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# BE A LIBRARIAN

*A guide to careers in modern librarianship*

by

CLIFFORD CURRIE

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With a Foreword

by

SIR SYDNEY ROBERTS, LL.D.

*Master of Pembroke College,  
Cambridge*

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## Foreword

by SIR SYDNEY ROBERTS, LL.D.,

Master of  
Pembroke College, Cambridge

THIS book is frankly propagandist, but its propaganda is in a good cause. Mr Currie begins with a commendably brief reference to the beginnings of his own career and at once strikes a fundamental note—he became a librarian because he ‘could not contemplate an adult life in which books were not dominant’.

It is in that spirit that the young man, or woman, should approach librarianship as a profession. But to be a book lover is not enough. The gradual assembly of a private library is one of the most delectable hobbies in the world, but librarianship is something different. Like everyone else, the librarian will have his personal preferences; but if he is to do the job properly, he must lift himself into the universal category, he must be the servant of the readers and students and scholars in all branches of literature and science and in the vast complications of the modern world he must equip himself with the essential tools of the bibliographical trade.

Mr Currie's chapters are packed with historical and factual information and should reassure the beginner that public librarianship is not confined to cataloguing and other routine duties. Of course it has its elements of drudgery (what worth while job has not?), but just as there are no permanent boundaries of knowledge, so there is no limit to the activities of those who make that knowledge available. A good librarian should be instinctively bookish, but mere bookishness will not carry him very far. As Mr Currie says, he must ‘work hard *with* books and *for* people’.

S.C.R.



## Acknowledgments

I SHOULD like to express my gratitude to many government agencies and to many librarians for their help in giving me statistical and much other information, and to acknowledge my debt to those whose experiments and achievements I have discussed in my text. Perhaps I may be allowed to say by whose courtesy it is that the photographs appear. Figure 1 is reproduced by permission of Dr W. Kaye Lamb, Librarian of the National Library of Canada. Figures 2, 7 and 8 are reproduced by permission of Dr G. Chandler, City Librarian of Liverpool (photograph, City Architect). For leave to use Figures 3 and 11 I am indebted to Miss Jean Fetterly, Librarian of the McLaughlin Public Library, Oshawa, Ontario (photograph, Panda Studios). Mr J. E. Tolson, Librarian of the University of Sheffield, gave me permission to include Figure 4. Figures 5, 9 and 12 appear by leave of *The Bromley and Kentish Times*. I use Figure 6 by permission of Fisons Limited (Mrs K. E. Brookland, Librarian), and Figure 10 appears with the consent of Mr John Hall Jacobs and Mr George King Logan, Librarian and Assistant Librarian, respectively, of the Public Library of New Orleans, Louisiana (photograph, Mr Frank Lotz Miller). I have also to acknowledge the supplementary permission of the following architects: Messrs Curtis and Davis, Goldstein, Parham and Labouisse, Favrot, Reed, Mathes and Bergman, and Messrs Gollins, Melvin, Ward and Partners. Finally I should like to thank my editor and publisher and my colleagues, Miss J. Barratt and Mrs D. Pinder, for valuable advice and much help in criticism and in substance.

C.C.





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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Suffering a Vocation*

**H**ABENT *sua fata bibliothecarii*: I kicked against the pricks but it had all been settled elsewhere. So, in the end, I became a Librarian.

I was brought up in a small town in southern Ontario, one of the sort that Stephen Leacock wrote about, and very nearly in period. A public library was opened there some thirty years ago and my father, who was a man of standing in the place, turned up for the inauguration with the reeve and council and the town band and the ice-hockey team. A little girl gave some flowers to an important lady, and my mother pushed me forward to borrow the first book. I think I managed that quite well, though I was only three, but I cannot say whether I formed any wish, then and there, to be a librarian when I grew up. If I did, it was just a cupboard-love fixation (for when my mother went to change her book the young woman who presided sometimes gave me candy), and I expect I thought that all librarians were ladies, anyway. I am afraid that I was not a very knowledgeable, or indeed a very literate, little boy. "Snow White" unnerved me at the age of six: I was not subtle enough to distinguish between suspended animation and death, and if books were about the triumph of injustice the Public Library Board could keep them. I could manage very nicely on the funnies. You could depend on them. The cops and the good cowboys always came out on top. So I stayed a happy moron until I was thirteen years old and at school, as it happened, in England.

My conversion came in a curious way. I had been injured at football and I was obliged to stay in bed for a very long time. There were no funnies in Britain, or not my kind, and it was all going to be terribly dull. Then one day, with my toilet-mirror

and for want of anything better to do, I spelled out—backwards—the titles of the books on a little wall-shelf above my bed. And then I pulled them down with my ruler. And then, though I cannot remember on what impulse, I began to read them. They were the *Waverley Novels*. Within three months I had read the lot, prefaces and all. I went on from there, and read and read and read. I even kept for some time a priggish diary of my reading, at which I cannot now look without discomfort. No doubt in gratitude to Scott I was reading—as his hero Waverley would not—to a plan, the nature of which is beyond my present recollection.

This self-conscious dedication gradually faded but I found that I could not contemplate an adult life in which books were not dominant. I wanted to live and work with them. I wanted never to be deprived of the gratifications books bring to the senses: the touch and smell of good paper, the fine proportions of letters and of masses of type. I had to be able to take books from their places, run my finger over their backs, see how they opened, flick their corners straight. I wanted a perspective of bookshelves always in my eye. And books, books, books.

This was not a rational way of determining on a career and was much tainted by mushiness. But it was the way in which my decision hardened, before I was fifteen years old, to become a librarian. I cannot remember that any of my schoolfellows shared my ambition but no one attempted to turn me from it. So I set myself, in my last years at school, to learn all I could about librarianship and libraries.

People are sometimes told (I understand) when they go to see a librarian for advice on library work as a career, that the fundamental thing isn't fondness for books at all but a Tidy Mind, or Neatness and Accuracy, or some other wholesome idea left with us by Mr Tupper. I had better luck myself. I went to see a young man who listened courteously to what I had to say, then answered "Yes, if you *like* books and if you think you would like working among them, then you ought to become a librarian". So he set

me to read about libraries and their history, an immensely exciting discipline to which a gentle introduction is provided by some books which I shall suggest to you later on.

I think we can now manage without any more autobiography: I became a librarian years ago and my *Early Struggles* have ceased to convey a Message. My personal experience is antique. I have no formula to suggest to you, save that you find out all that you can about librarianship and determine for yourself which way of entering it is likely to suit you best. Now the best way of making a start is not necessarily the same from year to year nor, in the English-reading world where most of us will work, from country to country. A great deal was said, twenty years ago, of the unity and indivisibility of librarianship, and most of it was simply not true. In the United Kingdom, for example, there was (and there remains) a single standard of technical qualification—that awarded by the Library Association—but its acceptance was a good deal less universal then than now. It was more or less disregarded by government departments. And conversely the possession of a university degree, which you *had* to have if you wanted to work in an academic or a state library, did you very little good if you presented yourself for a job under a municipal authority. The counties gave due weight to both sorts of qualification, but it was often rather difficult to transfer from county library work to some other kind. The special libraries of great industrial and research corporations—so many fewer then than now—stood somewhat outside the general organization of librarianship and drew their personnel mainly from science graduates and their inspiration from ASLIB.

