey as Secretary of the Regents had responsibilities. The commission and the committee both prompted undoubtedly by the same purpose to do good, reached points of divergence and Melvil Dewey occupied an anomalous situation in such divergences and felt it necessary to clear the situation by resigning as Secretary of the Regents; for he differed with both the Commission and the Committee in details. What he said to Governor Roosevelt is quoted quite fully; as it is wise to record some of the efforts out of which grew New York's present position in the educational world:

'I have felt keenly the gain that would come to the state from a complete unification of its educational interests on a basis that would secure harmony and good will from all concerned. There

## Melvil Dewey

is another consideration at least ten-fold more important than this unification, and that is that education in this state should be kept absolutely free from domination or interference of partizan or sectarian politics. Both the University and the department of public instruction are today doing better work than ever before in their history, and receive and deserve greater confidence than ever before/

In this connection it is right to quote from a letter written on Dec 6, 1899 to Rev Lyman Abbott, editor of the 'Outlook':

'Much has been said in a quiet way as to the relation of the Catholic church to the issue. They believe in endowed academies of their own. Mr Skinner has stood for the practical abolition of all academies which of course incurs the hostility of not only the Catholics, but of those who favor any form of secondary instruction outside of the public school system. It is also true (though this is private information to help your point of view) that the leading republican politicians put their heads together, so a man told me who was present at the interviews, and decided that they could make more political capital out of the anti-Catholics by having Skinner hit a Catholic head wherever he saw it. Some of his decisions were right, some of them were entirely needless and were made not in the interests of education at all, but in order to carry out the wishes of the political bosses. Of course the Catholics who knew this were greatly dissatisfied with a man and a department willing to lend itself to even a mild persecution of any particular religious faith. The regents have the respect of the Catholic church because we have steadily refused to know in regard to any school, teacher or student whether he was Protestant, Jew or Catholic, and I have been greatly gratified to find that these people are grateful to be treated as American citizens and are entirely satisfied not to be discriminated against, while in no case have they tried to seek the slightest advantage. I believe this method of dealing with the question the only right one, and yet it is only natural that the people who know the facts should feel a degree of confidence and respect for the regents which they can not feel towards a department that has prided itself on scoring points against them. Our supreme danger is that politics may be introduced into the University. The state as a whole has grown more and more earnestly opposed to this.'

## More Fighting Years

Ful reference to the conditions of conflict between the Regents and the Department of Public Instruction would require consultation with the 'Messages from the Governors of the State of New York' edited by Charles Z Lincoln published in eleven volumes in 1909. Several governors, including Hill, Roosevelt, Odell and Higgins were involved in either practical suggestions or in pointing out the acrimonious conflict which existed prior to consolidation.

The resignation of Melvil Dewey as Secretary of the Regents took the following form:

Regents office, Albany, N. Y. 22 Dec. 1899

*To the Regents of the University of the State of New York*

For 11 years I have held two positions under your honorable board, secretary and financial officer, and director of the home education and library departments. The work of either of these positions demands the entire time of a strong man in vigorous health. For more than two years I have been forced to recognize that it was impossible to give the strength which the work demands to both these positions. I am therefore constrained to ask the board to relieve me of my duties as secretary, as I believe I can accomplish more for the state and for the board by giving my entire time to the state library and home education departments because most of my life has been spent in special study and active service in those fields. I tender this resignation at this annual meeting to take effect as soon as the board can arrange for it conveniently, because I believe that the fact of a vacancy in the position of secretary may be a factor in the solution of the much discussed question of educational unification, as it will leave the way clear for any reorganization of the work of the regents that may seem wise. I must make plain, however, that this resignation is not offered for the sake of putting it on the records and of having it declined, but because I earnestly desire to give such service as I may hereafter render to the University in the field where I am sure I can be most useful.

MELVIL DEWEY

*Secretary*

Without taking space to include here Mr Dewey's comments upon his resignation it is appropriate to reprint the resolutions that were passed, for unlike the action at

## Melvil Dewey

Columbia College there was recognition of the tpe of service that Mr Dewey had rendered to the state.

RESOLUTIONS ON SECRETARY'S RESIGNATION. Regent Reid, chairman of the special committee submitted the following resolutions, which were adopted unanimously:

*Resolved*, That the regents have heard with much regret the resignation of Mr Melvil Dewey of the position of secretary and financial officer of the University, which he has held for n years in conjunction with the directorship of the library and of the home education departments.

*Resolved*, That we deplore the circumstances of impaired health and of overtaxed strength which have led him to ask release from part of his duties; and we trust that the relief which he seeks may soon result in his complete restoration to bodily vigor.

*Resolved*, That the board recognize in Mr Dewey an organizer of genius, an executive of great skill, an educational leader of marked originality and energy and an officer whose administration has coincided with the largely augmented usefulness and honor of the University.

*Resolved*, That we record with gratitude his zeal for the welfare of the service of the state, his devotion to the interests and good fame of the board and his constant sympathy with the cause and institutions of higher education in the commonwealth and in the nation, and that we rejoice to believe that his rare gifts and abilities will still be at the service of the University in a field congenial to his wishes and commensurate with his extraordinary qualities.

*Resolved*, That the board accepts the resignation to take effect on next January I, 1900, with renewed expression of its regret, and of its high regard and esteem for its secretary and its friend.

He was succeeded as Secretary by James Russell Parsons Jr who on March 16, 1900 printed in one volume the Regents' minutes covering the years 1889-99. The introductory lines wer an endeavor to do justice to the work that had been performd by Melvil Dewey. This is what Parsons said:

'This volume contains the official minutes of the regents of the University during the secretaryship of Melvil Dewey, a period of il years (1889-99) in which the University came to be recognized as one of the most effective educational organizations in the United States.'

## More Fighting Years

This separation from the Secretaryship bruised the heart of Melvil Dewey excessively for he was in 1899 within hailing distance of the consolidation of the Regents of the University of the State of New York and the Department of Public Instruction. The very thing towards which he had worked for years as a means of bringing up the entire educational machinery of the state into efficiency and harmony was snatched away from him at the moment when it seemed nearest to achievement.

It had been during this period, 1889-1899, that Melvil Dewey constantly lifted the standards of professional examinations and drew general attention to the danger of diploma mills. This line of activity served to make him additionally unpopular in many directions of self-seeking by schemers against the public interest.

Passing beyond all details of executive work (and the amount and quantity were extraordinary) we now approach the second effort to produce unification, in 1904. Bearing in mind that Melvil Dewey was no longer directly connected with the educational machinery save as the Library was a part of that machinery, it is important to realize that a special joint committee of the legislature was appointed in 1903 to conduct hearings and to report back to the legislature regarding the educational unification. Those hearings are a matter of record and copies of the hearings are among the papers of Melvil Dewey. The gentlemen assigned to the hearings were in some cases not scholarly nor perhaps interested in scholarship. A quotation from one of the discussions will show this point:

Assemblyman P: Who are the Democrats? (in the Regents)

Senator B: McKelway, and Doane, and Beach, Lord. Lord wasn't elected as a Democrat, was he?

The Chairman: I don't know.

Assemblyman P: No, he was elected as a Republican. I don't think we have but one Democrat on it.

Senator B: Who is that?

Assemblyman P: Daniel Beach.

## Melvil Dewey

Senator B: How about Doane?

The Chairman: How about McKelway?

Assemblyman P: He isn't much of a Democrat.

Senator B: From a party point of view I don't doubt that a number of men will be selected as Republican who will not be men in very hearty accord with the Republican party.'

\* \* \*

During the committee meeting of Jan 27, 1904 this colloquy occurred after agreeing to accept a minority report:

'Senator B: I have known of some surrenders when the vanquished was allowed to walk out with full honors of war, fife and drum and flags flying, you know.

Assemblyman M: There was a case in our early history where they marched them out in that way and then the Indians massacred them.

Senator B: That is an unfortunate illusion at this time.

The Chairman: There are no scalping parties around here.

The early hearings or discussions showed dissatisfaction with the bill that was before the committee. Between Jan 19 and Jan 27, 1904 somehow a substitute came into the hands of the committee, was found to meet the requirements, was recommended back to the legislature with a minority report and passed. This substitute bill carried out the main points for which Dewey had battled five years before. Of this event, Frank P Graves, President of the University and Commissioner of Education, said in the United States Daily, Mar 3, 1931:

'The most conspicuous milestone in the history of education in New York State is to be found in the so-called "Unification Act" of 1904/

This brings us to 1904. The active head of the consolidated educational body then became A S Draper who had been called from the University of Illinois at Urbana, but who many years before had been Superintendent of Public Instruction in Albany from 1886 to 1892, and thus during Melvil Dewey's early days there.

## More Fighting Years

Regarding the selection of Mr Draper there exists copy of a letter from Melvil Dewey to President Taylor of Vassar, Feb 13, 1904:

'My confidence is largely dependent on Draper's personality. You know I scrapped with him when he was here, was never considered his personal or official ally, but by many was supposed to be his educational rival. I feel therefore that I am in a position where no one will accuse my judgment of being warped in his favor. I have canvassed the country repeatedly and am forced every time to the conclusion that his very unusual experience, his strength, his reputation, the confidence of legislature and people in his educational work, which he has to an unusual degree, make him the very best man in the United States to come here at this time. It is a crime to have this friction continue longer and a discredit to us all.'

Both wer strong men, both wer positiv and in correspondence by Melvil Dewey with George William Curtis in the '90's, Mr Draper had in writing assured Mr Curtis that if he should come with the Regents there would be no effort to weaken the relationship of Mr Dewey.

In the years that had elapst possibly Mr Draper forgot what had been said and done before. At any rate the reports of Mr Draper to the Regents after he took office in 1904 not merely damnd Mr Dewey's work with faint praise or with sarcasm but indicated that he couldn't understand what wer the duties of the employes of the Library nor what wer the exact functions that Mr Dewey and his employes wer performing as a state duty. Knowing as we do, the devotion with which Mr Dewey had workt all thru the years, it was a poison drop that ultimately aided in bringing the resignation of Mr Dewey from the Library itself on September 21, 1905, at 54 years of age.

It is difficult nearly a quarter of a century afterwards to hold separate or, in a sense, understandable all the various threds of influence, of thought and of attack that combined to make the continued stay of Melvil Dewey in Albany impossible from his point of view.

## Melvil Dewey

On the day of his resignation the Board of Regents adopted a resolution offerd by Regent Pliny T Sexton and seconded by Regent Edward Lauterbach declaring:

'That the occasion of the resignation of Melvil Dewey from official relation to the educational work of the state is an opportunity for the expression of grateful recognition and sincere appreciation by the regents of the university of the value of his services to the cause of public education and of library development during the seventeen years of his official labors therein, years which clearly mark an epoch in educational work in this commonwealth, and that Dr Dewey will be followed in his future life by the most cordial good wishes of the Board of Regents/

Reading the mass of correspondence and the transcripts of hearings before a committee of the Regents and discovering that he was supported as strongly by some as he was fiercely attackt by others the conclusion is, so far as this biography is concernd, that no good purpose would be servd by reproducing small portions of the hearings (for the hearings would be understandable only if printed in ful), nor the findings of the committee nor the rebuke which the Regents administerd to Mr Dewey in February, 1905. There is no dout at this time that Mr Dewey had opend himself to attack thru some very proper interests which he had in Lake Placid, to which region he had gone yearly from 1893 to 1905 because of hay fever from which he sufferd severely, and rose cold from which Mrs Dewey also sufferd. Involvd in the charges against him was that he robd the state of time to which it was entitld and also involvd was a question as to the racial rules governing the Lake Placid Club. Most of those who attackt him then ar now ded. There may hav been a political motiv but there is nothing gaind by so charging. For those who ar interested in understanding the boild-down result of the attacks, reference can be made to page 480 of the second annual report of the New York State Education Department and running thru to



Original Lake Placid Club House, Boni Blink (Bonnie Blink), 1895  
With a Capacity of Thirty and Located on Five Akers of Ground



Lake Placid and White Face Mountain, the Giant Sentinel of the North

## More Fighting Years

page 484. The rebuke was so worded and so also was the report of the committee consisting of real friends of Melvil Dewey, that it can be easily interpreted in this negativ way and was by Public Libraries:—

**'You havn't done it, but don't do it again.'**

Every point of attack against Mr Dewey was met freely and frankly. It was shown that insted of Mr Dewey giving les time to library work when absent from Albany he actually gave more. In this connection as part of a great record, it is wel to print portions of a letter sent by Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, to the Regents thru Whitelaw Reid:—

**February 9, 1905**

**MY DEAR MR. REID :** The petition now before your Board of Regents, asking the removal from office of your State Librarian, rests upon incidents with which, in themselves, we other librarians have no concern, and as to which we are not entitled to speak; but from some statements in the newspapers I infer that there will be brought to the aid of the petition charges of a different nature, some of which do concern the general practice of our profession. One charge in particular is, from time to time, reiterated in connection with attempts to discredit Mr Dewey with his Regents and with the public. It is, that he spends a considerable part of each year away from his office.

Now to those of us who know Mr Dewey professionally, and who have seen him more or less intimately, and to those of us who know what are his methods of work, such a charge is as ridiculous as its motive appears to be contemptible. Mr Dewey eats, drinks, sleeps and talks library and library work throughout the twenty-four hours, the week, the month, and the year. His physical whereabouts at any one time is immaterial. He carries his business with him to his home; he brings it back with him in the evening and in the morning to his office. He is, in effect, as much engaged with it at Lake Placid as he is at Albany; it is as much his play as it is his work. He is the clearest example in our profession of a man who can not shake off his business.

For what does the State employ such a man? Is it merely to stay at a desk during certain hours? or is it to think and plan,

## Melvil Dewey

and promote and organize? Is he to be judged by a day? or by a year?

Every one who knows Mr Dewey knows that he is an actual and a keen sufferer from hay fever, and that during certain months existence in Albany is intolerable to him. During these months he moves his desk to Lake Placid. But is he serving the city of Albany, or the State of New York?

There is no man living today to whom more than to him is due the prodigious activity of the past quarter of a century in the promotion of libraries, and in the diffusion of interest in them. There is no one who has done more to stir with enthusiasm for practical library service competent people who are needed in it. His name is more widely known abroad than that of any other living American librarian, for his contributions to library technique and to the general acceptance of public libraries as a motive force in popular education. \* \* \*

We should hate to see a great state estimate an administrator of large interests as though he were a thousand dollar clerk in a railroad office.

HERBERT PUTNAM.

**It might be added that if a man of such mentality as Melvil Dewey could be properly mesured by a time clock, the actual report on time given by the custodian of the clock in Albany showd Mr Dewey to be giving more hours per year to his work than a minor clerk was expected to do.**

On Sep 20, 1905 when Melvil Dewey could alreedy mesure inevitable forces, he wrote to his old frend Pliny T Sexton of Palmyra who had been one of the Regents during most of the term of Mr Dewey's service to the state of New York. In that letter he gave the reasons why he saw no chance of continuing satisfactory work in Albany. He judiciously interpreted the changed attitude of mind which had come over A S Draper. There is one point however which should be in this record, viz; that in eighteen months Mr Dewey had never seen Mr Draper in the library tho his reports

## More Fighting Years

to the Regents criticized the library and its management. One sentence can be quoted:

**'He (Draper) admitted to me after submitting his report on the library, that he had never read a page of my many reports and time and again has betrayed the most astonishing unfamiliarity with our work.'**

Inquiring from people still living as to the general effect upon the library of Mr Dewey's departure in 1906, the point is made that the groups of happy, enthusiastic employees lost all their sense of personal sympathy with the head of the effort and became conscious of mere cogship. In one of the birthday notes sent to Dr Dewey last December a woman who had been in the Regents office before the Dewey regime and through it said:—

**'I often think how we dreaded having a new and strange chief and how quickly you changed our feeling for you because you were so broad-minded, sympathetic and kind.\*'**

The balance of the communication indicates the absence of sympathy and kindness after Dr Dewey had left

In the first printed statement made to A S Draper by the director of the State Library who had succeeded Mr Dewey, he showed the immense development that had taken place in the library in a few years but he did not mention Mr Dewey's name once.

Likewise at the end of the second annual report of A S Draper there is no mention of Mr Dewey's departure from the library but Mr Draper says on page 571:

**\*A new administration has been installed in the library by calling one of the most experienced and commended librarians in the country to the directorship.'**

Thus Mr Dewey surrendered the responsibility of a great work without a friendly word from those who took his place.

## Melvil Dewey

The total result of the seventeen years of work by Melvil Dewey carried thru, under difficulties that cannot be fully described or detailed, was:

1 That the University of the State of New York governed by Regents, became embodied in the Constitution of the state on Jan 1, 1895 and therefore beyond momentary likes or dislikes of governors or legislatures;

2 That the effect of New York's progress in raising the standards of technical and general examinations thru the Regents, has influenced the rest of the United States by toning up the demand for knowledge and skill in the professions dealing particularly with the human body; medicine, surgery, dentistry, midwifery etc.;

3 That the standard of scholarship was raised thru the Regents' examinations by introducing elastic principles in these examinations;

4 That non-competitive duties were performed for the entire educational system of the state thru the Unification Act;

5 That the statesmanship involved in such unification and expansion attracted the attention of other states;

6 That the library became a vital thing thruout the state, increased enormously in size and efficiency and by means of traveling libraries and direct loans of books placing all the citizenship in contact with the state's collection of books;

7 That the original idea of Melvil Dewey that adult education was just as important as the education of childhood received its crowning and its glory in the years of his work in Albany thru that which can be called university extension or home education or adult education—whatever word is used, it means the expansion of opportunity to those who have passed beyond school age; and

8 That thru the law library and its efforts to be of **greater** service the Legislative Reference Bureau was **originated** in Albany, **and** because of its appeal to good

## More Fighting Years

sense has spread into every progressive state in the Union and even into foreign countries.

The development in all directions in the United States since the day of Mr Dewey's arrival in Albany has been remarkable. Neither he nor his friends would make any attempt to trace out or label all the influences which have been felt, but recalling fully his original oath and summing up his life to 1906 it is evident that he was true to himself and true to his vision.

Looking back dispassionately on those days however, the work of Melvil Dewey was as a whole, powerfully successful. The attacks of enemies had not hindered his progress towards a goal that he had set for himself. And while he in his later years laid his appraising emphasis on three pieces of work:—the Library School, the invention of the Decimal Classification and Relative Index, and the creation of the recreational home in the Adirondacks called Lake Placid Club, the compiler of this volume claims that his sense of proportion was somewhat at fault and that the untraceable, unrecorded influences of himself and the thousands inspired in his Albany years, will in the long run have had even more effect in carrying out his youthful purposes than anything else that he attempted in his long and self-sacrificing life.

Regarding his final separation from work in Albany it can safely be said that there were two forces at work in him to prompt separation. Temperamentally Mr Dewey preferred originating ideas and having others carry them out, or rather he wished to build a machine but not to run it. And second, his conflict with office-seekers and office-givers had been so continuous for seventeen years that he became conscious of having delivered his message, and it therefore behooved him to shake the dust and go on to the next city, which for reasons that will be made clear, was Lake Placid, New York.

## Lake Placid Club

'With the loyal support and cooperation of members of the Club and the Company's security holders, it is confidently believed that the Club can be carried forward along the lines of the ideals and principles established by its founder, Dr Melvil Dewey, and under which it has so greatly grown and prospered, to an even greater success; and the present Board of Directors is pledged to this endeavor.'

T Harvey Ferris  
Chairman of the Board, Lake Placid Co

Edward B Stott  
Chairman of Finance Committee, Lake  
Placid Club Council

Frederick T Kelsey  
Chairman of Finance Committee, Lake  
Placid Co

*(From a letter to Club members, printed in October,  
1932J*

To maintain the Club standards that were set nearly forty years ago by Annie and Melvil Dewey, succeeding generations of Club members have built up an organization that is truly unique. The child, the youth and the adult are all considered in their relations to each other. Of the three the adult is responsible to make the Club safe for the child and the youth; involving therefore exactly the home thought with which conscientious parents surround their family.

One of the prominent members wrote in July of the present year:

'Of the many great ideas of Dr Dewey that contributed to the building up of this Club, the one that I believe will survive as the greatest asset for the future growth, \* \* \* is the attention paid to the physical, mental and spiritual care of children and youths.'

## Lake Placid Club

This attention is so far-reaching in vacation months that from little tots up, group care, group amusement and graded activities catch all in a joint enthusiasm with others of about the same age; playing, or learning by playing, or exploring, or participating in safeguarded recreation. Melvil Dewey frequently said that he wanted children taught to breathe, to walk, to talk and to work correctly.

The sensitivness of both Annie and Melvil Dewey to pollen made it impossible for them to liv in cities for about four months altogether in each year. As early as 1878 Melvil Dewey had been aware of his sensitivness and every summer for several years he and Annie traveld when possible to the famous places of America to escape pollen colds. As early as 1885 there is evidence that they corresponded with Keene Valley, Essex County, New York.

The point of difference between these two united people and the average person was that they wer on an everlasting quest for an ideal location where insted of merely enjoying it themselvs they might invite others to share the benefits with them. Albert Shaw very aptly pointed out in a recent discriminating letter regarding his early connection with the Placid Club as far back as 1895, saying:

'Melvil Dewey had first gone to Lake Placid to escape hay fever through summer months, and had become greatly attached to the place and its environment. He could never accept anything in a calm and receptive mood. He laid hold upon the beauties of nature almost aggressively. He could not be content to enjoy summers at Lake Placid without trying to invent things and create things, and thus leave a permanent mark upon the locality. \* \* \*

'Melvil Dewey's energy was irrepressible. He reached out in every direction to extend the Club's landed domain. He was trying to do things, and learning much in the process of building up the resort of his ardent dreams. \* \* \*

## Melvil Dewey

**'He could never have been happy to have made merely a commercial success of a mountain resort. Nor would it have satisfied him to have made an interesting recreational center/**

The fact that the Lake Placid Club has expanded from a simple house with accommodations for thirty people (see illustration of first club-house) and a property five akers in extent, to over 400 bildings and more than 10,000 akers of land requires a rational explanation and it is easily found.

Melvil Dewey saw that such a uniquely extensiv vally in the Adirondacks as was the Lake Placid vally would, as soon as access was easy or comparatively easy, result in the establishment of a great number of homes and enterprizes and that these spotted over the landscape without any particular plan would spoil the general appearance of the vally and the mountain sides. Therefore, as soon as he found the vally (which was definitely before 1893), and for years thereafter, he directed all his energies to the securing of as large a tract of land as possible. As the Club is now arranged to care for 1500 senior members and 500 junior members (from twenty-one to thirty-five years of age) his vision and dâring hav resulted in all these families having at their disposal thousands of akers of plesure facilities, with each facility belonging equally to all members. It is easy to picture 1500 families scatterd in houses here, there and everywhere and thus to see the entire outlook of wild mountains and passes and productiv fields mard with individual homes. By the Dewey plan a most unique recreation home or club has been brought into existence by foresight exprest nearly forty years ago. The present ground plan, for the club-house and cottage section alone, is shown by the map folded in the last pages of this book.

T Morris Longstreth in his volume 'The Adirondacks' calls Lake Placid Club an experiment in intelligence. He says amusingly:

## Lake Placid Club

'The Lake Placid Club was sired by a sneeze; for, though at the age of forty-five Melvil Dewey had planted and seen sprout the seeds of more original and useful enterprises than most Americans achieve at ninety, he couldn't resist the spasms of hay-fever.'

Later on he tried in a paragraph to say what would be difficult to explain in a volume:

'What began as the Placid Club was, therefore, more than a refuge for hay-fever victims, more than an eating-resort for indigent intellectuals. It gave men breathing time in surroundings of haunting loveliness. It gave them a chance to cleanse themselves, to see things squarely, to come into high thoughts. And almost the only essential for membership was character. No matter how prominent or able or wealthy a man or a woman might be, if she or he had not that passport to good society, which is easier to recognize than to define, that person was asked to seek elsewhere more congenial atmospheres. And every season some such persons, who cannot grow accustomed to life without a bar, or who mistake the spirit of the Club in other ways, receive such a request. The result is that the atmosphere is kept so un-hotel-like that parents who would not leave a child alone in a hotel for a single night have often traveled abroad, leaving their young daughters at the Club for all summer in entire confidence that no unhomelike taint will touch them.'

Melvil Dewey announst in 1893 to a few founds that he had found, in Lake Placid, the satisfactory anser to all his seekings:

'We ar intensely interested in getting for neighbors people whom of all others we would prefer. I make therefore half a dozen copies of this letter to send to those whom we are specially anxious to summer with us at Lake Placid.'

Such early papers as ar now in existence as to 'The University Club in the Wilderness' show that William B Howland, Rev Lymlan Abbott, Hamilton W Mabie, Dr Nicholas Murray Butler, Prof Jeremiah W Jenks, Ira A Place, Prof J Lawrence Laughlin, Chancellor James R Day, Prof Lucy M Salmon and many others wer actively or casually interested in that which was first

## Melvil Dewey

intended to be a cooperativ club, but later became proprietary in order to permit continuous and responsible attention to Club property, and to maintain standards. Cooperativ ownership and in a sense cooperativ rule did not work. As Mr Dewey said in a letter of June 13, 1924 adress to Prof J W Jenks:

'The Club had troublous times in those early months.'

At the beginning was an idea. The idea took form and is now so stable that tho both Annie and Melvil Dewey hav past on, representativ Club members ar pledged to carry on the policies of the Club, which policies alone account for its great success. Just as was dreamd of at the beginning so at the present time, thirty-seven years after the beginning, there is self-perpetuating management, stability of motivs and underlying property values. According to the consolidated balance sheet made public April 30, 1932, the assets of Lake Placid Co, operating the property for the Lake Placid Club and for the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, amounted to \$3,993,381.

It is not necessary to trace thru all the elements of gradual growth. Conversation with employes who in some cases hav been with the Club for over thirty years reveals that Annie and Melvil Dewey always had the Club on their minds to such an extent that Annie Dewey workt out the original plans of practically every cottage and main bilding in the property, Coulter & Westhoff and later William G Distin of Saranac Lake being the architects. For long she was the presiding genius over Club detail. As age came on she became the 'lady in white' moving with quiet dignity among the members, ruling her little empire with firmness, peculiarly self-restrained and yet with a strong survival of the original impulses which made them both reach forward always to something yet to do here or hereafter.

Melvil Dewey early and late in the days of expansion, haunted every structural effort with his personal presence

## Lake Placid Club

day or night, equipt with his perpetual companion, a six foot measuring stick, each foot divided into tenths.

Both wer faithful custodians of a great trust, for the increase in the values of the property came very largely thru the investments of the members. The great structure was largely bilt from within tho from time to time hevly loan responsibilities wer taken on from outside when a special development of the m!ain bildings was necessary. The method of management from the beginning was that the option holders, investing in sufficient securities of Lake Placid Co to cover cost of bilding cottages, wer never the owners in fee simple but that all such cottages wer available for rent by the Club if the option holders did not bespeak the use of the cottage for their own use. Consequently every cottage bilt added to the strength of the Club and the method used resulted in tying in the interest and enthusiasm of each member no matter how remote from the general center his cottage might be.

After the Club began to be solidly establisht for a summer recreation home the activ mind of Melvil Dewey seeing the reality of winter sports attractions and in consequence running counter to every profecy of the villagers of Lake Placid, kept one house open accomodating eight members in the winter of 1905-6. Since then has been created a winter sports center that is world famous; so much so that the III Winter Olympics wer brought in 1932 to the community of Lake Placid because of its fame as a winter resort. The Club had 1600 visitors at one time in the winter of 1931-2. What St Moritz is to Switzerland and Europe, in an equally inclusiv sense is Lake Placid to New York and the United States.

Because a club conveys the idea of selected membership the Lake Placid Club has never advertized for general patronage, it being considerd an essential feature of this Club, just as with any other social organization, that

## Melvil Dewey

the members shall have it within their power to decide on other members to be taken in. To advertise would mean the acceptance of any respondent.

There is no possibility of understanding the Lake Placid Club if the investigator comes to it as if it were a hotel. It is operated with the exactitude that might be found only in the most advanced hotels. Yet there is nothing of the hotel character in the Club. Hundreds who come here in the two seasons—summer and winter—meet hundreds that they have met before. None are conscious of being managed; none need follow any fore-ordained line of amusement; all are free to come and go; and yet there is an atmosphere involved that binds all together in a sense of friendly and mutual interest.

Naturally then comes up the question of employees; for such an institution cannot run itself. In this direction it is necessary to go back to the early days of the Club and realize the rigid idealism of Annie and Melvil Dewey. From 1895 up to the present no seasonal worker has ever been taken on except after complete investigation as to character, reliability, intellectual interests, standing in college or school as the case might be. So it is correct to say that the employees are just as select as the members. In fact during the summertime and to some extent during the winter the young people can of themselves produce trained choirs for religious services, musical and dramatic programs, adding to the value and the interest of every cultural side of the Club.

As far as possible every one of the seasonal helpers was and is freed from any feeling of direct dependence upon the Club guests. Every employee is paid and yet every employee pays for that which he receives. A respect for the independence of each is thus maintained under conditions that are ideal. Yet Club members have often become interested in these young people of character and many instances have occurred where the door of **opportunity** was **liberally opened** to them through mutual respect.

## Lake Placid Club

A seasonal employe who was with the Club for fifteen years was invited this year to comment upon the employment side of the Club. Miss Edith Rowley of the Reis Library of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, answered in July:

'During an acquaintance of nearly fifteen years in which the contacts were those of a student in the New York State Library School, as an observer of his work as a trustee of Chautauqua Institution, and at Lake Placid Club as head of a department, I had many opportunities to observe the attitude of Dr. Dewey toward a great number of employees and associates under many different conditions and circumstances.

'One thing stood out clearly and was so repeatedly verified as to be unchallenged. He had an unvarying sympathy for the great number of workers on the Club payroll and a desire to have them work under the best conditions possible. In all the time I was in charge of a department containing hundreds of helpers over a long period of time, I never knew of a valid claim or a reasonable request that would make for health, comfort, or happiness of the group to be refused. He was always generous toward those who served well the needs of the Club. Mr. Dewey knew that happy people are the best workers and surrounded them with good living conditions and recreation that was suited to the ages and types of workers. There was a recognition of the individual that enabled the Club to draw a high grade of employee.

'The standards of service were so exacting that only persons in sympathy with them were comfortable and happy at the Club. But these standards drew as a magnet the type of helper who was willing to use his or her brain to understand, interpret, and carry out the ideals that were put before him. Students from many colleges and universities were delighted to spend a summer at the Club earning money to continue their studies. After one summer they usually continued to come as long as it was possible to combine the work of the remainder of the year with a summer season at the Club.'

With such a vast and intricate enterprise it of course is necessary that a group of employes should be permanent. Many of those with families live in the village of Lake Placid. A large proportion have been more

## Melvil Dewey

than twenty years with the Club and hold the memory of Annie and Melvil Dewey in deepest respect.

The loyalty of permanent employes and associates was shown on many occasions during the passing years, particularly during periods of financial stress. On his eightieth birthday without his knowledge the Lake Placid Club staff arranged for the transplanting of a magnificent palm to stand near the clubhouse in Lake Placid, Florida, as a memorial of their esteem.

Referring again to management, it must be evident that it is complicated. The Club acquired forty-two farms and consolidated them into eight farm centers. All poultry and dairy products together with seasonal vegetables are raised on the property by the employes of the Club. Every problem involved in overproduction at some seasons and underproduction at others has been met by unusually elaborate refrigerating systems, permitting the storage of 100,000 quarts of cream alone. The refrigeration plant is so laid out that all the necessary temperatures for the best results are available from a point above freezing to a point below zero. Seven great herds of Ayrshires, Jerseys and Holsteins are maintained the year round.

Having touch on the physical equipment of this strange enterprise, its maintenance is only possible through the individual enthusiasm of the members who return for their summer or winter vacations year after year and thus influence others to come to the five golf courses, the miles of bridle paths, the mountain and pass trails, the twenty-five tennis courts and diverse land and water sports.

Through the years there remained in the minds of these devoted people, Annie and Melvil Dewey, the purpose that ideal outdoor surroundings and the call of sports should also carry with it a cultural atmosphere in music, in literature, in non-denominational religious services—all predicated upon the expected behavior of cultured people when grouped with others of like tastes.

## Lake Placid Club

In a letter written this year by Theresa West Elmen-dorf there is an interesting comment on music as one of the cultural features of Lake Placid Club:

'I remember very well an occasion now many years since that a group of us were out in the dying twilight watching the moon in the west "pull down the sky", the glimmer of the darkling water of the lake, the low murmur and soft fragrance of the great pines over our heads responding to the play of the west wind. Mr Dewey turned to me and said: "Theresa, can you think anything to make it more exquisite, more perfect?" I replied: "Nothing, unless you could add really exquisite music." '

In early years, while the greatest simplicity prevailed, talented amateurs entertained informally. Development of musical expression at the Club is marked by several definite milestones.

In 1915 Madam Sembrich came to make her summer home there, and her pupils were heard in recital from time to time, including Dusolina Giannini and Winifred Cecil.

Among many concert artists who have sung here are Reinald Werrenrath, Martha Attwood, Anna Hamlin, Louise Stallings, Rafaelo Diaz, May Korb, Dorothy Seegar, Everett Marshall, Carolina Segrera, Richard Crooks, and John Goss.

