

This very handsome volume, with its fine plates, has been produced with the artistry and care characteristic of recent Cambridge University Press books. One could not imagine a more appropriate format for this brief but useful contribution to the history of publishing.—Rollo G. Silver, *School of Library Science, Simmons College.*

## Bibliographies of Bibliographies

*A History of Bibliographies of Bibliographies.*

By Archer Taylor. New Brunswick, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1955. ix, 147 p. \$3.50.

In this notable contribution to professional literature, Professor Taylor returns to the consideration of that "essence of an essence," that "sophisticated tool" which, within narrower limits, he discussed with so much grace and learning, a decade ago, in his *Renaissance Guides to Books*. Now he traces the history of bibliographies of bibliographies from Jerome the canonized to Besterman the blessed and beset. He has restricted himself to "works of universal scope"; some 50 names or titles appear in the index.

To Conrad Gesner's *Pandectae* (1548) he gives credit for "an auspicious beginning of a very difficult aspect of bibliography," and for constituting "the first modern bibliography of bibliographies," which "aimed at comprehensiveness and included works of all ages as far as they came to his knowledge." Francis Sweerts' *Athenae Belgicae* (1628) is said to have been not only "the first classified bibliography of bibliographies" but also "the first independent or almost independent bibliography of bibliographies," a qualified primacy which, in its fullest sense, he reserves for Philip Labbé's *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum* (1652).

There are interesting accounts of the efforts (so far fruitless) to recover Jodocus Dudinck's vanished *Bibliothecariographia* (1643), of the unpublished *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum* of Cornelius a Beughem, and of the lost manuscript of Charles Moëtte's *Bibliotheca Alphabetica*, this last the only treatise on the subject which "can be dated in the eighteenth century."

Professor Taylor refers to "the temptation that comes to every bibliographer to wander afield and include works of little pertinence

to the task," and insists that "accuracy, industry, and learning are not the only virtues required of a bibliographer," adding that "a bibliographer must be a practical man who sees how his book will be used." He concedes that "any definition of a bibliography is difficult to formulate and even more difficult to adhere to." The penultimate chapter is devoted to modern "Periodical and Cooperative Enterprises." The conclusion reached is that "with all their faults and insufficiencies—and what human works lack them?—bibliographies of bibliographies are very valuable aids to scholars." "Each age," Professor Taylor avers, "must create its own bibliography of bibliographies."

Professor Taylor alludes to his study as an "historical summary," but it is more than that: it is criticism at its finest and soundest, too.—David C. Mearns, *Library of Congress.*

## Books, Libraries & Librarians

*Books, Libraries, Librarians. Contributions to Library Literature.* Selected by John David Marshall, Wayne Shirley and Louis Shores. Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1955. 432p. \$6.

The compilation offered by Mr. Marshall and his associates is intended to include a "representative selection" from the "body of professional literature" which possesses the "quality of readability," to provide "a source of pleasure and of profit to the profession's tyro and veteran alike," and to be "read by librarians and library school students seeking recreation, instruction and perhaps even inspiration." (Introduction, p. [xi]) Inasmuch as more than a quarter of the authors are non-librarians, the meaning given to "body of professional literature" is a rather unusual and certainly a very broad one. But let it stand without argument.

The work is divided into four sections: "Books and Reading," with 13 papers; "Libraries," with 11; "Librarians and Librarianship," with 16; and four notable statements of the librarian's profession, "The Freedom to Read," "The Library Bill of Rights," "The ALA Statement on Labeling," and the "Code of Ethics."

This is, in several respects, an astonishing florilegium. Of the 40 articles and essays,

one is by an Austrian, two are by British writers, one is by a Frenchman and 36 are by Americans. In view of the avowed purpose of the work, and even accepting the unstated implication that it is intended primarily for the American reader, the nationalistic bias is difficult to justify. If many aspects of "Librarianship" are more national than international, surely there is a universality about "Libraries" and, still more, about "Books and Reading."

The original dates of the selections range from 1780 ("The Duties and Qualifications of a Librarian," by Jean-Baptiste Cotton des Houssayes) to 1954. This unqualified statement of chronological range is, however, quite misleading; only the French contribution antedates the present century, and only three pieces originated in its first quarter. More than half come from the present decade. Again one may justifiably raise a question as to scope or emphasis. Certainly nothing like half of the worthy, readable papers in the areas covered falls in the 1950's! Of course, this is not at all to quarrel with the anthologist's right to select as his judgment directs, provided his bases of selection are good, nor in any way to deny Mr. Marshall's statement: "It is inevitable in a volume such as this that someone's very favorite piece of library literature will have been omitted." (Introduction, p. xii) One may, however, take the compiler to task when his biases and principles are not made clear and when he does not qualify, in terms of nationality and period, such a title as *Books, Libraries, Librarians*.

