

academic status and the educational possibilities of the library.

The tone of the writing, didactic and hortatory, is somewhat reminiscent of Ranganathan, but it is not unpleasant. One is struck by the author's serious effort—in the face of great obstacles—to improve college libraries and advance professional librarianship. He should be applauded.

A realistic treatment of college librarianship in India, this book should be of interest to students and scholars of comparative and international librarianship.—*Morris A. Gelfand, Professor Emeritus, Queens College, Flushing, New York.*

Dibdin, Thomas Frognall. *Thomas Frognall Dibdin: Selections*. Compiled and introduced by Victor E. Neuburg. The Great Bibliographers Series, no.3. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1978. 245p. \$10. LC 77-18012. ISBN 0-8108-1077-8.

Victor Neuburg's effort, "an attempt to provide an introduction to the work of a somewhat undervalued man of letters," is a commendable undertaking. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite come off. The reasons, however, are not the fault of Neuburg—at least, not entirely.

The problem lies with Dibdin himself, what he had to say and how he went about saying it. But Neuburg, too, cannot avoid some of the responsibility. After all, the series of which this is the third volume is "The Great Bibliographers." (One and two were devoted to R. B. McKerrow and A. L. Pollard.) It appears that the judgment of the past, which consistently has evidenced reluctance to crown Dibdin with the mantle of greatness, has been accurate in its assessment more often than not.

Selections from seven of the almost two dozen bibliographical works that issued from the prolific pen of Dibdin between 1802 and 1838 are included. Few, if any, would serve to stimulate the kind of full-scale study of T. F. D. that Neuburg hopes to encourage. The *Bibliomania* (1804), perhaps his best-known work, is represented, as is his *Bibliophobia* (1832), perhaps his least-known (reprinted for the first time). So, too, is *The Bibliographical Decameron*, which, when issued originally in 1817 in three sumptuous volumes, is said

to have represented the high point of Dibdin's career.

More than anything else, Dibdin was a man of and for his time—the golden age of bibliophily. He was less the bibliographer—not in the Fredson Bowers sense but compared with a contemporary, Brunet—and more consumed with bibliographical themes. His passion for books, as was that of many of his circle, was manifested in "large paper copies," "uncut copies," "illustrated copies," "unique copies," "copies printed upon vellum," "first editions," "true editions," and "a general desire for the Black Letter." Dibdin chronicled this world. His writings both drew sustenance from it and helped to sustain it—although not indefinitely, as the *Bibliophobia* attests to.

Did they do more? Did they, as Neuburg in his introduction holds, tie together the elements of book collecting, bibliography, and scholarship? Did Dibdin's Roxburghe Club activities, his chronicling the bibliophilic passions of the Douces and the Hebers, begin to address the uses to which rare books could be put? Perhaps. What is more likely, though, is that the Douces, the Hebers, and others would have pursued their passions without the efforts of T. F. D. The fruits of their enthusiasm and the rewards being reaped by students and scholars of the twentieth century cannot be laid at the feet of the author of *The Bibliographical Decameron*. Dibdin reflected his times, he did not create them.

Dibdin's real contributions to bibliography might be said to be confined to his *Introduction to . . . the . . . Classics* (four editions published between 1802 and 1827), his *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* (Althorpe Catalogues (seven volumes, 1814–1923), and the magnificently printed edition of Ames' *Typographical Antiquities* (four volumes, 1810–1819). Even here, though, as William A. Jackson has pointed out, Dibdin leaves much to be desired in terms of bibliographical accuracy. He was something less than the "great bibliographer" the publisher's series title might imply.

Dibdin does deserve a place in the history of bibliography—taken in its broadest sense. I doubt, however, that place occupies so prominent a position as Neuburg

indicates.—*John F. Guido, Washington State University, Pullman.*

Bahr, Alice Harrison. *Book Theft and Library Security Systems, 1978-79*. White Plains, N.Y.: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1978. 128p. \$24.50. LC 77-25284. ISBN 0-914236-14-8.

This report addresses the question: "Which theft prevention program is most suited to the library budget, library staff, library building design, and the nature and extent of losses sustained?" (p.5). Although it does not answer this question directly, the report does achieve its stated goal of supplying the data that will help librarians arrive at their own answers. Of available publications, this volume comes closest to gathering in one place the background information librarians need to approach the problem of theft intelligently and systematically.

Although almost half the volume is devoted to descriptions and user reports on commercially available electronic security systems, as the title indicates, there is also considerable discussion of the theft problem in general. Two features of special interest are the attention given to assessing the magnitude of the theft problem and the discussion of the theft problems of special collections, nonprint, and journal collections.

The chapter on "Determining Whether Theft Prevention Measures Are Necessary" assesses clearly the three most frequently employed methods of measuring book loss—the book census, the inventory, and the sample. It gives step-by-step instructions, reports various experiences with each method, and attempts to point out the advantages and disadvantages of each. Surprisingly, the author argues that the inventory be given serious consideration as a viable procedure. The author argues that if the inventory is considered as a tool to achieve other valuable ends, for example, weeding, preservation, etc., in addition to calculating book losses, it may be a cost-effective procedure. The discussion of sampling methods provides, in clear, understandable language, the basic steps in taking a statistically valid sample. As such it will provide precision in many cases where there would otherwise be none. The danger here is that the simplicity

of the explanation will embolden librarians to undertake major sampling efforts without further advice. In this regard the author's suggestion that help be sought of a college business or engineering department is particularly sound.

The major section on electronic security systems effectively answers questions that buyers are likely to ask—such as, how the systems work, what they cost, what can be protected, and what special features each system has. It is a good update of the *Library Technology Reports* issue (Nov. 1976) devoted to consideration of these products. These two volumes and the recent Association of Research Libraries SPEC kit on *Theft Detection and Prevention* provide libraries with an excellent background for consideration of competing products and implementation of an ESS-based prevention program.

The chapter on theft problems of journal, nonprint, and special collections is slightly less satisfying, perhaps because the work done in these areas is less complete and theft problems less easily evaluated. Journal mutilation as a part of the theft problem is

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