Perhaps the greatest advance in musical expression at the Club was initiated in 1917 when instead of having one orchestra attempt both dance and concert music, two groups were engaged for the long summer season. Daniel Kuntz came as leader with five other members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 1918 Julius Theodorowicz, assistant concert master of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Carl Lamson, now and for many years accompanist for Fritz Kreisler, joined the group. Julius Theodorowicz has now conducted the ensemble for several of its fourteen annual visits to the Club. Popular solo artists of the ensemble this year and for years past are Hazel L'Africain Theodorowicz, cellist and member of

## Melvil Dewey

the American String Quartet, and Carmella Ippolito, violinist, who studied with Zimbalist several years.

Daniel Kuntz, retired after thirty-three years with the Boston Symphony, spends his summers at the Club among his friends of long acquaintance, and occasionally conducts a special children's concert to his own delight as well as to theirs, and is often guest conductor of the Sunday night concert. There are six other concerts each week; one of chamber music. Every summer the orchestra gives one or more afternoon concerts at each of four sanatoria in Saranac Lake and vicinity.

In 1923 a great addition to Club music was made by the installation in the new Agora, a theater and concert hall seating 1200 persons, of a four-manual Austin organ costing \$30,000, and by the employment of a resident organist.

Agora as a word is puzzling to those who are far removed from their Greek. Like many others of the aptly chosen names for different parts of the Lake Placid Club, Agora is exactly what it means,—the gathering place—the very heart and center of the whole Club activity, for which Annie and Melvil Dewey had planned and worked, and even given the name, fifteen years before realization. It was erected in 1922-23. The cost of the building alone was \$150,000. When the stage of Agora is not in use the historic Daly drop curtain beautifies it. This curtain was given to the Club by John Golden, and is one of the famous theater curtains of the nation. In 1923 the *New York Tribune* said of it:

'Augustin Daly had a noted Italian artist, Gariboldi, execute a drop for his theater. It was a combination of silk, velvet and appliqué work, with a blending of embroidery and painting. Gariboldi painted the figures and executed the embroidery with his own hands.'

With the building of Agora another constructive vision of Melvil Dewey, founder of the Club, became concrete. Realizing the need of education in music appreciation and

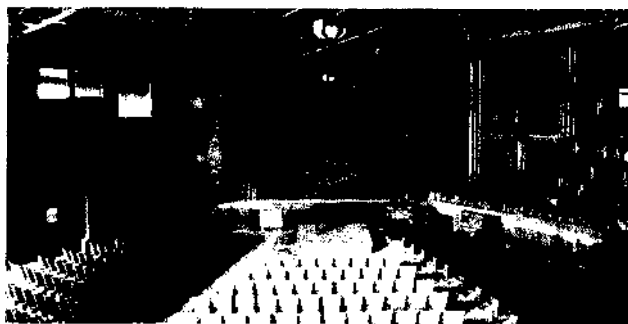
## Lake Placid Club Facilities



Playhouse for Children



Northwood School for Boys



Agora, the Club Theater



Annie (Godfrey) Dewey Memorial Chapel, Erected in 1923  
This Picture Shows the Chapel Decorated for a Wedding in 1932

## Lake Placid Club

music production in the small towns and rural area of northern New York, a music missionary, Mrs Maud Graff, now Mrs Walter P Stacy, was sent to churches of all denominations, schools and community choruses, to arouse a music movement culminating in annual music festivals held in Agora. These continued with large financial support by the Club from 1924 thru 1930, until they grew so greatly as to take the form of district festivals.

The Club choir, another phase of music here, has been of more gradual growth, but like the festival, had its beginning with the building of Agora. Religious as well as musical and other cultural needs of Club members have always been a matter of much consideration, and Agora made it possible for the first time to hold undenominational religious services, providing ample space and facilities for the hundreds in residence in summer. The good volunteer choir of 1923 has gradually been replaced by a group of over thirty trained young vocal students. They come to the Club from the famous Westminster choir, from the music departments of Cornell, Syracuse and other universities and from private teachers, to earn money for further study, and wait on table, finding time for rehearsals in the evening after supper, and singing in the choir Sunday morning between serving breakfast and dinner. The choir has reached such a degree of excellence at this time that it compares very favorably with the best city church choirs, and is a matter of surprise and great pleasure to all who hear it.

Several traditional features in relation to the various seasons of the year are carried thru with appropriate ceremonies during winter, summer and fall. A list is sufficient explanation:

### *Early Winter*

- Raising the Snow Birds flag for winter sports
- Search for Yule log
- Kindling of Yule log
- Wassail** bowl ceremony

## Melvil Dewey

### *Christmas, New Year's, and College Week*

Singing of Christmas carols by waits

Christmas service in Chapel

Christmas tree party for Club children

Christmas tree party for children of Club employes

Druids' search for mistleto

New Year's Eve dance, children's dance and farewell to Father Time

Ice Carnival

Twelfth Night revels

### *Other dates*

Bobby Burns Nicht

Candlemas and burning of Christmas greens

Shrove Tuesday—flapjack contest

### *Summer and fall*

Pioneer dinner for members of twenty years standing

Costume dance

Staf maskerade

Staf concert

Indian Council Fire

Hallowe'en party

Thanksgiving

Of the above, the Indian Council Fire, is specially interesting, being based upon the legends of the Six Nations. The ceremonies are very picturesque and given in accurate tribal costumes. The rituals for the Council Fire were the joint work of Melvil Dewey and A C Parker, a Seneca, mentioned in 'Albany Days'.

The lifelong purpose of Melvil Dewey to give educational advantage under ideal conditions has through the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation expressed itself in the Northwood School for Boys which the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation operates. The simple religious thought that staid Melvil Dewey in his youth may be regarded as embodied in the School hymn:

## Lake Placid Club

Father in Heaven, we ask for Thy blessing,  
We come to Thy fountain of goodness and truth,  
We gaze at Thy mountains, Thy woods, and Thy valleys,  
We seek now Thy guidance, in the days of our youth.

Wilt Thou show us the way thru the doubts that beset us,  
As we strive to prepare for Life's battles ahead;  
May Thy blessing now rest in full measure upon us,  
By Thee may our School forever be led.

One of the most enduring evidences of the Club spirit that prevails among the members came shortly after the death of Annie Dewey. A small but superb memorial chapel was erected to her memory and for perpetual Club use. There is not a feature of it but that represents gifts. Because the memorial elements in and near the altar, the gifts of pews and memorial windows necessarily include the names of many beloved members of the Club, past and present, complete details are included here for permanent record:

### Stained Glass Windows in Chapel North Wall

*Double Door*—Presented in honor of Melvil Dewey by an unnamed admirer.

Left panel—The Sower.

"Behold a sower from afar  
He goeth forth with might  
The rolling years his furrows are  
His seed the growing light."

—Washington Gladden

Right panel—The Seer.

"They dipt into the future  
Far as human eye could see  
Saw the vision of the world  
And all the wonder that will be."

—Alfred Tennyson

*Triple panel window*—In memory of Addie Mabee Elliott  
1872-1925 (placed by John Elliott).

# Melvil Dewey

## East Wall

*Double window* at left of altar—In loving Memory of Katherine Emily Wood. 1912-1925 (placed by Willis Wood).

*Double window* over altar in center—In Memory of Cornelius Woelfkin, D.D., L.L.D. 1859-1928 (placed by G H Warner and other friends).

*Double window* at right of altar—In loving memory of Joseph Nicholas Viot. 1874-1927 (placed by Mrs J N Viot).

## South Wall

*Triple window* over door—To the Memory of William George Russell, M.D. (placed by friends).

A tablet, not yet placed, is in preparation as a memorial to Arthur Kinne Dewey.

*Baptismal Font*—13 April 1916-16 May 1918

Kinne Dewey

Think of him still as the same, I say;  
He is not dead—he is just away.

*Chancel chairs*—In Memoriam  
1810-1874. Albert Clark  
given by his granddaughter Emma Clark Roche.  
1813-1905. Emeline Fuller Clark  
given by her granddaughter Emma Clark Roche.

*Altar Cross*—In loving memory of  
John Peck Balderston  
8th mo 30th 1910.

<i>Memorial</i>	<i>Name of donor</i>	<i>In memory of</i>
Agora chairs	Edward Ogden	Dr Cornelius Woelfkin
Agora pulpit	W E Shuttleworth	
Prie-dieu	Mr and Mrs Paul H Harwood	
Flags	Miss Jennie Brown	Capt Randolph R Brown Anne Huntington Brown
Communion set	Florence Pond	Margaret W Keck
Trays & cover	Mrs Mariana B Conklin	Edwin A Bradley and others
Paten	Irving H Griswold	

## Lake Placid Club

<i>Memorial</i>	<i>Name of donor</i>	<i>In memory of</i>
Dossal	Mrs E C Roche	
Vases	Mr and Mrs J S Fraser Mrs Randolph Chandler Edwin M. Bulkley	
Moffat Bible	Mrs E C Roche	
Alms basins	Mr and Mrs Paul King	
Minister's gown	Mrs Susannah P L McWilliams	
Himnals	Philip S Gardiner Mrs Darius Goff E P Eastman	

The markers on memorial pews ar:

James Dwight Arnold June 7, 1925	David Henderson McKay <b>1846-1898</b>
Henry S. Chapman 1837-1926	Martha A. Dickson McKay
Annie Godfrey Dewey By Co-workers in Home Economics	Angelica G. Oakley Eunice W. Tallman
Addie Mabee Elliott	Nellie B. Parkhurst Charles H. Parkhurst
Jefferson Clinton Farrar	Nettie E. Reidpath 1870-1898
Sarah Deane Pond Farrar	Katharine L. Sharp
Marianna Stoutenburgh Gleason	Carolina Yorke Stone 1838-1915
Herbert Parsons Gleason	Placed by her daughter Mary Stone Goode.
Ellen M. Hawks Harrison <b>1842-1924</b>	'Love <b>makes</b> Memory <b>Eternal</b> '
Joseph LeRoy Harrison	Willard <b>Case Viot</b>
Father and mother	
Nathaniel Emerson Mead	
<b>Jane Van Keuren Mead</b>	

## Melvil Dewey

Donors of pews other than memorial ar:

Mrs. Dean Alvord	Mrs. F. A. Cole
Mrs. W. B. Brickell	Mrs. W. Howard
Mrs. C. C. Brugel	William B. Rogers
Miss Emma Hartley	

As the years drew on for separation from all things earthly, Annie and Melvil Dewey put into effect a long-considerd purpose for 'seedsowing' in the many subjects that had caught and held their enthusiasms. Hence the creation of the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, endowd with gifts from Mrs J P Balderston, Mrs Frederic A Cole, Mrs Emily Dewey, Miss Lillian K P Farrar, Miss Dorkas Fellows, William Halls, Miss Margaret Miller, John Relstab, Mrs Spencer S Roche, Mrs John A Roebing, May Seymour, Katharine L Sharp and others; but more particularly with the gift of all Club or company securities by Annie and Melvil Dewey. The work of the Foundation is therefore dependent upon the vigor and advance of the Club itself.

In October, 1920 Annie Dewey wrote to Melvil:

'Last evening May (Seymour) read to the Wests, Theresa etc, her revised Foundation plan and we had quite a discussion. Arthur is greatly interested in the idea and in the permanency of the Club and offerd some good suggestions. He thinks it very desirable *to* start as soon as possible and get it *in* good working order during our lives, and that the first body of trustees should be a small one but of good weight. He especially advocated the good "business man" preponderance rather than too many educators and tho't 5 a good number, beside our own family.'

The Wests mentiond in the above ar Arthur and Alice West of Bethlehem; and close frends thru more than twenty-five years. The Theresa mentiond is Theresa West Elmendorf to whom reference is made in 'His Enduring Frenships' and elsewhere.

In 1922 the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation was charterd by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, and states as its objects:

## Lake Placid Club

'To restore to health and educational efficiency, teachers, librarians and other educators of moderate means who have become incapacitated by overwork; to establish, maintain and aid schools, libraries or other educational institutions, specially at Lake Placid; and to institute, organize or foster other movements to advance public welfare through education by means of the Foundation press, conferences, forums, addresses, guided reading and similar agencies/

Among the friends whose interest in Melvil Dewey's efforts for perpetual influence should be recorded, ar the first trustees who incorporated the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation:

Henri La Fontaine, Arthur E Bestor, Charles H Parkhurst, Harry W Hicks, Charles B Hobbs, William F Slocum, Hamilton Holt, Dr John A Wyeth, Annie Dewey, Melvil Dewey, Godfrey Dewey and Emily Beal (since 1924 Mrs Melvil Dewey).

Some of the activ interests of the Foundation ar:

### Seedsowing objects:

#### Simpler spelling of English

English as international auxiliary language

Simplified Spelling Board (America)

Spelling Reform Asn (America)

Simplified Spelling Society (England)

Anglic Association (Sweden)

#### Decimal Clasification

International Inst of Bibliografy

Northwood School

Adirondack music (festivals)

World Center. Union of international associations.

International fellowship

English-Speaking Union

Libraries, home and adult education

Home and institution economics

Eugenics and birth control

Thirteen month calendar

Tools and tecnique of brain workers

Shorthand for general use

Public helth and safety

Metric sistem

Conservation

Bilboard control

## Melvil Dewey

### The present trustees of the Foundation ar:

Herman K Beach, President Bridgeport Metal Goods Co, Bridgeport, Conn

Arthur E Bestor, President Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, N Y,

Rev Henry Evertson Cobb, STD, Senior Minister, Collegiate Church, New York

Mrs Melvil Dewey, Lake Placid Club

Harold T Edgar, Treasurer Edgar Bros Co, New York

Lilian K P Farrar, MD, New York

T Harvey Ferris, Dunmore, Ferris & Burgess, Utica, N Y

Ira A Flinger, Director Northwood School, Lake Placid Club

H W Hicks, Secretary, Lake Placid Club

Henry W Holmes, Dean Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass

Frederick T Kelsey, Lewis, Garvin & Kelsey, New York

Harry G Kessler, Controller, The Commonwealth & Southern Corp, New York

William Dodge Lewis, Editor The John C Winston Co, Philadelphia, Pa

Rev Benjamin T Marshall, DD, Piedmont Congregational Church, Worcester, Mass

E Clarence Miller, Bioren & Co, Philadelphia, Pa

John R Mott, Chairman International Missionary Council and Worlds Committee of the YMCA, New York

Charles T Newberry, Chairman of the Board, J J Newberry & Co, New York

Rev Charles H Parkhurst, DD, retired, Atlantic City, N J

John W Sheperdson, Vice-president Morgan Construction Co, Worcester, Mass

William Shillaber, retired, New York

Hon Walter P Stacy, Chief Justice, Supreme Court, Raleigh, N C

Edward B Stott, President E B Stott & Co, New York

Mrs William H Taylor, Treasurer St Clair Coal Co, St Clair, Pa

The management of the Lake Placid Co is in the hands of representiv Club members, the present Board of Directors being as follows:

## Lake Placid Club

Herman K Beach, President Bridgeport Metal Goods Company,  
Bridgeport, Conn

Frank A Bosworth, First Citizens Bank and Trust Company,  
Utica, N Y

Godfrey Dewey, Lake Placid Club

William C Feathers, President of Manufacturers National Bank,  
Troy, N Y

T Harvey Ferris, Dunmore, Ferris & Burgess, attorney, Utica,  
N Y and Chairman of Board of Lake Placid Company

Irving H Griswold, Chairman of the Advisory Board of New  
York Telephone Company of Northern New York, Platts-  
burg, N Y

Frederick T Kelsey, Lewis, Garvin & Kelsey, attorneys, New  
York

Harry G Kessler, Controller of Commonwealth & Southern  
Corporation, New York

Charles T Newberry, Chairman of the Board, J J Newberry &  
Co, New York

John W Sheperdson, Vice-president, Morgan Construction Com-  
pany, Worcester, Mass

William Shillaber, retired, New York

The entire voting stock of the Lake Placid Co is owned  
by the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation.

To record the friends of the Lake Placid Club, since  
all members of the Club have a direct interest in it, would  
require printing thousands of names. The omission of  
any is not significant of anything except a lack of space.

There should however be mentioned as a sincere friend,  
a man who is almost as well known to all members of the  
Lake Placid Club in recent years as Dr Melvil Dewey  
himself,—a man who coming to Dr Dewey as a youth  
in 1895, returned to him as a grown man of achievement—  
Harry Wade Hicks, secretary.

Between fifty-four, when he resigned from his responsi-  
bility in Albany, and eighty, Melvil Dewey, with the  
assistance of co-workers carried on creative work, after  
most men of his age would have sought for ease. His  
task in Lake Placid lasted actually thirty-six years tho

## Melvil Dewey

dreamd of for years before. This chapter only proves that he was endeavoring to round out the boyhood purpose of service. Rev Boyd Edwards, hedmaster at Mercersburg Academy, again visited the Club in 1932 after several earlier seasons. One day he was requested to comment on Melvil Dewey and the Club. What he said closes a chapter that has briefly covered more than forty years' devotion to one purpose:

'Institutions which stand must rest on something steadfast. Positive and simple qualities give foundation-men stability. Melvil Dewey was not only upright—he was downright. He had positive standards, controlling convictions, persistent ideals, absolute fidelities & intelligent opinions. He had thought many fundamental questions clear through. He knew where he stood and he knew why—a great characteristic. Even his air-castles he "did not pull down but built foundations under them". He dared to keep on standing by when the careless crowd was letting go and drifting off.

Teople who cherished high ideals as to influences & environment, both natural and moral, felt a deep confidence about making the Lake Placid Club a long-time all-summer home for their children. That, together with his happy sense of balance between simplicity and comfort, between natural beauty and artificial convenience, between bodily exercise and spiritual culture, gathered about him a loyal band of friends, counsellors and supporters who had character, and were willing to make quality of life the chief objective to which every lesser thing should be sacrificed whenever necessary. The character, quality and spirit of the Lake Placid Club are his monument and its endurance in any distinguished sense will depend upon its essential fidelity to his characteristic and essential ideals.'

## Library Evangelism

**In the perplexity in which the literary public now stand with regard to university education, whether studies shall be compulsory or elective; whether by lectures of professors, or whether by private tutors; whether the stress shall be on Latin and Greek, or on modern sciences,—the one safe investment which all can agree to increase is the library.**

**Emerson**

Intentionally the preceding chapters have dealt with certain of the most outstanding efforts of Melvil Dewey that would have general interest for the non-professional reader.

In 'Obviating Library Chaos' we showed non-technically what his Amherst dreams and invention had done for the reading public of the world. That chapter devoted to the origin of modern library methods and the spread over the entire world of the use of Arabic numerals to classify human knowledge, showed the gift of a great idea was worthy of comparison with any of the other notable inventions of the human race.

In 'Fighting for Progress' we saw that Mr Dewey risked his own professional life in order to open up wider opportunity for women in the professions.

In 'More Fighting Years' we showed a long continued battle to broaden every phase of educational opportunity, without any regard to partisan politics or to what might be called the spoils of office.

And in 'Lake Placid Club' we showed that at a time of life when many think of retiring from duties this extraordinary and dynamic human being, not content with enjoying a beautiful part of the country with a few friends, opened up and carried thru an enterprise that in its total detail is exceedingly complicated. Its effect has

## Melvil Dewey

benefited thousands and in its present shape stands unique in the entire world as a recreation home.

Now however it is necessary to give brief mention to a number of other activities connected with the development of libraries here and abroad. To understand several of these lines it is important to go back to Melvil's original idea as a youth. Perhaps it will be correct to assume that he reasoned in this way:

I favor Free Libraries for Every Soul. This idea cannot be brought to success unless either donors of great amounts are aroused to interest; or localities are fired with a competitive ambition to equal their neighbors; or legislators are convinced of popular demand.

He had only indirect influence on creating large private donations; but by means of publications, publicity and the creation of self-perpetuating organizations he did arouse thousands of neighborhoods to the desire for libraries and he did bring into being through legislation forms of law that made the creation of libraries on a uniform basis of support possible.

A next form of soliloquy that is justified by his immense accumulation of letters and particularly the letter to Andrew Carnegie in part 4 is this:

If libraries are multiplied rapidly they must be intelligently managed and hence it is necessary to train librarians, for otherwise there will be no uniformity in method.

What he did at Columbia in initiating a form of education that had never been attempted before in the history of the world is shown to be an essential part in a very rational vision of things that ought to be done.

Yet again soliloquizing he might have said:

If libraries are multiplied, and trained librarians are provided, how is it possible for them to be efficiently managed on uniform lines unless some of us settle down on the question of standardized library methods, standardized equipment, interchange of information, resulting finally perhaps in centralized cataloging and classifying.

## Library Evangelism

These soliloquies would explain his devotion to developing the American Library Association and its Supply Department, the Library Supplies Committee, later evolved into the Library Bureau by way of experiment with the Readers and Writers Economy Co. They will also explain why the Library Journal, Library Notes, Public Libraries and other state and general pamphlets all had reason for existence in that they were part of a project for reaching the public mind.

These soliloquies would also account for the vigorous promotion of state library associations beginning with New York, to keep the subject of library development constantly before the public; also the creation of state library commissions by the state so that a non-political group could bring the library problem before the political groups of each state. Such reasoning would also justify the effort to establish the American Library Institute of the elders in the profession, as well as to promote organizations that from one side or another would keep the library subject ever to the front.

Looking back over these diverse activities the startling evidence is found that Mr Dewey did not work for himself, was heedless or careless of personal advantage, made no deliberate preparation for a rainy day, and towards the end of his life with the consent of Annie Dewey and still later with the final approval of Emily Dewey, everything that he had was turned over to the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation so that the things dear to him in public advance might forever be carried on. Also to provide for 'seed sowing', which he loved best of all and thought would do most for his fellow men. It reminds one of what was said of Agassiz; that when some one applied to him to read lectures, or carry on some other paying employment, he answered:

'I can't waste my time in earning money.'

## Melvil Dewey

Dr O W Holmes told a somewhat similar story of John Hunter; that being interrupted by a professional call, when he was dissecting a tiger, he said:

'Do you think I can leave my work for your damned guinea?'

With this as an introduction we shall include a brief mention regarding the many lines of activity in which he and hundreds of others shared in the past fifty-six years.

The American Library Association was founded in 1876. It has remained in existence ever since. Its early years tested fully its value and its vitality. On only three occasions has there been no annual meeting,—1878, 1880 and 1884.

At the outset a number was given to each member on his certificate. Member No. 1 was Melvil Dewey; member No. 29 was Annie Godfrey (Dewey). Following out the original plan of numbering, the highest number attained in 1932 was 27,864. More than half the members are still surviving and therefore the actual active membership exceeds 13,000.

The annual meetings have been held in many different parts of the United States as well as in Canada. Only in rare instances has an annual meeting of the association been held twice or more in any one place. The annual meeting of 1932 was held in New Orleans; the first visit of the American Library Association to that territory in all the years of its existence.

Foreign influences of the association have been strong from the beginning. Twenty-one Americans were present at the international library gathering in London in 1877; ninety-four in London in 1897; forty-six in Brussels in 1910, eighty-two at the semi-centennial of the Library Association of the United Kingdom in 1927, and seventy at Rome and Venice in 1929.

Those whose knowledge of the organization is at all general will realize that the working officers acted and act for its continued existence and efficiency. The Secretary

## Library Evangelism

of the American Library Association from 1876 to 1890 was Melvil Dewey, who kept up with the involvd and responsible work only by over-exerting himself in Boston from 1876 to 1883; in Columbia from 1883 to 1888; and for two years in Albany from 1889 to 1890, and again in 1897-98. The honorable group of secretaries who followd in the footsteps of Melvil Dewey wer: W E Parker and Mary Salome Cutler, 1890-91; Frank Pierce Hill, 1891-95; Henry Livingston Elmendorf, 1895-96; Rutherford Piatt Hayes, 1896-97; Henry James Carr, 1898-1900; Frederick Winthrop Faxon, 1900-02; James IngersoU Wyer, 1902-09; (Edward Clarence Hovey, Executive Officer, 1905-07) ; Chalmers Hadley, 1909-n; George Burwell Utley, 1911-1920; Carl H Milam, 1920- .

The presidents during the more than fifty years that the American Library Association has existed hav gatherd into an honor roll the names of the most eminent. According to a table compiled by Mrs Henry J Carr the presidents hav been:

	Year
Justin Winsor.....	1876-85
William Frederick Poole.....	1885-87
Charles Ammi Cutter.....	1887-89
Frederick Morgan Crunden.....	1889-90
Melvil Dewey.....	1890-July, 1891
Samuel Swett Green.....	July-Nov., 1891
William Isaac Fletcher.....	1891-92
Melvil Dewey.....	1892-93
Josephus Nelson Lamed.....	1893-94
Henry Munson Utley.....	1894-95
John Cotton Dana.....	1895-96
William Howard Brett.....	1896-97
Justin Winsor.....	July-Oct., 1897
Herbert Putnam. . . . .	Jan.-Aug., 1898
William Coolidge Lane.....	1898-99
Reuben Gold Thwaites.....	1899-1900
Henry James Carr.....	1900-01
John Shaw Billings.....	1901-02
James Kendall Hosmer.....	1902-03
Herbert Putnam.....	1903-04

## Melvil Dewey

	Year
Ernest Cushing Richardson . . . . .	1904-05
Frank Pierce Hill . . . . .	1905-06
Clement Walker Andrews . . . . .	1906-07
Arthur Elmore Bostwick . . . . .	1907-08
Charles Henry Gould . . . . .	1908-09
Nathaniel Dana Carlile Hodges . . . . .	1909-10
James Ingersoll Wyer . . . . .	1910-11
Mrs. Theresa West Elmendorf . . . . .	1911-12
Henry Eduard Legler . . . . .	1912-13
Edwin Hatfield Anderson . . . . .	1913-14
Hiller Crowell Wellman . . . . .	1914-15
Mary Wright Plummer . . . . .	1915-16
Walter Lewis Brown . . . . .	1916-17
Thomas Lynch Montgomery . . . . .	1917-18
William Warner Bishop . . . . .	1918-19
Chalmers Hadley . . . . .	1919-20
Alice S. Tyler . . . . .	1920-21
Azariah Smith Root . . . . .	1921-22
George Burwell Utley . . . . .	1922-23
Judson Toll Jennings . . . . .	1923-24
H. H. B. Meyer . . . . .	1924-25
Charles F. D. Belden . . . . .	1925-26
George H. Locke . . . . .	1926-27
Carl B. Roden . . . . .	1927-28
Linda A. Eastman . . . . .	1928-29
Andrew Keogh . . . . .	1929-30
Adam Strohm . . . . .	1930-31
Josephine A. Rathbone . . . . .	1931-32
Harry M. Lydenberg . . . . .	1932-

In addition to serving a total of fifteen years as secretary, Melvil Dewey was twice president and treasurer three times.

The earnest, sincere work done by the officials of the American Library Association over a long series of years has gradually expanded the labors of the association so that its various committees now affect the entire library life of the nation whether represented by members or not. In later years the perpetuity of the association has been assured by liberal gifts that produce funds for special purposes other than the routine conduct of the association.

## Library Evangelism

The Library Journal was under discussion early in 1876 between Melvil Dewey and Edwin Ginn. In view of his blazing enthusiasm for libraries and his realization that there must be an organ of information the decision to publish a periodical was reasonable and would have gone through in Boston except for the discovery that Messrs Leypoldt and Bowker were considering a similar publication in New York. Naturally Melvil Dewey was the first editor and he was surrounded and supported by a number of those whose enthusiasm he had aroused. The best way to define this is simply to print alphabetically a list of the cooperating editors as shown in volumes I, 2 and 3—1876-8:—

Ezra Abbot, Harvard University; W E A Axon, Manchester, Eng; J J Bailey, St Louis Public School Library; J S Billings, National Medical Library; J Carson Brevoort, Astor Library; George Bullen, British Museum; James T Clark, Edinburgh; P Cowell, Liverpool Public Library; H O Coxe, Bodleian; Chas A Cutter, Boston Atheneum; J Eaton, Commissioner of Education; Chas Evans, Indianapolis Public Library; John Fiske, Harvard University Library; Richard Garnet, British Museum; Reuben A Guild, Brown University Library; W T Harris, St Louis; H A Homes, New York State Library; J D Mullins, Birmingham Public Library; E B Nicholson, London Institution; S B Noyes, Brooklyn Mercantile Library; Fred B Perkins, Boston Public Library; Wm F Poole, Chicago Public Library; L P Smith, Philadelphia Library Co; A R Spoford, Library of Congress; Thomas Vickers, Cincinnati Public Library; Fred Vinton, Princeton College Library; A E Whitaker, San Francisco Mercantile Library; J L Whitney, Boston Public Library; Justin Winsor, Boston Public Library.

The Library Journal went through the usual vicissitudes of a new periodical and there were a number of times when continuance seemed impossible. Knowing Melvil Dewey as we have come to know him through this record of his life, it is not ridiculous to say that when everything looked impossible of achievement, just then he made it possible. His records show many times when he strained his credit

## Melvil Dewey

and assumed personal responsibility to keep the Library Journal alive. In fact in this book will be found a statement that where he was to receive \$100 a month salary he finally received a large number of the early issues of the Library Journal, and many are in storage yet.

But no matter what the vicissitudes, the Library Journal as a periodical was a worthy rallying point and still is after a continuous existence of over fifty years.

Space in the Library Journal did not permit covering the entire library field satisfactorily with questions and ideas affecting the very small libraries and hence Public Libraries under Mary Eileen Ahern began its existence in 1896, twenty years after the Library Journal. From the chapter devoted to the friends of Melvil Dewey it will have been seen that Mary Eileen Ahern brought out thirty-six annual volumes.

Between 1886 and 1898 Melvil Dewey himself issued a periodical called Library Notes that was largely taken up with technical questions of library equipment, proving in a sense an organ to promote uniform cataloging, abbreviating, etc. Library Notes frequently stated in its letterhead that its field was improved methods and labor-savers for librarians, readers and writers'.

In later years the American Library Association has published 'The Bulletin' for use among members. This Bulletin which is the official organ of the association, is published monthly, but each year three special issues appear:—One devoted to the proceedings of the annual conference; another a handbook of information regarding the whole library field for the preceding year; and a third the annual reports.

The American Library Association through the Board on the Library in Adult Education publishes a quarterly entitled 'Adult Education and the Library'. It also publishes a book list and annotated buying list.

An additional bulletin put out by the American Library Association is the 'Subscription Books Bulletin' for the

## Library Evangelism

purpose of advising librarians, school superintendents and others regarding the authority, reliability and usefulness of subscription books and catalogs.

A library quarterly devoted to library science is published by the University of Chicago Press. *Special Libraries* is the official organ of the Special Libraries Association, mentioned later in this chapter.

Also H W Wilson and other publishing groups have made a point to distribute various kinds of information to the librarians periodically.

The summing up of all this line of thought is that whatever has so far been done and what will be done in the future is directly traceable back to the Adams Center boy who saw a lack in our modern civilization and stirred up hundreds and thousands of others to believe that the lack could be met—and was.

Melvil Dewey's account books and the early records of the American Library Association show that Mr Dewey operated in 1876, as he said several times humorously afterwards, a library supplies business in his desk in Boston. His accounts show less than \$300 worth of business in the year and this note added to the account says:

**'Run as private investment til June 30, 1877 and then gave all with profit to date, to the American Library Association under the name of Library Supplies Committee/**

The accounts of the committee from that time on cover June 30, 1877 til Nov 15, 1879. The business was closed out with this entry:

**'Nov 15, 1879 los and gain account \$120.43.'**

It was evident by this time that the question of library supplies would have to be on a more productive and practical basis. Therefore subsequent to a few months' indirect trial (and it was an agonizing trial) with the Readers and Writers Economy Co, a corporation was formed whose existence has gone on til the present time,—

## Melvil Dewey

the Library Bureau, now consolidated with Remington-Rand.

When it is remembered that Melvil Dewey not only kept up his editorial work but carried on research in relation to technical subjects as well as doing much with the business side of the Economy Co and Library Bureau, both in Boston and in New York and to a lesser degree in Albany, it is quite evident that he was attempting too much. Nevertheless as the years went on and he interested those who could look after the business details, the Library Bureau grew up to be one of the most progressive of all business elements in the United States, in that it is always improving upon itself and seeking efficient standardization of business as well as library methods. This organization safely based on the increasing demands of a growing nation reached the point where its shares had great value and it appeared at one time as though Melvil Dewey's investment in this right idea would relieve his later years from all personal anxiety. However, as has already been shown in the chapter dealing with the Lake Placid Club, he was so possessed with the restless idea of making a unique recreation home for a cultured public that from time to time he sacrificed his shares in the Library Bureau in order that the idea of the Lake Placid Club should not perish. Ultimately his sacrifice of these valuable securities was complete.

The chapter devoted to 'Inspired Co-workers' has already indicated that he and those associated with him were possessed with the idea of attempting to make library technique uniform. That phase of his creative work and those associated with him therefore need no further comment here.

As to influence in foreign countries, it has already been shown that he and twenty-one others went abroad with the original idea of organizing librarians in England. Results were first produced in the United Kingdom in 1877 and have spread from there to other civilized nations.

## Library Evangelism

The Library Bureau idea viz, uniformity in equipment, also went across the seas in the establishment of a branch Library Bureau in London and later in other parts of the world.

