

Book Reviews

Theory of Knowledge Classification in Libraries. By Anand Prakash Srivastava. New Delhi: Lakshmi Book Store, 1964. 206p. \$6.75.

In the field of classification, provision of good textbooks for beginning students has lagged far behind the output of advanced works describing research. Mr. Srivastava has been teaching for some years in the Virkram, Delhi, and Rajasthan universities, and has now published this book on the basis of his lectures and seminars. It goes a long way towards filling the gap, and provides a useful introduction to the science of classification, particularly as developed in India under the influence of Professor S. R. Ranganathan.

There are five main sections and a useful (if somewhat limited) glossary. The book opens with a discussion of the structure of knowledge and the nature and role of classification schemes in ordering knowledge in documents for shelf arrangement and for the subject approach to books. The next two sections cover analysis into categories, or "facets"; the qualities of a classification scheme; terminology; and notation. These are followed by a more detailed account of the structure of a faceted scheme, and the final section deals with the procedure in classifying documents.

The approach is generalized, but the examples are all taken from the Colon and Decimal classifications. Although the author is wholeheartedly of the Ranganathan school, he has some criticism for CC and some praise for DC; and the book is dedicated to Melvil Dewey. He shows a good knowledge of current classification literature (especially British), and has clearly read H. E. Bliss's books with a sympathetic understanding. The exposition is lucid and shows a good grasp of the principles of teaching.

Criticism of the work derives mainly from its place of origin. It is written very much within the school established by Ranganathan, and may therefore appear new and strange to American students; the text is not free from errors in the use of English, or misprints. Though an elementary work, therefore, it is not easy to read. I am con-

vinced, however, of the value of the work it describes, and recommend it to teachers in American library schools who are looking for a simple account of the principles of facet analysis. For anyone willing to make the effort to master the style and approach—remembering that the author is not writing in his mother tongue—the book repays study.—D. J. Foskett, *University of London*.

A Searcher's Manual. By George Lowy. Hamden, Conn.: Shoe Strong Press, 1965. 104p. \$5. (65-16218).

Mr. Lowy has produced an interesting guide to the principles and practices of bibliographic searching. The guide is divided into three main parts: (1) the introduction, which includes the function of the search and principles of card catalog entries; (2) the technique of the search, including a comparison of procedures followed in several libraries, use of the main card catalog, use of bibliographies and catalogs, illustrative searches, search of the outstanding order file, serials and series and final steps; and (3) an appendix, which includes sections on the most frequently used bibliographic tools and selective lists of national, trade, and specialized bibliographies.

This slender volume should prove helpful in the training of new bibliographic searchers if used with established guides and if it is emphasized to the trainee that some of the principles stated are not universally accepted but may be practices of one library. No distinction is made, for example, between American-British and foreign authors in the rule for filing names with a prefix, and also the modification of letters is not disregarded in all libraries. The material is generally well organized, and good use is made of samples and tables throughout the text. Each chapter is summarized but in most cases the summary is too brief to be very useful. The chapters on basic principles and card catalog entries are well done except for the fact that the author fails to mention the best searcher's manual available—the ALA *Cataloging Rules for Author and Title Entries*.

Not all bibliographic searchers will agree

with the selection of bibliographies nor with their relative importance but this volume should nonetheless be a useful tool in training new searchers and should be especially useful in small and medium-sized libraries. Large libraries might well wish for a greatly expanded list of bibliographies containing fuller information. All libraries might question the value of the comparison of searchers' markings and outstanding order file arrangements, although this might be valuable in the classroom. A new edition might include an introduction containing general searching principles as well as a chapter on modifications in searching and problems encountered with computerized order records.—*Connie Dunlap, University of Michigan.*

The Brothers Harper. By Eugene Exman. New York: Harper & Row, [1965]. xvi, 415pp. \$7.95. (65-14651).

Welcoming a businessman's history of his firm in which factual data is thoroughly explored, well organized, and carefully documented—such is a rare pleasure, surprisingly rare indeed even for the output of so literate a group as publishers. Mr. Exman, recently retired as a vice president of Harper's has here retold the story of the firm from its beginnings around 1820 to the disastrous fire of 1853. He approaches his subject with great seriousness of purpose and with an almost Germanic propensity for raw data—evidence rather than hypotheses, details rather than conclusions, names rather than personalities. His presentation is long and involved, but in time it comes to impress one as being specially appropriate to its subject.

Mr. Exman's announced objective is "to keep green the memory of the four brothers and their extraordinary partnership." After contemplating their sullen faces and reading about their uneventful careers, one is led to conclude that Mr. Exman is indeed a good organization man. Not that his heroes are without glory: they carved their niche in our country's cultural history with a shrewdness which one can not help but admire. Working quietly and with a unity of purpose, they formed a powerful dynasty: so far as we will ever know, their four wives never fought, and nephews when they came of age were taken into the firm

with no grumblings from their uncles. Mr. Exman has tried his best to discover the individualities of the four brothers—Fletcher the friend of authors, Wesley the printer, John the bookkeeper, James the personnel manager—but their uncommunicative ways leave us agreeing with their adage that "any one of us is Harper, and the other three are the brothers."

What was their commitment to the cultural world they served? Why did they deal in books, rather than in nails or mortgages or potatoes? What was their attitude toward the content of their editions? Did they believe in virtue rewarded, naively equating literary merit with large profits? Or did they see irreconcilable extremes, in the manner of some pessimistic Romantic dichotomy, their strategy being one of compensating for a few good works with a mass of potboilers? Did they believe in a "long haul" theory, balancing in their catalogue the probable immediate favorites with the potential long-term classics? Or were they satisfied to leave all such matters to the gods and the critics, issuing almost anything and predicating their firm's growth on new audiences—such as were quickly developing in the West and through their own school district series? Such questions, however simplified and rhetorical, reflect on the larger question which we must ultimately ask about any publishers—in what ways were they a cause, and in what ways merely an effect, of the cultural life of the public they served?

"The secret of a successful book house was to play the part of the benefactor of the man of letters"—such is the dictum of William Tryon (*Parnassus Corner*, p. 101), and while James T. Fields broadcast it widely and convincingly enough to carry his firm to a remarkable success, it also carried him down to the depths of a fearsome battle with one of his disgruntled authors, the redoubtable Gail Hamilton. In comparison, the assault on Harpers, by Theodore Sedgwick Fay, described by Mr. Exman, approaches slapstick. In their external dealings, the Harpers were usually too clever to leave themselves vulnerable to serious attack; and, within the firm, they changed quietly with the times, in contrast to the violent personal upheavals of Fields' later business career. Fields preached end-