It is pretty fair to say that, right up to the end of the Second World War, you had to be very careful about the *kind* of library in which you made your start and the kind of higher education with which you equipped yourself. I am not going to suggest for a moment that caution is any less necessary than it was. What I do say is that an immense new liberalism is emerging in librarianship, as between its various branches and as between country and

country in which it is practised. British government departments and some British universities now ask for formal library qualifications. Municipal libraries often tell candidates for senior posts that a degree will be an advantage. Sometimes they specify it. A few of the largest of them encourage graduate entry by offering special employment, at a quasi-professional level, to people with degrees who want to qualify in librarianship. Many, many people with library qualifications are reading for degrees in their spare time and most of those I have met avoid the extremes of insufferable egg-headedness. Hundreds more, graduates already, are doing full-time work in libraries while they study library science, and they seem (those of them that I know) to bear the yoke easily. The double qualification is gradually assuming the importance in Britain that it has long had in the United States and Canada; it is a great help now in moving from one kind of library to another, and from one country to another, with all the enrichment of experience that these movements mean.

Fundamental library methods do not really differ much in the Western world or in those parts of Africa and Asia which are in intellectual communion with the West, but we have to find a point of departure and I am going to tell you about the job as it is done in Great Britain—though I hope to indicate the principal variations elsewhere. Most of what I shall have to say relates to public library practice. Where I know that other kinds of libraries do things in other ways I shall point this out.

The chapters which follow will try to introduce both school leavers and graduates to the principal elements of library work and I should like to think—although this is not a textbook—that they may offer some help to student librarians in the United Kingdom with their First Professional Examination, and perhaps with their Registration Examination as well.



*Choosing a Library*

A LIBRARIAN could conceivably have millions thrust upon him, but he will never achieve millions. If you would like to make a lot of money you must follow the known roads to success, and if in the end you feel sorry you did nothing for libraries you may put this right at the expense of your sorrowing relatives. Many a cannery president with a Cadillac sold newspapers in his boyhood but none would have staked his future on lending books. Librarians get by but they never get rich.

Librarianship in all its forms is vocational. You become a librarian because you want to help people, or science, or industry, in the particular way that library workers can, and because you think you will enjoy it. When you have made up your mind on that point and have been through the necessary educational preliminaries, you may look for a library to work in or, at least, one in which to begin.

Those with the greatest appeal to the imagination are the national libraries. Their staffs and appropriations are usually large, but employment opportunities in them, related to those in the whole field of librarianship, are rare in the extreme. Recruitment is usually limited to people—who must have really good academic qualifications—between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-six. Library qualifications, as a preliminary to appointment, are not asked for in the United Kingdom.

Your chances of appointment in one of the national libraries may seem to you to be a little thin. But this is a useful point to tell you about the most important of them in the English-speaking world. After all, you will hear of them constantly, later in your library career, whatever form it takes. You may do some research of your own in one or other of them. I think

you will have missed a rather important experience if you do not.

### *The Library of Congress*

The biggest of the national accumulations is that of the Library of Congress in Washington. It was established in 1800, as a library for the legislature, and was re-founded in 1815, after its lamentable destruction the year before. Thomas Jefferson's collection of 6,487 volumes formed the nucleus of the new library which has grown, in the hundred and forty-odd years since its inauguration, to a vast store of 35,331,657 recorded items, of which books and pamphlets number about a third. The rest is made up principally (I quote figures for 1956) of 15,000,000 manuscripts, 2,600,000 photographs, 2,300,000 maps and topographical items, 2,000,000 pieces of music, 583,000 prints, 464,000 gramophone records and many thousands of microfilm and motion picture reels. A great part of the accessions since 1870 has consisted of deposits under copyright. Two hundred and fifty miles of bookshelves and twenty-one reading rooms are contained in two large buildings. Material was provided for nearly three-quarters of a million researchers during 1955. Its collections are valued at \$2,192,830,635 and its employees number 2,520.

The main departments of the Library are Administration, Reference, legislative Reference Service (a Congressional intelligence bureau of specialist investigators, mainly in the economic sciences, whose staff of 196 includes only 8 graduates of library schools), Processing, the Law Library and the Copyright Office. Some of these are divided into sub-departments: Manuscripts, Maps, Music, and so on, which are vast libraries in themselves. The Library has its own classification—one which lends itself to use in other collections—and a system of card catalogue printing and distribution in which thousands of libraries participate.

If you find books more imaginable units than dollars or pounds you may think these macro-statistics as impressive as any

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in the world. They awe me, but greatly fortify my faith in mankind.

### *The National Library of Canada*

Although the National Library has existed in law since the beginning of 1953 and plans for a magnificent building to house it were published in 1956, its construction cannot be precipitate as it will form part of a monumental design for the rebuilding of central Ottawa. A National Librarian is already in office and in addition to acquiring books he has three main tasks: to complete a union catalogue of the principal libraries in Canada; to compile bibliographies and catalogues of Canadian publications; and to microfilm scarce material of Canadian interest. Books by Canadian authors, or books imported into Canada or published in or manufactured there, must be deposited under the National Library Act.

Until the National Library is fully functional, its duties in practice continue to be carried out by the Library of Parliament (founded 1866), whose 600,000 volumes are shelved in an inconvenient and endearing rotunda—a building much admired by connoisseurs of the High Victorian taste, cream and rust sandstone without, rich gold leaf and carved white pine within.

### *The Commonwealth National Library of Australia*

The Australian National Library was founded in 1902. Its services were consciously modelled upon those of the Library of Congress. Under the Commonwealth Copyright Act of 1912 it may receive a copy of every book published in Australia. It was first established in Melbourne, but it moved to Canberra in 1927 and it is the library of the Commonwealth Parliament as well as the principal library of the nation. The Commonwealth National Library building, when completed, will accommodate more than a million volumes; the library's present holdings are about 400,000 books, 50,000 maps, 100,000 cubic feet of archives and two and a half million feet of motion picture material.

*The British Museum Library*

The National Library of Scotland (the Advocates' Library until 1925), in Edinburgh, and the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, both enjoy privileges of deposit, complete in the first case and restricted in the second. The Bodleian Library at Oxford, the Cambridge University Library and the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, are also entitled to receive a copy of every publication of the classes designated in the Copyright Acts.

But the copyright library most convenient of access to the densest mass of population in Great Britain is that of the British Museum. It is also the nation's greatest collection of books.

The British Museum was founded by Act of Parliament in 1753 and the original components of its collections were the library and museum of Sir Hans Sloane (partly by bequest and partly by purchase), and the Cotton and Harleian manuscripts. The Royal Library was added by George II in 1757 and thereafter it received books deposited under copyright. In 1823 George IV added a further considerable gift and the British Museum moved from its original site in Piccadilly to Bloomsbury. The government of the British Museum is vested in trustees who include representatives of the founders' families and high officers of state, but the functions of the trust are carried out by a standing committee. Its permanent membership consists of one trustee appointed by the Crown and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Lord Chancellor and the Speaker. Appointments to the office of Director and Principal Librarian are made by the Crown.

The departments of the Library of the British Museum are three: that of Printed Books, that of Manuscripts and that of Oriental Books and Manuscripts; together they contain more than 6,000,000 printed books, 60,000 manuscripts, 100,000 charters and rolls and some thousands of Egyptian, Greek and Latin papyri. The catalogue in the Reading Room, in the form in which it exists as this book goes to press, is composed from

copies of the edition printed between 1881 and 1900 and of the supplement of 1905, cut up and mounted, with entries for the accessions since the supplement, in about 1,250 volumes. By the use of photo-offset methods, however, the Trustees hope to complete for subscribers, within five or six years, a 250 or 300 volume edition of the catalogue which will represent the library's holdings at the end of 1955.