From the first state library association organized in New York State in 1890, there have grown state, provisional and regional library associations in practically every state in the union and each province in Canada.

In addition to associations of general librarians there are also now in various parts of the country, school library associations bringing together the librarians whose attention is to schools particularly.

Also out of the tendency to organize there has been brought into existence a Special Libraries Association which ties together those libraries that are operated as part of the business equipment of banking houses, research bureaus, newspaper morgues etc, and this group alone has many hundreds of active members scattered in every state of the union.

Then also has grown the tendency to organize library trustees so that there is now a Library Trustees Association involved in the subjects that deal with the local financing of libraries with which naturally the librarian ought to have nothing to do.

Among localized groups is the Ohio Valley Regional Group of Catalogers. In view of the weakness of some of the southern states there has been formed a Southeastern Library Association, and to meet the need of Louisiana, Texas and some other contiguous states, a Southwestern Library Association.

This does not exhaust the organization work for the advancement of libraries for in many of the largest cities there are library clubs tracing back their origin to the New York Library Club which Melvil Dewey organized in 1885 and which is still in active existence bringing together the librarians of a closely knitted territory for the discussion of problems that might not apply to a state or to a group of states.

## Melvil Dewey

According to Melvil Dewey's records the first state library commission was organized in Massachusetts. The idea was to have library expansion receive official sanction without compelling the individual librarians to approach the political organization of the state. These commissions are now found in the majority of the states and their functions are not all similar. For instance there is a commission in Idaho entitled 'The Idaho State Traveling Library Commission'. In Montana there is a 'State Library Extension Commission' and the same in New Mexico. These library commissions themselves have a nation-wide organization named 'The League of Library Commissions'. The state librarians also have a national organization 'The National Association of State Libraries'<sup>1</sup>.

Nowhere in the collection of Dewey material is there any evidence of his desire to be personally honored for work done. It is true that as a young man he could not be unconscious of the leadership he was exerting in his chosen lines. But when he came into the ruff and tumble of the merciless world and he had to fight with all the aggressiveness of his nature for that which he knew to be right he quickly rose to the grace of heart that drove self-seeking out. He never attempted to gather to himself the commendations of the world. He was satisfied to originate an idea. He was pleased when people rallied to the right idea. He was sorrowful when he had to fight to secure the victory of the right idea. But there are no traces of his attempt to serve himself or to claim credit except where an error had to be corrected. Now that he has gone a deliberate appraisal of what he did or initiated or prompted is right. Martha Conner, Associate Professor of Library Science in the Carnegie Library School of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, last year prepared for use throughout the library schools of the United States, an 'Outline of the History of the Development of the American

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

Public Library'. It does justice to the creative mind of Melvil Dewey. Miss Conner said in a recent letter:

'Mr Dewey was a great man such as the library profession had not before seen and whose equal we may not see for years. His fame will grow as the years pass. One has only to delve into library history to appreciate his work, his initiative and marvelous energy.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to go back to 1876 to find the slogan of the American Library Association. It sprang out of the heart and mind of Melvil Dewey riding back and forth with his whole thought on his world's work. The slogan was this:

'The best reading for the largest number at the least cost.'

It was the seed thought of all that tens of thousands have now done to make the world library conscious.

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## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

\*It is the generations of children to come who appeal to us to save them from the affliction which we have endured and forgotten.<sup>7</sup>

William Dwight Whitney

It will be easy to understand Melvil Dewey's lifelong advocacy of rational spelling, simpler weights and measures, and the use of abbreviations, if his passion for time-saving is recalled.

Facing the documents of this volume is a direct reproduction of one page of his oration on 'Time' delivered at Alfred before he was nineteen. The reverse of that page concluded his thought; the last sentence was:

'If life is so short and eternity so long, nothing but earnest, persistent endeavors will enable us to look back on a finished work.'

Picture then this youth forever carrying in his mind and soul the master thought later expressed by Kipling:

## Melvil Dewey

If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son.

If we understand this we understand all, and can sympathize with activities that may run counter to our own smug acceptance of the God of things as they ar. The average mind opposes change to such an extent that we even giv an untouchable holiness to establish usage. Such an attitude was foren to Melvil Dewey from beginning to end.

On no one subject in his record of useful work was more humor poked at him than in relation to simpler spelling. It is so easy to make fun; as did a certain newspaper when discussing the omission of *ue* from *catalogue*. It proposed to try it *on glue*. It raised the redy laf but left the principle untucht. When Melvil Dewey believd, as those know who hav red this volume, he believd with all his hart.

Anyone who givs thought to English spelling wil find these things ar self-evident:

1 The letters used in a word seldom indicate pronunciation (or sound) and therefore spelling cannot be based on sound—*ough* is a fair sample—and so each confusing word must be painfully memorized by all learners here or abroad. What can a foren reader make of this jingle?

**'Though the rough cough and hiccough plough me through  
I ought to rub your horse's hough for you.'**

2 The possibilities or probabilities of English becoming a world language because of its simple structure, depend upon spelling English words as they ar pronounst or pronouncing words as they ar spelt; otherwize the majority of English words ar a stumbling block to the foren reader.

3 There is nothing sacred in spelling. It is just a human inconvenience or convenience that arose as the

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

race advanst from the speaking stage to a printing and reading stage.

4 Accepted abbreviations ar just as accurate as words fully spelt. If we all agree that *Ga* means *Georgia* and so pronounce it, there is no reason to spel it out. There ar hundreds of such usages in the names of degrees. *MD* is never now spelt out and does not need to be.

It is not the place of the compiler of this biography to go into iether a lengthy or short argument as to why Melvil Dewey was right in saving time. There is no value in arguing.

He was iether wholly right in protesting against the waste of a child's time by compelling mere memory tests for spelling or he was wholly wrong—there is little room for a middle-ground. The pioneering spirit is iether understood or misunderstood; some wil always see a thing condemnable in daring to be different. But to any who realize that the race and its ways hav always been involvd in progression or retrogression, and that progress comes from those who dare out beyond the herd, there is at least warrant for asking many to understand a man to whom a wasted letter or figure or motion was a crime against the seconds of time that made the minutes and the hours of life.

Assuming the interest of the reader to hav continued to this point, let us trace the remarkable growth of spelling reform from the 'yo's until now. The reform was not created by Melvil Dewey—in fact in his early enthusiasm for time-saving as a boy he knew nothing of what modifications of spelling had been going on for centuries. It was only after he had pledgd himself to save the time of the children in learning spelling and weights and mesures that he learnd that use had simplified *ghospel*, *ghizzard* and *ghossip* by dropping the *h*; or that some daring innovators had changed *fysshe* to *fish*.

It wil be helpful to read a few quotations from *Tarts of Speech, Essays on English'* publisht in 1901 by Brander

## Melvil Dewey

Matthews, the eminent author and critic. He devoted the closing chapters of his volume to American spelling, and to the simplification of English spelling. The chapters shed light on the changes which have taken place and will take place in the English language as it prepares for the universal recognition and use which Melvil Dewey had argued for as early as 1870 in Amherst:

'What, then, do British writers mean when they animadvert upon "American spelling"? So far as I have been able to discover, the British journalists object to certain minor labor-saving improvements of American orthography, such as the dropping of the *k* from *almanack*, the omission of one *g* from *waggon*, and the like; and they protest with double force, with all the strength that in them lies, against the substitution of a single *l* for a double *l* in such words as *traveller*, against the omission of the *u* from such words as *honour*, against the substitution of an *s* for a *c* in such words as *defence*, and against the transposing of the final two letters of such words as *theatre*. The objection to "American spelling" may lie deeper than I have here suggested, and it may have a wider application; but I have done my best to state it fully and fairly as I have deduced it from a painful perusal of many columns of exacerbated British writing. \* \* \*

'The leading philologists of Great Britain and of the United States have repeatedly denounced English spelling as it now is on both sides of the Atlantic, Professor Max Müller at Oxford being no less emphatic than Professor Whitney at Yale. There is now living no scholar of any repute who any longer defends the ordinary orthography of the English language. \* \* \*

Any one who takes the trouble to inform himself on the subject will soon discover that it is chiefly the half-educated men who defend the contemporary orthography of the English language, and who denounce the alleged "American spelling" of *center* and *honor*. The uneducated reader may wonder perchance what the *g* is doing in *sovereign*; the half-educated reader discerns in the *g* a connecting-link between the English *sovereign* and the Latin *regno*, the well-educated reader knows that there is no philological connection whatever between *regno* and *sovereign*. \* \* \*

'Orthography is none the less a branch of philology, and philology does not come by nature. \* \* \*

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

'This "American spelling" is less absurd than the British spelling only in so far as it has varied therefrom. Even in these variations there is abundant absurdity. Once upon a time most words that now are spelled with a final *c* had an added *k*. Even now both British and American usage retains this *k* in *hammock*, altho both British and Americans have dropped the needless letter from *havoc*; while the British retain the *k* at the end of *almanack* and the Americans have dropped it. Dr Johnson was a reactionary in orthography as in politics; and in his dictionary he wilfully put a final *k* to words like *optick*, without being generally followed by the public—as he would have spelled it. *Music* was then *musickj* altho, even as late as Aubrey's time, it had been *musique*. In our own day we are witnessing the very gradual substitution of the logical *technic* for the form originally imported from France—*technique*. \* \* \* (The Simplified Spelling Board now uses *tecnic* or *tecnique*.)

'Perhaps, however, there is less even than ordinary logic in the British journalist's objection to the so-called "American spelling" of *meter*; for why should any one insist on *metre* while unhesitatingly accepting its compound *diameter*? Mr John Bellows, in the preface to his inestimable French-English and English-French pocket dictionary, one of the very best books of reference ever published, informs us that "the act of Parliament" legalizing the use of the metric system in this country (England) gives the words *meter*, *liter*, *gram*, etc, spelled on the American plan. \* \* \*

'I have seen a man whose home was near Gramercy Park stop short in the middle of a little street in May fair, and point with ecstatic delight to the strip of paper across the glass door of a bar proclaiming that CYDER was sold within. I have seen the same man thrill with pure joy before the shop of a *chymist* in the window of which *corn-plasters* were offered for sale. Yet he wondered why a British house should have *storeys* when an American house has *stories*; and he disliked intensely the wanton *e* wherewith British printers have recently disfigured *form*, which in the latest London typographical vocabularies appears as *forme*. This *e* in *forme* is a gratuitous addition, and therefore *contrary to the trend of orthographic progress, which aims at the suppression of all arbitrary and needless letters*. \* \* \*

'In a translation of Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature," published in London early in the nineteenth century,

## Melvil Dewey

I have found *aera* for *era*; and in the eighteenth century *economics* was *aeconomics*. *Esthetic* has not yet quite expelled *aesthetic*, **altho** *anesthetic* seems now fairly established.

The Greek *ph* is also a stumbling-block. We write *phantom* on the one hand and *fancy* on the other, and either *phantasy* for *fantasy*; yet all these words are derived from the same Greek **root**. Probably *phancy* would seem as absurd to most of us as *fantom*. Yet *fantasy* has only recently begun to get the better of *phantasy*. The Italians are bolder than we are, for they have not hesitated to write *filosofia* and *fotografia*. To most of us *fotografer*, as we read it on a sign in Union Square, seems truly outlandish; and yet if our great-grandfathers were willing to accept *fancy* there is no logical reason why our great-grandchildren may not accept *fotografy*. \* \* \*

*There never has been any "regular" spelling accepted by everybody, or any system of orthography sustained by universal convention.* \* \* \*

The United States government appointed a board to decide on a uniform orthography for geographical names; and the recommendations of this body were generally in the direction of increased simplicity—*Bering* Straits, for example. The spellings thus officially adopted by the national government were at once accepted by the chief publishers of school text-books. And these makers of school-books also follow the rules formulated by a committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science appointed to bring about uniformity in the spelling and pronunciation of chemical terms. Among the rules formulated by the committee and adopted by the association were two which dropped a terminal *e* from certain chemical terms entering into more general use. Thus the men of science now write *oxid*, *iodid*, *chlorid*, etc, and *quinin*, *morphin*, *anilin*, etc, altho the general public has not relinquished the earlier orthography, *oxide* and *quinine*. Even the word *toxin*, which came into being since the adoption of these rules<sup>1</sup> by the associated scientists, is sometimes to be seen in newspapers as *toxine*.

Thus we see that there is progress all along the line; *it may seem very slow, like that of a glacier, but it is as certain as it is irresistible!*

**Dr F A March, President of Lafayette College and later consulting editor of the Standard Dictionary, had**

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

workt wel along the way towards spelling reform before Melvil Dewey moved to Boston in 1876.

The American Philological Association, in 1875, appointed a committee consisting of Professor F A March; Professor J Hammond Trumbull and Professor W D Whitney, of Yale; Professor S S Haldeman, of the University of Pennsylvania; and Professor F J Child, of Harvard, to consider the whole subject of the reform of English spelling. The Association made many recommendations based on the successiv reports of the Committee.

From one of these reports, known as the Trincipls of '76' two paragrafs ar taken:

(1) 'The true and sole office of alfabetic writing is faithfully and intelligibly to represent spoken speech. So-cald "historical" orthografy is only a concession to the weakness of prejudice. \* \* \*

(6) 'To prepare the way for such a change, the first step is to break down, by the combined influence of enlightend scolars and of practical educators, the immense and stubborn prejudice which regards the establisht modes of spelling almost as constituting the language, as having a sacred character, as in themselvs preferabl to others. All agitation and all definit proposals of reform ar to be welcumd so far as they work in this direction.'

An International Convention for the Amendment of English Orthografy was held in Philadelphia, August 14-17, 1876, "to settle upon some satisfactory plan of labor for the prosecution of the work so happily begun by the American Philological Association and various other educational associations in this country and England". The attendance was widely representativ of British and American scholarship. (Melvil Dewey had joind in the call and was present tingling with purpose. He became Secretary of the Spelling Reform Association then created and with the exception of a brief period remaind so until his deth in 1931.)

Annual and quarterly meetings wer later held, the membership was largely increast, a *Bulletin* was issued in

## Melvil Dewey

newly design'd letters—soon abandon'd—to convey arbitrary sound-thoughts to the eye, addresses wer made, articles wer written, and in these and other ways the members "set themselves to produce and concentrate dissatisfaction with the old spelling". The recommendations of the American Philological Association which included certain changes in the alfabet, and many simplifications of spelling, wer adopted. A special list of eleven words, *ar, catalog, definit, gard, giv, hav, infinit, liv, tho, thru, wisht* was approved for immediate use, with particular emfasis on *hav, giv, liv*.

The American Philological Association took joint action with the Philological Society on the amendment of English spelling in 1883, on the basis of which twenty-four joint rules wer printed in the *Proceedings* of the American Philological Association for that year.

This movement, begun with so much enthusiasm both in England and in America, was carrid on in the United States by the Spelling Reform Association over thirty years, deriving much of its dinamic force from Mr Dewey. The National Education Association, in 1898, gave its approval to the movement and adopted the simplified spellings known as the Twelv Words {*catalog, decalog, demagog, pedagog, prolog, program, tho, altho, thoro, thorofare, thru, thruout*), and has used them in its publications ever since. In 1916 the Association adopted the rule for simplifying *-ed* to *-t*, when so pronounst, in past tenses of verbs. This Melvil Dewey had advocated since the early '70's.

Unfortunately, while the Spelling Reform Association had in its ranks the best scholarship in the country, it had in its tresury only such funds as the scolars themselvs could contribute—not enuf to carry on an effectiv campain.

When support for an activ propaganda was offerd by Andrew Carnegie in 1906, the Simplified Spelling Board was organized to conduct it, drawing its membership from

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

the American Philological Association, the Philological Society (London), the Spelling Reform Association, the Modern Language Association of America, the National Education Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and other representative bodies of scholars and educators, as well as from the front rank of men of letters and men of affairs. The Board thus continued, without historical break, the movement started by the American Philological Association in 1875, counting among its guiding spirits the men most prominently associated with the movement from its organized beginnings on both sides of the Atlantic.

To understand the offer of Mr Carnegie it is necessary to look into his letter files and those of Melvil Dewey. The letters produce definite evidence of Melvil Dewey's persistency when he was convinced on any subject. The letters and the replies are a perfect picture of the temperaments of the two men. Melvil Dewey looked at the whole field of simplified spelling while Mr Carnegie looked at the gains that could be made immediately with but little trouble. Both were ultimately in satisfactory harmony.

Beginning with Feb 18, 1902 and running thru to 1907, Melvil Dewey unlimbered his very argumentative guns and laid down a barrage. Quotations from some of Andrew Carnegie's letters are important:

**April 1, 1903.** 'I attach more importance to getting right on the ten most awkward words than I do to any general and wide scheme that could be suggested. I want some practical result for my money, to begin with. I should consider the success in the general adoption of the change in those ten words worth Ten Thousand Dollars a year for ten years, and would not consider more talk worth One Dollar/

**April 7, 1903.** 'You stated that you could get the signatures of the leading educationalists of the world to agree to use improved spelling in a number of the worst words, I think the number was ten. Until that is done, I have nothing to do in the premises.'

**April 23, 1903.** 'I stand just where I did, most anxious to get

## Melvil Dewey

the leaders to adopt the improved spelling of ten words and upon my return will be glad to see you upon the subject/

June 4, 1903. 'Let me say to you I will do nothing unless a body of the foremost of the literary men can be pledged to use improved spelling for the ten worst words. \* \* \* Let me see your list of men and their signatures. I should be one, but do not count, as I do not rank with the pundits.'

Jan 14, 1904. 'I have made up my mind that reform in spelling can only come by degrees. What I said to you was that if you could get the signatures of a goodly number of the foremost men to agree to use improved spelling in, I think it was, ten or a dozen words, I would be glad to aid the matter by providing the necessary funds/

On March 24, 1904 Melvil Dewey widely distributed from Albany a general circular regarding Andrew Carnegie's intention. This circular included a blank pledge reading as follows:

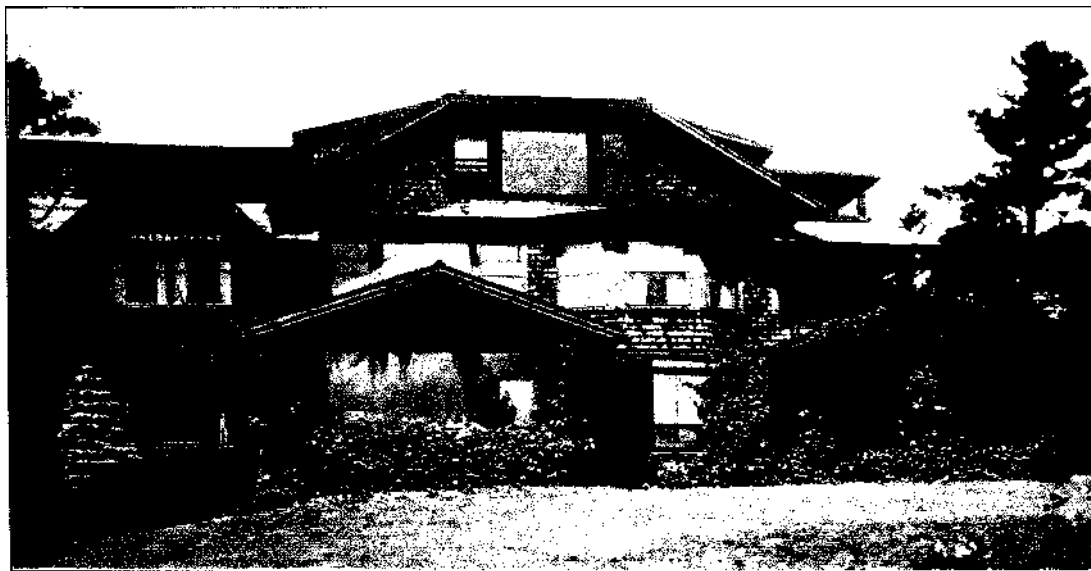
'I hereby agree to use habitually in my own writing at least 10 of the 12 shorter spellings adopted by the National Education Association/

We can thus picture Melvil Dewey, the impassioned crusader, using time and strength and means to produce a series of pledges which when secured would mean nothing to him financially and would only prove pleasing because representing a definite element of progress in the affairs of the human race. Once more he rejoices in causes rather than in personal gain.

On Jan 15, 1906 Melvil Dewey wrote to Andrew Carnegie congratulating him on the increase of the simplified spelling gift from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year.

Mr Carnegie himself was not merely the donor of means. His letters to the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune* and to President Roosevelt need not be quoted in full, but a few sentences show the earnestness of the man whom Melvil Dewey named 'The Patron Saint of Libraries'.

Andrew Carnegie to the *New York Times*, March 22, 1905: 'This effort is not a fad; no attempt at a fonetic system. It is



**Melvil Dewey's Study on the Third Floor of Whyt Birches, Lake Placid Club**  
An Unobstructed View of More than 50,000 Akers of Vally and Mountains



Lake Placid Club Buildings Viewd from the Air. Tennis Courts to the Left

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

only an effort to systematize and hasten a process that has been always at work/

Andrew Carnegie to *New York Tribune*, March 28, 1906; 'The editors who are disposed to ridicule the effort themselves use words and especially spellings which their predecessors a century ago would have described as degrading to literature.'

Andrew Carnegie to *New York Times*, Sep 3, 1906: '\* \* \* So far from being distinctly American, the Presidents (referring to Pres. Theodore Roosevelt's proclamation as to simplified departmental spelling) proposed changes in spelling, some 300 in number, are selected by the Simplified Spelling Board from fully 3000 words agreed upon and jointly recommended in 1883 by the Philological Society of London and the American Philological Association. \* \* \* We have thus the cooperation of the whole race (English-speaking).'

Andrew Carnegie to President Roosevelt, Sep 10, 1906, regarding his 300 words: 'Sooner or later the English language had to be reformed. \* \* \* Sincere congratulations upon this bold yet wise and characteristic step.'

Andrew Carnegie to *New York Times*, Sep 4, 1906: 'The society had its origin in this way. Upon consultation it was thought that if fifty of the foremost literary men in America would agree to adopt a few changes in spelling, which all agreed would be decided improvements, the society should be formed. Some 650 circulars were addressed to such men. The replies were astonishing. Nearly 600 pledged themselves to use the following 12 words:—*tho*, *altho*, *thoro*, *thorofare*, *thru*, *thruout*, *catalog*, *decalog*, *demagog*, *pedagog*, *Prolog*, *program*. So far these are all that the members have agreed to use. \* \* \*

'Its aim is not to destroy the language of Shakespeare and Milton, but to continue and, if possible, to hasten its further development, that it may become a more and more efficient instrument. It has admittedly become such since the great master's time, he being himself, as I understand, the greatest coiner of new words, new meanings, and new spellings who ever enriched a language.'

The development of the work made possible by Andrew Carnegie can be more fully understood by corresponding with the Simplified Spelling Board, Lake Placid Club, New York. The logic of the entire effort is there in various brief pamphlets.

## Melvil Dewey

Subsequent to Andrew Carnegie's death his gift of funds for the advancement of spelling reform ceased. When the exhaustion of remaining funds threatened to impair the progress of the movement as a whole, Melvil Dewey offered to the Simplified Spelling Board the use of space and clerical assistance at Lake Placid Club, now headquarters of both that organization and the Spelling Reform Association. The present secretary of the Simplified Spelling Board is Dr Godfrey Dewey who from college days worked actively with his father in the same field.

To list all who have participated in the spelling reform effort in the United States and the British Empire through the years of active advocacy since 1870 would take many pages in this biography. They would run up to the thousands—college presidents, editors, professors, business men, authors etc.

The generation succeeding the pioneers of 1876 included the following eminent men, presidents of the Simplified Spelling Board: Thomas R Lounsbury of Yale; Charles H Grandgent of Harvard; and Calvin Thomas of Columbia. The latter was also the author of the Spelling and Pronunciation preface to the Unabridged Standard Dictionary. Prof Raymond Weeks of Columbia who was president of the Spelling Reform Association for a period should also be mentioned.

It will not be considered invidious to mention the long-continued enthusiasm and influence of I K Funk, Editor of the Standard Dictionary. The amazing organization that gathered around him to create the Standard Dictionary from nothing—a truly American story in itself—brought the whole composite English language under review at one time. The correspondence between I K Funk in New York and Melvil Dewey in Albany and Lake Placid was constant for years. Between 1891-4 Melvil Dewey served on the Standard Dictionary Committee on Disputed Spellings and Pronunciations.

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

Following I K Funk must be named Frank H Vizetelly who in 1915 compiled 'A Dictionary of Simplified Spelling from the New Standard Dictionary of the English Language; and based on the publications of the United States Bureau of Education and the rules of the American Philological Association and the Simplified Spelling Board'.

The Dewey spirit in years of effort to save time never askt for personal recognition, was never puft up, and vaunted not itself. As a mere boy he estimated and believd that three years could be saved in a child's education by making English spelling more consistent. He was substantiated to the extent of two years by many later thinkers. Since his childhood thousands of words have been accepted in changed form by a reasoning public. As a pioneer Melvil Dewey went further than most, seeking to accustom the public eye to new forms, thereby hoping to break down the greatest obstacle to improvement, which he termd Visual prejudice'. His purpose was to make people think, counting upon logical results to follow in time.

On the Melvil Dewey principle that whatever is right wil ultimately prevail, the interest in English as an auxiliary language in foren lands wil grow. One form of English arizing in Sweden, and pland for use in foren countries, has been named Anglic. It is designd for easy reading of English by foren students, and involvs no introduction of new letters or simbols. A few lines wil show its caracter.

'For sum tiem there has aulso prevaeld an intenshon in Germany to uez English as an augzilyery wurd langgwij. Representativs of aul shaedz of thaut, which were endeivering to introduces an internashonal langgwij for purposez of muetual understanding, konsiliaeshon and pees amungst the naeshonz, wonted from the very start a living, and not an artifishl, langgwij which was uezed and spoekn by the larjest number of pursnz in the wurd.'

## Melvil Dewey

Dr Melvil Dewey's and Dr Godfrey Dewey's correspondence and contacts with Prof R E Zachrisson, Professor of English in the Royal University of Uppsala, Sweden, and originator of the Anglic movement, was very cordial.

The important feature of Anglic is that it originated in a non-English-speaking country, leaves at least sixty per cent of the words on the average printed page wholly unchanged and some five to fifteen per cent more only slightly changed. In 1930 an Anglic fund was organized abroad for spreading the knowledge and use of Anglic over the world, facilitating as says one commentator:

'International cooperation and peaceful intercourse among the nations.'

Also in keeping with the belief that the English tongue will come into broader use, constant efforts are being made to simplify it—the latest announcement being in relation to Basic English, whose principle is the mastery of the fewer than 1000 basic words that are in constant use and whose mastery would at once give the foreign tongue a fairly expansive control of English.

### Metrics

The enthusiasm of Melvil Dewey for metrics is shown in the chapter 'Three Years' Development'. F A P Barnard more than half a century ago compiled, and Melvil Dewey made public, the evidence that in the world there were over 250 standards for a pound and over 350 standards for a yard.

The general purpose that took form in the minds of other metrologists was to increase international contacts; to render commerce simpler; and to secure a standard that had a scientific basis. These advantages were realized by Melvil Dewey, but his first thought was for the child and its bewildering task in memorizing all sorts of weights and measures.

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

Fortunately Melvil Dewey in 1931 wrote some autobiographical notes on metrics which are very interesting as explaining his early inventive quest, his alertness to adapt all new knowledge that came his way and the influence that attached to his activities before he was twenty-five:—

'In skool in Adams Center I rebeld agens compound numbers. I told the teacher that jeometri taut us a strait lyn was the shortest distance between 2 points & that it was absurd to hav long mezur, surveyor's mezur & cloth mezur; also absurd to hav quarts & bushels of diferent syzes & to hav avoirdupois, troy & apothecari weits with a pound of feathers hevier than a pound of gold. I spred out on my attik room table sheets of foolscap & desyded that the world needed just 1 mezur for length, 1 for capasiti & 1 for weit & that they should all be in simpl decimals lyk our muni.

'I was puzzling over the names to giv the new rnezures when I red that Senator John A Kasson of Iowa had past in Congress a bil legalizing the metrik sistem. I lookt it up at once, found that it met my plan ideali & the next week went to our vilaj lyceum & gave a talk on the great merit of international weits & rnezures. From that day I became a metrik apostl.

'When I went to Boston in April, 1876 I soon saw clearli that my lyf work was universal education chiefli thru reading & free publik libraries & that libraries wd be useles to those who could not read, that Massachusetts in spyt of its World Fair medals for its eminence in education was losing on illiterasi, & that 1 of the 2 chief reasons why it took America so much longer than Germany & Italy to teach efisient reading was the waste of tym over compound numbers. I had charterd the American Metric Bureau for teaching & introducing into praktikal use the international decimal weits & rnezures. I induced Charles Francis Adams as 1 of the leading Americans to accept the presidensi whyl I as sekretari had all the hard work. We campeind on this for 6 years & made great progres. I got a number of arithmetiks to throw away the plates in which they gave a fals idea of the real metrik sistem, submitting problems & treating it without praktikal nolej. We got them all to drop *me* from *gramme* & spel *liter* & *meter* *er* insted of *re*. They gave decagrams, centiliters & other terms apearing in the ful tabls, but never used ani more than we use dyms & eagls.

## Melvil Dewey

I arranged with Fairbanks & Co in scales, with the Standard Rule & Level Co, & Keuffel & Esser for length measures, & with George M Eddy & Co for tape measures & with the Dover Stamping Co for capacity measures & we supplied some of the state departments & 100s of schools with standard metric weights & measures.

'We had lists of addresses given before teachers' associations, printed a Metric Bulletin, later called Advocate & got lists of papers & magazines to print our articles. Germany had adopted the metric system in 1870 but not much progress had been made. This grew steadily till now every civilized nation, Russia & Japan being the last 2 to come in, has made the adoption with the exception of England & United States.

'When I was called to Columbia in May, 1883 I was so deeply absorbed in new work there & keeping up my chief job as founder-secretary & maid of all work for American Library Association & Spelling Reform Association that I did give little attention to metrics. H E Davidson, my assistant to whom I had turned over my Boston office & work did what he could for a series of years but when my active missionary efforts were of necessity suspended the work lagged. Fynali Howard Richards, a Yale man of independent means, organized the Metric Association & took up the propagandist work & did what he could with limited means, so that each year the public here as in England are being gradually educated to the importance & the enormous saving that would come in direct use in education & in increase of international trade with the 55 nations that have at last adopted metrics.

'When in 1877 I took <sup>22</sup> American librarians to an international conference in London I went over to Paris & with Sir Edmund Barry, a prominent Australian official, visited Baron DeWatteville. He wished to impress his American & Australian **representatives** & **took** us to the Palace of the Archives with 4 uniformed attendants watching his every nod as he showed us about. At his signal they opened the great doors of a huge vault. Behind **these** they opened the 2d doors & again to the 3d doors till we were in the holi of holies where France kept its greatest treasures. The **Baron** handed a document to Sir Edmund who glanced at it & said: "Great God, the original edict of Nantes". He handed me **another** & as a boyish admirer of the great Napoleon I read the **original** of his will & the masterly postscript in his own hand, saying: "**I desire that** my ashes shall rest on the banks of the Seine in the

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

midst of the French people whom I have loved so well." That sentence tucht the harts of all France & his bodi was brot bak lyk that of a god & givn one of the world's famus toms in Les Invalides.

'I saw on the shelf a slender box of which they seemd not to know the contents but suggested that I was interested in that. They took it down, opend it & I saw the orijinal prototype meter which had been deposited there as the standard of the world on Dec 10, 1799. I sed: "My interest is great becauz I was born 52 years from that day & am proud that my birth was on the aniversari of the praktikal birth of the world's metrik sistem." I of the atendants turnd & sed: "Are you Melvil Dewey of America? We have known you here as the leading American apostle of the metric system." To a boy only 3 years out of collej it was naturali veri gratifying.

'America as the greatest labor-saving nation in the world shd hav been the leader in metriks & is at the tail of the 56 nations simpli becauz of our mother cuntri England. She held bak 170 years before she wd adopt our present kalendar & we held bak with her. At an anual convention when I recomended to the state skool superintendants of New York that they shd cooperate in securing the greatli needed 13 month kalendar a veri lerned man sed an insuperable objektion was that we ed not celebrate the aniversari of George Washington on Feb 22. I sed: "He forgets that George Washington was reali born Feb 11 & was 21 years old when America which lagd England, fynali adopted our present Gregorian sistem."

'I once had a pamflet telling of the protest made by England agenst the adoption of Arabic numerals. They had come from India to Arabia & being 1 of the greatest labor-savers the world has ever known, a universal languaj of quantiti, their use began to spred. But stranjli it was opozd & laws wer past imposing fyns if ani one used Arabic figures. The law compeld them to use Roman numerals or to write out quantities in words. The protest sed: "Ani one that sees V knows that it is five. But these invaders wish to adopt a queer Arabic karakter & they print a 5 lying down on its face. It is an outraj to try to compel red-blooded Englishmen to lern Arabic. Away with it."

'As a result of this pig-heded conservatism it was 400 years befor the Arabic numerals wer fuli receivd in England. The human mynd can hardli grasp what it wd mean to atempt the

## Melvil Dewey

computation of the world without their marvelous aid. The abacus, or ball slyding on wyrs helps.

