

Review Articles

American Library Resources

American Library Resources: A Bibliographical Guide [By] Robert B. Downs. Chicago, American Library Association, 1951. 428 p. \$7.00.

The profession's debt to Robert Downs, already so great as to threaten it with, or, better, save it from, insolvency is further increased by the compilation of this bibliography of bibliographical exercises. It constitutes an indispensable addition to the reference apparatus. Begun fifteen years ago when Dr. Downs was engaged in gathering published materials on "facilities for study and research available in southern libraries," it has grown to a point where, "in scope, the guide now presented is national in coverage and is inclusive of every field for which bibliographical information is available." It is sponsored by the American Library Association's Board on Resources of American Libraries and has been furthered by a grant-in-aid from the Rockefeller Foundation.

The more than fifty-five hundred entries record "printed library catalogs, union lists of books and serials, descriptions of special collections, surveys of library holdings, calendars of archives and manuscripts, selected library reports and similar works of potential usefulness to research workers." Occasionally, but sparingly, unpublished writings have been included. The arrangement "is broadly by the Dewey Decimal system" because of its "simplicity and the general familiarity of library users with it." The advantages are, no doubt, compelling and yet, from the parochial prejudice of the reviewer, it seems unfortunate to separate Charles Evans' *American Bibliography* and Joseph Sabin's *Dictionary* by eleven classifications and three thousand seven hundred and seventy entries!

This is, of course, no fault of the compiler and readily can be overcome by recourse to the index, but it is likely to confirm the public's impression of the elaborate perversity and ruthless whimsicality of classification.

Again, Dr. Downs insists that "each title is listed only once," but if entries 4698 and 4706 are not, in fact, duplicates there is someone who will be obliged forthwith to surrender

himself to the psychiatrists.

The importance of the work, it must be understood, is the importance derived from its encyclopedic range. It is, in other words, an invaluable first resort. It belongs with the great general compendia which the searcher uses at the outset of a quest. For many, indeed, for most, librarians it will be found to satisfy reasonable enquiry. In reference practice it will take an honored and distinguished place. The extent of information to be extracted from it is both broad and deep. It is a boon to those who would amplify their own materials by reliance on loans from other institutions. As a drawer in which to look, it rolls easily and the contents are alluringly miscellaneous. It is possible to come upon almost anything. It is probable that the ransacker will find exactly what he needs.

But it must be understood also, that this is an unpretentious guide. It is large but it is not exhaustive. Dr. Downs' admirable introduction concludes with a quotation from Elliott Coues' rueful confession: "Bibliography is never finished and always more or less defective." *American Library Resources* has the limitations implicit in selectivity. It does not, for example, record the preliminary survey of natural history museum libraries, reported by Carl W. Hintz in *The Library Quarterly* for April 1948, nor Hans Nathan's "Autograph Letters of Musicians at Harvard" in the Music Library Association's *Notes* for September 1948; nor Ruth Watanabe's account of "Howard Hanson's Autographs in the Sibley Music Library" in *Notes* for March 1950; nor Lee Fairley's "Check-List of Music on Microfilms in the Library of Congress" in *Notes* for June 1947; nor Colton Storm's appraisal of the William L. Clements Library in *Autograph Collectors' Journal* for January 1950.

There are four entries under Daniel Defoe, but no citation of the splendid essay by Zoltán Haraszti on the William Peterfield Trent collection, now in the Boston Public Library ("no other library, not even the British Museum, possesses as complete a collection of Defoe's works"), which appeared in *More Books* for January 1931.

Yet such criticisms are captious, even impu-

dent, and worse, they are seemingly ungrateful. They are justified only if they contribute to the intelligent use of a valuable, painstaking, scholarly implement to learning. We should, we must, be thankful for it.

It will be surprising if this publication does not inspire or require the administrators and custodians of notable collections to undertake systematic, detailed, statements of their holdings. Dr. Downs points out that:

In contrast to the libraries which have been so well covered bibliographically, we find a group of strong institutions that has been inactive in publishing, and which perforce does not show up to full advantage in the present compilation. Instances among universities are California, Chicago, Columbia, Illinois, Michigan (except Clements Library), Minnesota, Stanford (except Hoover Library), Northwestern, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York.

Come gentlemen! There is work to do—work to do in the national interest and for one another. It is, moreover, the best possible coin with which to repay Bob Downs for all he has done (and is doing) for the rest of us.—*David C. Mearns, Library of Congress.*

Bibliophile's Reference Shelf

The Bookman's Glossary. 3rd ed., rev. and enl. New York, R. R. Bowker, c1951. 198 p. \$2.50.

The Book in America: A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States. By Hellmut-Lehmann Haupt, in collaboration with Lawrence C. Wroth and Rollo G. Silver, 2nd ed. New York, R. R. Bowker, 1951. xiv, 493 p. \$10.00

Both *The Bookman's Glossary* and *The Book in America* are well-known titles to librarians, but their appearance in new editions justifies calling attention to them at this time. *The Glossary*, which had been edited in its first two editions by John A. Holden (1925 and 1931) is now issued by a team of revisers (Frederic G. Melcher, Edward Lazare, Sol M. Malkin, Jacob Blanck, Anne J. Richter, and Ruth E. Bains). There has been a complete revision of the work, although basic definitions have not been altered. A number of terms have been added: e.g., alphabet

length, art canvas, avant garde, backlist, battledore, bearers, bibliogenesis, bibliognost, bibliopeggy, bibliosoph, bibliothech, bibliotheca, bibliothetic, calendar, California job case, etc. New names, such as Elmer Adler, John Bell, and Edwards of Halifax have been included. Some terms have been removed (antiquariana, antiquariat, basket, blank, etc.). In addition to the main list of terms, there is an Appendix which includes "Classical Names of Towns and Cities," "Foreign Book Trade Terms," "Private Book Clubs," "Proofreaders' Marks," and "A Selected Reading List." Two sections, "Curious Editions of the Bible" and "Pronunciation of Authors' Names," which were in the second edition have been dropped from the present revision.

The Book in America received general approval and commendation in its first edition, issued in 1939. The present edition is a reworking of the volume, and introduces materials on bookmaking, publishers, publishing and bookselling in the United States through 1950. The problem of space made it necessary to omit the section of Ruth S. Granniss on the history of book collecting and the growth of libraries from the present edition. However, the material on book auctions was originally part of Miss Granniss' contribution. A bibliography, prepared by Janet Bogardus, is included in the volume.

Dr. Lehmann-Haupt and his collaborators, Lawrence C. Wroth of the John Carter Brown Library and Rollo G. Silver, who is now a member of the faculty of the Library School at Simmons College, have done an able job in incorporating developments since 1939, although the most extensive revisions occur in Part II, by Dr. Lehmann-Haupt. It seems quite clear, however, that further revisions of this work will be necessary in the future, since the subject the authors deal with is a live one that is constantly changing. Of special importance to college and reference librarians is the section on "Postwar Problems," which is concerned with such matters as the distribution of books, the increase in the cost of books, censorship, and problems of reading. The authors give attention throughout the volume to the "periodical" in America (see Index), and one senses the atmosphere of competition between the book and the periodical for the attention of American readers. Dr. Lehmann-Haupt has expanded his ideas on