It is not the omission of "someone's very favorite piece of . . . literature" that bothers here. Rather, it is the fantastic over-emphasis on the most recent and the equally fantastic ignoring of much major (and, let it be stressed, "readable") writing in favor of many minor pieces. Where is that great group of British essayists of the nineteenth century who wrote so delightfully and trenchantly of books and reading and libraries—Carlyle, Coleridge, Lamb, and Ruskin, to name four? They are not here. Or where, if we must select writers closer to the present, are Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton, Conrad, Galsworthy and Virginia Woolf? They, too, wrote well about books and reading and libraries and they, too, are absent. Or

where, if the question is of American authors and writing of the twentieth century, are William Rose Benét, Henry Seidel Canby, John Livingston Lowes, Christopher Morley, A. Edward Newton, John T. Winterich and Carl Van Doren? Most of these men couldn't write a dull word if they tried and all were, or are, passionately devoted to the cause of books, reading, and libraries. None of them is here. To say nothing of the French and German writers of this and the nineteenth centuries. Nor do we find many of the important, and, let the jury note, "readable," names in American librarianship—John Cotton Dana and Justin Winsor, for example.

Aside from these major considerations, several other points inevitably occur to the reader and cause him to wonder about the contribution which the work will make. The small but sturdy wild flower of Sir Winston Churchill, "Books in Your Life," is gathered in the same bouquet with that familiar hothouse plant, "Librarians as Enemies of Books," in which the former librarian of the Clements Library not infrequently crucified truth in order to make a neat point. For those who like their whimsey straight, Edmund Lester Pearson's "Their Just Reward" may prove enjoyable reading and give pleasure or profit. Whimsey, except for such classics as "Alice" and "Pooh," is not this reviewer's particular dish of tea and to him Mr. Pearson's Dooleyesque piece seems forced and precious, however well it may have been received in 1911.

Speaking of college freshmen orientation week, Chauncey Brewster Tinker ("The Library," p.167) wrote, in 1938, ". . . it is doubtful whether any of the speakers will have mentioned the college library." Five pages later we find Henry M. Wriston noting that instruction in the use of the library "is often done in lectures during Freshmen Week." How does the profession's tyro reconcile these two statements, written within a year of each other? He is likely to be confused, at the least, by the assertion on page 391 that formal library education has existed in the United States for 80 years, a figure which the compilers might well have corrected in an editorial note. Examples could be multiplied but there seems little point in doing so.

We have been taught that a responsibility of the editor-compiler is to guide and assist the reader by providing explanation of matters unclear, helpful signposts to the unfamiliar, and references lacking in the original. This responsibility has here been almost wholly disregarded. The quotations on pages 190, 263, 269, and 370 (top), for example, are nowhere identified.

There are, of course, a number of good things in the volume—Raynard Swank's "Sight and Sound in the World of Books," Pierce Butler's "The Bibliographical Function of the Library," and Leon Carnovsky's "The Obligations and Responsibilities of the Librarian Concerning Censorship," to mention just three. There will be very few, the undersigned not among them, who will not find here at least one unfamiliar piece. Yet, the total effort is faulty and seems not worth the labor expended—or the six-dollar

price tag by the publisher.

To prove that the book has been carefully read and to imply knowledge it is customary, in a review of this kind, to include a list of errors. No such list is here appended, but it may be suggested that the cause of librarianship, to say nothing of scholarship in general, is ill-served by a volume of this size which contains more than 50 transgressions.

This is *not* a "representative" compilation in terms of period, nationality, or even kinds of libraries and librarianship. There is nothing, for example, on the university or scholarly library, as such. The work cannot fail to give the neophyte a distorted, incomplete and, at times, a false picture. That the established, well-read librarian will derive much in the way of pleasure or profit seems doubtful.—*J. Periam Danton, University of California (Berkeley).*

## Book Classification and the Problem of Change: A Reply

In general, I agree with David Haykin's "Book Classification and the Problem of Change" (*C&RL*, October, 1955). However, if Mr. Haykin did not mean to imply that no changes should be made in the Dewey Classification schedules by individual libraries, he should have expanded his article a little. If a small, general library, for instance, can make its collections more accessible and logical to its users by slight and reasonable deviations from the Dewey schedules, no one should question that it is the practical thing to do.

The Yale Club Library, for one, finds it difficult to use effectively the schedules for Economics of Industry (338.1-338.4). Take, for example, the subject of cotton. The schedules call for four different classifications: under Botany, Culture, Economics of Manufacture, and Economics of Production. Since general books on the subject of cotton in a small library usually cover at least two of these facets, it is better for them to have the subject confined to one class, say 633.5, with the possible exception of straight botanical works, which it probably won't have anyway.

Our readers will ask where the books on cotton are and it is easy for the librarian to answer 633.5, without going to the catalog, and at the same time knowing that there will at least be one book there. It is easier on the reader, too, who usually prefers to avoid the catalog if he can, and who certainly always prefers not to have to chase around the classification to find books that to him and to the librarian logically belong in one place. The same holds true, more or less, for coffee and any number of other products or subjects.

Mr. Haykin did not make it clear that there is a difference between the intention of the editors of the Dewey Decimal Classification and the classifiers on a library's staff. While it is true that all classifiers will agree on the class for most books, many classifiers will disagree on the class of many books, regardless of the editors' intentions.

Many small libraries classify their books before they obtain the LC cards. Usually they arrive at the same class as the Dewey classifiers at LC, but sometimes they do not. It is possible that the LC classifiers are a little too theoretical in this respect. They do not always succeed in checking back to