'I day at the Lake Placid Club I askt Senator T H Ferris when he had plenti of leizur some day to try some simpl operation by the old method e. g., multiply LXXXVIII by XXVIII. Some weeks later he sed to me: "You nearly got me in the insane asylum. I rememberd what you said and starting from Utica to New York took a pencil and began work. A prominent Utica lawyer was in the seat with me and we worked over it till we reached Poughkeepsie and then said: ["Here is the insane asylum. We better get off and go voluntarily rather than go on with this and be sent there."]

'I hav 100s of tymes in adrees sed the English wer the greatest peopl in the histori of the world but the stupidest, in some things lyk their refusal to adopt, the kalendar & Arabic numerals. They ar giving the identikal arguments now in refusing to us syentifik speling & persisting as if it wer sacred to use what everi competent skolar in the world agrees is the most unsyentifik, illojikal, inconsistent, wasteful & altogether absurd speling that has been evolvd in the whole histori of the world.

'Dreamers advocate the merits of an octonal & duodecimal sistem over the decimal but it is mereli fanciful for as<sup>l</sup> long as man has 10 fingers & toes he wil use the decimal sistem & it cannot be much longer befor England & America wil complete the list of nations & the metrik sistem wil be the universal languaj of quantiti for the whole world.'

Melvil Dewey's militant soul would hav rejoist at some recent items of news.

In the sport pages of the *New York Times* on Nov 23, 1932, appeared the statement that the Amateur Athletic Union on the preceding day had voted without a dissenting voice for the use of the metric sistem in track and field events.

At a tecical congress held in Brussels in September among a number of recommendations wer these unanimously adopted by more than 1000 delegates:

1 The language used in technical instruction thruout the world, should be standardized.

2 Technical papers and documents should universally adopt the metric system.

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

### Abbreviations

The abbreviations which Melvil Dewey worked out as Secretary of the American Library Association and also in connection with the Library Bureau were essential elements in improved library machinery. In this direction there was mutual help between C A Cutter and Melvil Dewey. Later many of the finalities in abbreviation were carried to completion by May Seymour and Melvil Dewey.

The main thought in elaborating the system of abbreviations was to save the time of the librarian in making card records. If for instance, all librarians would agree that *G:* meant *George* and *G. .* meant *Grace* then after awhile it would become second nature to extend the full name in the mind without the trouble or time necessary to write it out in full.

Melvil Dewey applied the same principle to months of the year, reducing them to two letters or even one, where no confusion would result. Here are the abbreviations:—Ja, F, Mr, Ap, My, Je, Jl, Ag, S, O, N, and D; to be written between the day and year without punctuation, in logical order, as 10 D 32 for instance.

As all such agreement would, in its final result, affect the records on thousands, or tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of cards according to the size of the library, the practicality of the effort becomes apparent.

There are now hundreds of such abbreviations in common use in libraries, catalogs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs and biographies. The tendency has been for these to work out also into common correspondence and to appear on every envelop among the hundreds of millions addressed in the year to residents in the United States and abroad. Not all of this influence of abbreviations is claimed for Melvil Dewey but the manner in which he and those associated with him promoted and prompted the idea of efficiency through abbreviations has been one of the

## Melvil Dewey

markt but unrecorded influences on general business efficiency in the United States.

However we hav to go back stil further than 1876 to understand Melvil Dewey's breves. These represented his idea of saving time at his own desk. Later they spred thru all organizations that he controld, as related to office memoranda. If *e* ment to him *the* or *v* ment of he obviated the waste of time and, we might say, ink, in writing three caracters for *the* when one would do for all his practical purposes. The breves constantly in use in the early and later years of Melvil Dewey wer the following:

### Melvil Dewey's Notehand Breves

about	abt	except	xc
after	aft	extra	x
again	ag	for	f
against	agst	from	fr
always	alw	good	gd
am	m	<i>give</i>	gv
an	a	great	g
and	&	had	hd
are	r	has, have	h
as	z	her, here	hr
at	a	him	hm
be, been	b	his	z
because	be	in	i
before	bf	is	z
better	btr	it	i
between	btw	just	J
both	bo	kind	k
business	bz	know	no
but	bt	large	lrj
came, come	cm	like	li
can	c	make	mk
could	ed	man, many, men	mn
do, does, done	d	may	m
each	ea	might	mi
either	ei	more, most	mo
ever, every	ev	much	mu

## Spelling, Metrics and Abbreviations

must	mst	these, those	thz
neither	nei	this, thus	ths
never	nvr	thought	tht
no, nor, not	n	thru	thr
of	v	time, times	ti
oh, on, only	o	to, too	t
or	r	toward	twd
other, others	oth	under	u
our	r	up, upon	P
over	ov	very	vr
own	o	was	wz
part	pt	we	w
person, persons	per	were	wr
public	pb	what	wt
quite	q	when	wn
right	ri	where	whr
said	sd	while	whl
shall	sh	which, who, whom	wh
should	shd	whole	whl
since	sns	whose	whz
some, same	sm	why	y
soon	sn	will	l
subject	sbj	with	w
such	su	work	wk
take, took	tk	would	wd
than, then	thn	year	yr
that	tt	you	u
the	e	your	ur
their, there, they	th		

The above breves are included to show the time-saving instinct of Melvil Dewey. To write them became second nature with him and, as will be seen in the portion of a letter reproduced in facsimile in the chapter 'Cheerful Eventide', the resultant effect was that many more words could be crowded into a given space without any loss of clarity of meaning, providing the recipient understood the system.

## Boston Days

I have lived to know the great secret of human happiness is this,—never suffer your energies to stagnate. The old adage of too many irons in the fire conveys an abominable lie. You cannot have too many, poker, tongs, & all; keep them all going.

Prof E D Clark

The last three' days of Melvil Dewey in Amherst (April 7, 8 and 9, 1876), present a strange medly. On April 7 he visited Northampton, then went to Chicopee and had a long argument regarding rifles and pistols. On April 8 he borrowd \$100, paid up his local bills, rode John, examind a saddle, packt up his books and had a shoot with Prof Esty.

On Sunday, April 9, his emotions, as in Bernhardt Bay in 1869, got the better of him and he had several 'big' cries. Yet he cald on Prof Montague and they talkt libraries. Then he cald on several frends. The entries for that day end in this manner:

'It was to me a sad day for I feared it might be really my last. So with an earnest prayer that God will do with me what seems to him best I closed the book, for it is written and no entry can be altered.'

He therefore began a new diary without paying attention to his birthday, tho he did move on the tenth.

On April 10 he started for Worcester and Boston. In Worcester he went over Wesson rifles thoroely. In Boston he met Edwin Ginn.

The chapters 'Obviating Library Chaos', 'The Idea Spreding' and 'Library Evangelism' ar all related to this period of Melvil Dewey's life and wil shed light on his earnestness.

## Boston Days

While he was deep in preparing for the meeting of librarians in 1876 he was also occupied in preparing a full description of the Decimal Classification, in order to have it included in the enormous volume put out by the Bureau of Education, as an exhibit for the Exposition. This volume was entitled 'Public Libraries in the United States'. In it was a division devoted to classification. By that means Melvil Dewey was first able to bring the Decimal Classification in some permanent form before the librarian thinkers of the United States and the world; set forth in the chapter 'Library Evangelism'.

In addition to these two exacting duties he also was editing the Library Journal in order that there should be a periodical of authority circulating among the librarians and thus promptly conveying ideas to the members of the profession as well as eliciting ideas from them.

Therefore we can picture Mr Dewey from 1876-83 as being loaded down with too much responsibility of an unremunerative character. His correspondence of that time shows that within a few months after he arrived in Boston he was at his wit's end financially. Yet with his peculiar form of idealism he carried on every phase of the work that was loaded on his shoulders, with the thought of the cause being first and the remuneration being second. Looking back on those days it is possible to imagine Melvil Dewey taking no measure of his own strength but with fiery enthusiasm, his incandescent soul followed the logic of every thought to its conclusion.

In the original constitution of the American Library Association among the committees appointed appears in section 6 of officers, the following:

'The cooperation committee shall consider and report upon plans designed to secure uniformity and economy in methods of administration; and the association, board or committee shall have power to refer subjects to special committees.'

The cooperation committee early in 1877 began to report its findings. As nearly as can be now ascertained

## Melvil Dewey

the cooperation committee consisted of Chas A Cutter, Boston Atheneum; Fred B Perkins, Boston Public Library and Frederick Jackson, Newton Free Library. In the Library Journal of April 30, 1877 the cooperation committee submitted a preliminary report covering Standard sizes and standard catalog card'; May 31, 1877 they reported on 'accession catalog, standard abbreviations and cooperative supplies'; June 30, 1877 on 'the shelf catalog'; July 31, 1877 on 'abridged rules'; Aug 31, 1877 on 'library statistics, association binding, further abbreviations, binders, printed numbers, call slips, catalog slips, miscellanea and the supply department in general'.

With every one of these reports Melvil Dewey was involvd as Secretary of the American Library Association tho his name is not mentiond in any of the reports made by the committee. He threw each report into its final shape and bilt up most of its material.

But this was not all. By cooperation with F A P Barnard, President of Columbia, those interested in metric subjects wer brought together in a conference at Philadelphia and out of that conference grew the Metric Bureau of which Melvil Dewey was secretary.

But this was not all. Having become imbued with the idea of saving time for scolars and saving labor for publishers by a simplified form of spelling—and this enthusiasm runs back to his scool days as wil hav alrede been discoverd—he came in contact with Dr F A March, (father of General Peyton C March), the eminent filologist of Easton, Pennsylvania, President of Lafayette College. Thru the cooperation of Prof March and others there was formd a Spelling Reform Association, growing out of another meeting in Philadelphia in 1876. For this movement also he assumed personal responsibility for success. He undoutedly overmesured himself; yet nothing but such fiery enthusiasm would hav carrid

## Boston Days

thru in those difficult times such things as he did, in a sense superior to financial considerations.

His enthusiasm for takigrafy remaind so great that he attempted to hav it explaind in Harvard. President Charles W Eliot, in his own handwriting, under date of Oct 8, 1878 advized him that the corporation had made a rule that 'no person not an instructor in the university shall address the students in a college room.' It is interesting to know that this attempt to get takigrafy explaind in Harvard was not for himself but for another man who was endeavoring to promote some classes.

His account books of those days just as has been suggested earlier, could now be examind and a balance struck.

He had an office in Boston from 1876 to 1883; his business card covering three national organizations:

### **General Offices O, 7 & 8, No. 33 Hawley Street, Boston\***

Besides the ECONOMY CO., (a commercial corporation, manufacturing labor-saving devices for readers and writers,) three missionary educational societies have these offices as headquarters for the U. S. The collections illustrating each work are the largest known and are free to all. Each society desires as members all friends of education and progress, and many belong to all three. Otherwise they have no connection except the economy and convenience of offices in common.

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"The best reading for the largest number, at the least expense."

### **AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.**

President, Justin Winsor, Librarian Harvard University.

Secretary, Melvil Dewey.

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"The exclusive use of the International Decimal Weights and Measures/'

### **AMERICAN METRIC BUREAU.**

President, F. A. P. Barnard, S.T.D., LL.D., Pres't Columbia College.

Secretary, Melvil Dewey.

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"The simplification of English Orthograpy."

### **SPELLING REFORM ASSOCIATION**

President, F. A. March, LL.D., Lafayette College.

Secretary, Melvil Dewey.

Each society has a SUPPLY DEPARTMENT, furnishing at low prices, often at half former rates, everything it recommends, pertaining to the Library, Metric or Spelling Reform movements.

Supported entirely by gifts and members' fees, the smallest sums are gratefully received.

Every moment was occupied with something or another that was beneficial to society. There is no direct evidence that Annie Dewey was obliged to do indexing and cataloging but the accounts show that she toild pretty stedily and earnd considerable mony from work for Justin Winsor of Harvard, and for R F Poole of Chicago, on Poole's Index.

## Melvil Dewey

In five years Melvil Dewey became very widely known in a certain direction. All the librarians, all metrol-ogists, and all authorities on spelling of the United States became aware of his existence and aware also of his constant invention of new ways and means of securing uniformity in practis.

The cultural side of Boston and vicinity was exceedingly gratifying to both Annie and Melvil Dewey. They livd in Newton. They took part in the Newtonville Every Saturday Club because the principal object of the Club was the study of English literature. Mr Dewey was very activ in this Club, for papers amending the original printed constitution ar stil in existence, markt all over with takigrafy and interlineated here and there with new words, the whole aim being to make the organization a vivid part in the literary life of Newtonville.

There was also in existence at the time a Study Club in which both Mr and Mrs Dewey wer interested.

The social side of Boston for both Annie and Melvil Dewey was affected by contacts with the leading librarians of the vicinity, and other professional groups. There wer also important acquaintances arising from the family connections and frends of the Godfreys—the Clafllins, J G Whittier, Rutherford P Hayes and others.

The correspondence of Annie and Melvil with the Wellesley group was constant and most frendly. Many letters survive from President Alice E Freeman (Palmer) whose life was cut short at forty-seven. Several of her letters askt for advice on the selection of books in covering periods of history in which she specialized. It was out of the frendship with Alice E Freeman that Melvil Dewey was selected as advizer **to** the Wellesley College library in 1882.

Considering now the way in which Mr Dewey workt **for** the American Library Association, Spelling Reform Association, Metric Bureau, Library Journal, the **expansion of the Decimal Clasification**, details involvd in **creat-**

## Boston Days

ing material for library efficiency, a swelling tide of correspondence growing out of an increasing flow inward of questions on all sorts of topics;—it is evident he gave his strength without any thought of self or pay or personal honor. In fact he tried as much as possible in those days to prevent the use of the word Dewey as attacht to anything that lookt like reputation or fame.

It was during this period that he followd the logic of his reasoning and cald himself 'Dui' for economy of time and letters in spelling.

In 1883 he was cald to Columbia College to which place unfortunately he carrid over with him many detts that had accumulated from the Library Journal, Metric publications, from Spelling, and the evolution of the Library Bureau.

It is not at all necessary now to analize the difficulties that confronted him, nor the ways and means with which he overcame them in those Boston days. It is enuf to say that he did accomplish that which to the ordinary man would hav seemd impossible. And having accomplish^ in various lines, he left the task to others to carry on; for when he reacht Columbia he endevoid as much as possible to free himself from the annoyances arising from the various Boston offices he left behind.

The years from 1876 to 1883 wer foundation years. He had been compeld to recognize in these few years that a right idea is in no way self-executing. It was during these years that his genuin interest in the efforts of others as leading in the direction that he himself wisht the national mind to go, first began to show itself. Direct thinking, close analisis, enthusiasm and fiery zeal appear in all the pages of the man and his achievments.

## New York Days

Once started in a way that I think is right, I cannot turn back until I see the end of it.

Irving Bacheller's 'Coming up the Road'

The chapter which has been written regarding Mr Dewey's fight for progress in Columbia College places proper emphasis on the difficulties he met, the courage with which he met them and his clear idea as to the necessity of educating librarians. This feature of his work however was only a part of what he left behind him in New York as accomplished.

Not many months after his arrival in New York he realized the necessity of the librarians of greater New York coming together to 'clear' their difficulties and to become personally acquainted with each other. Out of this grew the New York Library Club which is still in existence and of which R R Bowker was the first president and Melvil Dewey the first secretary. The history of this Library Club covers much really practical achievement; for there were problems affecting the librarians of the metropolitan district that would not affect any other part of the United States. The history of that organization according to Milton J. Ferguson, present president, has been far-reaching.

The object of the New York Library Club as set forth in the constitution was:

'Its object shall be by consultation and cooperation to increase the usefulness and promote the interests of the libraries of New York and vicinity.'

The manual of the New York Library Club issued in May, 1931 states that the first meeting of the Club was

## New York Days

held Nov 12, 1885, and a committee appointed to prepare a union list of periodicals in libraries of New York City.

This was promptly done and provides another illustration of the thoroughness with which all library efforts were carried thru by Melvil Dewey. Whether the library called on was a subscriber to a periodical or not, it became possible for each member of the New York Library Club to tell an inquirer exactly where he could consult the periodical he wished. This union list of 1864 periodicals edited at Columbia College library indicated in abbreviations, for the year 1886:—1) Places of publication; 2) Frequency of publication; 3) Names of the libraries. Another element of perfection in the list is a footnote on the first page reading as follows:

Tour styles of type show the fulness of set.

Antique type denotes a complete set with current numbers.

Roman type denotes a partial set with current numbers.

Small capitals denote a partial set without current numbers.

Italics denote current numbers only/

At the second meeting of the Library Club Reservoir Park, 5th avenue and 42nd St was proposed as a suitable site for a central library building. On that location the New York Public Library now stands, as a result of the consolidation of the Astor, Tilden and Lenox foundations.

All the prominent librarians of New York City and vicinity have been members of the New York Library Club whose development closely paralleled that of the development of the library profession in the United States.

Mr Dewey was also active while in Columbia in promoting a form of university extension, as explained in the School Journal of March, 1888:

'Columbia College Library is doing a good service to the public by offering five courses of lectures free of charge to all who care to attend. The lectures are not advertised in the usual way, but Mr Melvil Dewey, Chief Librarian, has opened a

## Melvil Dewey

lecture register at the college library where is recorded the address of any one asking to know of lectures on any topic in which he may be interested. Tickets are sent to the addresses on this register. Topics are grouped in order to save the trouble and expense of sending tickets for science lectures to those caring only for literature and art, or vice versa/

Also for self-education and for the spread of enlightenment, Mr Dewey originated during his Columbia days the New York Language Club. It was started in 1885. The officers for that year were:

President, F A P Barnard

Vice-Presidents:

David Dudley Field

Rev Howard Crosby

Rev Roswell D Hitchcock

William H Arnoux

Secretary and Treasurer, Melvil Dewey

The constitutional purpose of the Club was stated as follows:

'Its object shall be to consider practical questions connected with language, its use and improvement.'

However in circulars issued by the Club the following are laid down as Club purposes:

To simplify the spelling; to perfect the language; to make education easier for the people; to take a useless tax from writing and printing; to quicken the universal diffusion of knowledge.

Many of the most intellectual men of the day showed their interest in the Club. Among them were: Prof Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, PhD; Rev William Hayes Ward, DD; Rev Henry C Potter, DD; Rev R Heber Newton, DD; Prof C P G Scott, Ph.D.

Of the above Prof C P G Scott, in connection with the Carnegie gifts for simpler spelling, became secretary of the Simplified Spelling Board.

In 1888 the Children's Library Association of New York City was incorporated in order to create and foster

## New York Days

among children too young to be admitted to the public libraries, a taste for wholesome reading. A very interesting feature of the original purpose of incorporation was this:

**'The reading committee shall be composed of accredited representatives of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Hebrew faiths. It shall be responsible for the character of the reading furnished the children; and to secure non-sectarianism no book or serial disapproved by any member of this Reading committee shall be supplied by this Association to its readers.'**

Also an important feature of the original announcement says:

**'It may not be credible to most persons that there are probably fifty thousand children in New York City who never see the inside of an attractive illustrated book. We believe that the free distribution of such books and of the best illustrated newspapers among these poor children is the best antidote to those vile newspapers and cheap novels which circulate so freely.'**

As would be expected, the announcement is definite:

**'We have no salaried officers. All the workers give their services.'**

The general operative idea was that children admitted to the ordinary libraries would be allowed to take books home for use.

Involvd in the libraries connected with the Children's Library Association in 1888 was F C Patten whose references to Mr Dewey and his work will be found in the chapter 'Fighting for Progress'. While the origin of the Children's Library Association did not seem to rest with Melvil Dewey the correspondence arising from its creation was all addressed to Mr Dewey at Columbia College. The earliest workers were Rev Peter Stryker and Miss Emily Hanaway, later Mrs Stryker. The idea was rapidly taken up in other cities until the children's departments in public libraries have become recognized as equally important with the adult effort.

## Melvil Dewey

In fact Melvil Dewey's very early emphasis had been on the good or evil influence of good or evil books on the child's mind and character. Viewing this one effort by itself it is apparent that the library idea became a gospel with Melvil Dewey who saw in library organization the spread of good thought, from the simplest child just able to read up to the oldest citizen desirous of information.

The Columbia library and its problems are perhaps sufficiently covered through the letter of President Barnard to Seth Low which will be found in Part 4. No higher praise could be given to any man than the praise conferred upon Melvil Dewey by his immediate superior officer.

Apart from the pioneer work done in Amherst the real trying out of all of Melvil Dewey's theories came in Columbia. It was a condition that confronted him and not a theory. The tests of his plans at that point worked a great benefit to all the other libraries of the United States that finally fell in behind him in the standardization of equipment, of cards, of records, of methods, of classification and of cataloging.

During the New York stay Melvil Dewey kept up his tremendous promotional interest in library publications, the Library Bureau and the individual needs of libraries.

The *Boston Herald* on March 19, 1886 interviewed Melvil Dewey who was in Boston on a flying visit from New York and this is what Mr Dewey then gave as his faith regarding the library, the school and the church:

'There's no way of reaching the public so effectively as by the printed pages. It far exceeds the pulpit or the rostrum in force and power of extension. Here, then, is the trinity. The public school makes the base, giving the foundation for education; the church forms one of the sides by its moral teachings and its care for the spiritual man; and the public library makes the other side by its broad and general training of all classes and sects. It will not be many years before the public library will be recognized for its full value, and the little libraries will be found wherever churches and schoolhouses are. Every small town will have its library.'

## Albany Days

While still connected with Columbia College Melvil Dewey on July 12, 1888 addressed the twenty-sixth Convocation of the University of the State of New York at Albany. It is no strain on the imagination to believe that he spoke on libraries. The subject was 'Libraries as Related to the Educational Work of the State'. The speech fills twelve pages of close print in the report. It so aroused the Convocation that in the morning session of July 12 President H E Webster of Union College presented the following resolution:

'Whereas, This Convocation believes that the time has come when certain of our public libraries should be recognized as an essential part of the State system of higher education and as properly a factor with the academies and colleges, in the composition of the University of the State of New York; and,

'Whereas, To secure to the State the full advantages of such recognition, it is necessary that proper provision should be made by the State for advisory supervision and guidance of existing institutions and for stimulating the formation of new libraries; therefore,

'Resolved, That this Convocation request the Regents of the University to take such action as may seem to them expedient for giving to such libraries as their official inspection shall show to be worthy the distinction, their proper place as a part of our State system of higher education.'

Therefore these resolutions addressed to the Regents came up in January 1889 at the first meeting of the Regents at which Melvil Dewey was officially present as Secretary. And on motion unanimous action was taken by the Regents to the following effect:

'Resolved, That the Regents heartily approve the request of the University Convocation of 1888 that such libraries as may be found worthy the distinction shall be officially recognized as a

## Melvil Dewey

**part of the** University of the State of New York, and given a seat in the University Convocation.

'Resolved, That the officers of this Board be directed to submit to the Regents at their next meeting plans for determining what libraries are entitled to the proposed recognition and for carrying into effect the proposition of the Convocation so far as existing laws permit.

'Resolved, That the Chancellor and the Committee on Legislation be requested to procure any needed legislation to enable the Regents to comply fully with the request of the Convocation for the official recognition of certain libraries as a part of the University of the State of New York.'

In view of the length of Mr Dewey's speech this, his vivid declaration of the importance of the library, cannot be printed here but should be consulted by present-day librarians. However those who are unable to secure the speech may feel well assured that Melvil Dewey glorified the library in its relation to the world's progress. One sentence can prove a key to all the rest:

'The schools give the chisel; the libraries the marble; there can be no statues without both.'

He also spoke at the twenty-seventh annual Convocation in 1889. His subject then was 'The Extension of the University of the State of New York', a speech nearly twenty-two pages in length. It gave an entirely new idea of what the University of the State of New York could and should mean.

On the day following the address the Regents held their semi-annual meeting and gave the greater part of their time to considering the extension of the work of the University. The result was a series of eleven resolutions under whose authority the Secretary with the guidance and assistance of the Regents began the expansion of the University work in a manner that has never from that time since ceased to affect the outlook of the State of New York. These resolutions can be consulted in the Regents' proceedings of 1889.

## Albany Days

The convocations after 1889 show almost no formal speeches by Melvil Dewey. He arranged the programs and hence kept his personal opinions in the background while seeking to make each annual Convocation surpass the other as a clearing house of educational progress.

Some few comments upon these convocations are important. Chancellor Upson in 1894 said:

'We are all very much indebted to you for the success of the Convocation. Without your tact and industry and energy and enthusiasm it would be a failure. It is good and noble work that you are doing in this and all the rest of it.'

Hamilton W Mabie, editor of the Christian Union and, in 1891, a trustee of Barnard College, said this:

'The Convocation was a tremendous success, thanks to the electrical battery which you somewhere conceal about your person. I do not think I ever saw so many first class men together in an educational assemblage; and everything was so harmonious and genial. You are to be congratulated, and you have a capital instrument for thoroughly practical educational work. In the Convocation I saw its possibilities for the first time/

Dr G Stanley Hall, President Clark University, said in relation to the 1891 Convocation that it was the grandest assemblage of educators he had ever attended.

As indicating the centering of all sorts of inquiries upon Mr Dewey's attention in Albany a group of letters that happen to lie next to each other in a 'B' file in the '90's, show the following points to be interesting:

- 1 Invitation to speak in Milwaukee, Wisconsin without pay.
- 2 Asking influence in securing a new library position.
- 3 An invitation to dictate the arrangements of stacks, periodicals etc, in a pedagogical library and reading room to be established in New Jersey. (It may be remarked parenthetically that the writer of this letter was Nicholas Murray Butler.)
- 4 From England urging a great effort on the part of Mr Dewey to get people to attend a library meeting in England. (Against one of the exacting requests of **that letter there is written**

## Melvil Dewey

in blue pencil in Mr Dewey's handwriting a word that looks very like a violent expletiv.)

5 Accepting a place on a committee of the American Library Association.

6 Inviting activity in Washington so as to save the official life of the gentleman distributing public documents.

7 From Cleveland, Ohio asking for information regarding the Library Association of the United Kingdom.

8 An English librarian asking how to travel thru America—what to see and whom to call on.

9 Asking how to organize a meeting in Chicago that would fil a hall capable of seating 3000 people.

10 From Australia regarding a conference of librarians in Australasia and asking how to handle such a conference.

11 More in relation to Congress and the superintendent of public documents.

12 Wanting to know what Mr Dewey would speak about at the Baptist Social Union.

13 Another in relation to Congress and the superintendent of public documents.

14 And another.

15 As to the best method of organizing traveling libraries in a state where none existed.

16 An invitation from a civic club on the part of an Amherst fellow student twenty-four years after graduation.

17 Information as to the probable plurality of worlds.

18 Submitting an index to Vermont statutes for Mr Dewey's criticism.

19 From a librarian of a southern state who had been selected without experience and now was asking how to carry on the work.

20 Urging correspondence with a state superintendent of public instruction with view to having him become interested in the American Library Association.

21 Asking for advice how to handle the revision of the existing statutes of a state as affecting education.

22 Making excuses for not attending a conference affecting proposed uniform library laws thruout the United States.

23 Finding fault with an article that appeared in Library Journal,

## Albany Days

24 Asking how to secure certain books from abroad without sending direct.

25 Wanting to know when the Lake Placid Club could be visited.

26 Asking for advice how to establish a library at Wilmington, North Carolina. (It happens that this letter was written by Wm H Bixby, at that time captain of engineers of the United States Army and afterwards widely known as General Bixby in connection with waterway improvements of the nation.)

27 Declining to furnish copies of colonial records from a southern state to the library in Albany.

28 In relation to the European adaptation of the Decimal Gasification sistem and asking for close comparison between the French and English languages.

29 Reporting that a little entertainment had raised \$22.20 and asking for advice as to the best American history to be purchast.

30 Inviting a lengthy statement regarding the establishment of the Crerar Library in Chicago.

31 Asking Mr Dewey's interest in an application for a position in Washington.

32 Asking tecnical information as to cataloging.

33 Protesting against delay in publishing reports of a recent meeting in Europe.

34 'I am told you know everything.' And then asking for the identification of two obscure quotations.

35 Asking assistance in securing parliamentary archives of France from 1700 onward.

36 From Charles C Bonney, President of the World's Congress Auxiliary which was held in Chicago in 1893.

37 Another writes asking Dr Dewey to classify the following topics: Connecticut western reserve; Ohio military lands; Virginia county lands; Virginia western reserve; Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee military land; Ohio fire lands; etc.

How many more thousands of similarly varid inquiries wer in other places in the files it is not necessary to detail.

The chapter entitled 'More Fighting Years' indicates that a prolongd struggle went on in Albany between Melvil Dewey and those in various forms of authority, legislativ or otherwise. Yet even that chapter could

## Melvil Dewey

not possibly tell the entire story. Such a feature for instance, as printing the examination papers for the Regents in a private printery almost brought on a physical struggle. Melvil Dewey knew that the examination papers must be safeguarded against improper access. The original method of printing and distributing was open to question. It ultimately came to the point of introducing printing presses in the Capitol in order that the question papers might not be known in advance.

Yet when all this is said regarding past struggles the seventeen years in Albany had many attractive features. Both Mr and Mrs Dewey took prominent part in civic and religious affairs and, as usual, in all that they undertook, tried to justify their existence and their participation. Mrs Dewey's interest was particularly strong in the work of the Episcopal church and she occupied positions of trust in connection with missionary societies especially. A very dear friend to both of them in those days was Bishop W C Doane.

During 1894 and 1895 Melvil Dewey in conference with other leaders of Albany prepared the way for establishing the Civic League of Albany. Correspondence shows letters from all parts of the United States asking for what the 'Outlook', described as a model hand book for the conduct of a citizens' law and order society. The whole foundation work of the league can be traced from Mr Dewey's correspondence. He became president and his secretary was Rev W M Brandage. The purpose of the league was:

'To advance the highest interest of the city of Albany through systematic federation of associations and individuals willing to cooperate for the common good/

It became in fact as well as in name a league or federation in relation to good government, civil service, enforcement of law, public morals, public health and safety, education, city improvements, labor and philanthropy. The results of its work are part of the history of Albany.

## Albany Days

The history of Melvil Dewey's stay in Albany would not be complete without some mention of the interest he took personally in enlarging the scope of the museum and in his friendly cooperation with A C Parker, leading to the transfer of the wampums of Onondaga and other nations to the University of the State of New York. The resolutions of the time read as follows:

Resolved, That the University of the State of New York be and is hereby elected wampum keeper of the Onondaga Nation with full power, and it shall be its duty to get possession of and safely keep forever all wampums of the Onondaga Nation and the Five Nations and the Six Nations and each of them.

Resolved, That the Onondaga Nation does hereby sell to the University of the State of New York all wampums for \$500, and that sachems and chiefs, present all, execute a bill of sale for the Nation.

Say-ha-que	Baptist Thomas
Sa-da-qua-seh	Jacob Big Bear
Ha-wen-jo-wah-e	Enoch Scanandoah
. . . . .	Ha-say-gwa-e-say
Ha-e-o	Levi Webster
Ho-yo-ne-a-ne	William Webster
O-gayis-qua	John R Farmer
Ga-na-haguh-yat	Wallace Carpenter
So-day-qua-scum	Asa Wheel Barrow
Ah-wa-ga-yat	<b>Orris Farmer</b>
Te-hes-ha	Daniel La Port
. . . . .	<b>Hos-hay-qua</b>

The correspondenc of Melvil Dewey in later years was frequent with A C Parker who after resigning as state archeologist became curator of the museum at Rochester. Together they applied many Indian names to the bildings and main land divisions of the Lake Placid Club.

W S Biscoe says in speaking of Albany days:

'If Melvil Dewey **did** not agree with anyone **he did not hesitate to say so.** Yet at the same time he was exceedingly willing and anxious to learn from the opinions and discussions of others. If a principle was involved however, he would not yield a point.'

## Melvil Dewey

Mr Biscoe also relates an oblique tendency for easing a refusal:

'Dr Dewey had a way of saying when he did not agree with a proposal: "I am afraid the Regents would not agree even if I were to submit the subject." In relation to anything he favored, his tendency would be to say: "I'll get the Regents to support the idea." The effect in both cases was the influence of Dr Dewey/

As the time for Melvil Dewey's departure from Albany approacht he became interested in his successor, Edwin H Anderson, and September, 1905 wrote a cordial letter of congratulations and then hospitably invited him to stop at 315 Madison avenue til he could settle himself in Albany at leisure, adding in his whole-harted way:

Tray don't think this is a mere perfunctory invitation. You may remember that I bought the house because of the Library school, so to have 2 extra rooms available, and for the whole 16 years our lecturers have always been my guests and I hope will be till the house is sold. \* \* \* It will give us very great pleasure if you will come right to us and stay just as long as you find it convenient and agreeable. If you like we will swear a big swear not to talk "shop" over there. I have a pair of horses that have to be driven every day and if you have a weakness for autos I have the best garage in Albany though only one of our cars is there at present.'

## Home Economics

**In Woman's Who's Who in America Annie Dewey is mentioned as founder with Ellen H Richards of the Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics.**

Whitcomb & Barrows published in 1912 the 'Life of Ellen H Richards' by Caroline L Hunt. This volume traced the influential career of Ellen H Richards, (Ellen Swallow) paying particular reference to her longing for usefulness and a love of pioneering.

