

which is the recognition that the subordination of one topic to another is arbitrary and parochial and has no claim to logical or universal significance.

These two forms of relationship, the topical and semantic, make up the overwhelming proportion of most classification systems, and all classification systems which are based on semantic relationships or the arbitrary subordination of one topic to another, serve only to demonstrate that universal classification is no more significant than a pattern of printing on a page, and has no logic other than the logic of general discourse.

### 3. *Taxonomic*

There remains one other method of subordination which we call the Taxonomic. In certain fields, namely, systematic Botany and Zoology, and parts of Chemistry, there are highly developed classifications or taxonomies. In such fields we get true one place classification and subordination because the class, subclass or species of an entity is determined before it is named and independently of its name. It is, perhaps, the success of such taxonomies in limited fields which has led to what Dr. Shera has called "the pursuit of impossible goals," the attempt to compress all knowledge into a systematic taxonomy. The great age of library classification, the 19th Century, an age of which Mr. Bliss is the last exemplar, was fundamentally an age of Biology as contrasted with the 17th Century, which was the great age of Physics and Mathematics. The hierarchies of bibliographical classification are hierarchies based on biological analogs and have no other warrant in fact or logic.

Perhaps the various attempts to create taxonomies of knowledge could be justified so long as the only alternative seemed the chaos of the alphabet and its permutations so alarmingly described by Bradford;<sup>4</sup> but modern symbolic or "relational" logic has shown us that there is an alternative to classification which possesses all the order and flexibility required for the organization of information. In the sense of Gilbert's famous lines:

That every boy and every gal  
That's born into this world alive  
Is either a little liberal  
Or else a little conservative

<sup>4</sup> Bradford, S. C. *Documentation*. London, Crosby Lockwood & Son, 1948. p.19.

librarians for the past 50 years have been either classifiers or alphabetizers. But we cannot accept this narrow path between completely unsatisfactory alternatives as the final word. In view of the great triumph of mathematical reasoning in modern science, librarians, if they will free themselves from this outworn and narrow "either/or," can find in mathematics and logic new and viable bases for bibliographical order and organization.—*Mortimer Taube, Documentation, Inc., Washington, D.C.*

## Book Collecting

*ABC for Book-Collectors*. By John Carter. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1952. 191p. \$3.00.

Although it is now some months since its publication and it can no longer be pointed out as a new—or, indeed, even a very recent—offering, John Carter's latest book, *ABC for Book-Collectors*, surely deserves to be given notice in these columns and before this audience.

"This," writes the author, "is not an encyclopædia or even a glossary. It is an ABC, which is something much humbler. And it is not an ABC of bibliography, or of printing or binding or book-production terms, though many of these come into it. It is an ABC of book-collecting, for novices, would-be collectors and that section of the literate public which takes an interest in our pursuit without necessarily wishing to share it."

The objective has been "to set down, and to define, and sometimes to comment upon, such words and phrases, commonly used in book-collecting, as would be likely to puzzle an educated reader faced for the first time by a bookseller's or an auctioneer's catalogue."

Mr. Carter's *ABC* is something of a cross between a dictionary and a primer, for many of its entries are not merely definitions of terms or phrases, but form astute and valuable little essays on the subjects treated. "Advertisements," for example, is covered by a scholarly three-page treatise, while under "Auctions" the reader is given a five-page exposition of that domain, sub-divided to include separate sections on catalogues, bidding, prices, and terminology.

Another of the longer entries—and one which seems particularly significant from this

author—is that on “Facsimiles and Fakes.” (In observing of the facsimile that “an exact copy is a menacing thing to those who pursue originals,” frequently figuring “in the nightmares of collectors,” and causing booksellers “more trouble than almost any other factor in their business;” Carter records further that the facsimile has also been known to prove upsetting to “the studied equanimity of librarians”).

The book is characterized throughout by excellence of treatment and has good measure both of Mr. Carter’s poignant style and wit and of his temperate and sensible approach to matters of collecting. The latter quality is perhaps best demonstrated in his discussions of “Rarity,” “Condition,” and “The Chronological Obsession;” while examples of the former are found in his strictures on such things as “Deckle-Fetishism,” “Esteemed,” “Issue-Mongers,” and “Point-Maniacs.”

An interestingly handled aspect of the volume is the labeling that is present in a number of places to identify certain bibliographical features. The endpapers (one word according to Carter) are rather interestingly done, being labeled as either “paste-down” and “free,” with clear indications of the “head,” “fore-edge,” “hinge,” and “tail.” This treatment is carried on, too, through the pages of front matter, and also in the body of the book under such topics as “Shoulder-Notes,” “Side-Notes,” “Margins,” and “Guide Letters.”

From “Abbreviations” to “Yellow-Back,” *ABC for Book-Collectors* is a sound and valuable work. It is a book that ought to be included with the book-collecting literature of all academic libraries and on the personal shelves of a great many librarians as well.—*Edward Connery Lathem, Dartmouth College Library.*

## Technical Methods in Libraries

*Library Organization and Management of Technical Reports Literature.* By Bernard M. Fry. (The Catholic University of America Studies in Library Science, ed. by James J. Kortendick, No.1) Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1953. 140p. \$2.50.

*The Use of Photography for Clerical Routines: A Report to the American Council of*

*Learned Societies.* By Ralph R. Shaw, Washington, American Council of Learned Societies, 1953. 85p. \$1.00.

Although these two monographs deal with different subjects, they are reviewed together here because they represent the type of detailed studies which are necessary if librarians are going to place technical problems in their proper perspective. Fry’s comprehensive treatment of reports literature and Shaw’s report on the intensive application of the photoclark to library clerical routines should be welcomed as professional efforts to approach the problem of controlling a special type of material and to reduce the costs of operations, respectively.

Fry’s monograph discusses the nature and scope, administration, sources, processing, cataloging, storing, and security problems of technical reports, which have become increasingly abundant in recent years. It is estimated that about 75,000 unpublished technical reports are issued annually in the United States by research projects supported by the Federal Government. Thousands of other reports are also being produced by private agencies not on contract with the government. How to acquire, organize, record, and service them represent important questions to the research librarian. Fry has isolated the background of and present experience with reports literature. He also discusses the Technical Information Service of the Atomic Energy Commission, and provides such helps as a glossary of terms, four appendices on related data, and an extensive bibliography.

The librarian of the college, university, or special library which collects large quantities of technical reports will find this publication a useful guide. In both the discussion and the 14 exhibits, there are data which are up-to-date and practical. The work as a whole emphasizes the significance of security classifications to documents which are primary sources for progressive research. It is also clear from Fry’s observations that the situation in regard to reports literature is likely to continue to be complex, and that there is a need for trained workers in the field.

It is easy for some to criticize library techniques and routines and to accuse librarians of giving them undue emphasis. It is fortunate, however, that there is available a Ralph Shaw, first to be awarded the Melvil Dewey