### *University Libraries*

The national libraries are distinguished by the scarcity and splendour of so many of the volumes they contain, but in antiquity and even in numbers of books they are often eclipsed by the libraries of the greater universities. Harvard has the oldest library (1638) in the United States. Its many dispersed collections add up to nearly 6,000,000 books. It is the second library of the country and by far the largest university library in the world. Yale (founded 1701) has well over four and a half million books. Columbia has over three million, and the University of California, on its several campuses, has nearer four million than three. In a dozen other private or State universities, the libraries exceed, or closely approach, a million volumes; the growth of their book-stocks is as prodigious as the vitality of their alumni. There is a falling-off numerically in Canada: even McGill and Toronto do not quite achieve three-quarters of a million books apiece. It will be interesting to see if the riches in the gift of the new Canada Council stimulate the growth of the University Libraries. The universities of Australia are mostly of an age with those of North America but their rate of book acquisition has been much slower: Melbourne has fewer than a quarter of a million books, Sydney fewer than four hundred thousand. These largest of Australian university libraries had no proper buildings for many years and this no doubt has restrained expansion; a new library at Melbourne is badly needed. The four general colleges of the University of New Zealand have rather more or less than one hundred thousand volumes each; in South Africa, Cape Town

has nearly 360,000 items, Witwatersrand about a quarter of a million.

The libraries of the ancient universities in England—Sir Thomas Bodley's revival, in late Elizabethan times, of an earlier foundation at Oxford, and the Cambridge University Library, which has existed since the thirteenth century—are distinguished rather by splendours than by statistics. They are vast libraries, nevertheless. Cambridge has somewhat under two million books, the Bodleian a good many more. By benefit of copyright both libraries receive a copy of all publications in the United Kingdom. Cambridge lets its M.A.s borrow such books but fines them stiffly on default. In either university some colleges, notably Christ Church at Oxford and Trinity, Magdalene (where Pepys's books are perfectly displayed) and Corpus at Cambridge, own great riches and show them freely. Yet the real workshops of undergraduate reading, in Cambridge at least, are the libraries of the Departments—the Balfour, where a resident crocodile once inspired the drooping zoologist; the Squire, the home for a time of Dr James's most frightful phantom and now the graceful Law Library, where the one tuneful chime in Cambridge floats in on the summer air; the Engineering Library, a miniature Monticello under the great glass flank of its laboratory; and the English Library, which rings with heartening counsel for the faltering Tripos-man.

In London the University Library—which has no copyright privilege—and that of University College have each about 650,000 volumes; the other colleges are somewhat less liberally provided, but the London School of Economics has a library which is internationally important in its field: the British Library of Political and Economic Science, with three-quarters of a million books and pamphlets. The total of libraries and books in the university is indeterminate but enormous.

Another university with an array of libraries is that of Glasgow, where there are sixty-seven special collections as well as the main library of more than 400,000 books. St Andrews has somewhat

over, and Aberdeen somewhat under, the same figure. Edinburgh has well over half a million volumes and a great manuscript collection. Aberdeen and Glasgow are rich in early printed books.

The English provincial universities are much younger than those in Scotland and on the whole are less amply provided with books, though Manchester has some 650,000 and students have the resources of the John Rylands and Chetham Libraries, and the great reference collection of the city, at call. Birmingham far exceeds, and Leeds and Liverpool approach, 400,000 volumes.

### *Special Libraries*

We ought to look, now, at a class of libraries which is large already and is on the way to becoming much larger. I mean the Special Libraries—those which serve a profession, a firm, a research organization, a whole industry or a single branch of learning. It is logical to consider them after university libraries, for the aims of special libraries and the ideal qualities of their personnel may be similar. But they often have little in common one with another; their variety is infinite. You can group some of them by *content*—the fine art libraries, for instance, of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Courtauld Institute in London, that of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, England, or of the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Mass., or those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In the same class are the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., and the Hoover Library of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. More conveniently grouped by *function* are the libraries of the Bar Associations and Law Institutes in the United States and those of the Inns of Court in England—most, in fact, of the libraries of the professions. These two classes contain the largest individual libraries in the genre. The third kind, distinguishable by serving particular *groups of users*, forms the largest class of all, and it is of this kind that we think at once when we hear “Special Libraries” mentioned. Some, indeed, are on the grand scale: the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

Libraries, for example, or the General Assembly Library (though this is the national library, too) in New Zealand. Yet most are relatively small libraries, pivotally important as centres of research information and record, such as, in Britain, the various divisions of Imperial Chemical Industries or the units of D.S.I.R., the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in Ottawa, the Cancer Institute Board in Melbourne, and the Radiation Laboratory, at Berkeley, of the University of California. And now, even medium-sized firms are setting up their own libraries; record is a by-product of research; not to organize what has been found out is to demonstrate the high cost of low overheads; hence the phenomenal growth of special librarianship.

You will find that many special libraries, especially in this third category, are special in the sense of the material they contain. In the research library or information centre, and in some departments of large general collections, the librarian is concerned less with the backs of books than with the fronts of filing-cabinets—with the storage and location of periodicals, films and micro-films, slides, prints, clippings, gramophone records, blueprints, maps, catalogues and archives.

### *Libraries of Technology*

The libraries of the Institutes of Technology in the United States and of the Polytechnics and Technical Colleges in Great Britain have in part the character of smaller university libraries and in part that of special collections (e.g. Aeronautics at Hatfield). We have a long way to go in the English-speaking countries before the German concept of the Technical University is as successfully imported as it has been into the U.S.S.R. It is true that the greatest of the *Technische Hochschulen* is American—the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—but there is nothing really similar elsewhere in the U.S.A. or the Commonwealth. All the evidence is, however, that the teaching of Zuckerman and Snow has been listened to; not only is there going to be a tremendous effort in Western countries to produce scientific man-



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power but, unless the world is to be incomprehensible to your children, there has got to be the will to produce scientifically literate laymen. These trends mean a future for librarians of technology; their collections are mostly too small even for present needs but some are developing in the best tradition—that of the Massachusetts Institute, where the Humanities Library has a place of honour. Some technical libraries in England are perceptibly keeping before them this ideal of a balance of culture; a good example is that of the Bristol College of Technology. Against these, the great library planned by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research will be limited to technological works—if you can think of 18,000,000 volumes as offering any limits.