By 1896, doubtless as a consequence of discussions by Annie and Melvil Dewey, the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York had decided to give household science a place in the examination tests which the state was making for college entrance.

Mr Dewey when outlining the questions, turned to Ellen H Richards for assistance because of her long enthusiastic work at Vassar where she abandoned astronomy for social service, and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where in her study of chemistry she cleared the way for laboratory research in preparation for work in the lines of public health, regarded in the broadest sense.

These references are essential to understanding what followed when Ellen H Richards made her first visit to the Lake Placid Club in September, 1898. She had been invited there by Mr and Mrs Dewey in order to talk over educational reforms. She addressed the Club on the domestic service problem.

From that address and from her presence there came the determination to hold an annual conference at the Lake Placid Club to consider home problems. Year by year the conferences continued, all bearing the name Lake

## Melvil Dewey

Placid, two of them being held however at other points; Boston in 1903 and Chautauqua in 1908.

At the latter meeting plans were made for changing the conference into a national organization. The home economics movement as a thoroughly organized effort was therefore formed in Washington Dec 31, 1908. The American Home Economics Association has met at Lake Placid on other subsequent years but no longer as a conference.

Fortunately the proceedings from 1899 to 1905 are well preserved and available as evidences of good foundation work with which Annie and Melvil Dewey were in constant touch. At the conference in Chautauqua in 1908 Ellen H Richards reviewed the ten years of the Lake Placid Conference giving its history and its aim and defined it as one of the achievements of those who had directed and organized the Club.

During those ten years of Lake Placid Club conferences the nomenclature of home economics was coined and courses of study planned from the kindergarten up to the university. Now that both Annie and Melvil Dewey, neither of them self-seekers, have passed on it is right to state that all speakers at these conferences were entertained by these two. From the conference that brought eleven people together in the beginning has grown a movement that is now affecting every portion of the United States.

After the national organization was brought into existence there were special conferences held at the Lake Placid Club in relation to institutional economics in which Annie Dewey played an important personal part, for her studies of the problems presented by a great and growing institution led as they did with Melvil Dewey in other lines to define duties for others to carry out very exactly.

It can be well understood how thoroughly important were the discussions at the first meeting of the institutional economics section at Lake Placid in 1914.



Portrait in Water Colors of Melvil Dewey  
by Elizabeth Gowdy Baker



Emily Dewey

J. Cadwalder & Cadwalder

## Lake Placid Club in Florida

It was at this meeting that Annie Dewey made known the score card for rating employes, which she and Melvil Dewey had worked out because of the increasing number of employes and the importance of carefully selected young men and women. It was on this occasion that both these great organizers confessed that in every human being there was an invisible quality which no score card could rate. It is that invisible quality which has carried many of the employes of the Lake Placid Club out into the greater world where some of them have become leaders.

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### Lake Placid Club in Florida

In the accumulation of Melvil Dewey papers there was one found written in 1907, entitled 'Lake Placid Club; a forecast'. At the time this was written the Club had existed only twelve years. The 'Seer' then declared that the development of the Club must result in establishing branches or affiliated clubs. In the fifth line of that circular he says 'in the south'. Apparently these circulars were distributed to members and friends of the Club. This is how the statement ends:

'The prediction is prepared here simply to lodge in the minds of our members the possibilities whenever enough of them feel the need in other places of the advantages they have found at the Club.'

Just as with the careful selection by Annie and Melvil Dewey of the Adirondacks for a recreation home, Melvil and Emily Dewey spent two seasons looking in southern states for that which would be the best location for those desiring a milder climate in the winter. The correspondence files show many visits in many directions and frequent conferences. So **ful** of **the** idea was Melvil **that when stopping** in Thomasville, Georgia, he outlined **to**

## Melvil Dewey

the leaders of that community just what would be the significance of the club that he had in mind.

After careful consideration of all parts of Florida he decided that the best location for a club would, in the long run and for all purposes be the rolling country of the state forming a ridge or backbone for the peninsula of Florida. Thru the hearty cooperation of the residents and property-holders, the vicinity of Lake Stearns was decided on, where rolling hills and cristal clear lakes abound, circled by citrus groves.

Of course Melvil Dewey could not be content to hav the name remain Lake Stearns; consequently we find in the legislature of 1927 the passage of an act changing Lake Stearns to Lake Placid. In the same year we find that twenty to thirty property-holders, acting together, made it possible to create the Lake Placid Land Co and thru that corporation secure the legal transfer of 3000 akers for development of the Lake Placid Club in Florida. Dr Dewey considered this gift of land as a future added endowment for the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation.

The tract of land finally selected as the best for cooperativ Club use lies between Lake Childs (now Lake Placid) and Lake Stearns (now Lake June-in-winter). Scrub palmetto, bushes, pines, oaks and palms covered the tract. In December, 1929 clearing began and out of the effort now has grown the first group of bildings to carry out in the course of years the vision of Melvil Dewey regarding a recreation home in Florida, foreseen 25 years ago. Edwin H. Clark, Chicago, is the architect.

Thru a favorable contract in 1927 with property owners in Lake Stearns (Lake Placid) it was possible to transforms the skeleton of a hotel into a bilding approaching the Club standards for temporary use. This arrangement permitted the carrying out of the Club plans and Melvil Dewey oftentimes exprest his thanks to E C Stuart of Bartow whose cooperation in the matter of the bilding was essential.

## Lake Placid Club in Florida

The noteworthy thing regarding any effort to improve or landscape a property in Florida is that in a very short time results are secured. William F Yust who was for twenty years at the Rochester Public Library and in 1931 took up his duties at Rollins College, wrote to Mr Dewey on Dec 14, 1931 just four days after the birthday ceremony when as already stated, volumes of congratulatory letters were presented to Mr Dewey. Mr Yust said:

'Less than three years ago Dr Dewey took me thru sand and brush to a lonely spot where the present club buildings are. He seemed to see them clearly then, but I confess I did not see them. Perhaps it was because only young men "see visions".

'What has been done since then seems like a miracle. The beautiful lawn room which we occupied, the continuous breeze across the lake, the good things to eat, the new-born golf course with its beckoning greens and the general homelike charm of the entire arrangement made an indelible impression on us/

Dr Dewey was very happy in his southern home. He reveled in the sunshine and mild climate and was entirely free from bronchitis which troubled him in the frosty air of the North. Since his death Emily Dewey has arranged to manage and develop the Lake Placid Club in Florida along the lines originally determined upon by Mr Dewey. There are interchangeable privileges by the northern and southern clubs.

The beauty of the main building of Lake Placid Club in Florida can be realized by the picture taken this summer and reproduced in this volume. All the ideality and simplicity of purpose of Melvil Dewey are safe in the hands of Mrs Emily Dewey.

The Club is rightly mentioned in this biography, because this new enterprise which will grow as the years proceed was dared upon and soundly established by Melvil Dewey in 1927 at seventy-six years of age, subsequent to the warning stroke which has been mentioned in the chapter 'Cheerful Eventide'.

## L P C Education Foundation

The Minute Book of the Lake Placid Club Education Foundation begins with the State Charter. It is followed by Melvil Dewey's statement of 17 Dec 21 (11 years ago) as to Foundation purposes. The existence of the Foundation was mentioned in the Lake Placid Club chapter. Mr. Dewey's altruistic hopes and purposes are made clear in this document.

'On my 70th birthday Dec 10 there was handed to me legal endorsement, ready for transfer to the Foundation trustees as soon as elected, even share of the voting stock of the Lake Placid Club. This common stock is \$100,000 & owns the surplus of \$320,000, thus starting the Foundation with \$420,000. In addition my wife & I are leaving over \$300,000 more to the Foundation. Katharine L *Sharp*, our vice-president, left \$20,000 which the trustees will administer as a memorial to her father; & May *Seymour*, for 34 years my co-worker left about \$40,000 last June, subject to a life interest of her relatives. We are sure from offers already made that *gifts & Legacies* will come from other Club members.

The Foundation trustees will own every share of the voting stock including the surplus of Lake Placid Co. It in turn owns every share of the L P C Stores, Inc. These trustees will annually elect the directors of the business corporation, which they can control fully in virtue of complete ownership. The trustees however will not be bothered with business details but will receive the *earnings* of this stock to be spent by them for education. If the directors elected do not employ satisfactory officers & maintain the proper standards, the trustees will have full power to change or correct. The aim is to fix prices of the cooperative Club so that there shall be 5% of total business left after paying all expenses. Part of this the trustees will use for needed *improvements*, but none of it can go as *profits* to any one. The balance will be for the objects stated. Lake Placid Club is the *social organization* run to give its members & their friends the greatest now health & strength for their coming work possible from the town & municipality.

## L P C Education Foundation

givn to vakations. It is open all the year, now has 5 clubhouses, over 80 cotajes, & big & litl, 320 bildings on 8000 akres. The Club as such owns neither real estate nor equipment. A fu members furnisht capital & agreed without taking salaries for services to run the bizines at aktual *cooperativ* cost with a marjin of 5%, even \$ of which was to be used for needed improvements. This stok has now been givn to the Foundation, its earnings to be used for 3 things, restoration, milionth man quest & seedsowing.

'Restoration The most wasteful thing in education is scrapping best workers when they break down from overstrain. When a rejiment went stale Pershing didn't send it home, recruit another sent from training camps clear acros the sea, but with 1/10 the tym, labor & expense, he sent the rejiment bak of the lyns to play for a fu weeks & then brot them to the fying lyn as seasond troops worth twys as much becauz of experience. The colosai mistake in education has been our failure to do the same with thoz whose zeal has led them to cripl themselvs by *overwork*. We propoz without sacrificys of selfrespekt or having the feeling of being an objekt of *chariti* to make it posibl to restore to helth and efkiensi meni of our best educational workers at a cost no greater than their home living expenses, or perhaps les.

'Milionth man quest\* The histori & destini of the world is chiefli shaped by a veri fu. From the 110,000,000 in America, if we took the no who influenst it most we shd chanje American & world histori. This milionth man comes ofenest from the humblest home. We want to make a distinkt efort to fynd wher-ever hiden, the boy or girl who givs promis of being a great leader & bring him to Placid in the fynest clymat with the best skools & develop his abiliti as near as posibl to 100%. If his parents can pay all or part of the expense, wel; if not, the trustees wil feed, clothe, fit for & send him thru colej from the Foundation, feeling sure that now & then it wil serv the world mytili by fynding a milionth man.

'Seedsowing We hav had members & gests from 46 states & 26 nations. Over 10,000 come each year & mor than eni other resort they ar known to represent *leadership*, & this distinktion is growing greater everi year. They ar here at leisure for vakation sumr & winter under ideal conditions for comparison of views & **agrement on things that need to be dun for publik wel-**

## Melvil Dewey

fare. Alredi sum improvements that hav had mor than national influence has started here, & we believ our plans, plant, fasilities & oportunities wil insure that mor & mor the Club will be a rekognyzd center for this vyтали important seedsowing which means educating the publik, often by long laborius proceses that reqyr much tym, til it demands & secures the things of most worth/  
(synd) Melvil Dewey

Since the above was written, Annie and Melvil Dewey hav past on. Subsequent letters from Melvil Dewey defined Foundation purposes more in detail. Other contributors and the present trustees are mentioned in the Club chapter. The vital dreams and works of Melvil Dewey are thus to remain vital.

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### Concluding Lines

The picture of Melvil Dewey's life, achievements and influence is not now complete and wil never be—unless we regard "never" as limited by the possible future expunging of all records of civilization.

Much detail has necessarily been omitted, as indicated in the Explanatory Foreword. The profusion of material was overwhelming.

The letters from his frends and admirers all over the world would fill another volume as large as the present. They will be preservd against the time of a more adequate appraisal perhaps in 1951—the Dewey centennial.

Only a few more lines will be added—in some sense as a summing up of an unusual career.

Honors: Melvil Dewey paid slight attention to honors conferd or deservd for things done. He was always more interested in things not yet done. Alfred and Syracuse Universities gave him) honorary degrees in 1902. A few certificates of honorary membership in organizations

## Concluding Lines

abroad; a few prizes for exhibits in Paris, Chicago, St. Louis, etc. were among his papers. The thought of monumenting was abhorrent to him. As late as December 23 last year, he wrote an artist, who had suggested a piece of personal statuary: "I wd forbid it."

Appraisal: Dr. Thos. E. Finegan, who passed on this year in Rochester after receiving many educational honors in New York and Pennsylvania, was connected with the New York State Education Department from 1892 to 1919, covering 13 years of Melvil Dewey's work in Albany. In a letter written in November, 1931 he said to Mr. Dewey:

Your vision, your intellectual powers, your facility of speech, and your direct and positive action made you a dynamic power in the development of American education.

Your contribution to the development of public library service gives you the distinction of being the outstanding American character in this field. This is not, however, in my opinion, your great service to education. Your chief contribution to American education was in the service you rendered in the promotion and development of secondary and higher education. You served the Empire State as Secretary of Board of Regents at an opportune time. It was under your administration and direction that a great public interest was aroused in the organization and maintenance of academic departments, and of high schools in the State of N. Y.

You made the right of the American youth to obtain the type of secondary and of higher education best adapted to his mental aptitudes and needs, and the obligation of the state to make available facilities for such instruction, fundamental in your educational creed and philosophy. As long as our democratic institutions prevail, the maintenance of high schools and colleges will rest upon this philosophy.

You also did a great pioneering work in adult education. Your advocacy and organization of university extension courses was a service of vital importance to the country. Adult education has become one of America's great problems. You saw it 50 years ago.

## Melvil Dewey

Appraisal: On Dec 28, 1931 the *New York Times* said this of Melvil Dewey:

025.4 D51

An appropriate epitaph for the late Melvil Dewey would be the above notation used in his library decimal classification system to identify his book. It would suggest the outstanding contribution of his eager and wide-ranging mind. His system, which has come into almost universal use, is capacious enough to make a place for all the volumes that have been written and printed, and flexible enough to admit hereafter all the books of whose making there is no end. Millions upon millions bear his decimal brand, and he will no doubt share, both in public and private libraries, the immortality of works in prose or verse whose place on the shelves he has permanently decreed.

If the activities of this world-known librarian were all recorded it would be puzzling to know where in his scheme to list them. He deserves a place in Philology, though he would not be comfortable there unless it began with an "F," since one of his persistent interests was reformed spelling. So aggressively loyal was he to the "queer-looking" spelling that he invited the sneers of many who clung to the old spellings as to friends of their childhood. He himself must have suffered pain as a lover of words in seeing their mutilated faces, but he continued valiantly to advocate the reform. He is also entitled to be remembered under 640 (and especially 647.94) for his demonstration of efficiency in the management of a guest hotel or club. Again, his promotion of outdoor sports, and especially Winter sports in the Adirondacks, would justify his being honorably mentioned under 796.9.

Still other categories have a right to claim him, especially professional education in this State. He was one of the pioneers in bringing about better preparation and compulsory registration for certain professions, notably that of medicine. But when an adequate biography is written it will give him a permanent place in 920.2—the place reserved for the biographies of librarians. Every library card catalog is a monument to him. The late J. C. Dana of the Newark Library attributed to him the "art of classifying" which, with the aid of librarians, made the library "helpful to a thousand ends and tractable to the humblest worker." Dewey's part in establishing schools for training librarians and in organ-

## Concluding Lines

izing the American Library Association will keep him in the lasting gratitude of librarians.

World Leadership: To the overwhelming majority of libraries in the United States the D C volume is the basic tool. To the world at large however, it is even more.

When, in 1895, the Institut International de Bibliographic, newly formed by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine adopted the D C as the only possible basis for its projected universal subject bibliography, to cover ultimately all subjects in all languages in all periods of the world's history, it sought and obtained from Melvil Dewey permission to publish, in any language except English, a translation and extension of the D C tables. There were added to the basic D C notation, consisting solely of the 10 arabic numerals decimally arranged, a series of manipulative signs:—

$\overset{\wedge}{-}$   $\overset{\wedge}{-}$  : (o) (3-9) = " " 00 A-Z

Of these the most important are perhaps the colon as a sign of relation, the parentheses of subdivision by countries; and the prone 8 indicating universality. These signs enormously increase the power of the D C for exact detailed analysis and made of the C D (Classification Décimale) a tool as indispensable to world bibliography as the D C had become to library economy both here and abroad. The closely related work of the Union of International Associations for a world center, and the achievements at the Palais Mondial in Brussels in demonstrating a new type of visual education, are all shot through and through with the genius of the D C.

Where the library edition of the D C offers a classification sufficiently detailed for library purposes combined with utmost possible simplicity, the bibliographic edition of the C D offers by aid of its various signs a minute precision. Through this interpretation and expansion, the basic work of Melvil Dewey has provided what is potentially the most invaluable of all the tools or tec-

## Melvil Dewey

niques of international scientific research and intellectual cooperation.

**Permanent Records:** Naturally as a librarian looking back over the centuries and forward to the times of the future, Melvil Dewey was deeply impressed with the impermanency of most human records. He was one of the incorporators of the Modern Historic Records Association which has since become inactive. What he then interested himself in would justify further consideration and revival. The purposes of the Association would include the use of photographic plates as a durable means of preserving records and documents; the use of the phonograph in preserving utterances of celebrities; moving picture machines to obtain records of important events; and the erection of fire proof buildings for the storage of records. The plan spoke of records on parchment, the burial of records on clay cylinders or tablets; and the printing of a few copies of each issue of every newspaper on rag paper. Some features of this plan have already been carried thru by various libraries, the *New York Times*, and other enterprising organizations. The full development of the idea as a national project still remains in the future.

**Racial growth:** It was a constant and favorite thought with Melvil Dewey that each generation should stand higher than the preceding. Quotation is made from an article by him, appearing in the Fiftieth Anniversary volume of the National Education Association:

"Civilized man has become as a god in what he dares and does, because he stands on the shoulders of all his predecessors and utilizes the work of millions of men in thousands of years."

This mental attitude made him content to see improvement built on improvement, knowing that faithful foundation work was essential to the superstructure, whether foundation buildings were honored or not. Among his papers was found an opinion quoted from Bishop Temple:

## Concluding Lines

'It (education) is the power whereby the present ever gathers into itself the results of the past, and transforms the human race into a colossal man whose life reaches from the creation to the Day of Judgment. The successive generations of men are days in this man's life. The discovery of inventions which characterized the different epochs of the world's history are his works. The creeds and doctrines, the opinions and principles of the successive ages are his thoughts. The state of society at different times forms his manners.'

Time-saving: Melvil Dewey passt to many the thought of time-saving which had been supreme with him since his boyish days at Adams Center. He put it this way:

'We lengthen lyf by labor-saving methods & devyses. By doing twys as much in each hour we may dubl lyf. Sum of the supremeli foolish afekt to despyz ani saving of tym, speciali in tryfls, as bad form, but the total of "tryfls" makes up most people's waking hours. \* \* \* They "do as grandma did" & never ask why ani more than sheep going around 3 syds of a holo squar when as smooth a path strait akros is onli  $\frac{1}{3}$  as long.'

Second Power: Hundreds of times during his life, Melvil Dewey told in print or by word of his desire to stimulate one person a year to do constructiv work and thus in fifty years to have fifty people carrying on tasks that he could not do. It was his modest joy in his closing years to think that he had succeeded. The simple story of his life proves that insted of fifty he aroud thousands, who blaze with purpose to broaden the horizon of millions of readers. The sequence in his life-thought was 'I am' therefore 'I can'; if so 'I ought' and 'I will'. He saw ahed of his day things that wer not and created them. He tucht others with an inspiration that still affects the world. He labored so well that his works liv after him. Melvil Dewey was a seer, an inspirer and a doer.

Life - A very narrow isthmus between a boundless  
eternities & a past & future. To look forward & look back,  
& the brain grows faint & dizzy in a vain attempt to comprehend  
the infinite. But although our concepts of the future are indistinct  
and we cannot understand its ways of a mile within us  
that may neither be hushed nor mistaken, plainly says -  
of the future we exist a part. & we pass this thin stratum  
called life, we feel deeply that life is very short, eternally long,  
thrice & eons & life flowing quickly & is almost like  
rapidity for a form that is hidden. We cannot like wisdom,  
to note & enjoy & use & know that it must contain enough  
& a golden land to supply & create & a river. It is possible but not  
prob. if how many use the time & if a point were inexhaustible,  
how much it may contain, how long the rapid & may continue  
& a secret known to God alone. It is not less true & that we  
cannot see & lit eons but it is much less regarded. But we  
and beside a lit stream. Knowing that a very moment or last  
hour life must be fully I think it would impel & not slough  
like us & adoring. If we have a mark to do & for what other purpose  
could we have been created, we must do it while a day lasts. For every  
tick & the bird caught comes upon cannot cry for laborer. As yet  
in field & usefulness is fully occupied. Once you master, out your inclinations,  
then turn your attention to the field & the wants & the human family will

### Life

Essay by Melvil Dewey, June 8, 1870  
(Transcription on page 44)

## Part 3

### Documents of Historic Value

'The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,  
Moves on. \* \* \*'

Fitzgerald's 'Omar Khayyam'

'Whatever hath been written shall remain,  
Nor be erased nor written o'er again.'

Longfellow's 'Morituri Salutamus'



## Three Genetic Papers

Because the Decimal Classification idea as it first occurred to Melvil Dewey in Amherst in 1872-73 is an important element in the entire history of library development in the United States and foreign countries, it is considered fitting to preserve for the future information of the world the three papers prepared by Melvil Dewey and submitted to the Library Committee of Amherst College on May 8, 1873. The original manuscripts are still in excellent condition.

As these three papers were produced by a young man just over twenty-one and represent pioneering research in a direction that had great possibilities of confusion, they are unique. It is true that as written in 1873 they are not perfect mirrors of conditions in 1932 and must not be now regarded as authoritative utterances regarding the entire Decimal Classification. They are printed here because they represent a Declaration of Interdependence that has been realized since among all librarians in all parts of the world. To give added actuality to his achievement a page of the original manuscript is photographed and used in this volume.

At the time these papers were prepared he also wrote papers on 'To construct the scheme of Classification', 'Library Catalogues', 'The Subject Catalogue', and 'To Assign the Class Numbers'.

At or about this time he wrote papers on 'Routine', describing how a book was to be handled when received; also 'Care of Books', 'Choice of editions', 'A History of Books', and 'Our Catalogues'.

### Library Classification System

Select the main classes, not to exceed nine and represent each class by one of the (ten digits) nine significant figures. Sub-

## Melvil Dewey

divide each of these main heads into not more than nine subordinate classes', and represent each sub-class by a digit in the first, or ten's, decimal place. Sub-classify each, or any, of these eighty-one (hundred) classes, into not more than nine sub-classes; and assign to each, one of the digits in the second decimal place. Thus the sub-classes may be increased in any part of the library without limit; each additional decimal place increasing the minuteness of classification ten-fold. Arrange the classes numerically; (omitting the decimal point but arranging as if it were written after the first figure) and the books of each class alphabetically by authors under that class—the books standing in the same order on the shelves as the titles of the same in the catalogue. Enter in each volume in place of the number of its shelf as usually entered, its class number as far as assigned. For convenience of runners, enter, in the usual place of 'number on shelf, the author's name (if anonymous the letters or words as in the catalogue) spelled as it should be in the catalogue. Readers will call for books thus located by their 'class number' (instead of 'shelf') and author's name as printed in the catalogue (instead of 'number on shelf').

When the number of volumes in any alphabet increase enough to warrant, select from it all of a like character and give them a place together (alphabetically of course) e. g. If the class were 47 add to each volume selected for the new sub-class a digit making the class number 4.71. The next sub-class picked out would be 4.72 thus allowing ten new sub-classes instead of the original class 4.7. Books of a general character, embracing more than one topic or subject would remain in the general class, e.g., A Dictionary of Science would receive no sub-classification but remain simply with main class number. If it were a work treating of the subject 4.7 generally, not limited to any of its sub-classes it would take 4.7 only as its alphabet number. Large sets—public documents, serials, periodicals etc should be given a distinct number for each set, then the alphabet word may be omitted and simply the class number & vol. attached to each book. Of course the subdivision of the class should be carried far enough to entitle the set to a distinct number. The cipher has its regular zero power i.e., indicates no classification e.g., 0 would be the class number of a general cyclopedia which covers all the nine classes. 470 would indicate that the work embraced

## Three Genetic Papers

several or all of the subheads 471,2 etc and hence o indicates no further classification.

It is desirable to fill out the scheme fully when an additional class is made, since there would be danger of confusion if only 471 e.g., were chosen without knowing what 472,3 &c were to be. If convenient *nine* subheads will be desirable because of symmetry—but the system is not at all affected if only a part of the nine figures are employed, e.g., if seven classes were made, 478 and 479 would not appear in the scheme.

## The Merits of the System

A somewhat extended personal examination of the various systems of classification in use by the large libraries of this country, and such facts as were accessible concerning library economy abroad, lead me to think the proposed system better than any single one now in use for the following reasons.

It allows of any and all changes in building, shelving, &c without any change whatever in the press marks as first catalogued. Each book being located relatively to the other books according to its subject; and not according to a wooden shelf, it is clear that so long as the book is by the same author and on the same subject there is nothing to be changed in any removal or recatalogueing. In this respect as well as many others the plan has exactly the merits of the card catalogue over the old method—indeed the system owes its origin to careful study of the card catalogue system now generally conceded to be the best ever devised.

The shelf catalogue (with cross references—all on cards) affords at the same time the best devised subject index—always complete to date and of easy reference. The same numerical arrangement of cards as of books is also of the greatest convenience and utility in cross reference.

Books on the same subject are found all together (as far as it is possible to make close classification of books) and no growth of special subjects, or limitation of space, or changes of any kind ever separate them. This is of the greatest utility to the library staff and such persons as have access to the shelves since they find in one place all the resources of the library on the subject they came to investigate.

## Melvil Dewey

Much time is saved the runners since, excepting the readers for amusement only, the calls for books are almost uniformly for several on the same subject. In this system, the runner finds them within reach of each other; in the old they are more or less scattered thruout the building.

This grouping also shows at once what imperfections or wants the library has in any department, also if there are any duplicates, since they would appear side by side.

The simple press mark shows not only where the book is but what it is and of what size, and on the records the character of each person's reading is clearly indicated. In the boxes of slips for books issued there is a full table of the classes of books 'out\*' at any time. The value of these self-recording statistics will hardly be overestimated, giving without extra labor an accurate history of all the books read. A mere counting of box slips at stated intervals also gives a history of the use of books in each department.

The system requires no changes in the old plan of cataloguing, except writing the class number in each volume in place of the common shelf number. Therefore if at any time any change seems desirable, a simple disregard of this number throws the book into the old plan.

The annual cleaning of shelves allows of necessary moving of classes without any extra labor, thus every inch of shelving is economized.

This alphabetical arrangement is used & approved in the library of N. Y. State, N. Y. Mercantile Ass., N. Y. Apprentices Soc. & many others—all those mentioned being much larger than our own.

Of the many objections & difficulties that occur & have been suggested, there is as yet none from which the way is not clear.

The system is easily understood & applies equally well to a library of a hundred vols, or of a million, it being capable of indefinite & accurate growth; the system growing with the books in the same direction & at the same rate; an exceedingly desirable thing wholly unattainable by any other plan yet proposed. Thus the very great labor & expense which attends the reclassing, re-arranging & re-cataloging, which was essential after a few years of growth in all libraries, is wholly obviated by this plan.

## Three Genetic Papers

The librarian is free from the common danger of locating two books in the same place or of overfilling a shelf. At present those books whose press marks are lost or varied *in* copying & printing, can be found only by accident. By this plan any books may be found without a catalogue since the library is in itself a full classed subject catalogue & may be referred to in the same way & with similar ease.

No vacancies on shelves occur if a book is lost, condemned, exchanged or sold as duplicate.

It is of great utility in classing & handling pamphlets—giving each its number once for all & therefore a simple numerical order accomplishes everything. Only a librarian can appreciate the labor saved in this vexing department by so simple & effectual a system. A like application to unbound periodicals has similar merits.

In case the books were to be arranged in the old plan, the facilities for cross reference, for statistics, for arrangement of classed catalogue, & for many details of library economy, afforded by this system, make it very desirable that each vol. should receive its class number as proposed, whether it be the basis of arrangement on shelves or not. The librarian in any satisfactory system acquaints himself with the character of each book before he locates it. By writing this class number in the book at that time, he gives to all users of that book an accurate key to its character in the simplest possible manner, thus saving repeated examinations of that large class of books whose titles are unsafe guides to their real subjects.

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### Its Special Adaptation to Our Library

If the plan be good in itself and for the use of libraries newly organized, it has also special merits making its present adoption in our library highly desirable. Of these the following might be mentioned.

Our great need of a good subject index would be fully met by this plan since the shelf catalogue (on cards most convenient) with cross references added would be a full index by subjects and the numerical arrangement would add greatly to its usefulness by the facility of cross reference they afford.

This plan will allow us to use every available shelf to its full

## Melvil Dewey

extent—also to add shelving as needed in the present Librarian's room both of which are impracticable at present without total disregard of classification. Our very limited space would be economized as much as possible in this way.

This plan will bring together sets now separated and which must remain separated in the old plan since it has been proved by all libraries that the space assigned to certain subjects will surely be filled long before the others thus making it wholly necessary to break up and scatter subjects.

The system allows of gradual adoption without confusion with the old. Therefore the library

1 May all be bro't into this classing at once;

2 Or gradually as time & means allow;

3 Or only the new books may be thus classed leaving the main library until a new building is erected. For reasons of accuracy the gradual change seems most desirable.

The peculiar character of our readers & the large number having access to the shelves make such a plan peculiarly desirable in the College Library while our faculty by the valuable assistance they might so easily render each in his own department, would enable us to class the library with an accuracy impossible to the best librarian unaided by special students.

The series of papers taken altogether indicate the thoroughness with which as a young man he had considered all phases of library economy or technique.

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### First Library School

In the chapter 'Fighting for Progress' reference is made to the historic statement prepared by Mrs Henry J Carr regarding the first conference to which the idea of a school of library economy was proposed and discussed.

This conference was held in Buffalo, New York Aug 14-17, 1883. The facts brought together by Mrs Carr follow:

Aug 16, 1883

Mr Dewey read an outline of a plan in regard to a proposed 'School of Library Economy' to be established at Columbia

## First Library School

College, and gave good reasons for the necessity of trained librarians.

The instruction proposed was as follows:

1 Practical Bibliography: To teach what author and treatise is wanted.

2 Book: To teach what edition is best to buy or borrow, whenever there is a choice of editions.

3 Reading: To teach how to get from the book what is wanted, and no more, most quickly and easily.

4 'Literary Methods' (for want of a better name) : To teach how to remember, record, classify, arrange, index, and in every way make most available for future use, what has been gotten from the books.

In the discussion that followed, Messrs. Smith, Mann, Cutter, Merrill, Carr, Green, and Crunden, spoke in favor.

Messrs. Poole, Chamberlain, and Billings, emphatically against.

Dr Billings offered a motion for the appointment of a 'Committee to draft a resolution expressing the feelings of the Association in regard to the proposed school for librarians at Columbia College'.

President Winsor appointed Messrs. Cutter, Chamberlain, Mann, Carr, and Merrill.

Aug 17, 1883.

That Committee reported as follows:

Resolved,—That this Association desires to express the gratification that the trustees of Columbia College are considering the propriety of giving instruction in library work, and hopes that the experiment may be tried.

Signed by Cutter, Mann, Carr, Merrill.

Minority report by Judge Chamberlain:

Resolved,—That this matter be referred to a committee to report more definitely at the next meeting of the Association.

Majority report adopted.

On motion of Mr Bowker, seconded by Mr Dewey, the president was directed to appoint a committee to take into consideration during the year all projects and schemes for the education of librarians, and to report in detail at our next meeting.

## Melvil Dewey

May 5, 1884.

Trustees of Columbia College passed resolutions establishing Columbia College School of Library Economy.

The school opened at Columbia, Jan 5, 1887, and had forty-four students during its connection with that college.

Of the eleven graduated in 1888, seven are members of the A. L. A.:

G Watson Cole, 500; Annie B Jackson 787; Ada Alice Jones, 770; Frank C Patten, 543; Mary W Plummer, 602; May Seymour, 777; and Florence Woodworth, 783.

And of the thirteen graduated in 1889, eight are on the membership list:

Elizabeth G Baldwin, 828; Nina E Browne, 716; Edith E Clarke, 711; Mary Medlicott, 780; Harriet B Prescott, 733; Caroline M Underhill, 712; Anna H. Ward, 1277; George E Wire, 608.

April 1, 1889, school transferred to Albany and made state school under name New York state library school.

May 8, 1889, Library school committee made standing committee of A.L.A.

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### Barnard's Sincere Opinion

The following letter from President F A P Barnard to Seth Low, written in 1888, gives a clear idea of the high esteem in which Melvil Dewey was held by President Barnard. It also gives an idea of the details which then fell upon the president of Columbia College. One of the effects of the letter was that the committee of which Seth Low was a member brought in a report which exonerated Melvil Dewey from blame for introducing women students into the first library school in history. This historic struggle for a new woman's profession is detailed in the chapter 'Fighting for<sup>1</sup> Progress\*.

