

# Review Articles

## Important Memoirs

*Mitchell of California: The Memoirs of Sydney B. Mitchell, Librarian, Teacher, Gardener*, with a preface by Lawrence Clark Powell; Berkeley, California Library Association, 1960. Illus. 263 p. \$5.00.

At one point (p. 178) Sydney Mitchell writes, "Since my eighteenth year I have spent my life in universities. I have been on the staff of four of these. I have taught in summer schools at others, have been a visiting fellow at still another, and in my investigations of library service, I have been for a longer or shorter time at two or three dozen more." Certainly he got about and, as a consequence, flung high a constellation of students who continue to shine and twinkle in the firmament.

These reminiscences are his response to their devoted insistence. He never found time to finish them; formally they break off with an account of the early years of his Berkeley experience, but that interruption is gently compensated for by an appended interview which he gave to Neal Harlow and Andrew Horn at Grizzly Peak on a February afternoon in 1950. Cora R. Brandt has added an account of his horticultural accomplishments; Betty Rosenberg has compiled an admirable bibliography, Lawrence Clark Powell has contributed the explanatory preface.

From these pages emerges with extraordinary fullness the story of a man who, in his youth, "never . . . met a real librarian," who began his career at the paltry salary of twenty dollars a month, and who nevertheless came to exert (the words are Dean Powell's) "more influence in western library work than any person since James L. Gillis." There are nostalgic, evocative chapters on the Montreal of his youth, on McGill University in the Stephen Leacock period, on the milieu and minions of the library school at Albany, on Stanford in the days when President Jordan played first base on the faculty team, on the shaping of a Californian.

And there is Edmund Lester Pearson's

prescription for a perfect charging system: "Attendant picks reader's pocket, stamps on reader's foot, and files reader's teeth."

Mitchell was a great innovator, unafraid of change, unawed by the dicta and the cherished practices and the petty pretension of his elders, indifferent to tradition, always eager to grow with the growing world around him. But he was without malice; the only hatred he betrayed was directed toward accession books! He was a magnificent teacher and this was, perhaps, because he was first and unwaveringly a magnificent human being. His memoirs are important for this reason and for the more obvious reason that they are inseparably a part of the history of education for librarianship.—*David C. Mearns, Library of Congress.*

## Classification Schemes

*Guide to the SLA Loan Collection of Classification Schemes and Subject Heading Lists on Deposit at Western Reserve University as of March 20, 1961.* Compiled by Bertha R. Barden and Barbara Denison. 5th ed. (New York: Special Libraries Association, 1961.) 97p. \$4.00.

In our data-packed, highly specialized society, the organization of information into manageable form presents a problem not only to libraries, but also to advertising agencies, textile manufacturers, banks, and sugar planters—to name just a few. The system devised by one group to control its material may solve the problem of another. Since 1924, the Special Classifications Committee of SLA has conducted a "share-the-wealth" program for such systems by building a collection of classification schemes and subject heading lists through contributions from SLA Divisions, ASLIB, UNESCO, and many special, university, and public libraries throughout the world.

The present edition of the *Guide* to the collection describes 788 classification schemes and other systems for the organization of special collections, 210 more than were listed