### *School Libraries*

With well over 26,000 such collections in the United States alone, the future for school libraries seems bright with promise. Consider Los Angeles, where from 1957 the Board of Education expects to administer ninety libraries in high schools and over one hundred in elementary schools. But the great achievements are isolated as yet. We find elsewhere in America that some States of the Union prescribe library and librarian standards for their schools; others suggest but do not enforce. In many cities the Department of Education has a School Library Department: this not only makes for a common denominator of service but also provides the means of co-operation with the Public Library—an example is joint publishing of annual selections in Baltimore. Some State Teachers' Colleges and Universities run summer Workshop courses on school libraries: most of these are for teachers and they apply mainly to schools with fewer than 500 children. The unevenness in library provision is being ironed out by a vigorous national Association of School Librarians, by the School Library Associations of the States or the library sections of State Education Associations; and consumer interest is well represented in High School Library Clubs and Teen-Age Library Associations. In Canada a similar unevenness exists in the Provinces:

only two have supervisors of school libraries, though there are trained school librarians and soundly established secondary school libraries in all the larger cities. In some Provinces arrangements exist for book supply and technical assistance to elementary schools from the local public library; in others, such schools are looked after by the regional library system (*q.v.*). In some Australian States, the Department of Education or of Public Instruction encourages school library provision by a "pound for pound" subsidy; for each pound raised by parents or school committees the Department puts down another. New South Wales has a model school library, where it holds vacation courses for teachers; in Western Australia all high schools have a teacher-librarian, and a library room is standard in all new primary schools. Queensland has a primary school circulating system. Tasmania's school library provision is outstanding: hardly a secondary school is without a really good collection of books; four such schools have full-time librarians. New Zealand's School Library Service, financed by the Department of Education, circulates loans to 2,285 schools of all classes (1955 figures). New Zealand alone deals with school library provision in a fully national and rational manner.

In England tradition is maintained; except *within* some school library areas you will not see much evidence of planning; there is a pattern, however. In all parts of the country the best libraries in this class are those of the private high schools which are called Public Schools, some having ancient endowments, some being modern memorials. Good examples are those of Aldenham, Lancing and Cheltenham Ladies' College. For State education, the Act of 1944 makes Counties and County Boroughs responsible (with a number of non-County Boroughs as "excepted districts"), and these authorities provide school library services. Perhaps best managed are those of the London County Council, with a central direction and supervisory staff and with a fair sprinkling of trained librarians in schools, especially in Comprehensive and Grammar Schools; in some other counties direct

grants are made to schools but certain services, such as arrangements for binding, in Essex, are made by the County Library. In some "excepted districts" (e.g., Bromley) the same pattern is followed as in Essex; in others—Cambridge is an example—the public library selects, circulates and maintains school library books in return for a financial contribution from the local education authority. What all this amounts to is the chaos of services which has always distinguished local administration in England, but notwithstanding it there is now a large number of well-run school libraries, thanks not least to the School Library Association and to those training colleges in which courses for teacher-librarians are held.

### *Town and City Public Libraries*

Thousands of people are employed in the kinds of libraries I have been describing to you, and each kind serves its hundreds of thousands. I am going on to talk about a class which employs tens of thousands and works for millions—and which may well have included the library which first suggested a career to you. I mean the ordinary town and city libraries: the class which ranges from the little building between the courthouse and the fire-station to the great reference library on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

In their beginnings, the public libraries were part and parcel of the spread of literacy; some of their earliest ancestors, the eighteenth-century circulating libraries and athenæa of New England and of the English spas, were classical and contained, but such later collaterals as the Mechanics Institutes for self-improving artisans, and curates' classes for mill-boys with their four-penny grammars, were not—they led in the mystique of the infallibility of education. This mystique fired all the Fathers of the public library movement: the aristocratic Bostonian, Josiah Quincy; the spiky, uncompanionable English bibliophile, Edward Edwards and the reformer, William Ewart, his patron in the House of Commons; the modest and kindly publisher, Passmore Edwards; and the stern, visionary ironmasters, Pratt and Carnegie.

The movement spread fast but, until the second half of the nineteenth century, without much of a discernible pattern. Tax-supported public libraries, based upon the school district, were sanctioned in New York and Michigan in 1835. From 1848 Boston, and from 1851 all municipalities in Massachusetts, had the power to raise library funds by taxation. New Hampshire followed Boston in 1849 (though indeed Peterborough, N.H., had led the nation by founding a library, and maintaining it by tax, in 1833), then Maine (1854), Vermont (1865) and Ohio (1867). Within sixty years of the Boston Act, Delaware alone held to the school district as the public library unit; municipal libraries had legislative sanction in every other State.

An Act of 1850, the fruit of Edwards' and Ewart's labour, allowed English boroughs with 10,000 or more inhabitants to establish and maintain public libraries and to equip them with furniture and staff. It did not authorize the purchase of books, and it limited the amount which might be raised for library purposes to a rate (the British local property tax) of one halfpenny in the pound. Ten pounds in annual value would have been a pretty fair average assessment for urban houses at that time; ten halfpence (or ten four-hundred-and-eightieth parts of a pound) is all that the library could draw from each household. In a town of fifty thousand people, who might live in ten thousand houses so assessed, this rate could bring in a maximum of little more than two hundred pounds. It was perhaps fortunate that few towns had adopted the Act before new legislation, in 1855, raised the rate limit to one penny and allowed the purchase of books. These were among the least of benefits already, or soon to be, secured by towns which wisely promoted their own legislation. A consolidating Act of 1892 did not disturb the penny rate limit and for the generality of towns it remained until 1919. The threepence in the pound limit which had applied in Scotland was not removed by legislation until 1955.

In Canada, eight out of ten Provinces have public library legislation though in one, Alberta, the principal Act is as recent as

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1956. Provincial draftsmen have in general followed the Free Libraries Act (1882) of the legislature of Ontario—where the greatest achievements as, most signally, in Toronto, in Hamilton and Windsor, and in the sumptuous memorial or donated libraries of London and Oshawa, have been. Service variations between Province and Province, and between individual city and rural community within a Province, are vast, but urban library provision is on the whole excellent. Due perhaps to a different cultural tradition, perhaps to the absence, so far, of a Provincial library Act, progress in Quebec has been less than you might have expected of this prosperous and long-settled land. Montreal, however, is now providing a branch service on the general North American pattern and Westmount, a dominantly English-speaking municipality within the metropolis, has a library of its own.

The public library service in Australia is as varied as a wide confederation can make it. It was desperately poor a generation ago but it has improved in every State since Ralph Munn, of the Pittsburgh Public Library, and Ernest R. Pitt, of the Public Library of Victoria, surveyed the Commonwealth's libraries in 1934-5. Thus in New South Wales, the Library Act of 1939, based upon the Munn-Pitt Report, has been adopted by one hundred and twenty-seven Councils. These authorities levy rates and also receive subsidies from a Library Board which was constituted in 1944. Similarly, a Free Library Service Board encourages and subsidizes book provision in Victoria; since the Board was set up in 1947, fifty-six municipal libraries have been established. "Efficient co-ordination and improvement" is the duty laid upon the Library Board of Queensland (where there are twenty-six local authority services, Brisbane having nine branches) by the Libraries Act of 1943. The main municipal function of the Libraries Board of South Australia is the administration of the State Public Library at Adelaide. Western Australia, where a Library Board was established by an Act of 1951, has a clear-sighted, comprehensive programme: the Board has the

duty "to advise the Minister on matters of general policy, to approve of libraries to be registered as free libraries and to provide for their control, and to control and manage libraries and services and the training of librarians". The evidence is that the Board is doing all this with outstanding success. In Tasmania, under the Libraries Act of 1943, a Board administers the State Library headquarters in Hobart and promotes, largely by an exchangeable book subsidy *in kind*, the growth of library services outside the capital. Thirty-six Tasmanian municipalities benefit in this way and seven have been set up with the help of the Hydro-Electric Commission. The Library Board has produced an admirable motion-picture documentary of its activities; seeing it, you know that the service is healthy, vital and honoured in its State.