# Barnard's Sincere Opinion

## Columbia College

New York

President's Room, *December* 15th, 1888

My dear Mr Low: Certain incidents of recent occurrence make it seem to me a duty to make a written record of my appreciation of the value of the work done here by Mr Dewey, as chief librarian of the college. To understand this it is necessary to refer to the low condition to which the library had sunk during the greater part of this century. The books, such as they were, were little used, and not appreciated by either students or officers; visitors to the library were few, and scarcely any one resorted to it for reading, in fact the librarian was disposed to discourage readers, and when I recommended students to resort there in their vacant hours he often complained to me that they annoyed him. Your own recollection will tell you that the library was practically of no use to you during your student life.

On the occurrence of a vacancy of the office, and when the library was about to be removed into the new building, the committee resolved to institute a reform. A member of the committee made a special visit to Boston and Cambridge for the sake of studying the Boston public library and the library of Harvard University. By consent of the committee I invited Mr Melvil Dewey, then director of the Library Bureau in Boston, and recent librarian of Amherst College, whom I had known for 10 years preceding, and whom I believe to be the most accomplished librarian in the country, to visit New York and to be present at a meeting of the committee. Mr Dewey accepted the invitation and was present with the committee on several occasions. He was so evidently a master of the subject, and proposed so many and so novel views in regard to library management, that he greatly impressed the minds of the members. It had not occurred to me to nominate him as our librarian here, for I knew he was engaged in a flourishing business in which he was much interested. The committee, however, manifested a strong desire that he should undertake for us the work which he evidently so well understood. He met their advances reluctantly, but proposed to look for a suitable person whom he could guarantee to fulfill their expectations. After much pressure, however, he consented that his name should be placed before the board. In doing so,

## Melvil Dewey

however, he was obliged to make considerable pecuniary sacrifices, to which he was willing to submit in consideration of the assurances given him by the committee, that they would give him hearty support in carrying out his views. One of these views was the creation of a School of Library Economy, a scheme which has since been realized with singular success. Mr Dewey was therefore nominated and elected in 1883, taking office at the same time at which the library was removed into the new building. His first task was to assemble together all the books belonging to the college scattered in the different departments and belonging to the literary societies, and make a complete catalogue of the whole in duplicate, by authors' names and their subjects. This was a heavy undertaking which occupied about three years before its completion. By a remarkable system of economy in the purchase of books, he made available the annual appropriation of funds for the rapid increase of the number of volumes, and by the interest awakened among friends of the library on the subject, he increased the number of volumes at a rate which in the last five years has increased the number three-fold. By the creation of a large reading room and the introduction of reading tables for 200 visitors at a time, and by the introduction of assistants to bring volumes on demand to all the readers at their places, and to assist in looking up authorities, he has encouraged the use of books to such an extent as to make the library a favorite place of resort for students and officers alike. This has done more than any other measure to encourage the spirit of investigation in our college and to make this system of University instruction a success.

It was also a part of Mr Dewey's plan to meet the entering classes every year at the beginning of the session in order to give them instruction in the use of books and the consultation of authorities, a plan which is pursued with excellent results.

But the principal service which Mr Dewey has rendered has been the inspiration which his fervent zeal and enthusiasm has infused into the whole body of students, whereby they have become warmly interested in the subjects which are taught in the classes, and stimulated to endeavor to produce something original of their own. In this respect his influence has been invaluable and has been of more important service to the college than that of any other officer.

Mr Dewey has been subject to some criticism for some certain

## Barnard's Sincere Opinion

characteristics or acts which have not pleased certain members of the faculty. The criticisms have seemed to me generally mistaken or captious. The acts complained of have been owing to his excessive zeal or to his scrupulous observance of the rule. Previously to his coming here there had been no rule established for the government of the library. The first business of the committee was to establish a system of written rules, drawn from the experience of old libraries, which imposed some unaccustomed restraints upon persons using the books. Mr Dewey considered it his duty to enforce these rules impartially, and thus he has come in collision occasionally with officers who considered themselves above rule. But he has always strictly conformed to rule himself, and instead of being arbitrary, as has been imputed, he has never failed to refer every question of doubtful power to the committee or the president. For the past five years I have made it a habit to visit the library daily, usually spending there an hour at a time. Mr Dewey has been accustomed to make memoranda of all questions on which he desired advice, and these he had produced to me for my direction, noting my decisions, which he has usually preserved for reference. I am conversant therefore, with the details of his management to an extent which is true of no other officer, and I am very confident that he has not exceeded the bounds of his authority in any particular. His ardent enthusiasm, however, has caused him sometimes to be in advance of public opinion, and he has seemed therefore to be sometimes over positive. From newspaper notices it appears that Mr Dewey has been called to be state librarian and secretary to the regents of the University at Albany. It is not stated that he has accepted, but considering the past, I should not be surprised if he should do so. I have not seen him since the election, but several incidents lead me to believe that his place here is not agreeable to him. Should he leave us, I should esteem his loss a very serious one. It is not difficult to fill the vacancy by a man reputed to be competent, but I do not know where you will find a man whose whole soul is so entirely filled up with devotion to his profession. He has been a constant stimulus to intellectual effort in the college, and an inspiration which has reached to every member of the institution. If he leaves, his loss will be felt as a serious blow by even those who professed to be least satisfied with him here.

## Melvil Dewey

I address to you this letter as taking a special interest in the library and as chairman of a committee recently appointed to inquire and report on certain matters affecting Mr Dewey. I do not know any better form in which to express my testimony to the importance of the services rendered to the college by this excellent officer.

I am, very respectfully yours

F. A. P. Barnard

Hon. Seth Low

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### Age Charging Youth

The following letter was from Henry Barnard, first U. S. Commissioner of Education and famous educational author. At the time Mr Barnard was 77 years of age. He died in 1900. The letter becomes therefore something in the nature of a charge to the one who would lead the people over toward something not yet attained.

Hartford, Conn

6 Nov 88

My dear Mr Dewey

Your plan for the extension and expansion of the State Library, and the concentration and unification of the various literary and scientific trusts committed to the Regents of the University, is grand, and in your hands perfectly practical. The immediate results, even if you get no further than to develop the library, and transfer the Cabinet of Natural History, both under the immediate direction of the Regents, thru their secretary, and superintendent (or his assistants) in charge of the special trusts, will at once bring the Board to the front, and in the many ways which your fertile brain has already suggested, bring it into vitalizing connection with every progressive institution of the State.

In a few years the academic and college libraries will get rid of their dead matter and deader routine and limited work. Among other outcomes, a scientific pedagogical course of reading will be organized which will be felt thru the Teachers' Institutes, teachers\* departments, Normal Schools, and colleges; in all the great district, village and city schools,—town and city public

## Age Charging Youth

libraries\* will be instituted. Then the old district libraries will receive a new development, and along with these movements the University aim of the Board will come out and be felt on the colleges and higher institutions. Therefore you will live to see in some form a registration of graduates tested by some recognized standard of examination applied by each college in connection with advisory and cooperating agencies of the Regents. But the Regents must get you out of your present much better paid position into librarianship and secretaryship (combined) of the Board, and no new appointment must be made except in view of the right man in his appropriate place to help realize the University idea.

Nothing short of some large plan of this kind will justify your leaving your present position. All roads lead to Rome, and all great progressive movements find their ablest advocacy and their most immediate and evident dissemination in the press of New York. Columbia can now be made the great University (not at all a collegiate institution), of the United States. The great libraries of New York with the Columbia Trustees, ought to be brought together into some plan of special purchasing as well as of general expansion, with a joint catalog of all books now accessible<sup>1</sup> in all the great libraries, with an annual supplement of additions to each—under the direction of a Board of advisory librarians, whose meetings should be in Columbia University, and of which you will, by force of practical knowledge and executive ability, be the head.

Now, without a strong motive to go elsewhere you cannot abandon this city and (national) work—but with suitable compensation, you can do a great work at Albany and thruout the State, and if Columbia College does not immediately begin its university work, you can return to New York, and give the work an impetus and shape.

Well, go on, on either line, where you are, or in Albany, and develop the library into the great factor of universal and university education. I shall not live to see the results, but if you go to Albany within a year, and I live one year longer I am quite sure I shall see the beginnings of a great movement, which will go on with accelerating rapidity, and ever widening influence.

Adieu.

Your friend

Henry Barnard

## Trained Librarians Essential

In view of the immense practical interest which Andrew Carnegie first showed in his endowment of libraries in Pennsylvania and Scotland and by the distribution of many millions of dollars for the establishment of libraries in all parts of the United States, Canada and other foreign countries, it is considered pertinent to this biographic volume to reproduce, word for word, the letter which Melvil Dewey wrote to Andrew Carnegie in 1890, at the time when Mr Carnegie had declined to aid in strengthening the Library School, which after its stormy experience in New York had been moved to Albany in 1889.

The letter from Mr Carnegie to Mr Dewey on May 15, 1890 is quoted quite fully in the chapter entitled 'Fighting for Progress'.

A number of years afterwards Mr Carnegie contributed to three library schools. The Carnegie Corporation has gone further than that; for it has contributed liberally to all phases of library organization, particularly thru the American Library Association.

Mr Andrew Carnegie  
New York City

21 My '90

Dear Mr Carnegie:

I am sorry that I misunderstood the meaning of your words 'we shall certainly do something for the school,' but I still have hope that you will look into the question and I know you will discover that your present information 'that there is no difficulty in getting good librarians/ comes from people who are not well informed. I have studied this subject for the last 20 years and no man in the world has been so placed as to know so well as I the difficulties; for as secretary from its organization in 1876 of the national association of librarians and in charge of its offices I have had not only the experience of a single library but the focalized experience of hundreds and I wish to

## Trained Librarians Essential

assure you before you sail, so that you may carry the shot and test it, that there is no profession at the present time in which it is as difficult to get satisfactory men and women as for what we call modern librarianship; at the same time there is hardly any in which there is such a surplus of candidates. They spend your money and in many cases while accomplishing a great good accomplish only half what would be possible for an expert to do with the same opportunities & expenditure. And the pity of it is that in so many cases the trustees are as ignorant as the librarian & are not aware of the opportunities they are wasting.

There is no room for doubt on this question but we who are carrying the burden must wait patiently till you who are paying the bills, learn that you could do more good with a great deal less money by supporting those who have studied the problem profoundly & who are making every sacrifice to help generous men & women to make their gifts to the public more valuable. These mistakes seem to me sometimes as if a man should build a magnificent ship & then refuse to provide an engine because he was assured by many captains & ship owners that they had no difficulty whatever in running their ships with sails; or the man who built splendid churches that are valuable as architectural monuments, but failed to provide competent pastors or, perhaps the illustration most clearly akin of all, the building of splendid piles for a college without providing professors or apparatus.

I think I understand the difficulty. Your time is crowded full with a 1000 cares & you dismiss my letters with the same attention you give to hundreds of others in dictating answers to your morning's mail. If you can recall our evening's conversation you will certainly remember that the points I then made appealed to your good judgment & won your assent. I know perfectly well that if you were to cross-question me for a half day on these matters & allow me to present the abundant proof which I could furnish you, you would be convinced beyond all doubt that you would accomplish ten-fold more good for your fellow men, in the lines in which you have shown so much interest, by enabling us to train ten to twenty librarians each year, than by building splendid buildings & leaving it to chance as to whether they shall do ten or twenty or fifty or possibly eighty or ninety per cent of the good that is possible.

I beg of you to think on these things & to use the same hard sense that you apply to business; for the world needs 100 fold

## Melvil Dewey

more, than the princely gifts you are making, to advance library interests & it cuts me to the heart to see so many splendid opportunities go by default for the lack of a very little money when more than enough is being spent on unnecessary though beautiful architectural effects.

I feel exactly as a missionary in lower New York ought if he saw the poor people freezing & starving & was given a palatial church but refused a few thousand dollars needed for things vastly more pressing & important. I am sure that as you think of this matter you will come to the conclusion that you have not enjoyed your full privilege nor discharged your full duty by erecting a beautiful building without making sure that it does a work equal to the cost & capacity of the plant. Pray think on this side of the great work & if I can ever be of any service feel free to call upon me.

Very truly yours

Melvil Dewey

P S. While this letter was lying on my desk for signature, Mr Love, late superintendent of schools & now librarian of the new library at Jamestown, N Y, came in, asking for two cataloguers to help them. I told him that in the last week we had two of our pupils engaged to go to the new library at Chicago, one to Cornell University, one as librarian at Duluth (& he in turn immediately engaged one of our ladies from the present class for his assistant though he had never seen her) & a few hours before the president of the Jackson Library at Michigan came in to engage two of the present class to go there, another has gone to the Springfield, Mass public library, also another to the College for the Training of Teachers, New York & we have four or five calls which we are unable to fill. The reason I add this note is that Mr Love had remarked that he had been talking the day before with the librarian from Pittsburgh who was meeting exactly the same grave difficulties which I have explained to you & also to Mr Love who told him that he would get most help by coming here to us. It strikes me as a curious coincidence that in the very hour I was writing you my letter of regret & disappointment that you had not taken time to understand the work of the Library School in reply to your assurance that there was no particular difficulty, just then a man hundreds of miles away should come in with the message that your librarian at

## Trained Librarians Essential

Pittsburg was on his way to ask for just this help which you seem to think is not very important. I wish to repeat and am prepared to maintain my position, that any man, even though he be a librarian of 50 years experience, who tells you that there is not grave difficulty in getting people competent to get out of libraries the full amount of work which they are capable of doing, that is, to be an entirely satisfactory librarian, is either wholly ignorant of library matters or has failed to comprehend what modern librarianship means. I think you will usually get such information from men whose own libraries are far short of what they ought to be.

This great work is in its infancy & these men talk about it as the farmers used to talk about the little railroads that took the place of their lumbering stage coaches in sections where they spoke of a train making 20 miles an hour as the 'lightning\* express & were full of incredulity at the suggestion that anything better was possible.

The man who wrote 'Triumphant Democracy' cannot long be kept in ignorance of as great an educational movement as we have in hand & I feel absolute confidence that if your life is spared, we shall yet find you one of the warmest friends & supporters of the Library School & that you in turn will find it your most valuable ally in helping the public by means of libraries which are daily coming nearer to their real position as the colleges for the people.

Melvil Dewey

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## Visualizing Regents' Responsibilities

In the chapter devoted to the work done by Melvil Dewey in Albany as Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, will be found evidence of a certain order aimed first at strengthening the foundations and active work of the Regents; second removing the Regents from political power but giving constitutional right to the work and organization of the Regents; and third by ultimately consolidating the work of the Regents with that of Department of Public Instruction.

## Melvil Dewey

Therefore the letter of Melvil Dewey to Whitelaw Reid written in 1888 before he had been selected for service in Albany takes on historic significance; for it is evident that his contact with the problems of the Library at Albany had led to his considering the whole re-organization of Regents and Library including the thought of consolidating functions. His letter becomes profetic and should be permanently preserved as one of the important documents in the educational work of the state of New York, even leading to a similar determination to consolidate educational facilities or control in many other states besides New York.

New York, Nov. 25 '88

Dear Mr Reid:

In reply to your query what ought to be done by the Regents in working out the plans I suggested to the Library Committee at your house nearly a year ago, I beg to give a brief outline of some of the things that seem to me practicable & highly desirable. Of course you will understand that I do not say that these plans are all formulated in the best way, or that local circumstances which I have not discovered in the six months of my work as Consulting librarian, may not modify some of them. I only say that after a good deal of thought, I think I see clearly how the right man could carry these out to the great advantage of the state & at a cost so moderate as to create no objection. In this short resume you will hardly expect even a brief explanation of the advantages or of the methods which I see make these plans wholly practicable. And finally you will understand that I do not expect any man who undertakes this great work, to set everything in motion at once. I should say that he should apply to the work all the power & push that were consistent with these principles:—

1. To be sure, before taking any action that there was full & proper authority in the laws of the state so that no critic could say a progressive administration was 'taking the bits in its teeth' & exceeding its proper functions & authority.

2. To absolutely avoid all entangling alliances of politics so that neither party could possibly have excuse for partisan opposition.

3. To maintain above possibility of criticism the dignity of the Regents of the University. This would sometimes require a little

## Visualizing Regents' Responsibilities

patience to avoid what might appear to some unseemly haste in the state's most dignified educational body. Our own Board of Trustees at Columbia are very conservative & I have learned this in carrying some of my work forward faster than they could digest the new ideas.

An experienced, skillful man, observing these principles, would, I am sure, find his way unusually free from the difficulties which beset most undertakings of this magnitude.

The following check list of 'things to be done\*' does not profess to be exhaustive but is merely a memorandum of some of the things for which I have seen the way clear.

i. BUILDING. Make your sixth (6th) of the \$20,000,000 Capitol into ideal state library quarters as nearly as the limitations allow. This is almost done & with a greater degree of success than I dared to hope when I undertook the problem six months ago. The Regents & the state will be very proud of the result & the public will at once recognize it as among the very first in attractiveness & convenience. The extra appropriation of \$15,000 at the special session of the legislature enabled us to make some vast improvements over the plans on which the estimate of \$147,000 had been based.

2. REORGANIZATION. A complete reorganization of the methods, as you move into these quarters, is important. Your library, while first in size & value of all the state collections, has by no means held the same rank as to its methods, extent of use & etc.

3. LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS. It should be made the very best working legislative library, so that every officer of the state could with the least possible delay get any information or assistance to be had *in print*. The smallness of the present use is astounding, & only skilful work will lead the average legislator, whose non-scholarly habits I fully appreciate, to become a frequenter & user of the library. But it certainly can be done with at least a respectable minority & just as soon as these men from both parties have learned that they can get promptly at the library any available facts on any question under discussion there will be no further trouble in securing any reasonable appropriation for an institution that is daily proving itself of direct value to the individual members.

4. STATE REPOSITORY. It should be the best existing repository of everything pertaining to N. Y. state. This side of

## Melvil Dewey

its work has been better looked after than almost any other but much remains to be done.

5. SELECTION OF BOOKS. Its growth should be better balanced. After recognizing its special character & the kind of additions that indicates, there should be, not a building up on the lines of the librarian's personal taste, but catholic provision for all who have the right to use the state collection.

6. PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY. This oft quoted phrase should be made a fact in your library. To every citizen of the state this splendid collection in its splendid home, all paid for by the state, should be the real university 'where any person may find information on any subject'. This requires practically nothing but the disposition on the part of the management. Books, rooms, & facilities are already provided. Space has been left (in addition to the regular provision in the reading rooms) where upward of 50 scholars at once may carry on investigations at private tables. Properly managed this feature will surely become of great value & will attract to the state library men & women who will highly appreciate the privileges granted & whose labors will *in* turn bring credit to the library.

7. PERIPATETIC BOOKS. In this same spirit it should be arranged to send to any college, school or even responsible individual, copies of books which are not otherwise attainable because of rarity or cost. There is an inexpensive & effective plan by which the dangers of such service are overcome. Many a scholar too poor to buy or too busy to visit a distant library to see the book, would get great help from such a privilege. As the crown of the N. Y. system of colleges, the university of the state ought in this way to supplement their smaller libraries. This, quite as much as the provisions for special study in the building, will go far to make real that golden dream, a people's university.

8. PERIPATETIC LIBRARIES. Either as trustees of the state library or as Regents of the state university you ought to put in operation a scheme of travelling libraries similar to what has proved so successful in Australia. The means for this are at hand *in* the \$50,000 a year, annually voted, nominally for district libraries throughout the state, actually spent, more than nine-tenths of it, for chalk or other 'incidentals'. This money could easily be restored to its proper functions & one admirable plan for its use would be to send for a year to any community, meeting certain reasonable conditions, a library of say a thousand

## Visualizing Regents' Responsibilities

carefully selected volumes, cataloged, in cases and with a model system of lending so as to be readily carried on by any intelligent novice in library work. In this way, the books (instead of being dissipated, as in past experiences, after their freshness for the community was gone) would be literally worn out by constant reading as they went from place to place. The obvious difficulties in this work have been faced & solved & a small annual appropriation would enable you to do a wonderful work for all sections of the state not now provided with public libraries. Clearly these would be the best entering wedges to prepare the way for permanent libraries.

9. STATE GUIDANCE & SUPERVISION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES. As briefly pointed out on p. 14-16 of my paper before the University Convocation, of which I enclose a copy, the time has come when the state must recognize the work of the library, as more than a generation ago it recognized that of the schools. This is the greatest work at once before you. It will require time & skill but its doing will surely mark a new era in popular education. One definite assistance, not mentioned in the paper, is for you to have trained assistants on the state library staff, one of whom can be detailed for a week or a month to go to any town that may ask such help, & start a new library or reorganize an old one on the lines that will enable them to do the most good with their funds & opportunities. The calls for such assistance are growing every month in frequency & urgency. It will inevitably result that you will be constantly training, in connection with your library, a succession of young librarians & catalogers who will be called to take charge of the new libraries springing up on all sides. To illustrate this point I note that as I write, four such calls in a single day are on my desk, each asking urgently for one of the pupils trained in our Library School. Just as N. Y. has led all the states in meeting the demand for trained teachers by founding no less than ten normal schools, so you will be sure to have at least one center for training competent librarians, without whom no satisfactory library progress is possible. Fortunately this training can be so combined with your own library work as to impose a very slight financial burden.

10. STATE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL BUREAU. This is practically a part of No. 9. Except to one who has studied just this phase it will be hardly understood. The papers & discussions at last year's national convention of librarians will give an idea of

## Melvil Dewey

**the work to** be done. A part of that can be done cheaply & wisely in your library to the great gain of all libraries & scholars throughout the state. Questions, to which the answers may be readily found in the great state library, without such facilities become serious stumbling blocks *in* investigations. Ten minutes of the time of a trained library aid may save months of weary work to some teacher remote from the great libraries.

i1. STATE CLEARING HOUSE FOR DUPLICATES. This problem has puzzled the librarians for many years. Nearly every library is embarrassed by duplicates useless to it but in themselves valuable. The only satisfactory solution yet devised would be entirely practicable in the new state library. Each library of the state could ship to Albany all its duplicates, which would be appraised by a disinterested expert, who from the storehouse of duplicates would send back an equal value. Something of this work has been done for a few years past by J. G. Ames of the Interior Department at Washington, with the result that hundreds of libraries have got rid of worse than useless public documents & have in return filled ugly gaps in the one set that is so much prized. This again at trifling cost would be of immense service.

In connection with this distribution so systematized, great gifts to the libraries of the state would be sure to come. Books are constantly published by societies, authors &c, of which a certain number are to be given away where they will do most good. This clearing-house, under a trusted officer familiar with the libraries of the state, would receive cases of such books to be added to the boxes or packages going back to the libraries, which boxes would include also not only returns for duplicates sent, but documents printed by N. Y., & others received from foreign exchanges.

But I should weary you to point out even briefly, all that ought to be done, by the Regents, judged from the standard of the modern library, Much work suited to the popular public collections would have no place in the state library but on the other **hand** some of the most important things can be done satisfactorily no where else. Not that the cost involved is great but that even small expenses are sharply criticized if benefiting some one outside the immediate constituency, e.g., a work in itself of the greatest value & costing comparatively little may benefit 99 other libraries quite as much as Columbia & this gives ground for criticism that **Columbia's** income is being spent for the benefit of others. Where

## Visualizing Regents' Responsibilities

money is raised by tax as in public libraries, the difficulties are much greater. It has often happened that important work has been prevented or stopped after being started, from this cause. But the state library is paid for by the entire state & it becomes its duty as well as its privilege to do these things, impracticable for local libraries. Happily for general interests just in proportion as the state library serves the entire state, instead of the one city where it is located, it strengthens its claim to public appreciation & support.

You asked me also to note anything on the other side of the Regents' work which I felt to be worthy special attention. In planning the new offices for the Regents in place of those now taken by the library, I have been compelled to look into some of the other work & have given it not a little thought.

a. EXAMINATIONS. There are wonderful possibilities in the Regents' examinations which ought to include higher work. But great care must be taken that they do not come within the range of anti-examination criticism. The system might be carefully revised to secure the obvious great good & eliminate as far as possible the evils attributed to them by the critics of over-examination.

b. CONFERRING DEGREES. I am assured by men like President Barnard, to whom I submitted these ideas for criticism, that instituting on a high plane, with proper restrictions, examinations for all degrees, so that any man or woman, whether college bred or trained at home, might receive recognition of his acquirements, would result in making the degree of the university more highly prized than that of any other institution. These could be conferred at your 'commencement' which the University Convocation was designed to be & the effect would be great all through the state in stimulating our college graduates to keep up their studies & try to attain higher rank. Few of the ambitious scholars can afford the expense of residence at a university, after completing their college course, but if they could earn their degrees as here suggested they would go on with work which would soon have an appreciable influence on the higher scholarship of the state.

c. FELLOWSHIPS. If this broad work is undertaken, I have no doubt that men of means can be found to endow fellowships yielding say \$500 a year, to be assigned to the most promising & deserving applicants from all parts of the state, to enable

## Melvil Dewey

them to spend one or more years in study & investigation in the state library & museum where they could find facilities which no college could offer. For the vast majority of topics the library is the real laboratory where all the higher work must be done, e.g., philosophy, ethics, religion, political science & economy, law, education, commerce, languages & literature, history, biography & travels. Indeed beside the subjects covered by the state museum, we lack only chemical & physical laboratories, an observatory & a gallery of fine art. As bearing on the possibilities of a university without professors, a prominent American scholar who took honors at Cambridge, England, after his graduation at Columbia, said that he never attended a lecture while in residence. I would not propose incurring large expense adding missing factors or creating anything like a new college but the University of the State of New York is already in its second century. My only plea is that existing facilities be used instead of lying stagnant.

d. UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION. This can be made, by well-directed effort, much the most important higher educational gathering of the year in America. The law provides already for inviting leading men from other states. A very great increase in usefulness is entirely practicable.

e. UNIVERSITY EXTENSION. This remarkable work, the most significant & far reaching done by Oxford & Cambridge in all the centuries of their existence is just taking root in America. The Regents better than any other body in the U.S. are fitted to introduce & maintain it. It is self-supporting & promises, in connection with the modern library with which it works hand in hand, to mark a distinct era in practical usefulness of higher education. You would be sure of the hearty co-operation of the more progressive professors in all the colleges.

Finally as to your third responsibility, the State Museum of Natural History.

f. SAFETY. This great collection is in imminent danger of destruction by fire, being singularly exposed. Its loss would mean more than money & immediate steps should be taken to house it in a fire-proof building. By happy chance I find ample Museum quarters (among the finest in the country) available almost without cost. The fifth floor of the Capitol, running into the great roof, affords four times the present space occupied by the Museum. This space can be had for the asking, as it can

## Visualizing Regents' Responsibilities

be used for no other purpose & except for heating, its use adds nothing to state expense. I have examined it in detail with the Commissioner of the Capitol Who assures me that the plan is entirely practicable & can be carried out with very little change in the building. He thinks about \$60,000 would put in needed sky-lights, tile the floors, heat & ventilate & carry up the elevators. This would solve the difficulty at once & the legislature could doubtless be induced to grant, for better maintenance of the museum, the annual rental of the present building which ought to be about \$10,000. This would have the great advantage of bringing all three of the Regents' departments together Sc would enable them readily to consolidate all into the University of the State of New York, making in fact the ideal people's university, a great library & a great museum, with degree-conferring powers, but without any direct instruction.

This change would add immensely to the usefulness of the Museum which is visited by only a small fraction of those who go to see the Capitol. On the fifth floor the orderlies would find it the most attractive show place in the building. After it would be your splendid new library rooms on the third & fourth floors & visitors would leave the great building remembering that part under the Regents as vastly more interesting than all the rest together.

The influence through the state of this new prominence would greatly strengthen your hold on popular sympathy & support.

g. LECTURES. A course of scientific lectures ought to be given in connection with the museum, specially during the sessions of the legislature when some of the members would attend & become interested. I find since noting this need, a law authorizing & requiring such lectures but no evidence that it has been complied with.

h. AID TO COLLEGE & SCHOOL MUSEUMS. A great help at small cost is possible by exchanging duplicate specimens, making up small working cabinets, & in general helping the small museums of the state something as the state library should help the librarian. I say 'small', having in mind that your help is no longer needed by the American Museum in Central Park where their greatest treasure, giving the highest scientific value to the collection, is the great series of original types of fossils which by some unhappy arrangement came from Albany here instead of remaining in the State Museum where it clearly belonged.

## Melvil Dewey

i. CONSOLIDATING SCIENTIFIC WORK. Clearly the State Museum is the natural center for all the scientific work of the state (excepting engineering &c.), i.e., state botanist, entomologist, geologist, paleontologist &c, should all be parts of the *scientific staff*.

Finally & perhaps as more important to the success of your future work than anything else is the need of greater solidarity. There seems to have been going on a centrifugal action, dissipating energy & breaking to pieces, where a centripetal force was needed to weld together all these diverse interests, into one strong smoothly working organization. Like the Indian's bundle of sticks, separated they can easily be broken, & any department may be crushed out of existence by such action as recently killed the important state survey. Together, they will do much more good & be safer from the accidents of politics.

You will almost never find one man, eminent as a specialist in any of these departments, who at the same time has business training & natural gifts that will enable him properly to care for the financial & business details of the work. In a single compact organization however it would be as much cheaper as more effective to have, e.g., a trained book-keeper to attend to all accounts, finances, &c. for all departments, thus relieving your specialists of a disagreeable duty which they can perform only badly & giving them time for the work *in* which their services are of great importance. These departments belong naturally together. They are already under the control of the same body of trustees. Economy & usefulness all point strongly to a more intimate union.

In my intense interest in this whole matter I have ventured to verify my own judgment by taking into confidence a few eminent educators, including President Barnard and Henry Barnard, the first U. S. Commissioner of Education, & others. Every man consulted has expressed to me his firm belief that this great work as outlined in this long letter, is entirely practicable & that if carried through it will mark an epoch in the higher education of N.Y. & its influence will spread in time to every state of the Union.

It is my sincere hope that the Regents will face the responsibility & accept the magnificent opportunity now open to them to carry their work to the extreme front.

Sincerely

Melvil Dewey

## Two Balanst Letters

(For the information of present and later generations the reminder is included that Whitelaw Reid who was born in 1837, distinguisht himself during the War between the states by brilliant work as a war correspondent. In 1868 at the invitation of Horace Greely he joind the editorial staf of the New York Tribune, became chief editorial writer in 1869 and in 1872 when Mr Greely died, succeeded him as editor and principal owner of the Tribune. In 1889-92 he was minister to France and from 1905-12 ambassador to Great Britain. Many other distinguisht services wer performd by him in addition to occupying an important place among the Regents of the University of the State of New York.)

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## Two Balanst Letters

During the unsuccessful attempt for Educational Unification made while Theodore Roosevelt was governor of the state of New York, Melvil Dewey wrote him two letters both of which ar necessary to an understanding of the attempt made to improve the educational machinery of New York state.

In the letter dated the 22d of June, 1899 the outstanding features ar:

1 The demand that the public schools should be kept absolutely free from partisan politics.

2 That Mr Dewey was willing to work with any selected official if by that means the thing desired for the state of New York might be accomplisht.

The outstanding features of his letter of Jan 2, 1900 ar:

1 The determination to sacrifice his personal position for the sake of the desired good.

2 Renewd emfasis on the danger of partisan politics.

## Melvil Dewey

3 That the educational sistem needed a merging influence so far as public scools wer concernd; but that it was educational madness to attempt the destruction of endowd and private scools.

As these letters ar essential for the sake of the record each letter is reprinted in ful:—

22 Je \*99

Hon. Theodore Roosevelt  
Las Vegas, N. M.

Dear Gov. Roosevelt:

Parsons expected to see you before! you went west, as did I, but you were dodging about the state with your many engagements whenever I tried to find you. We regret more than I can well express that the reunion makes it impossible for you to be here at convocation for the little speech of welcome which you conditionally promised last winter. We doubly regret it because just at this time the eyes of the state are turned toward you as the one man who can solve the educational snarl which comes from duplication and the need of unification and which has been the chief embarrassment to educational progress in this state for a whole 100 years. It is fitting with the new century that the new order should come *in*. Parsons' father died this morning and he has just left the office asking me to tell you that the president of the Associated Academic Principals of the state sent to them all the question of their willingness to support heartily your propositions as expressed to the newspaper men at the time of the last meeting. He reports that the answers coming in are practically unanimous, indicating clearly that if you choose to make this a leading item next year it is entirely within your power to have such a support that there can be no possible doubt of the issue. The demand is that the public school department shall be kept absolutely free from partizan politics, that the superintendent shall have a longer tenure and opportunity to do his work solely from the educational standpoint, and that the educational system of the state should be unified, thus doing away with friction and needless expense and making the way clear to unquestioned leadership in every department of education. There seems

## Two Balanst Letters

to be practically unanimous agreement that the easiest, simplest and surest way to bring this about is to have the superintendent elected by the regents, retaining practically his present statutory powers. The public school department should then be of course a part of the University of the State of New York just as the University of France, which was copied from the New York system, includes the primary schools as well as the higher. I think you understand that I have never for a moment had any desire to increase my personal field or powers in this matter, and that I am so anxious for the good that can come to the state only through unification, that if necessary I would willingly yield a part of the power now exercised. The superintendent with his powers defined by statute would have much larger powers than the secretary, and there would be no danger of friction or feeling of subordination, since the secretary of the University would have nothing to do with the administration of the common schools.

