

Review Articles

"Mostly Mearns"

Largely Lincoln. By David Chambers Mearns.
New York: St Martin's Press, [1961] xi,
227 p. \$6.00.

Largely Lincoln is "Mostly Mearns." That means it is a combination of good humor, sound scholarship, and a feeling for the telling incident or appropriate anecdote that adds up to a delightful book. It is a good representation in book form of the genial master of manuscripts at the Library of Congress, a happy reminder of a warmly erudite personality for all who know him and a wonderful introduction to him for those unfortunate librarians who have not yet had the pleasure of hearing him tell in person such stories as they will here find in print.

Dave Mearns is a much more serious scholar than he looks, but it is his sparkling puckishness that is reflected in the warmth of his face, the warmth of a greeting in his office, the warmth with which he helps one scholar after another at the Library of Congress, which is also so well reflected in this volume. Readers can turn to his other works to measure his stature as a historian (of the Library of Congress as well as of President Lincoln); let them turn to this book for history with hilarity and librarianship with laughter.

In *Largely Lincoln* nine of the essays are about the wartime president. All of these are entertaining, and most of them develop, gently and amusingly, little known points in Lincoln's life that verify the claim of Earl Schenck Miers' introduction that: "Much of what is revealed will come as a delightful surprise, rewarding the reader with insight into Lincoln and his age."

The other six essays are equally delightful and equally rewarding. His story of D. P. Gardner, "the New England Soap Man," is

worthy of the late James Thurber; and his account of the seventh annual convocation (1907) of the Boston Authors' Club is as rollicking an excursion into a by-way of American literary history as is likely to be found. Every essay can easily be a favorite—mine or yours—but no bookman, so-called, self-styled or real, can afford to miss the one called "A Neglected Bookman: Calvin Coolidge." It is a gem.

This is a happy book and one to recommend to all lovers of books. But I do have one cavil with the author: He is such a good historian, such a lover of books, such a scholar himself, why does he bang the worn-out drum that librarians are enemies of books, are neither readers nor scholars? I wish he could be as proud as the library profession is proud for him, that it is librarianship that led Dave Mearns down the paths of scholarship to the point that he himself disproves his charges against librarians. Let him stand up and be counted as the fine librarian he is.—Richard Harwell, *Bowdoin College Library.*

Science Literature

Collecting Science Literature for General Reading; Papers presented at an institute conducted by the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, November 6-9, 1960. Champaign, Ill.: Illini Bookstore, 1961. 186p. Paper, \$2.00.

This collection of papers of the seventh Allerton Park Institute is apt to be the most timely and popular topic of the annual series. At all age levels and in a broad range

of cultural groups, the varied aspects of science are today eagerly read about and discussed. For many a beleaguered librarian this volume will provide comfort and guidance, wise counsel, and useful clues to potentially important new directions. Readers will find different papers of greater interest, depending upon their primary field of service; however, certain of the papers are of wide application and will have enduring usefulness.

The first paper, "Classics in Science," by Robert B. Downs, provides in a simple dozen pages a synthesis of the early record of scientific theory, ingeniously tying together in historical perspective the printed landmark works described. In his usual thorough manner, he enumerates the thirty-three classics in a bibliography following his narrative.

Two short papers follow, the first by a scientist who works on an international plane and the second by an early well-known popularizer of science. The paper of Frederic Seitz seeks to orient us to the place of science in our world, in our particular society, and in our own time. With a brief nod to the future, the author suggests no apparent goals for libraries in the grim future. The other paper, by Watson Davis, develops a life-long thesis of its author. Mr. Davis has for decades been a one-man factory for the promotion of universal diffusion of popular science. His suggestions here do not fail to demonstrate his indefatigable drive. Briefly, he renews his well-known claims for "auxiliary publication" as a device for avoiding full and costly publication in science, and proposes "an inclusive scientific newspaper potentially capable for circulation to every scientist and engineer . . . in the nation". There is little in these two papers to relate them to the tasks of libraries.

Another small group of papers follows

dealing with the special problems of creating and serving interest in science in children specifically, young people (broadly defined as from the sixth grade to senility), and a very brief report of some effective promotion by the use of audio-visual methods. The first and second of these chapters are particularly allied to public and school library practice; the last apparently depended largely for its effectiveness upon a filmstrip, which, unfortunately, could not be demonstrated to the reader with the text.