In New Zealand the four principal cities have good and long established public libraries. Auckland (1880) has nine branches and well over 300,000 volumes, and there are about 100,000 in the Canterbury Public Library (1859) at Christchurch. Dunedin (1908) has more than 150,000 books, and Wellington (1893) with nine branch libraries, approaches a quarter of a million. Smaller municipal libraries may benefit under the Country Library Service—even those above the normal population maximum of 15,000.

The great public library of the Union of South Africa is that of Johannesburg, founded in 1890, and now having something like 650,000 books. The older foundations at Durban and Port Elizabeth have rather fewer, respectively, than a quarter of a million and 100,000 volumes.

### *State, Regional and County Libraries*

In America, most of the States of the Union, following the example of Massachusetts in 1890, have set up Library Commissions or other agencies to ensure some sort of book provision for unusually poor, remote, or sparsely populated areas. These agencies work partly by the encouragement, establishment and

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subsidy of small public libraries, partly through travelling libraries (as late as 1955, ninety-eight bookmobiles were sent out into rural Kentucky with the mission of bringing reading matter to that forty per cent of the State's population which had had none before). To isolated individuals they send books by post. The rural functions of the Library Boards of the Australian States and of the Country Library Service in New Zealand are roughly the same. Regional library legislation in the Canadian Provinces attempts to deal with similar problems of distance and sparse population, but distance itself—and an uncompromising topography—means that sometimes Province and region are not always one. British Columbia, for example, has three library regions or Unions: Fraser Valley, Okanagan Valley and Vancouver Island. Alberta has two. Nova Scotia has four. Saskatchewan has one and Manitoba has one projected. Newfoundland is itself a regional synthesis. Ontario, where there are many old, small libraries in proud, small towns, has tactfully avoided the regional solution, and has persuaded these communities to group themselves into fourteen co-operatives—usually based on the county—for services such as book purchase.

Legislation in most of the American States allows library powers, under an elected Board, to their constituent counties. In certain States, e.g., California, there is no Board, and the County Supervisors administer the library.

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1918, the Public Libraries Act of 1919 and the Public Libraries (Northern Ireland) Act of 1924 permitted the establishment of library services, subordinate to the county education authority, by the councils of administrative counties in the United Kingdom. The Scottish Act of 1918 is now superseded by an Act of 1946. County councils were set up, in England and Wales, by the Local Government Act of 1888 and fifty-nine of them now administer library services. There are also thirty in Scotland and six in Northern Ireland. These services may be urban—with large branches as in Lancashire and the Home Counties serving, exceptionally, communities of 80,000

people and beyond—or rural, with mobile libraries or with local centres supplied by delivery vans. The local centre, open for a few hours a week, is not a very satisfactory unit; the books it can offer are never quite enough for its village but they could be put (so librarians reason) to far better use in mobile libraries with a ten or twelve hours a day service. Thus bookmobiles, or mechanical horses and trailers, each with an immediate selection of a couple of thousand books and with a daily visiting schedule of two villages or even three, are fast replacing local centres: scores of these, in Cumberland, Derbyshire and elsewhere, have been shut down in recent years. Sometimes, of course, a community so far develops that a mobile library is no longer enough; when its population reaches a figure which varies from county to county but which is generally upwards of 5,000, a full-time local branch service is provided. An administrative county which adopts the Public Libraries Acts adopts them for its whole area, save for the districts within it which have incurred library expenditure in the previous year. But such districts, provided they be not county boroughs (i.e., towns having the local government powers of a county as defined in the Act of 1888) may relinquish their library powers to the county if the Minister of Education agrees. Again with the Minister's agreement, the county may allow any large town in its area to set up its own library service or to administer the service previously administered for it by the county. Thus the large urban district of Orpington separated from the Kent County Library on 1 April, 1957. Another, Chislehurst and Sidcup, will administer its own service from 1 April, 1958.

I have told you a little of how libraries are set up and run by various kinds of public authorities, and for what purpose, but I have said nothing about private munificence. I think I must, for the scope and stature of a library, and perhaps your choice of it, depend upon its original endowments and its income over many years. Governing bodies, particularly in countries where they have other municipal responsibilities, sometimes lose their early



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pride and enthusiasm in a fine library when they begin to realize its continuing cost. The service may lose their support; the public may lose interest; the librarians may lose heart. Many library boards or committees have been saved years of back-breaking debt by foundation and endowment. Between his first gift to Dunfermline in 1883 and his death in 1919, Andrew Carnegie, the hard bargainer and universal philanthropist, founded (conditionally upon a grant of the site) nearly 3,000 libraries in the Atlantic countries and elsewhere. Selective, posthumous benefactions were continued by the Carnegie Corporation and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. Another Founder, Enoch Pratt, was cast in the same mould, but he had less tolerance of trustees, and, supervising the erection of his own great library in Baltimore, he saw its opening, with four branch libraries and a full stock of books, ten years before his death in 1896. Pratt was a genuine eccentric but a man of the keenest vision: he endowed Baltimore with \$833,333.33 for its library, the city to pay interest at five per cent until the capital sum reached \$1,000,000. How hard the realism; how splendid the realization. Foundations such as the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the McLaughlin Library at Oshawa, the Mitchell of Glasgow and the Gilstrap Library at Newark-on-Trent and greatest of all, perhaps, the Astor, Lenox and Tilden foundations which unite in the New York Public Library, have in their several ways a special impact on the popular mind. They were given in faith, not wrung in taxes.

This descriptive chapter has been long but so little has been described, even among libraries of the English-speaking world. The United Nations Organization Library, the Libraries of the American State Legislature, the Public Libraries of the Australian States, the National Library for the Blind, the Raffles Library at Singapore, the Huntington, Rylands and Chetham's Libraries, libraries in the Caribbean and Ghana, and whole classes of libraries such as Hospital Libraries, Prison Libraries, Teachers' Libraries—none has had a word. I have had to keep to the big

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battalions with the widest employment possibilities, but do not let them confine your choice if you feel drawn to some other kind of library. See your local librarian or write to your national library association; you can depend on a courteous answer. For the rest, I grieve for the statistics with which I may have dazed you in this chapter. I have never been one of the fun-from-figures school, but I urge these on you very seriously. As a librarian with good qualifications and English as your mother-tongue the world of books can be your oyster. Choose judiciously and you will turn up a pearl.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Getting Organized*

**P**TOLEMY'S library was founded in Alexandria, in about 300 B.C., with the artless motive of propagating Greek culture in a place where it did not belong. Two and a half centuries later Julius Caesar went to Alexandria with a dream of Romanization, but he was a practical sort of visionary and sought no honour as a founder of colonial libraries: he burnt the one which was there and left it at that. These two exercises in political forethought cost us most of the literature of Greece, and you would think this lesson would last us the whole of history. You might reasonably expect a man, when he had read a book, to wrap it carefully and bury it. But there is something in our nature which compels us to assemble libraries just as surely as, once every few generations, we feel obliged to burn them down, or at least to burn armfuls of the books in them. In lands not now given to political or religious bonfire-nights we can still modify the dangers of literacy; we can reduce the library appropriation and fire a few librarians. Vulgar opinion sometimes supports these activities and librarians, who feel keenly for their security and for literature, have associated for the protection of books and of their own status, for the education of the public in these matters, and for such gentlemanly lobbying in high places as opportunity may allow.