I write this letter to ask as the greatest service you can render, not being here in person, that you send a pretty full telegram to be read Monday evening in the senate chamber when Vice-Chancellor Doane and Regent Whitelaw Reid make the annual addresses. A strong telegram from you expressing your interest in education and regret that you could not be present, and summing up your attitude in favor of practical unification, would help wonderfully in giving courage to all honestly seeking the solution of this question. Nothing at our great meeting in Syracuse last December was so received by the audience and gave them so much pleasure as my announcement of the interest you had shown in the library by accepting the chairmanship. (By the way, I have a pigeon-hole full of accumulated business to go over with you as soon as you return for active work next fall).

The feeling that they had your sympathetic leadership would lead the sane, level-headed men both in the public school department and in the University to have confidence that a solution was at hand and they would work together to bring about the ideal. I just find by good chance a copy of Mr Farr's circular letter and inclose it. While personally I am more satisfied with the present regents, I am bound to admit that your propositions as

## Melvil Dewey

6tated here meet with very wide approval, and that those who would prefer the life tenure and the present board, are constrained to admit that public sympathies favor the change. I must concede also that the change has the effect of a material concession on the part of the regents, because of unification, and in that way does a service. Yet personally I should be glad if it were not necessary to introduce this feature. The essential thing is freedom from politics, unification and harmony. The White bill proposition to create a commissioner over all I believe to be a radical mistake at the present time. Sup't A. S. Draper, who was much the strongest man we ever had in the position, told me the other day in Illinois that he could not conceive of a man who understood thoroughly the details of these departments making such a suggestion; that the state demanded both in the superintendent and in the secretary men of first class caliber and experience who could not be had as mere subordinates, and that with competent men in those positions the so-called commissioner of education was a purely fifth wheel to the coach who could perform no useful function beyond the imagination that he would be a unifying force. I agree with Sup't Draper, who has thought of this matter for many years, that the regents themselves are entirely sufficient for such a unifying force, and that by dropping, for the present at least, the suggestion of a high salaried new commissioner we should avoid the grave criticism of creating needless high salaried offices. Leader Allds was in my office for an hour this morning and assured me that the White bill could not possibly have been passed in the assembly because of the prejudice against this creation of a *new* high salaried officer. If we can make the beginning with freedom from politics, and unification, I am perfectly sure that Draper is right, and after all our discussion our people here are agreed on it that there would be no friction, no difficulty, and absolutely no need of introducing a third high salaried man.

May we not rely on having a good strong telegram from you before we adjourn Monday night? If anything delays this letter in reaching you, let us have the telegram even if later and we will read it before convocation adjourns Wednesday afternoon. Perhaps the best plan would be to send the telegram for Monday

## Two Balanst Letters

night and a letter which would reach here before adjournment which could be read and given to the press so that the state should understand how warmly you are interested in this question and how just is the position that you have taken. It was a great comfort to many people to find with all your zeal for practical improvements you had so profound a respect for the oldest institution of the state, the chief work of the greatest of New Yorkers. When Alexander Hamilton's method has worked for 115 years, new hands should not rashly set it aside.

Yours very truly

Melvil Dewey

The second of these two important letters to Theodore Roosevelt here follows:—

2 Ja '00

To his Excellency

Theodore Roosevelt

Governor of the state of New York

In accepting the appointment with which you honored me as a member of the commission on educational unification, it was distinctly understood that I was to serve as a private citizen, not in any sense as the representative of the regents, and that if the report agreed on by a majority of the commission did not accord with what my 11 years of experience led me to believe for the best interests of the state, I should be free to point out to you the reasons. Saturday afternoon I signed the report with the six other commissioners because of the desire of the minority that a report should not go out as the deliberate judgment of the commission because a majority favored it, but that the report in itself should clearly indicate that on many of its important features the commission were divided four to three. In attaching such signature, I stipulated with the commission that it should in no way debar me from sending the supplementary statement which I felt in duty bound to make. I feel the more free to do this because by my resignation, which took effect this morning, I have removed my personality absolutely from the question of educational unification, and because after making this statement it is my purpose to drop further discussion of the question and

## Melvil Dewey

confine myself closely to my chosen field of home education and library work.

Omitting many minor details in which the majority of the commission declined to accept my views, it seems necessary to specify the following points in which its suggestions should be amended before they may, with due regard for the best interests of the state, be adopted.

The regents should elect not only the executive head, but also all directors of bureaus, and should fix all salaries above \$1200. The state requires at the head of each of its great departments of education the peer of any man in the country in that particular field. Such men are now at the head of important interests and very few, if any of them, can be induced to leave those positions unless they can receive the dignity and protection afforded by election and removal, not by any individual, but by a nonpartizan board. The executive would in fact select and nominate the men for all these positions and his judgment would probably invariably be followed by the regents, but he should have this power, not by statute, but because of the integrity and capacity with which he administers his trust and the confidence he has inspired in the board which honors him by intrusting all its work to his execution. For his sake also I believe it necessary that the statutory power of making high salaried appointments and fixing salaries should be vested in a board and not in an individual, who in proportion as his powers are autocratic will be subject to unjust criticism and annoyance.

I believe that the salary of \$10,000 should be reduced to \$7000. If the ideal man of the entire country could be secured for \$10,000, I should heartily favor it, but it is almost certain that no one of the great leaders who have been suggested for this position can be induced to accept it on the terms proposed. These men are receiving from \$10,000 to \$13,000 salary in their present positions. Most of them have in addition a finely equipped presidential house, their tenure is for life with a provision for retirement on half salary at about 65 years of age, and their positions are free from the danger of merely political overthrow. No such man is likely to accept the proposed position on the terms now offered, and unless the conditions can be materially changed we shall find ourselves in the dilemma of having a mandatory law designed to secure a great leader, but which in fact

## Two Balanst Letters

will compel the appointment of a second or third rate man at a salary much higher than would have been necessary to secure the best services obtainable under the proposed conditions.

I object to the commission's plan as needlessly extravagant in its plan of administration. There is now serious complaint of the extra cost to the taxpayers of two administrative departments for education in New York. But the commission's plan provides for no less than four. The field of education is exhaustively covered by the various bureaus each of which must of necessity attend to nearly everything in its own field. There remains only the supervision of these bureaus and certain items of general administration. But for this the suggestions appended to the report provide for no less than four distinct administrative offices: The regents office, the chancellor's office, the bureau of law and the bureau of administration and finance; each to be maintained with rooms, officers, clerks and other employes throughout the year. These four should be consolidated into a single office with a single set of salaried employes. This would require no officers or expenses distinct from those authorized and controlled by the regents in the administrative bureau.

The report ignores the world-wide distinction between elementary and secondary education by attaching the public high schools to the bureau of elementary education, and the endowed academies and secondary schools to the bureau of higher education, thus putting a premium on the very duplication of inspection, examination and supervision which it is the purpose of this commission to avoid. Every civilized country recognizes the essential differences between elementary and secondary education. At no point from the kindergarten to the university is the line more marked than here. The child is just beginning adolescence, the most important and plastic period of its life. It is beginning to trace cause and effect and to be no longer content with the mere inventories of information of the elementary school. The difference between secondary and higher education is less marked as is indicated by the common European practice of merging what corresponds to our college and high school courses in a single eight or nine year gymnasial course. The avowed purpose of some prominent advocates of the commission's classification is to segregate the endowed academies, private and incorporated schools so that they may be more easily killed and they are characterized

## Melvil Dewey

as a menace to our common school system. I profoundly believe in the public high school as the most important educational institution of modern times, but it is educational extremism run mad to suppose that the world will ever dispense with its endowed and private schools, which alone can do certain kinds of work that the public wishes to have done. I can not with good conscience refrain from protesting against any scheme which would either attack the existence and prosperity of these schools, or would ignore the essential difference between secondary and elementary education which is recognized by every man whose training and experience have entitled him to the name of educator.

Names are minor considerations, and were it not for the more important matters mentioned above would not be referred to here. But I believe the commission's decision at its first meeting should have been adhered to and that the department of education should have taken the name "University of the State of New York" *in* recognition of the constitutional provision. For the name of the executive officer I feel that the commission has chosen the poorest of the five suggested, viz, secretary, superintendent, commissioner, minister, chancellor. Hardly any new mind coming to the question would hesitate a moment after reading in leading dictionaries the definitions of these titles, to recognize secretary or superintendent as much better words for the functions to be performed than to take the title chancellor and give it a new meaning when it has been for 115 years used by the state in its proper meaning of an honorary head to the University.

I have felt keenly the gain that would come to the state from a complete unification of its educational interests on a basis that would secure harmony and good will from all concerned. There is another consideration at least ten-fold more important than this unification, and that is that education in this state should be kept absolutely free from the domination or interference of partizan politics. Both the University and the department of public instruction are today doing better work than ever before in their history, and receive and deserve greater confidence than ever before. The presumption in such a case is very strongly in favor of existing conditions. While there would very likely come certain improvements if the plan recommended by the majority of **the** commission should be adopted, I am forced to believe after **mature** deliberation **that** the danger of injury to our educational

## Library of Congress Leadership

interests, if their plan should be adopted without material modification, is vastly greater than any possible' good that may come from the improvements suggested.

I keenly regret that I differ from the majority of the commission with whom my relations have been so pleasant, but with your appointment, you asked me to give my honest judgment of what was best for the state. I have done so regardless of every departmental or personal consideration.

Respectfully submitted

Melvil Dewey

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## Library of Congress Leadership

The following important letter written by Melvil Dewey to President McKinley in 1899 has two elements of significance in it:—

First, that Melvil Dewey without any reserv whatsoever desird to glorify nationally the professional side of library work and,

Second, that he advocated the selection of Herbert Putnam who, between 1899 and 1929, completed thirty years of work in organizing the Congressional Library so that it has become of national as wel as international fame.

3i Ja '99

Dear Mr President:

We believe profoundly in your desire in every case to do what is best for the American people. I therefore venture to write you frankly because many of us are in great fear lest a mistake be made which will cripple and embarrass American education for possibly a long generation. The intelligent librarians and those best qualified to judge of library matters in this country are very deeply concerned over the rumors of the possible appointment to the headship of the national library of a man who has not proved fully his fitness for this most responsible position in what has come to be a profession. I am receiving telegrams and letters from the strongest men begging for any influence to avert

## Melvil Dewey

what would be esteemed in our circles as little less than a national calamity. I write strongly because the matter is vitally important. America is recognized by other nations as easily first in librarianship. The library of congress has utterly failed in the past not only to lead but to take any important part in the marvelous development of this quarter century. Our new building is the finest in the world. We have a right to expect great things. Not one of the candidates whose names are in the public prints commands any confidence from the library profession. They may be estimable gentlemen, but the danger is too great. Some of them have secured indorsements from men whose names ought to count. Several of the strongest indorsements to my certain knowledge were given without understanding the case and would be withdrawn if it could be done without giving offence. I have assured the people whom I have met that I could not believe it possible that you would fill this position hurriedly or with any man about whose entire fitness there was any doubt. I inclose an editorial from the Post which has just come to my desk, because it is a fair, temperate statement of the case, perhaps as good as any of the many sent me. I have no knowledge of the writer, but the position fairly represents the people whose opinion ought to weigh most in filling this great position. The fact that a man may have been a librarian is not enough. There are very few of the 5000 librarians in this country at all adequate for these responsibilities. It is possible that no one of the strongest men will accept the position under present conditions, and in that case it would be better to override the demand that a professional librarian be appointed if you can secure a man of great administrative capacity and broad sympathies with the modern library movement. The impression is practically universal that no one of the eight or nine candidates whose names have appeared is at all adequate.

As the founder and for most of its history the secretary and executive officer of the national association of libraries, of which I have twice been president; as the founder of the Library Journal and of the Library school, I have more than any other American been brought in wide contact with the leading spirits who have made American librarianship the first in the world. I feel that I have a right therefore to send this letter and to beg with great earnestness that you do not fill this position with a candidate from such as are now being so persistently urged upon you. I

## Library of Congress Leadership

know the circumstances of the library, and it will get on very well with the force as now organized without any official head, probably a great deal better than with either of the experimental heads which are urged on your consideration. Your assurance that no appointment would be made hastily would relieve you from a great deal of the pressure, for most of these men know very well that their candidacy would under no circumstances stand the scrutiny of six months consideration.

You will doubtless wish to know who would be the best man from our standpoint. I can assure you of the warmest approval from the great body of American librarians, if you could secure Herbert Putnam, now librarian of the Boston public library, a Harvard graduate, and most successful as librarian at Minneapolis. In his later position he has shown qualities in dealing with hard problems in harmonizing diverse interests and in effective administration which make him an ideal man for this great position. I know that Mr Putnam does not desire to go to Washington, and would promptly decline to be a candidate. I am confident however that if the appointment were tendered to him, with his keen sense of duty to the public and with the pressure which would be brought to bear on him from the leading librarians of the country, he could be induced to accept. If he did, it would mark an era at the close of this century, for the national library under his administration would win a confidence at home and abroad such as it has never enjoyed and such as it will not be creditable to the American people *if* it does not receive.

If Mr Putnam can not be secured, and you should go outside the field of technical librarians, I beg to suggest as one of the best men in America for the place, James H Canfield, president of the State University of Ohio. He is a Williams graduate, has been chancellor of the University of Nebraska and of Kansas, and has thus had in three different states experience in dealing with legislatures and public interests; is a man of remarkable ability and executive power, in warm sympathy with librarianship at its best, and would I am confident surround himself with a staff qualified from highest to lowest for the work and make a great success of his administration. Neither Mr Putnam nor Mr Canfield has the slightest knowledge of this letter, but in conversation with intimate friends of both within 24 hours, I am convinced that either of these men could be induced to accept this place if you would offer it.

## Melvil Dewey

If however for any reason it is determined to appoint from the present staff of the library of congress, it would be a travesty on civil service, and offering a premium on inexperience, mediocrity and probable inefficiency, to appoint a man without training and of a few months\* experience in a subordinate position, and ignore a man like Mr Spofford's first assistant, Mr D. Hutcheson, who has been for more than a score of years a faithful and efficient worker in the library. Mr Hutcheson says he does not desire the place, but would much rather see as librarian the strongest man that can be found in the country.

I cannot but feel that if you understood the intense feeling in this matter from those who have no possible interest except the public good, and who are best qualified to judge, no amount of sectional, political or personal pressure would induce you to make this appointment hurriedly, or at any time to give what can be made so great a position to a mediocre seeker for office. Men adequate to such a place are not roaming the streets button-holding every acquaintance for support, or flooding the mails with persistent pleas for something that can be twisted into an indorsement. This is certainly one of the places which should seek the man, and the presumption is very large that no man who is a persistent applicant for the appointment is the best man to receive it.

You will receive the profound gratitude of every librarian and educator of America if you will protect us at this time from what we should really feel to be in our field of work nothing less than a national calamity.

Very respectfully yours

Melvil Dewey

During the year 1929 admirers of Herbert Putnam compiled a volume in honor of his thirtieth anniversary as Librarian of Congress. It is a volume of peculiar distinction assembled, and arranged by William Warner Bishop, University of Michigan, and Andrew Keogh, Yale. In contributing to that volume Melvil Dewey reviewed the struggle of 1899 and said:—

When a new librarian of Congress was to be appointed the ALA felt that we were at a critical point in American library history. We sent a strong committee to Washington to work for

## Library of Congress Leadership

the appointment of Herbert Putnam then Boston public librarian. We felt after much discussion among a few library leaders that he was clearly the best man for the important position.

When politics proved more powerful than education and another appointment was made our committee in sorrow felt that the cause was lost and came home.

My old friend of Columbia days, President Butler, was deeply interested and appreciated the gravity of the situation. He came to my house in Albany and after a thoro discussion of possibilities he took the first train to Washington. I dropt all other business and dictated a long urgent statement to Pres McKinley, working on it til I had to leav on a 4 a m train. It made clear that it would hav markt an epoch in American libraries if he had appointed Dr Putnam as we had urged. He recognized the truth of the argument and said if the appointment had not already been sent to the senate he would appoint the man the library leaders had chosen as best fitted.

Dr Butler knew Speaker Reed and Senator Allison intimately and they trusted his judgment in such matters.

By some good fortune never discust in the pres when the senate adjournd it was found that the name of Pres McKinley's appointee was not among those confirmed in the closing hours.

We reminded the President of his very recent conversion and that he now had to issue a new appointment.

Those who had put on bibliothecal mourning were astonisht and supremely happy to read that after all the agony some kind providence had interfered for the public good.

For 30 years Dr Putnam has quietly but steadily carried the immense burden of our national library thru its period of greatest growth and greatest improvement. He blew no trumpet before him as did the Pharisees but every year made real progress toward the haven where we would be. All the world has admired the skil and good judgment with which, with efficiency surpast only by his modesty, he has steadily bilt the national institution to its present commanding position in the library world.

We ar rearing no monument to a completed work. We believe the great record of the past wil be exceeded by what he wil do in the coming years.

So after a full generation we fittingly set a white stone to mark the end of the first lap so splendidly completed.

## Melvil Dewey

To paraphrase:

So bless you, Dr Putnam, may you liv a thousand years  
To render splendid service in this vale of human tears  
And may I liv a thousand, too, a thousand less a day  
For I shouldn't like to be on earth and know you'd past away.

The Library Journal of March, 1899 says this in its editorial page:

'The President had, from the beginning, expressed his desire to appoint a first rank librarian to the position, mentioning Mr Putnam and Mr Dewey with regret that neither of them felt that he could accept the position.'

Nothing has so far been found in the papers of Melvil Dewey to indicate that he felt any desire to be selected for this honorable position.

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### Dewey Resignation

In the Albany chapter under the title 'More Fighting Years' reference was made to the resignation of Melvil Dewey as secretary of the University. The official report from the Regents' minutes of the 22d of December, 1899 states that Mr Dewey insisted upon action in relation to his resignation and the report continues that Mr Dewey then said substantially:

I agree with Sup't Skinner that vastly more harm is being done to education by the heated discussions, misunderstandings and misrepresentations now so rife than by all the friction between the two departments. No personal sacrifice would be too great to secure harmony and peace among the educational workers of the state, and I am more than willing to withdraw my own personality from the discussion. This offer was made long ago with the assurance that the resignation would be made whenever it would help to secure better results, and I believe nothing short of my actual retirement from official connection with the schools will prove what my real attitude is.

## Dewey Resignation

As to the agitation about unification, I opposed promptly and strongly the inclusion of the University law in the revised education law when it was proposed in 1896, because the University was doing admirable work under its own law, which had had the sanction of the statutory revision commission only four years before; but the commission had decided that they must include all law bearing on education. It was the proposal to transfer the 523 high schools from the regents to the elementary school department which brought about the present differences. In addition to my exacting responsibilities as the head of three distinct departments, the nervous strain of these unfortunate discussions is more than I have present physical strength to bear in the office which is the natural target for misunderstanding or misinterpretation from every side. To escape this strain and at the same time make a substantial concession towards educational harmony, and to secure the concentration of work in my favorite field to which I have long looked forward, makes it imperative to insist on resigning my duties as secretary. I would like to terminate my work as secretary on the anniversary of the day on which I assumed it, January 1, 1889 (which, curiously, was the day on which Gov. Hill sent his fourth and last message recommending the complete abolition of the regents as a body no longer active or useful) leaving the present condition of the University and its various departments and the estimation in which it is held at home and abroad as compared with 11 years ago as a sufficient record of my service. The actual completion of my term of office justifies the following explicit statement.

It has been persistently suggested in various quarters where such a view might injure the University that I had fomented this discussion about unification to the end that my jurisdiction as secretary should cover the elementary schools of the state. In fact I have never seen one minute in which I wished such power or in which I would not have promptly declined added duties, because impossible to carry them without neglecting other matters more important in my own life work. I have profound respect and admiration for the common school work without the slightest desire to engage in it. 27 years ago I chose as my career that part of education which centers in the public library **and** is known as home education in distinction from the school education obtained in the regular teaching institutions from kindergarten

## Melvil Dewey

to university. Those regents present at the dinner to the special committee on choosing a state librarian given by Regent White-law Reid a dozen years ago for the express purpose of discussing this question, recall how plainly I set forth the claims of this great work and my own devotion to it. They will remember that their first invitation to me was with no thought of the secretary's duties, but solely to give opportunity to work out what the chancellor and vice-chancellor at the dinner characterized as my "revolutionary ideas in education"<sup>1</sup> to which they admitted they had already been converted. Chanc. Upson today reminds us that it was understood when I did accept your election that my chief work was to be in my own special field. I was told that assistant secretary Watkins was doing practically all the work since the physical breakdown of the secretary and that combination of the two positions was necessary to secure an adequate salary. I was asked at the beginning of my duties to give extra time till the general work of the secretary's office was well organized and running smoothly. For 11 years I have worked intensely in the hope that a little later I could give the needed time to my own departments. The phenomenal growth in responsibilities and duties which has made the decade the most remarkable in the University's history of 115 years, makes it idle to hope longer that I shall ever have more time. The duties grow steadily more exacting so that even if my exceptional physical endurance were fully maintained I should have to give up one of my dual positions. I expect very soon to have strength for full service in one field, but should not dare again attempt both.

My resignation was first proposed to include both positions, but on urgent request was modified. I wish the board however to consider it as covering both; but if there is a unanimous wish that I continue to direct the library and home education and I can have the regents' cordial sympathy and support, I shall gladly give all my strength to what so many believe the most practically useful and most appreciated work under direction of this historic board. If for any reason I can not have such cooperation, I should prefer to do my chosen work elsewhere.

If you accept my resignation in full, in leaving you I shall carry with me the most delightful memories of our relations. I have often said to other librarians that I thought I had the ideal board.

## Why Stop Learning?

Even when regents have differed wholly from my views there have been so many evidences of both official and personal confidence and good will, that I regard the members of this board not alone as superior officers, but also as warm personal friends. I could never meet any regent without recalling some of the pleasantest associations of my life.

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## Why Stop Learning?

The following letter from Dorothy Canfield Fisher is important. It confirms the point that Melvil Dewey's influence in 1876, 1883 and 1889 was directly exerted in stimulating adult education thru libraries, home education, and university extension.

Beyond that, the letter of Dorothy Canfield Fisher includes some very convincing arguments regarding the need of simpler spelling in the English language.

Jan 29th, '27

Dear Mr Dewey

There's been a great flurry about the date of publication of that book on adult education, and I've been so absorbed by telegrams and telephones and rather heated business letters, that I've not had time till now (when it's settled at last, and for *much* later than had been promised!) to turn to my own letters; I didn't want to write you a brief note, because I had on reading your letter, such a rush of things to say that I wished I could set off at once to Sebring and say them instead of writing them.

In the first place, I'm so touched and honored and heartened by your liking the spirit of those chapters. I oughtn't to have been surprised, for of course they are written under the inspiration of your own feeling about such things. You must have recognized it.

Did you happen to notice that I often speak in this book of the time (usually about a century) which the human race needs to catch up to the ideas of its great men of original minds? I've been struck, over and over, by the slowness with which original

## Melvil Dewey

minds find their audience. They say their inspiring, obviously true, fine things, and all their own generation can do is to gape at them, open mouthed. The next generation takes those sayings as a matter of course, and often forgets entirely the source of them. I wonder if you recognized yourself in that picture? I often thought of you in writing. You saw so clearly, so naturally, so vividly the inherent possibilities of all these means of reaching the intelligences of our adult population. I found you among the beginners of the extension movement, more clearly aware of what it ought to mean than most of its present advocates are. And of course the library movement . . . . I've a good notion to write that over and say what you were to it. I started to a good many times . . . and then feared that others would be wounded, . . . and I hadn't space for a mention of all. But it would really be infinitely more truthful, and I believe I will, after all . . . now that the date of publication is put off, so I'll have time.

Of course all that you say about spelling is as true as what you were saying about libraries thirty years ago. You're a century ahead of your times on spelling, that's all. You'd never know to see the archaic absurdities I use, myself, how deeply in sympathy with the spelling reform I am. (But it was not my typing which put in catalogue . . . but my stenographer's. I hadn't noticed it till you spoke of it!) I come to my outraged interest in our insane spelling by way of sympathy for children. The ease with which children in Spain and Italy learn to write, and the frightful mess which we impose upon our children's minds in the way of spelling, makes me burn! My own little boy is not eye-minded, and is logical. To see him struggling with the idiocies of English spelling, and trying (as anybody with a brain must, always) to make some sense out of the phenomenon . . . ! I've always wished well to those who were trying to do something about it, and if I've never tried *to* join them, it's been because my life was so cram-jam full of other activities, always. One can't do everything. I also felt a discouraged certainty that the spelling reformers were a century ahead of their times, and that they would accomplish little for the time being. Of course if the century-ahead people don't fight, the reform is put off more than a century. That's plain. So I've no excuse and don't claim to have.

## Why Stop Learning?

But some time, if circumstances permit, I have often thought I'd like to write something about you, personally, and your brain, and what it has done to our generation and will do to the next. There are so few originating brains in any generation, they ought to be chronicled. And one of the things I specially would like to emphasize in what you've done and are doing, is this work for spelling. There is a singular mad blindness to the seriousness of the problem . . . What a strange creature is the human being anyhow! I'd thought that possibly just because I never had been known as interested in spelling reform, I might catch people's ears, better, when I say something about it. My mind often plays about the ways and means of saying what I have to say, picturesquely and humanly, in the attempt to get through that barrage of brute prejudice which instantly is laid down in most minds, when the subject is mentioned.

Thanks a thousand times for reading my chapters so briskly, and for the generous-hearted encouragement you give me. I've worked very hard over this book, which is entirely out of my line, and which I've only been doing because I thought my father's daughter ought not to refuse the chance of speaking out for a cause dear to him . . . and to me, too of course. It was Frederick Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation, who wished the job on to me, in spite of my trying to think of somebody else to do it. It has taken just about a laborious year out of my life, and there have been many times when I agreed with my circle that it was madness to give so much time and effort to something so entirely out of my usual line . . . which somebody else could really have done as well. But when I read your letter, I felt repaid.

With every good wish and all my thanks,

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

## Library Instructors Organized

A fair indication of the spirit of those who helped forward or were helped by library school education is shown by the gradual development of the Association of American Library Schools.

Five annual meetings of the Round Table of Library School Instructors (the organization from which the A. A. L. S. developed) were held before organization with constitution and name of Association of American Library Schools. (1907—1910 informal meetings of library school instructors were held).

Date	Place	President	Secretary
1. Jan., 1911	Chicago	P. L. Windsor	Linda A. Eastman
2. Jan., 1912	Chicago	P. L. Windsor	Bessie S. Smith, acting
3. Jan., 1913	Chicago	M. W. Plummer	Caroline Burnite, acting
4. Jan., 1914	Chicago	M. E. Haaeltine	Florence R. Curtis, acting
5. Jan., 1915	Chicago	J. A. Rathbone	Florence R. Curtis, acting

At the luncheon on January 1, 1915, it was voted to organize the Association of American Library Schools. A constitution and by-laws were presented and approved at the meeting of the Association held in Albany June 29-30, 1915.

June, 1915	Albany	J. I. Wyer	Mary L. Sutliff, <i>pro tern</i>
Dec., 1915	Chicago	J. I. Wyer	Florence R. Curtis
Dec., 1916	Chicago	June R. Donnelly	Florence R. Curtis
1917	No meeting		
Feb., 1918	Atlantic City	Sarah C. N. Bogle	J. R. Donnelly, <i>pro tern</i>
July, 1918	Albany	Sarah C. N. Bogle	Florence R. Curtis
Mar., 1919	Atlantic City	Alice S. Tyler	Florence R. Curtis
Dec., 1919	Chicago	F. K. Walter	Florence R. Curtis
June, 1921	Boston	Josephine A. Rathbone	P. L. Windsor, acting
June, 1922	Detroit	P. L. Windsor	Margaret S. Williams
June, 1923	New York City	Ernest J. Reece	Margaret S. Williams
Jan., 1924	Chicago	Mrs. Harriet P. Sawyer	Margaret S. Williams
June, 1924	Albany	Mrs. Harriet P. Sawyer	Margaret S. Williams
Jan., 1925	Chicago	Susie Lee Crumley	Marion Fair, acting
July, 1925	Seattle	Susie Lee Crumley	Margaret S. Williams
1926	No meeting—W. E. Henry, appointed, but did not serve.		
June, 1927	Interim meet'g.	Alice S. Tyler	Florence R. Curtis
Dec., 1927	Chicago	P. L. Windsor	Margaret S. Williams
June, 1928	West Baden	Josephine A. Rathbone	Isabella K. Rhodes
Dec., 1928	Chicago	June R. Donnelly	Florence R. Curtis, acting
May, 1929	Washington	June R. Donnelly	Isabella K. Rhodes
Dec., 1929	Chicago	C. C. Williamson	Isabella K. Rhodes
		Mrs. H. P. Sawyer, Vice-Pres.	Isabella K. Rhodes (Jessie W. Luther, acting)
June, 1930	Los Angeles	(Miss Coulter, presided)	Isabella K. Rhodes (Marie M. Hostetter, acting)
Dec., 1930	Chicago	C. C. Williamson, Pres.	Isabella K. Rhodes
		Frances H. Kelly, Vice Pres.	Isabella K. Rhodes
June, 1931	New Haven	Frances H. Kelly, Vice Pres.	Isabella K. Rhodes (Lydia M. Gooding, acting)
Dec., 1931	Chicago	Frances H. Kelly, Vice Pres.	
April, 1932	New Orleans	Clara E. Howard, Pres.	Isabella K. Rhodes
		Arthur E. Bostwick, Pres.	
		Ethel M. Fair, Vice Pres.	

## Part 4

### Bibliografy

'Indeed, unless a man can link his written thoughts with the everlasting wants of men, so that they shall draw from them as from wells, there is no more immortality to the thoughts and feelings of the soul than to the muscles and the bones.'

Henry Ward Beecher

## Melvil Dewey's Writings

The following bibliography was prepared as a labor of love by Margaret Zenk and Roby Bair and sent to Melvil Dewey in 1931 while he was in Florida. In acknowledging this remarkable compilation he said in July 1931:—

'Thanks for the copi of yur bibliografi. I didn't realyz I was gilty of spoiling so much good whyt paper.

'As I lookt over yur 30 pajes with 484 entries it was a kynd of typwritn movie of my 60 years of hard work. Yur list is long but ther ar 100s of anonimus things that hav been printed & which no one has ani record of or ani means of making 1. But chiefii if yu had all the articles I intended to write & never found tym for yu wd hav a bulki volume.

' "What's dun yu partli may compute, but no not what's resisted." '

Undoubtedly he was correct as to anonymous articles, for at one time during the early rush of affairs in Boston and New York he was the secretary of several——probably more than nine——different committees each calling for its own special report.

# CARNEGIE LIBRARY SCHOOL

## BIBLIOGRAPHY III

*A Bibliography of MELVIL DEWEY  
by Margaret Zenk and Roby Bair*

PITTSBURG, PA.

1932

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*Dedicated to* MARTHA CONNER

Our friend and teacher, the one who  
encouraged and aided us in this work.

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### Preface to Bibliography

In this work we have endeavored to present as complete a Bibliography of the works by and about Melvil Dewey as could be done by using the tools in Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh. We have, to our knowledge, exhausted the resources to be found in this library and the list is complete to date. No material regarding the Dewey Classification has been indexed as it is an entire field in itself.

### Table of Contents

Books by Melvil Dewey. . . . .	368
Books edited by Melvil Dewey. . . . .	369
Articles by Melvil Dewey. . . . .	369
Information about Melvil Dewey. . . . .	380
Portrait index. . . . .	383
Bibliography. . . . .	384



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# Melvil Dewey

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- Vertical tile of Carnegie library, Pittsburg.

