

Bibliography of Bibliographies

A World Bibliography of Bibliographies and of Bibliographical Catalogues, Calendars, Abstracts, Digests, Indexes, and the Like, by Theodore Besterman. Volume I, A-E. Third and Final Edition, Revised and Greatly Enlarged Throughout. Genève, Societas Bibliographica, [1955] xxviii p., 1326 cols.

Mr. Theodore Besterman concludes the "Introduction" to his third (and as he threatens final) edition with the same valedictory as the two former editions:

May the noble-minded scholars instead of cherishing ill feeling kindly correct whatever errors have been here committed through the dullness of my intellect in the way of wrong interpretations and misstatements.

(From Hemaandra)

Acclaim and success must have assured Mr. Besterman that only a fool would accuse him of "dullness of intellect," and that only a waster would spend the time to find the few mistakes in interpretation and statements which inevitably must have crept into so large an undertaking. Over the years, this reviewer has occasionally found a lacuna; he naturally assumes that it has been corrected in this new edition. Once in a while he sought in vain a solution to a bibliographical problem, or he was not able to discover the proper heading. However, he has never been aware of serious errors or of intellectual boners common in this type of all-embracing bibliographical enterprise. Rather, he has marveled, over and over again, how one man can deal as satisfactorily with so many languages and with practically all fields of human knowledge.

We naturally assume that all readers of COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES are familiar with both, or at least with either of the previous editions. Should this not be the case we can only urge them to examine and to peruse at least the new third edition which follows, in scope and treatment, the first and the second editions. About 80,000 monographic "bibliographies" (as defined in the carefully written original "Introduction" which has been reprinted in the second and third editions) are listed chronologically under alphabetically arranged subjects. Articles are excluded; we believe that quite a few of the items listed are actually separately paged reprints from

journals. The description of each item in this edition has again been critically examined and has, when necessary, been corrected and revised. Our sample checking would indicate that Mr. Besterman's claim that the third edition lists twice as many entries as the first and about 25% more than the second, is on the conservative side. In addition, many new cross references have been added.

Since this reviewer has never applied time and motion studies to his own work, he cannot state how many hours, days or weeks the *World Bibliography* has saved him; may it suffice to say that the saving of time and labor has been great. Cumulatively, the bibliographical searches of thousands of librarians, scholars and laymen must have been shortened very considerably through intelligent use of Besterman's *World Bibliography*.

We do not wish to question the validity of Mr. Besterman's arguments in favor of his alphabetical subject arrangement. It is a fact, however, that sometimes the user looks under one subject only to discover later that he missed one equally or even more important bibliographical tool, listed under another related or larger subject. We believe that a classified listing of the "about 12,000 headings and sub-headings" would be extremely useful and greatly enhance the value of the *World Bibliography*.

In conclusion, we congratulate Mr. Besterman and thank him for his third improved and greatly expanded edition. We hope that he will find well qualified successors to carry on as a group where he bows out as a one man bibliographical center.—*Rudolf Hirsch, University of Pennsylvania Library.*

Financial Subject Headings

Subject Headings for Financial Libraries.

Compiled by a Committee of the Financial Division, Special Libraries Association. New York: Special Libraries Association, 1954. viii, 94p. \$5.00.

As a combination of alphabetic-classified and alphabetic-subject list, this compilation falls directly in the middle of current controversy; but as a practical aid in organizing materials in the great variety of financial libraries, it offers good guidance in bringing some system into the range of subjects covered in such libraries. This revision of the 1940 list again suggests subdivisions, or "Standard Subheads"