The first cohesive effort was made in America. Professor Charles C. Jewett of the Smithsonian Institution, and some others, persuaded eighty librarians and bibliographers to meet in New York in 1853. The members of the convention tried to form a permanent organization, but it was not until a second national conference in Philadelphia, in 1876, that the American Library Association was formed with a foundation membership of one hundred and three. In 1877, an international librarians'

convention in London, presided over by John Winter Jones, Librarian of the British Museum, led to the establishment of a Library Association for the United Kingdom. Eighty years later the British association has more than 12,000 members; the American, more than 20,000. At a conference in 1946 the Canadian Library Council launched the national Library Association; there had been an *Association Canadienne des Bibliothécaires de Langue Française* since 1943. A convenient southward orientation had stayed Canada's progress in this field until war made the Border a reality for a time. The South African Library Association is a good deal older (1930), so is the Library Association of Australia which was reconstituted in 1949 from the Institute of Librarians of twelve years before. New Zealand has a Library Association of its own, so has India, and a West African Library Association was inaugurated in 1954. Nearly all the American States have Library Associations, and national groups in particular classes include the Medical Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries and the Music Library Association. A Special Libraries Association, now 5,000 members strong, was founded in the United States in 1909, and there is also an important and exclusive society of some fifty great American libraries—the Association of Research Libraries. The British ASLIB (formerly the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux) was founded in 1924; it has a membership of over 1,800 special libraries, research bodies and business corporations, and it receives financial aid from the Government's Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Australia has an Association of Special Libraries and Information Services. As well as the national societies for book recording—the Bibliographical Society of America, the Bibliographical Society of Canada and the Bibliographical Society whose headquarters are in London—there are important associations attached informally to universities or national libraries, e.g., the Edinburgh, the Oxford and the Cambridge Bibliographical Societies, and that of the University of Virginia. Finally there are supra-national bodies

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such as the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association, the Libraries Division (in Paris) of UNESCO, which publishes an extremely informative bi-monthly *Bulletin for Libraries*, the International Federation of Library Associations (at Geneva) and *La Fédération Internationale de Documentation* (at the Hague). All co-operate with national library associations and with one another, and in the last ten years or so, by international seminars, by information and personnel exchanges, and by the seconding of experts to under-provided countries, they have done a lot of solid work.

### *The American Library Association*

We must look a little more closely, now, at the functions of some representative national associations. First, the American Library Association.

The A.L.A. was charged on incorporation with the duty of disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries, and membership is available to librarians, institutions, trustees, and almost any individuals or bodies corporate with an interest in library work. It holds an annual conference which has risen steadily in popularity from the 'seventies and 'eighties (it attracted an attendance of thirty-two in 1888) to the mid-twentieth century: 2,900 librarians met at Miami Beach in 1956. The A.L.A. has appealed more widely to non-public librarians than its counterpart in Great Britain; unlike the British association it is not itself an examining body but controls professional education by accrediting library schools, and it may be that this system is more widely favoured by academic and governmental librarians. It licenses through a Board of Education for Librarianship but maintains no professional register. (The Canadian Library Association follows a similar policy, two Canadian schools being also accredited by the A.L.A.) The American Library Association headquarters are in Chicago but it operates an International Relations Office in Washington, and the latter is not the sum of its interest in the capital; thus, after ten years'

hard lobbying by the Association and its friends the federal Library Services Act (*q.v.*) received the Presidential assent in 1956.

### *The Library Association*

The purposes and powers of the Library Association of the United Kingdom, as defined in its Royal Charter of 1898, are mainly

To unite all persons engaged or interested in library work by holding conferences and meetings for the discussion of bibliographical questions and matters affecting libraries or their regulation or otherwise.

To promote the better administration of libraries.

To promote whatever may lead to the improvement of the position and the qualifications of librarians; to hold examinations in librarianship and to issue certificates of efficiency.

To promote the adoption of the Public Libraries Acts; to watch and promote legislation affecting public libraries; and to promote the establishment of libraries for use by the public.

To promote and encourage bibliographical study and research.

The L.A. maintains a register of qualified (or Chartered) librarians whom it designates as Fellows or Associates. The former must have attained the age of twenty-five, must have completed five years of approved library service and must have passed the Association's Final Examination. An Associate must be not less than twenty-three, must have completed three years' approved service and must have passed the Registration Examination. Full-time attendance at an approved school of librarianship is recognized as equivalent library service for a period not exceeding two years for Fellowship and one year for Associateship.

You might care, now, to see what the Registration and Final Examinations are all about but first, if you are not a graduate but have the General Certificate at Ordinary level in five subjects, or three at Ordinary level and one at Advanced (one, in either case,

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being English or English Literature), you must pass the First Professional Examination. It is not a very dreadful exam. and quite interesting in its subject matter. If and when you take it you will have worked in a library for some months and if you have read your books and have been allowed to see how things are run, you will find it child's play. The papers, which are four in number and which last for an hour and a half each, follow this syllabus:

### (1) *Librarianship: Purpose*

The aims and scope of the library service. The services available in all types of library. Inter-library co-operation. Professional education and qualification. Professional associations.

### (2) *Librarianship: Methods*

How libraries are governed and financed. Staffing and the division of work. The ordering and receipt, preparation, care and custody of books, periodicals and other related material. The admission and registration of readers. Circulation methods, reservation, inter-lending of material, personal service, publicity.

### (3) *Library Stock: Description and Arrangement*

The parts of books and periodicals. Simple bibliographical terms. The practical purposes of classification in libraries. Parts of a classification scheme. Shelf arrangement, guiding and display. The purposes of reading lists. The purposes of cataloguing. The types and forms of catalogue. The details given in catalogue entries. References. The functions of subject headings in a dictionary catalogue and of indexes to a classified catalogue. The arrangement of the catalogue, alphabetizing and filing, guide cards and labels. Centralized cataloguing and the use of the *British National Bibliography*.

### (4) *Library Stock: Use*

The value and use of the more important types of reference,

book. Encyclopaedias, year books, directories, dictionaries, indexes to periodicals, abstracts, book-trade lists, books of quotations, biographical reference works, atlases. Abbreviations used in books.

When you have got over that hurdle (or straight away, if you have a degree) you can begin to prepare yourself for the Registration Examination which, to quote the Regulations, is "the general professional examination as a result of which successful candidates who possess the requisite language qualification and have had three years' experience in a library where service is approved, will be eligible for registration as Chartered Librarians". The language qualification is not very exacting—a pass, at Ordinary level and in a language other than English, in the G.C.E. examination or its equivalent. And this, in summary, is the Registration Examination syllabus—seven 3-hour papers arranged in four groups:

- GROUP A (i) Classification  
 (ii) Cataloguing  
 (iii) Practical Classification and Cataloguing
- GROUP B (iv) Bibliography and Documentary Reproduction  
 (v) Assistance to Readers
- GROUP C (vi) Organization and Administration
- GROUP D (vii) Literature of a Special Subject  
 This will be either—  
 (a) History of English Literature, *or*  
 (b) Literature of Science and Technology, *or*  
 (c) Literature of Social and Political Ideas

A new, multiple-choice syllabus, arranged in three groups together constituting eight papers, is under consideration as this book goes to press.