## Index of Proper Names, Etc.

- Abbreviations, 281  
 American String Quartet, 240  
 Amherst, 1, 2, 13, 25, 26, 34, 43, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 62, 63, 77, 78, 94, 95, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, in, 112, 131, 135, 136, 146, 157, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 175, 186, 194, 205, 251, 284, 298, 309, 319  
 Amateur Athletic Union, 280  
 Anderson, Edwin H, 256, 302  
 Ancestry, 28, 29, 30, 50  
 Andrews, Clement Walker, 256  
 Anglic, 275  
 Apprentices Library, N Y, 175, 195  
 Armour Institute of Technology, 83, 84  
 Arnoux, Wm H, 292  
 Antivenenean Society, 55  
 Astor Library, N Y, 175, 195, 257  
 Attwood, Martha, 239  
 Axon, W E A, 257  
 Ayers, Alice (Mrs Benj D Smith), 91  
 Abbe, Mrs Adelaide E (Eaton), 91  
 Abbot, Ezra, 96, 175, 257  
 Abbott, Rev Lyman, 218, 233  
 Adams Center, 21, 22, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 110, 259, 277  
 Adams, Charles Francis, 277  
 Adult Education, American Soc. of, 5  
 Ahem, Mary Eileen, 1, 89, 258  
 Albany, 68, 69, 78, 79, 80, 81, 97, 102, 104, 109, 112, 118, 119, 130, 132, 140, 159, 168, 190, 196, 199, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 213, 215, 216, 219, 222, 225, 226, 227, 228, 255, 260, 329, 335  
 Albany Argus, 210  
 Albany Evening Journal, 119  
 Albany Morning Express, 134  
 Albany Knickerbocker-Press, 134  
 Albany State, 216  
 Alfred University, 25, 43, 44, 94, 310, 315  
 Alvord, Dean, 142  
 Alvord, Mrs Dean, 246  
 American Library Assn, 2, 6, 63, 67, 68, 78, 91, 92, 96, 101, 112, 113, 129, 131, 133, 146, 174, 181, 182, 183, 202, 278, 281, 286, 287, 288, 298, 312, 361  
 A L A Supply Dept, 253, 254, 255, 256, 258, 259, 261, 263  
 A L A Catalog, 81  
 American Library Institute, 2, 253  
 American Library Schools, Assn of, 205  
 American Philological Asso, 269, 271, 275  
 Ames, J G, 340  
 Amusements, 20, 21, 110, 120  
 Arnold, James Dwight, 245  
 Bacheller, Irving, 290  
 Bailey, J J, 257  
 Baker, G H, 194, 196  
 Balderston, John P, 244, 246  
 Bangor Public Library, 171  
 Barber, C P, 161  
 Barnard, F, A P, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 192, 194, 197, 286, 292, 394, 330  
 Barnard College, 184, 297  
 Barnard, Henry, 99, 188, 204, 206, 207, 208  
 Barnwell, James G, 175  
 Barry, Sir Edmund, 278  
 Basic English, 276  
 Bates, Cinderella, 18  
 Bates, Mrs Eva A, 18  
 Bates, Mrs Helen Page (Nellie Page), 91  
 Beach, Daniel, 209, 221  
 Beach, Herman R, 248, 249  
 Beal, Emily McKay, 15, 73, 74, 75, 247  
 Beecher, Henry Ward, 47  
 Belden, Charles F D, 256  
 Bellows, John, 267  
 Bennett, Emerson, 34  
 Benedict, Georgia, 104  
 Bernhard's Bay, 43, 131, 135, 284  
 Bestor, Arthur E, 248  
 Billings, Dr J S, 194, 200, 255, 257  
 Binghamton Public Library, 82  
 Birmingham Public Library, 257  
 Biscoe, Walter Stanley, 53, 54, 67, 77, 78, 79, 86, 90, 106, 108, 136, 149, 166, 167, 168, 186, 187, 301, 302, 334  
 Bishop, William Warner, 256  
 Bixby, General Wm H, 299  
 Blazier, Geo J, 162  
 Board of Regents (see University of State of New York)  
 Bok, Edward, 63  
 Bodleian Library, 257  
 Bonney, Charles C, 299  
 Borden, Wm A, 167, 168  
 Boston, 54, 55, 58, 63, 66, 68, 71, 72, 74, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 109, 111, 118, 131, 134, 136, 140, 177, 183, 202, 255, 259, 260, 289, 309  
 Boston Atheneum, 101, 174, 175, 194, 257, 286  
 Boston Public Library, 175, 194, 195\*  
 257, 287  
 Boston Symphony Orchestra, 239, 240  
 Bostwick, Arthur Eltnore, 256  
 Bostwick, Wm L, 209  
 Bosworth, Frank A, 249  
 Bowerman, G F, 129  
 Bowdoin College, 171, 175  
 Bowker, R R, 96, 97, 118, 194, 290  
 Boyesen, Hjalmar Hjorth, 292  
 Bradley, Edwin M, 245  
 Braddock Library, 200  
 Brainard, E M, 103  
 Brandage, W M Rev, 300  
 Brett, William Howard, 255  
 Brevoort, J Carson, 257  
 BrickeU, Mrs W B, 246

# Melvil Dewey

British Library Association (see Library Assn of United Kingdom)  
 Brooklyn Mercantile Library, 175, 257  
 Brooklyn Public Library, 100, 101  
 Brown, Walter Lewis, 256  
 Brown, Anne Huntington, 244  
 Brown, Jennie, 244  
 Brown, Capt Randolph R, 244  
 Brown, Chas H, 195  
 Brown University Library, 175, 195, 257  
 Buckingham, Mrs Martha T (Martha Tyler), 90, 91  
 Buffalo Public Library, 195  
 Bullen, George, 257  
 Bulkley, Edwin M, 245  
 Burgel, C C Mrs, 246  
 Business Acumen, 93  
 Butler, Pres Nicholas Murray, 82, 99, 196, 234, 297  
 Butler, W S, 175, 195

Canfield, J H, 102  
 Capen, E M, 173  
 Characteristics, 122, 138, 93, 116, 99, 140, 117  
 Carnegie, Andrew, 7, 131, 199, 200, 201, 252, 270, 271, 272, 273, 332  
 Carnegie Corporation, 7, 200, 201, 205  
 Carnegie Library School, 262  
 Carr, Mrs Henry J, 202, 323  
 Carr, Henry James, 255  
 Catholic Church, 218  
 Cecil, Winifred, 230  
 Chamberlain, Hon Mellen, 194  
 Chandler, Randolph Mrs, 245  
 Chataqua, 85, 100, 118, 237  
 Chicago, Worlds Fair (1893), 83  
 Chicago Public Library, 176, 195, 202, 257  
 Chicago Worlds Congress of Representative Women, 88  
 Chicago University, 83, 125  
 Child, Prof F J, 269  
 Child-man, 138, 139  
 Children's Library Association, 292, 293  
 Christian Union, 297  
 Cincinnati Public Library, 174, 176, 257  
 Claffin, Mary Bucklin, 67, 288  
 Claffin, Governor William, 67, 288  
 Clark, Albert, 244  
 Clark, Emeline Fuller, 244  
 Clark, James T, 257  
 Clark, Prof John Bates, 254  
 Clark University, 297  
 Clinton, Dr W G, 152  
 Cobb, Willard A, 209  
 Cobb, Rev Henry Everston, 248  
 Coe, Ellen M, 194  
 Colby University, 171  
 Cole, Mrs F A, 246  
 College Alumnae, Assn of, 91  
 Columbia Alumni Notes, 196  
 Columbia (College) University, 2, 5, 6, 53, 54, 68, 69, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 90, 91, 114, 132, 146, 148, 170, 171, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 196, 197, 198, 199, 201, 204, 205, 206, 207, 219, 252, 255, 278, 286, 289, 290, 292, 293, 295, 326, 327, 342, 357  
 Columbia College Library, 90, 99, 186, 304, 291, 294

Columbia School of Library Service, 196  
 Commissioner of Education, N Y, 222, ^57  
 Congress, Library of (see Library of Congress)  
 Conklin, Mrs Marianna B, 244  
 Connecticut State Library, 161  
 Conner, Martha, 262  
 Cornell University, 241, 334  
 Coulter & Westhoff, 234  
 Cowell, P, 257  
 Coxe, H O, 257  
 'Credo', 144  
 Creer Library, Chicago, 299  
 Crooks, Richard, 239  
 Crosby, Rev Howard, 292  
 Crunden, F M, 101, 194, 255  
 Curtis, Geo Wm, 95, 209, 225  
 Cutler, Mary Salome, 91, 255  
 Cutter, C A, 63, 67, 96, 101, 158, 169, 174, 175, 177, 178, 194, 255, 257, 281, 286

Da Costa, Charles M, 184  
 Daly, Augustin, 240  
 Daly, Joseph F, 216  
 Dana, John Cotton, 255, 312  
 Davidson, H E, 98, 99, 278  
 Dawe, Grosvenor, 1, 8  
 Day, Chancellor James R, 234  
 Decimal Gasification, 1, 2, 8, 49, 50, 63, 78, 80, 85, 86, 91, 95, 101, 102, 107, 116, 125, 147, 150, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 167, 168, 170, 172, 176, 179, 180, 182, 183, 186, 215, 227, 285, 288, 209, 313  
 del Sarto, Andrea, 65  
 Depew, Chauncey M, 120, 209  
 Deveny, Mary M (Mrs E A Wasson), 91  
 De Watteville, Baron, 278  
 Dewey, Annie (Godfrey), 2, 3, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 77, 83, 84, 87, 88, 90, 92, 225, 231, 234, 236, 238, 240, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 253, 288  
 Dewey Cousins Association, 16  
 Dewey Emily (Beal), 1, 3, 25, 87, 148, 246, 253  
 Dewey, Thomas, 29, 59  
 Dewey, Admiral George, 1, 29, 30  
 Dewey, Dr Godfrey, 7, 67, 80, 83, 152, 247, 249, 274, 275  
 Dewey, Joel, 17, 27, 28, 29, 30, 66  
 Detroit Public Library, 171  
 Dexter, Franklin B, 175  
 Diaz, Kafaelo, 239  
 Dickinson, Asa Don, 130, 161  
 Distin, William G, 234  
 Dix, Dr Morgan, 185  
 D K E, 55, 56, 78, 98  
 Doane, Bishop Wm Crosswell, 102, 221, 300  
 Dorrance, Frances, 80  
 Draper, Hon A S, 209, 212, 222, 225, 226, 227  
 Du rant, Henry F, 62, 123, 170  
 Eastman, Linda A, 256  
 Eastman, E P, 245  
 Eaton, Adelaide (Mrs Adelaide E Abbe), 91

## Index of Proper Names, Etc.

- Eaton, Hon John, 172, 176, 257  
 Edgar, Harold T, 248  
 Edgerton, Winifred (Mrs F J H Merrill), 91  
 Edison, T A, 97  
 Edmands, J, 194  
 Edwards, Rev Boyd, 250  
 Edwards, James T, 211  
 Efficiency Society, 3, 117  
 Elder, Mrs G, 113  
 Eliot, Dr C W, 16, 25, 26, 2B7  
 Elliott, Addie Mabee, 243, 245  
 Elliott, John, 243  
 Elmendorf, Henry, 255  
 Elmendorf, Theresa West, 90, 92, 93, 239, 246, 256  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 47, 251  
 Enthusiasms, 109, 110, 112, 118, 139  
 Esty, Prof, 284  
 Essex Institute, 171  
 European Trips, 63, 64, 106, 201  
 Evans, Charles, 176, 257  
 Every Saturday Night Club, 288  
 Everett, Hon Edward, 31, 32  
 Exactitude, 99, 115, 116
- Fairbanks & Co, 277  
 Farrar, Jefferson Clinton, 245  
 Farrar, Sarah Deane Pond, 245  
 Farrar, Lillian K P, 246, 248  
 Father Point, Quebec, 68  
 Faxon, Frederick Winthrop, 255  
 Feathers, Wm C, 249  
 Fellows, Dorkas, 8, 85, 86, 116, 128, 149, 168, 176, 246  
 Ferguson, Milton J, 290  
 Ferris, T Harvey, 230, 248, 249, 279  
 Field, David Dudley, 292  
 Field, Herbert Haviland, 177  
 Financial Probity, 49, 55, 133, 135, 136, 138  
 Finegan Dr Thomas E, 311  
 Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, 3, 102, 361  
 Fisical Characteristics, 11, 59, 103, 104, 105  
 Fiske, John, 55, 62, 96, 174, 257  
 Fitch, Chas E, 209  
 Five Nations, 301  
 Fletcher, W I, 171, 194, 255  
 Flinger, Ira A, 248  
 Florida State College for Women, 179, 180  
 Folsoms, M, 172  
 Forbes Library, 101  
 Fort ightness, 113, 114  
 Foster, W E, 194  
 Fountain Pens, 98, 110  
 Fraser, Mr & Mrs J S, 245  
 Friendships, 60, 61, 100, 148  
 Frey, Albert R, 195  
 Funk, I K, 99, 100, 275  
 Funk & Wagnalls, 99, 100, 112
- Gallup, Asa O, 120  
 Gannett Institute, 63  
 Gardinier, Philip S, 245  
 Generosity, 130, 131, 132, 136
- Gillett, C R, 195  
 Gillett, Hon Frederick H, S3  
 Getchell, M W, 168  
 Ginn Bros, 56, 95, 97  
 Ginn & Company, 2, 186  
 Ginn, Edwin, 96, 256, 284  
 Ginn, Fred, 96  
 Gladden, Rev Washington, 47, 243  
 Gleason, Stoutenburgh Marianna, 245  
 Godard, Geo S, 161  
 Godfrey, Annie Roberts, 15, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 170, 177, 254  
 Godfrey, Benjamin Davenport, 66  
 Goff, Mrs Darius, 245  
 Golden, Tohn, 240  
 Goss, John, 239  
 Gould, Charles Henry, 256  
 Graff, Mrs Maud, 241  
 Grandgent, Charles H, 274  
 Granville, Frances Evelyn, Countess of Warwick, 11  
 Graves, Frank P, 222  
 Greeley, Horace, 345  
 Green, Eliza, 27, 28  
 Green, S S, 195, 255  
 Green's Settlement, 27, 28  
 Griswold, Irving H, 244, 249  
 Guild, Reuben A, 175, 195, 257
- Hadley, Chalmers, 255, 256  
 Haldeman, Prof S S, 269  
 Hall, Dr G Stanley, 297  
 Halls, Wm, 246  
 Hamilton, Alexander, 209, 349  
 Hamilton College, 171  
 Hamlin, Anna, 239  
 Hampton Institute, 200  
 Hampton Library School, 200  
 Hannah, G, 195  
 Hanaway, Emily, 293  
 Harris, Hamilton, 209  
 Harris, Hon W T, 48, 257  
 Harrison, Ellen M Hawks, 245  
 Harrison, Joseph LeRoy, 245  
 Hartley, Mrs Emma, 246  
 Hartford Public Library, 171, 195  
 Hartford Theological Seminary, 195  
 Harvard University, 25, 26, 62, 95, 96, 195, 248, 269, 274, 287, 327  
 Harvard University Library, 174, 257  
 Harwood, Mr & Mrs Paul H, 244  
 Haven, S F, 175  
 Hay, John, 180  
 Hayes, Rutherford P, 255, 288  
 Haykin, D J, 138, 150  
 Hazeltine, Mary Emogene, 118  
 Heath, John, 21, 96, 97  
 Hedge, J D, 175  
 Hewins, Caroline M, 195  
 Hewitt, Grace (Mrs Towle), 93  
 Hicks, Harry W, 247, 248, 249  
 Hill, Gov David B, 7, 206, 208, 209, 210, 219, 359  
 Hill, Frank P, 87, 100, 101, 255  
 Hinsdale, Dr Guy, 104  
 Hitchcock, Prof Edward, 54, 55  
 Hitchcock, Rev Roswell D, 292  
 Hobbs, Charles B, 247  
 Holmes, Dean Henry D, 248

# Melvil Dewey

- Holls, Frederick W, a16  
Holt, Dr Hamilton, 2, 247  
Hornet, H A, 175, 257  
Howson, Roger, 159  
Hosmer, James Kendall, 355  
Hovey, Edward Clarence, 255  
Howard, Mrs W, 246  
Howland, William B, 233  
Howland, Mrs (Wallace), 200  
Humor, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 53, 54, 55  
Hungerford Collegiate Institute, 21, 22, 33, 34, 36, 37
- Idaho State Traveling Library Commission, 262  
Idealism, 13, 14, 27, 28, 53, 56, 57, 65, 66, 69, 141  
Illinois Library Asso, 84  
Indian Librarian, 161, 222, 242, 301  
Indianapolis Public Library, 174, 257  
International Convention for Amendment of Orthography, 269  
International Library Exhibit, 91  
International Institute of Bibliography, 128, 129  
I O G T, 19, 32, 33, 113, 126, 127  
Iowa State College Library, 195  
Iowa State University, 171  
Ippolito, Carmella, 239, 240
- J**ackson, Frederick, 64, 286  
Jennie, E H, 113  
Jennings, Jusson C, 120, 256  
Jenks, Prof Jeremiah W, 233, 234  
Jones, Hon Edward T, 209
- Kansas State Historical Society, 171  
Kansas State Teachers' College, 161  
Kasson, John A, 277  
Keck, Margaret W, 244  
Kelsey, Frederick T, 230, 248, 249  
Keuffel & Esser, 277  
Keogh, Andrew, 256  
Kephart, Horace, 171  
Kerman, Francis, 209  
Kerman, William, 216  
Kessler, G Harry, 248  
Kindness, 128, 120  
King, Mr & Mrs Paul, 245  
Korb, May, 239  
Krome, Elizabeth Mary, 179, 180  
Kuntz, Daniel, 239, 240
- Lafayette College, 269, 286  
Lake Placid, 72, 107, 109, 112, 113, 115, 128, 130, 131, 132, 138, 225, 230, 237, 330, 333, 235 239, 348  
Lake Placid Club Chapel, 143  
Lake Placid Club, 3, 7, 73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 83, 84, 87, 93, 94, 97, 98, 103, 105, 130, 134, 135, 137, 138, 144, 168, 205, 325, 227, 229, 230, 231, 240, 248, 329, 235, 236, 237, 260, 273, 279, 299, 301, 308, 310
- Lake Placid Club Education Foundation, 3, 82, 132, 243, 246, 247, 253, 308  
Lake Placid Club Education Foundation Scholarship, 54  
Lake Placid Club in Florida, 1, 3, 116, 148, 149, 151, 152, 238  
Lake Placid Co, 230, 234, 235, 248, 249, 308  
Lake Stearns, 115  
Lake Wales News, 15  
La Fontaine, H, 159, 247, 313  
Lamson, Carl, 239  
Lane, W C, 195, 255  
Lamed, J N, 105, 255  
Laughlin, Prof J Lawrence, 234  
Lauterbach, Edward, 225  
League of Library Commissioners, 262  
League of Nations Library, 158  
Lee, Dr Thomas G, 176  
Legislative Reference Bureau, 228  
Lehigh University, 171  
Legler, Henry Edward, 256  
Lewis, Garvin & Kelsey, 248  
Lewis, Dr William Dodge, 2, 248  
Leypoldt, F, 96, 97, 118, 257  
Library Association of the United Kingdom, 2, 29, 52, 63, xoi, 123, 133, 198, 201, 298  
Library Bureau, 2, 96, 98, 131, 133, 178, 183, 190, 221, 22s, 253, 259, 260, 280, 294  
Library Notes, 192, 193, 253, 258  
Library of Congress, 8, 86, 102, 138, 149, 159\*, 161, 169, 171, 176, 181, 182, 195, 225, 257, 356  
Library Journal, 2, 95, 96, 97, 118, 119, 158, 165, 174, 178, 180, 186, 187, 194, 204, 253, 256, 257, 258, 285, 286, 288, 289, 298, 354, 358  
Library School, 6, 78, 80, 108, 129, 141, 147, 184, 187, 189, 190, 191, 194, 196, 203, 205, 207, 215, 217, 227, 302, 323, 334, 339, 354  
Library School of the Western Reserve University, 200  
Library School of Carnegie Library, 200  
Library Survey (1026), 169  
Library Trustees Association, 261  
Lincoln, Chas J, 219  
Lindsley's takigrafy, 52, 53  
Loan Fund for Students, 84  
Locke, George H, 256  
Long Island Historical Society, 195  
Longstreth, Morris T, 232  
Los Angeles Public Library, 171  
Lounsbury, Thomas R, 274  
Loveland, Herbert, 19  
Low, Seth, 99, 184, 185, 186, 187, 190, 204  
Lyceums, 31, 32, 36, 43  
Lydenberg, Harry M, 256
- Mabie, Hamilton W, 233, 297  
Madison Avenue (315), 68, 108, 112, 130, 302  
March, Dr F A, 67, 269, 286, 289  
March, Genl Peyton C, 289  
Marietta College Library, 161, 162  
Marshall, Rev Benj T, 248  
Marshall, Everett, 239  
Marson, Arthur, 113  
Marson, Ellen, 113

# Index of Proper Names, Etc.

- Massachusetts Agricultural College, 46  
 Massachusetts Institute Technology, 171  
 Matthews, Bran der, 265  
 McDonall, J, 128  
 McDonogh School, an  
 McKay, Mrs, 75  
 McKay, Martha A Dickson, 245  
 McKay, David Henderson, 245  
 McKelway, St Clair, 123, 209, 221  
 McKinley, Pres William, 353  
 McMillan, David H, 216  
 McWilliams, Mrs Suzannah P T, 245  
 Mead, Nathaniel Emerson, 245  
 Mead, Jane VanKeuren, 245  
 Mental Characteristics, 15, 18, 22, 31, 34, 39, 41, 46, 47, 48, 55, 58, 62, 63, 64, 75, 86, 90, 94, 95, 99, 101, 106, 109, 113, 114, 116, 122, 123, 125, 140  
 Mercersburg Academy, 250  
 Merrill, Mrs F J H (Winifred Edgerton), 91  
 Messages of Governors (N Y), 219  
 Metric Bulletin, 278  
 Metric Bureau, 2, 112, 119, 133, 146, 186, 263, 277, 286, 288, 289  
 Metric System, 34, 35, 36, 42, 247  
 Meyer, H H B, 256  
 Milam, Carl H, 255  
 Miller, Clarence, 248  
 Miller, Margaret, 75, 112, 246  
 Millionth, Man, 94, 310  
 Mirror Lake, 72  
 Mirror Lake Park, 138  
 Mitchell, Edw, 184  
 Modern Language Assoc of America, 271  
 Montague, Prof W L, 49, 284  
 Montgomery, Thomas Lynch, 256  
 Moose Island, 72  
 Moral Characteristics, 76, 86  
 Morgan, Appleton, 195  
 Mott, John R, 248  
 Morgan Construction Co, 248  
 Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, 46  
 Müller, Prof Max, 266  
 Mullins, J D, 257
- National Cyclopedia of Am Biography, 212  
 National Education Association, 7, 271  
 National Efficiency Society, 3  
 National Institute of Efficiency, 3  
 National Medical Library, 194, 257  
 Neill, Prof H H, 61, 62, 110  
 Nelson, Alex C, 195  
 Nepotism, 119  
 Nervous Irritability, 124, 125  
 Newark Public Library, 171  
 New Bedford Public Library, 171  
 Newberry, Charles T, 248, 249  
 New York, 28, 67, 68, 79, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 105, 106, 109, 111, 118, 125, 126, 128, 130, 140, 157, 168, 185, 191, 202, 206, 209, 212, 222, 227, 231, 235, 241, 253, 257, 260, 261  
 New York Children's Liby Assn, 2, 292, 293  
 New York Cooper Union, 53  
 New York Free Circulating Library, 171, 194, 196, 200
- New York Language Club, a, 29a  
 New York Library Club, 2, 23 7, 261, 290, 291  
 New York Shakespeare Society, 195  
 New York Stat\* Dept of Public Instruction, 206, 212, 917, 218, 221  
 New York State Education Dept, 22 a, 325, 257, 311  
 New York State, 204, ao8, 246, 248, 311, 336  
 New York State Library, 48, 69, 77\* 80, 104, 108, 119, 130, 158, 179, 198, 205, 206, 227, 257, 262, 291  
 New York State Library Assn, 175  
 New York State Library School, a, 79, 85, 171, 196, 198  
 New York Times, 180, 272, 273, 280, 311, 314  
 New York Tribune, 240, 272, 345  
 New York State University (See University of State of N Y), 2, 5, 6, 7, 311  
 Newton, Rev Heber R, 32, 39, 288, 292  
 Newton Free Library, 286  
 Nicholson, E B, 257  
 Northwood School, 3, 214, 242, 247, 248  
 Noyes, S B, 175, 257
- Oakley, Angelica G, 245  
 Oberlm College, 171  
 Official Rectitude, 119  
 Ogden, Edward, 244  
 Ohio Valley Regional Group of Catalogers, 261  
 Oneida Community, 43, 44, 55  
 Oneida Seminary, 25, 38, 42  
 Oneida, 27, 50, 105  
 Onondaga Nation, 301  
 Outlook, 218  
 Oxenham, John, 9
- Packard, A S, 175  
 Page, Nellie F (Mrs H P Bates), 91  
 Palace of the Archives in Paris, 107  
 Palmer, Alice E Freeman, 288  
 Parker, Gen A C, 55, 24a, 301  
 Parker, W E, 255  
 Parkhurst, Rev C H, 47, 100, 245  
 Parkhurst, Nellie B, 245  
 Parsons, James Russell Jr, 119, 220  
 Patten, Frank C, 188  
 Patton and Field, 46  
 Peoples, W T, 175, 195  
 Perley, Clarence W, 159  
 Perkins, Fred B, 175, 257, 286  
 Philadelphia Centennial (1876), 78, 92, 146, 173  
 Philadelphia Library, 172, 175, 178, 257  
 Philadelphia Mercantile Library Co, 175, 190  
 Philological Society of London, 273  
 Pierson, Henry Rufus, 209  
 Place, Ira A, 234  
 Plimpton, George A, 2, 97, 98, 186  
 Plummer, Mary Wright, 193, 256  
 Poole, R F, 64, 67, 195, 287

# Melvil Dewey

- Poole, Dr W F, 128, 176, 195, 202,  
\*55t 257  
Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, 210  
Pond, Florence, 244  
Potter, Rev Henry C, 105, 292  
Pratt, Albert, 27, 96  
Pratt Institute, 171  
Tratt, Isaac, 133  
Pratt, Mrs S F, 56, 62, 134  
Princeton College Library, 195, 257  
Providence Atheneum, 175  
Providence Public Library, 194  
Publishers Weekly, 194  
Putnam, G H, 195  
Putnam, Herbert, 102, 181, 203, 225,  
226, 255, 353  
Pyrke, Berne A, 117
- Quest Society of Florida, 176
- Rathbone, Josephine A, 256  
Readers A Writers Economy Co, 2, 98,  
131, 183, 253, 259, 260  
Regents Certificates, 214  
Reid, Whitelaw, 204, 206, 209, 220, 225,  
336, 360  
Reidpath, Nettie E, 245  
Relstab, John, 246  
Remington-Rand, 259  
Review of Reviews, 155  
Richards, Mrs Ellen F, 2  
Richards, Garnet, 257  
Richardson, Rev Ernest Cushing, 121,  
160, 195, \*55 <  
Rider, Fremont, 160, 169  
Roche, Emma Clark, 244, 245  
Roche, Mrs Spencer S, 246  
Roden, Carl B, 256  
Roebling, Mrs J A, 9, 246  
Rollins College, 2  
Rogers, William B, 246  
Roosevelt, Pres Theodore, 7, 126, 142,  
153, 216, 317, 219, 272, 273, 345  
Root, Axariah Smith, 256  
Rosenberg Library, 189  
Rowley, Edith, 237  
Reis Library, 237  
Russell, Dr William George, 244  
Russell, Leslie W L, 209
- Salmon, Lucy M, 233  
St. Lawrence University, 210  
St. Louts University, 171  
St. Louis Public Library, 194, 257  
St. Moriu, 235  
Sanders, Lyman, 21  
San Francisco Public Library, 171  
San Francisco Mercantile Library, 170,  
171, 176, 257  
Saranac Lake, 234, 240  
Saunders, F. 175, 105  
School of Library Economy (see Library  
School)  
School Journal, 291  
School of Library Service, 199
- Scott, Dr C P G, 292  
Seely, Dr W H, 142  
Seelye, President (Amherst), 46, 47, 56,  
57, 58, 136  
Seelye, L C, 136  
Seegar, Dorothy, 239  
Seer, 243  
Segrera, Carolina, 239  
Sembrich, Madam, 239  
Sensitivness, 23, 52, 54, 124  
Seward, Governor William H, 30  
Sex Equality, 91, 92, 93  
Sexton, Pliny T, 102, 125, 225, 226  
Seymour, May, 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81,  
82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 168, 246, 281,  
308  
Sharp, Katharine L, 73, 74, 81, 82, 83,  
84, 85, 86, 87, 245, 246, 308  
Shaw, Dr Albert, 130, 155, 231  
Sheperdson, John W, 248, 249  
Shillaber, William, 248, 249  
Shuttleworth, W E, 244  
Sibley, John Langdon, 96, 175  
Sheppard, Mack, 136  
Simpler Spelling, 8  
Simplified Spelling Board, 7, 247, 273,  
374  
Simpson, Frances, 84  
Six Nations, 242  
Skinner, Hon Chas R, 212, 218  
Slocum, Wm A, 247  
Sower, 243  
Smith, Carroll E, 209  
Smith, Charles Sprague, 53  
Smith College, 80  
Smith, Cornelius B, 67  
Smith, Mrs Benj D (Alice Ayers), 91  
Smith, Lloyd P, 171, 172, 174, 175, 178,  
181, 257  
Society of American Authors, 1  
Southwestern Library Assn, 261  
Spelling Reform Association, 2, 112,  
119, 133, 247, 269, 271, 278, 286, 287,  
288  
Spofford, Ainsworth, R, 181, 195, 237  
Stacy, Hon Walter P, 241, 248  
Stallings, Louise, 239  
Standard Dictionary, 1, 269, 274  
State Library Extension Commission,  
262  
State Museum of Natural History, 208,  
210  
Stearns, President (Amherst), 47, 58,  
165  
Stone, Carolina Yorke, 245  
Stone, Mary Goode, 245  
Stott, Edward B, 230, 248  
Strohm, Adam, 256  
Stryker, Mrs Peter, 293  
Stryker, Rev Peter, 293  
Syracuse University, 94, 241, 310
- Takigrafy, sa, 53  
Tallman, Eunice W, 245  
Ta ft, Lorado, 84  
Taylor, Dr William H, 225, 248  
Theodorowicx, Tullius, 239  
Theodorowica, M L'Africain, 240  
Thomas, Calvin, 274  
Thrift, 27, 54, 55, 58, 137  
Thwaites, Reuben Gold, 255

## Index of Proper Names, Etc.

- Thwing, Rev Ohas Franklin, 200  
 Time-saving, 12, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44,  
 45, 68, 69  
 Titsworth, J, 24  
 Tobacco, 33, 39, 40, 54, 55  
 Todd, Dr David P, 95  
 Toledo Public Library, 171  
 Towle, Mrs (Grace Hewitt), 93  
 Townc, Charles Hanson, 153  
 Townsend, Dr Martin I, 209  
 Trumbull, Prof Howard J, 269  
 Trustfulness, 140  
 Turner, Henry E, 209  
 Tyler, Alice S, 256  
 Tyler, Martha (Mrs Martha T Buck-  
 ham), 91
- Unification Act, 214, 222  
 Union College, 295  
 Union Theological Seminary Library,  
 195  
 United States Bureau of Education,  
 275, 285  
 United States Daily, 222, 319  
 University Club, 233  
 University Law (1892), 211, 212  
 University of California, 203, 205  
 University of Chicago, 83, 171, 259  
 University of Illinois, Urbana, 83, 84,  
 222  
 University of Ohio, 355  
 University of Pennsylvania, 171, 269  
 University of Peru, 161  
 University of Rochester, 25, 26, 171  
 University of the South, 171  
 Univ State of New York, (Including  
 references to Regents), 132, 204,  
 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 216, 221,  
 227, 296, 301  
 Regents, Bd of Univ of State of N Y,  
 2, 5, 6, 7, 69, 78, 82, 83, 102, 121,  
 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 214, 217,  
 219, 225, 227, 295, 296, 297, 300,  
 302  
 Regents, 108, 123, 125, 129, 196, 199,  
 206, 210, 212, 213, 216, 217, 220,  
 221, 225, 226, 227, 228  
 University of Vermont, 171  
 University of Uppsala, 275  
 Upson, Rev Anson T, 209, 297  
 Utley, George Burwell, 255, 256  
 Utley, Henry Munson, 255
- Vinton, F, 195, 257  
 Vizetelly, Frank H, 275  
 Voit, Mr & Mrs Joseph Nicholas, 244
- Wallace, Miss Anne (Mrs Howland),  
 200  
 Ward, Rev Wm Hayes, 292  
 Warner, G H, 244  
 Warren, Rev Orvis H, 209  
 Washburn, Freeman, 17  
 Washington Public Library, 129  
 Washington University, St Louis, 79  
 Waterman, L E, 98  
 Waterman, Frank, 98  
 Watson, Dr Wm H, 209  
 Wasson, Mrs E A (Mary M. Deveny),  
 91  
 Webster, Pres H E, 295  
 Weeks, Prof Raymond, 274  
 Wellesley College, 62, 63, 65, 66, 90,  
 101, 123, 148, 288  
 Wellesley Six, 90, 170, 171  
 Wellman, Hiller Crowell, 256  
 Werrenrath, Reinald, 239  
 Wheeler, Pres Benj Ide, 205  
 Whitaker, A E, 257  
 Whiting, Sarah F, 123  
 Whitney, Prof W D, 263, 266, 269  
 Whitney, J L, 175, 195, 257  
 Williamson, Chas C, 208  
 Williston Classical Seminary, 46  
 Wilkinson, Robt F, 216  
 Wilson, H W, 259  
 Winsor, Justin, 64, 67, 175, 255, 257,  
 287  
 Winter Olympics, 151, 235  
 Woburn Public Library, 171  
 Wood, Katherine Emily, 244  
 Wood, Willis, 244  
 Woodworth, Florence, 79, 80, 82, 84, 86  
 Woelfkin, Kev Cornelius, 244  
 Worcester Free Library, 171, 195  
 World Center, 247  
 World's Congress of Representative  
 Women, 92  
 World's Fair (Chicago 1893), 83, 91,  
 93, 146, 170, 277  
 Wright, Gov Silas, 30  
 Wyer, J I, 6, 77, 7, 86, 179, 198, 305,  
 255, 256
- Yale University Library, 175
- Zachrisson, Prof R E, 276  
 Zimbalist, 240
- Van Name, Addison, 175  
 Van Santvoord, Seymour, 149  
 Vickers, Thomas, 257  
 Vincent, Dr George E, 100  
 Vincent, Bishop John H, 18, 100







