

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

in the fourth edition. Items are arranged alphabetically under approximately 350 subject headings; the proportion of subject headings to schemes indicates the compilers' attention to accurate, specific delineation of subject areas. There is a cross-referenced subject index, as well as two appendices. The first appendix lists book numbers; the second gives classification expansions and revisions of Dewey decimal, Library of Congress, universal decimal, and punched card systems. The *Guide* is cumulative, retaining the citations of earlier lists in company with their new editions and revisions.

The increased cost of this fifth edition is at least partly justified by the much improved format, typography, and general quality of the publication. Better page layout and much more legible characters make the publication easier to use.

Some users of the earlier edition have mentioned their appreciation of the symbols which serve to identify some items more fully, or, in other cases, to give their location. That certain lists are terminologies, subject subdivisions, or uniterms seems self-evident to the reviewer scanning these keyed citations. The United States Air Force's *Glossary of Terms Used in Air Force Comptroller Activities* is readily identified as a terminology, while publications bearing titles like *Cumulative Subject Heading List* or *List of Subject Headings* declare themselves without ambiguity. (The symbols are, of course, justified in the relatively few cases where titles are misleading or inaccurate.)

The choice of subject headings within the *Guide* is entirely acceptable once the reader recognizes that the compilers have selected them on a firmly pragmatic basis—that is, on the basis of the subject covered by the particular classification scheme or subject heading list in hand—rather than, as with a pre-structured list of subject headings, in accord with the terms and relationships of a designated field of knowledge. The see-also references in the body of the *Guide* and the cross-references in its index provide generously for the inevitable differences in choice of word or word-order, although the simple directness of subject headings selected preclude much misunderstanding.

Some specialists may question the fact that a search for Health (see also Industrial Hygiene, Mental Hygiene) leads only at

length to Medicine, rather than immediately—and delay *may* result in the postponement of health. Such indirections, however, are no formidable problem while the *Guide* is still of manageable length. (Less of a quibble, perhaps, is the complaint that the see-also references under Medicine do not include Space Medicine.)

The materials listed in the *Guide* may be borrowed on a four-week loan for original material, or by photocopy or microfilm for permanent retention.—*Ann R. Lindsay, National Library of Medicine.*

Adult Education

University Adult Education: A Guide to Policy. By Renee Petersen and William Petersen. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. 288 pp. \$5.50.

This is an interesting, provocative, and disturbing book which should be read and pondered not only by university librarians but also by the librarians of public libraries, large and small. It provides a clear, critical, and detached analysis of a field of education which is directly related to libraries.

The authors are concerned with university adult education, which appears to be but a small part of the total adult education field, but they begin by looking at the significance of adult education today and the general principles and problems involved. The first two chapters will be of particular interest to librarians.

The function of university adult education, in the opinion of the Petersens, is "education (and legitimately, though usually to a small degree, research); it is not making money or public relations or social service or therapy or recreation." And they make it clear that they mean *college-level* education. "University adult education constitutes no more than about four per cent of adult education as a whole. It is one sector of a vast, amorphous institution, in which universities, junior colleges, public schools, government bureaus, community agencies, and private organizations engage in recreational, vocational, remedial, cultural, and educational activities of every type, at every level, for every purpose. Within this all but infinite