It will be some time before you meet the Final Examination, which is "designed to test the mature judgment of the candi-



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dates" but you might as well see how the land lies. The examination is in four parts, each of two 3-hour papers, and the following is a résumé of the syllabus:

1. Bibliography and Book Selection
2. Library Organization and Administration  
(The first paper is General; the second deals with either Public Libraries, *or* .  
University and College Libraries, *or*  
Special Libraries and Information Bureaux)
3. Literature and Librarianship of Special Subjects;  
one of the following alternatives—  
English Literature (a choice of five periods), *or*  
Philosophy and Religion, *or*  
Social Sciences, *or*  
Science and Technology (with four alternatives for the  
second paper), *or*  
Fine Arts, *or*  
Music, *or*  
Medicine, *or*  
History and Archaeology, *or*  
Linguistics and History and Theory of Literature.
4. One of the following—  
Palaeography and Archives  
Library Work with Young People  
Advanced Classification and Cataloguing  
Historical Bibliography  
Literature of Wales

One other post-Registration examination may be taken: that for a Specialist Certificate in Hospital Library Work.

As the Library Association controls examinations as well as qualifications, library schools in Britain are not as a rule attached to universities. There is one prominent exception, the School of Librarianship and Archives (at University College) founded in the University of London in 1919; the Director of the School

occupies the only Chair of Library Studies in the country. The course of training for the Diploma in Librarianship is open to people with good honours degrees, it lasts a year, and covers the same ground, as to its technical part, as the L.A.'s Final Examination syllabus. The University conducts its own examination at the end of the course, and there are two other conditions for the award of the Diploma, (1) that candidates submit a thesis or bibliography during the year following the examination and (2) that they submit evidence of twelve months' full-time service in an approved library. The Diploma in Archive Administration has similar requirements as to academic standing; it is awarded on completion of a course of not less than one year's duration and twelve months' full-time service in an approved record office. The course includes English Palaeography, Administrative History, Archive Administration, Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman French, History and Theory of Librarianship, and *one* of the following: National and University Library Administration, Special Library Administration, Public Library Administration, and Printed Materials and Sources for the Study of Archives.

Full-time education is otherwise confined to the library school departments, none of which existed in its present form before 1946, of the North Western Polytechnic, London, the Scottish College of Commerce, Glasgow, and seven other suburban or principal provincial centres. These library schools do not award their own diplomas but prepare students for the Registration Examination of the Library Association and, in some cases, for the Final. Graduates excepted, candidates for admission must have passed the First Professional Examination. Most of these schools, and many other colleges for further education, run part-time courses—some for the whole range of Library Association examinations. The Association of Assistant Librarians, a Section of the Library Association which has a special concern with the welfare and education of student librarians, conducts correspondence courses for all examinations and revision schools for some of them.

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The Library Association's examinations are held in London and a number of provincial centres twice a year. A recent statistical analysis, that for December 1956, shows that a total of 2,004 people sat the examinations (all categories) and that there were 915 passes—thirty-six with varying degrees of distinction—in the 2,214 papers attempted: a success ratio of forty-one per cent.

On the whole, then, you can see that, in their different ways, the national library associations control professional education almost wholly, either by accreditation or by the direct conduct of examinations. ASLIB, in the United Kingdom, is not altogether happy about this monopoly some of its members would like to see a separate Register of Information Officers (and many special librarians are so designated) based upon qualifications approved by a Board responsible to its own Council. Recent proposals to broaden the L.A.'s Registration Examination syllabus are due largely to ASLIB'S disquiet. You will not want to bother your heads with matters of this sort at this stage but I mention them because librarians are giving a lot of thought to the control of professional education and registration. Many think that the question of Who pronounces Whom to be qualified for What is fundamental; that their status and that the future of librarianship as a career depend upon it. Nobody is yet quite sure of the answer. The *Library Journal* recently listed complaints by an American librarian on the lack, in the United States, of a professional register and of library service as a prerequisite of qualification. Then an Englishman stated some dissatisfaction here "approved library service" and real experience were not necessarily the same thing, qualifying examinations may be taken piecemeal, library education has no sure academic basis.

All these blemishes exist. But don't let them put you off; they will be sorted out. Even now, a three-year study of library education and professional librarianship, financed by a Carnegie grant of \$50,000, is being undertaken at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. This offers us a unique chance, in America, Britain and wherever the library-education patterns of these

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countries are followed, to loosen our stiff necks and straighten our thinking. Meanwhile, anxiously though we await rationalization, many of us continue just quietly to enjoy being librarians.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *The Government of Libraries*

**I**N the mid-twentieth century your Librarian or Director is unlikely to wear whiskers and heavy mannerisms. He will not be a despot, I imagine, either of the benevolent or of the Barrett kind. Head patting is out, and contemporary office furnishings do not support the dramatics of tyranny: he is a rash man who hauls up another on a tangerine straw carpet. So, in whichever kind of library you choose to work, I expect you will find the principal executive a sensible and well-mannered person who gets on quietly and hopes that you will do the same. He may sometimes address you as "Mr Er" but there will be no other father-figure performances. The fire-eating eccentrics of library history are all gone now, and that is a very good thing for everybody. But libraries are institutions and in no institution is the director the sovereign power: he owes his appointment and his authority, his funds and his supplies, to some shadowy superior. The higher you rise in the management of your library the more you will have to do with this Superior; it would be sensible to examine its nature now.

The great national libraries, such as the Library of Congress and that of the British Museum, reflect their origin in the composition of their governing bodies. What was originally the working library of a legislature is still regulated (though only nominally since 1897) by a Joint Committee of that legislature, and what began as a royal gift to the people is still administered by a Trust on which all the Sovereign's Estates are represented. The principal funds of such libraries are secured in federal or national budgets. The university libraries, in Anglo-Saxon countries, are governed by academic committees which are most frequently called Boards but whose members occasionally have

the noble style of Curators or Syndics. The endowments of these libraries, and the degree of their support from public funds, are too varied for profitable examination here. Commercial, industrial or scientific libraries are sometimes the responsibility of small management committees, but usually they are the concern of some member of the Board, such as a Director of Research. Public libraries are very variously controlled; in the cities of the United States and Canada the usual pattern of management is by boards of trustees, not always so tightly integrated into the system of municipal government as in the United Kingdom. Their election may be by direct franchise, or they may be nominated by the mayor, by the city commissioners, or even by their manager. Some instances survive in America of a contract system whereby the library services of a city are supplied, in return for an annual payment, by what amounts to a private corporation whose membership is outside the commissioners' or the electorate's control. In a few cities, school boards still control the public libraries. But boards of trustees with solely library responsibilities, receiving from the tax-levying authority an annual appropriation (or perhaps, for such non-recurring expenditure as that on a new building, the receipts of a bond issue) in accordance with state law, are the general rule. Most of the states have county library legislation though in some cases, and for mainly topographical reasons, rural services are not quite so well developed as in the United Kingdom. In California, which has the lead in county library development, the service is under the direct control of the county supervisors; in most other states, under a county library board. In America, membership of this board is often the only local government responsibility of the Trustee; he has not the pull of other, and sometimes conflicting municipal responsibilities which he may feel, say, in England. He usually takes his duties extremely seriously, and library officials and associations go more than half-way to meet him: the A.L.A. awards citations for outstanding achievements in Trusteeship; Trustee handbooks are published; State "institutes"—or short

courses—are held for Trustees; so even are teaching courses leading to certification. Such efforts, I think, may have gone a long way towards creating that powerful body of informed public opinion which secured the passage in 1956 of the federal Library Services Act, a measure designed, through financial aid to states, to give library benefits (it is said) to twenty-seven million citizens who lacked them before.

