

Science Bibliography

American Scientific Books 1960-1962. Ed. by Phyllis B. Steckler. New York: Bowker, 1962. 474p. \$10.

Every librarian with an interest in scientific and technical books will want to own, or have ready access to, at least one copy of this handy bibliography which contains a wealth of information on some eight thousand selected entries cumulated from the monthly issues of the *American Book Publishing Record* (January 1960 to March 1962). This, according to the publisher, marks the first cumulation in any subject area from the well-known Bowker publication.

Entries are arranged principally by Dewey Decimal classification headings. The form of entry, in general, follows that used by the Library of Congress for its catalog cards and includes author, title, publisher, price, and catalog card number. In addition, brief descriptive annotations are included with many of the entries. Author and title indexes also are provided.

Some fastidious individuals will find the title of this bibliography to be in slight disagreement with the actual content. For, in fact, the books are not all American (books written by foreign authors and printed abroad but offered for sale in this country through a single designated agent are included), titles included are not all scientific (a majority of the books would be classed as medical and technical), items other than books are listed (several small pamphlets and other nonbook materials are included), and finally, the majority of the books appear to have been published in 1959-1961.

It would serve no useful purpose to refer in detail to each of the minor errors or misprints noted. In a few cases the prices given are not current, but the differences are slight and of little consequence.

In spite of the fact that this bibliography contains no information that was not previously available, the very convenience of this cumulation will make the volume a valuable addition to the reference bookshelf.—*John Sherrod, Science and Technology Division, Library of Congress.* ■ ■

items useful to the classifier). Form divisions are given seven pages of attention, but the need is felt for even more elaboration on the use of these all-pervasive "floating tables." Complete absence of any graphic aids to DC is everywhere apparent, but especially in this section, which would benefit from tabular display. At scattered spots, order of preference is recorded (e.g., at Form Divisions A and Form Divisions 061-063 A). The provision of a precedence table, comparing all possible pairs of numbers would give more clarity at a glance than is now possible.

There is need for check lists of questions the classifier should ask as each number is built: (Is the basic number more than five digits long? If so, see Form Division F (1). If not, continue.) That the Decimal Classification Office does recognize the utility of sequential instruction is apparent in General Principles and Procedures XA (Number Building), which gives a five-step procedure for preventing "divide like" instructions from going sour.

To examine this book outside its universe might yield as unsubstantial results as the review of a telephone directory which found it to be strong in its characters but weak in plot. It might be worthwhile, however, to emphasize the attitude revealed by the title. This work is not a guide to use of DC by readers. It is instead, as we take for granted, a guide to use by classifiers. Godfrey Dewey, in his preface, specifically points to "the classifier, the *user* of the classification." The book describes the input operations to the system, but concerns itself little, if at all, with any eventual output requirements. Only by accepting this inner perspective can the practices of the *Guide* be viewed as necessarily practical. But the world at large and nonlibrarians in particular refuse to abide by this rule. They will judge the practices and the *Guide* according to the facility or limitation it offers on their ability to find books. A basic limitation is the subordination of geographical to subject aspects, when an area program wishes to collect subject information relating to a given area. Each of us must make two separate evaluations of this book: first, how well it has accomplished what it set out to do, and second, what effect it will have when we put it into practice. The answers may be a world apart.—*Earl Farley, University of Kansas Libraries.*