The next two long papers, one by Joseph C. Shipman and the other by George S. Bonn, are alone worth the cost of the whole volume. Each will probably remain a classic in library literature.

Joe Shipman, librarian of the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, reviews "Publishing of Scientific Materials" from the earliest records to modern times, introducing representative measures of publication in the several fields of science and in various areas of the world. One startling fact reported is that, "The Russian totals of scientific books represented more than one-third of all the books printed in the U.S.S.R., while copies of American scientific and technical books represented only about 3 per cent of all the books produced in this country." This is only a fragment of the vivid picture of modern science literature provided by Mr. Shipman as a setting for the exhaustive treatment of "The Aids of Selection" presented by Mr. Bonn, the chief of the science and technology division of the New York Public Library. He opens his paper with an enumeration of six cardinal criteria for selection and then proceeds to list, in a series of appendices, general and specialized tools, book-reviewing journals, and other useful types of aids. The net result of this scrupulously detailed and thoughtfully discussed bibliographical effort is an impression of a

rare combination of Helen Haines and R. R. Hawkins, with some traces of Besterman. All frivolity aside, these papers provide substance for future planning.

The remaining papers touch on specialized types of public and peripheral types of material. In William S. Budington's "Problems of Selection in Science" one can readily sense the particular public of a John Crerar type of library. "The Components of the Science Collection" reflects accurately in its enumeration of types of materials the long experience of Irene Strieby in special libraries and their needs. The brief sketch of "Science Fiction as Literature" is lesser fillip, the frosting on the cake, bringing this collection to its conclusion, succinctly outlined by Harold Lancour with his customary Gallic humor. The conclusion, that "Science belongs in every library", and "Librarians will need, in the immediate years ahead, to inform themselves as never before about the world of science," is not itself news or a great contribution. A considerable contribution has been made, however, in adding to library literature an up-to-date, authoritative handbook to enable those less knowledgeable in the sciences to cope with the needs of our changing public.—*Jerrold Orne, University of North Carolina.*

Circulation Systems

Study of Circulation Control Systems. George Fry & Associates, Inc. (Library Technology Project Publications, number 1) Chicago: Library Technology Project of the American Library Association, 1961. 138p. \$2.50.

This attractively designed workbook is the end result of a long-awaited and comprehensively carried out study of circulation systems by a private management group in cooperation with an advisory committee of librarians. It is also the first publication to appear under the aegis of the Library Technology Project. The final product contains three manuals with tear-away worksheets for comparing systems in use, plus a truly impressive amount of statistical data.

George Fry & Associates, management consultants, were commissioned for this detailed analysis of circulation in the field by the Council on Library Resources in cooperation with the Library Technology Project of the American Library Association and the Special Libraries Association. Limited in scope to only the operations of borrower registration, charging and discharging of books, handling overdues and reserves, and circulation statistics, the study also involved sending some 4,585 questionnaires to varied libraries. Three hundred and thirty-one of these went to college and university libraries. These questionnaire results are tabulated in the study. During the actual study, seventy-three public libraries were visited, along with nineteen college and university libraries and twelve special libraries.

Actually, the report, conceived as a "guide in hand" for administrators instituting or revising present circulation systems, is divided roughly into two halves. The first covers the procedures under which the study was conducted, together with a review of current circulation control practices and recommendations as to modifications and improvement. The second (and larger half) consists of the three manuals, complete with indented, numbered tabs, provided procedural and cost information on the leading circulation control systems and their variations for public, college and university, and special libraries. The practical core of each manual is a number of blank work sheets, with accompanying explanatory samples, intended to be filled out when studying one's own needs with a view to estimating costs, modification, or consideration of a new system. The entire report is bound in plastic spiral so that these work sheets, one to be used for studying each charging point in the library, may be easily removed.

Both the Council on Library Resources and LTP are to be commended for their foresight in initiating this project and in providing the wealth of comparative information brought forth. This reviewer was intrigued by probable uses of the work sheets, although broad use and reports of resulting savings and modifications will necessarily first have to be evaluated for full practical evidence. Nevertheless, it is reassuring to see the potentials of management analysis ap-