In the United Kingdom there are no single-purpose public library authorities. Every committee which runs a county or civic library is an instrument of a larger, elected council which raises money for the performance, through its several committees, of local duties laid upon it by statute. All public library legislation is permissive, that is, it is adopted by competent authorities of their own volition. In England and Wales, these competent authorities are the Councils of Administrative Counties and of County Boroughs, of Non-County and of Metropolitan Boroughs, and of Urban Districts. A very few Parishes, also, are library authorities. The County Councils derive their library powers from the Public Libraries Act of 1919 and they work through the County Library Sub-Committees of their Education Committees. The other councils are constituted as library authorities through their adoption of the Public Libraries Act of 1892. A Municipal (or Non-County) Borough or the Council of an Urban District cannot now adopt the Act; since 1919 the competent authority is the Council of the Administrative County in which either is situated, and its powers are exercised (partly through local library Committees) by a Library Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee. All this may seem to you a little labyrinthine, but there is more to come. The Local Government Act of 1888, which created County Councils, also lifted a class of larger boroughs out of the common run established by the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835. Such boroughs—eighty-three of them—exercise all the powers of a County Council, and if some municipality which had never adopted the Act of 1892 were now raised to county borough

status and were to seek library powers, it would have to adopt the 1919 Act. Thus its libraries would be managed by a sub-committee of its education committee. Since the Local Government (County Boroughs and Adjustments) Act of 1926, the provisions of which are now incorporated in the Local Government Act of 1933, no municipality with a less population than 75,000 is eligible for county borough status. In recent years, indeed, Parliament has set its face against the creation of any new county borough, no matter how populous the applicant; most of the sixty-two administrative counties would find themselves unable to pay for statutory services if their big towns sealed themselves off and contributed nothing. But a real effort at rationalization seems to be promised in the *White Paper* of 1956.

The Local Government Act of 1933 allows any library authority constituted under the Act of 1892 to delegate all save its borrowing and rate-levying powers to its library committee, but such delegation does not allow the library authority to repudiate its responsibility for the committee's acts—this makes sense, for at least two-thirds of the committee must be in membership of the authority.

Not very many library committees in England and Wales have quite the freedom of action which the above paragraph may suggest. Most of their principal executive acts will be moved for reception at the monthly meeting of the authority. This amounts to a recommendation by the Chairman of the committee that the whole Council endorse what has been done and agree to what is projected. Scottish Burghs are in a much more independent position. The Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act of 1887 gives them a legal personality of their own. And yet they are curiously restricted as to their composition: their membership must number between ten and twenty, of whom half must be councillors and half must be householders in the burgh. Scottish county education authorities, by the Education (Scotland) Act of 1946, provide library services outside burghs where the Act of 1887 has been adopted. Between 1918—the date of the originat-



## THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBRARIES

ing Act—and 1955 this gave rise to a melancholy situation: rate-payers in burghs had to pay for their own libraries and an element for the county library service as well.

This demonstration in morbid anatomy has been by sample. But you *may* wish to lay bare the whole legal structure of the public library system in the United Kingdom, and you will find a recommendation to a specialist at the end of this book.

You will also learn a lot from the proceedings, some of which will no doubt be available by the time this book is published, of a Government Committee of which Sir Sydney Roberts is Chairman. The Committee is composed of people distinguished in librarianship, local government and education. Its terms of reference, as defined by the Minister of Education, are

“To consider the structure of the Public Library Service in England and Wales and to advise what changes, if any, should be made in the administrative arrangements, regard being had to the relationship of public libraries to other libraries.”

*People of Parts*

I HAVE enjoyed a consumer's acquaintance with a great number of libraries but if I pretend to be able to tell you how all of them are run I should be not a narrator but a novelist. I work in a British public library of medium size with, I suppose, reasonable funds and certainly a discerning clientele. My colleagues are able, intelligent and, if it is not wrong of me to say so, a little above the ordinary in academic achievement. We dance on the median. We are the Average Public Library. That is not quite the same thing as postulating that we are a Typical Public Library, and, so that you may have an idea of what goes on in libraries generally, the departments and methods I am going to describe very briefly will include some which are not our own and will omit some which are.

Before we get down to these things, I think it might be useful if we had a word about Library Staff. This is a little intimate and personal because staff are people and you cannot help relating them to a given place; what is more, if this little book achieves its purpose, the group may one day include yourself. It is Staff that I am going to talk about; not pay and conditions, for these are variables you must yourself determine at the proper time; not prospects, for it still lies in people to climb their own hills and find their own horizons.

I said at the beginning that a great new liberalism was entering librarianship. It is much easier now to move from one kind of library job to another; even, in the practice of library work at a mid-professional level, to move from one country to another. But there is a caveat and it is this: to be generally acceptable you have got to be generally qualified. On the western side of the Atlantic this means that you need a degree in some scientific or

humane study—you can follow your own bent in this provided it is not too esoteric—and a library science degree as well. The double qualification is being considered more and more as a single one, even in the United Kingdom, and if you want to be really mobile—if, once a librarian, you want to give yourself room for manoeuvre and judicious change of mind—I strongly urge you to get it.

In the library where I work this kind of thing happens. People leave school at eighteen with respectable Advanced Level results in the General Certificate of Education and (possibly because we have rather pushed Librarianship as a Career in a pamphlet we issue to local schools) come to us for some months or even a year before going up to their university. Most have decided on librarianship while still at school; others have entered with honest doubt and have made up their minds before leaving. Others, having thought about library work while they were at their universities, take a job with us for, say, a year, and then find acceptance at a library school. Still others come to us direct from school with the intention, which they generally carry out, of getting all their qualifications while working in this library or some other. On the whole, this means a pretty rapid turnover of junior staff, but we seem to have a constant and dependable intake of young people who really want to be librarians.

What encourages us most, I think, is that these new members of our staff are so interested in working hard *with* books and *for* people. We ask them to undertake three-monthly cycles of duty in each department and they try their hands and eyes at most things—from cutting paper sculpture in junior libraries to the detective work of bibliography. Wherever you take up librarianship you will find that you have people like these as your colleagues: *whole* people, not stuffy, not cobwebby, book-loving but not bookworms, and intensely interested in the lively world about them. I do not believe there were ever many librarians who would rather have talked about catalogues than about books (though there were some and they also served) but the last of

them are leaving now, inscribed timepieces and TV cabinets and all.

Now it would be very wrong of me to suggest that all or even much of library work is strictly literary. You *must* know about catalogues and bibliographies: some of your most satisfying work will be in advising readers on the means of getting the best out of libraries. This is true librarianship, and it is the catalogue and the classification scheme which turn simple stores of books into libraries. But a good many methods and devices, once considered as fundamental to library science as the catalogue itself, are now thought of as sub-professional. Some libraries in the United Kingdom and most American libraries therefore distinguish between professional and non-professional work. Librarians work as librarians *ab initio*. They assist readers and otherwise confine themselves to the tasks for which they were trained. Non-professional work is done by clerical workers or by library pages.

I quite agree with this, but in a country such as Great Britain, where even graduates are recruited to library work somewhat as (in other employments) apprentices might be, more openings can generally be found if entry is on a single level. In the library where I work, all entrants not yet having qualifications in librarianship come in at one level and we try to deal mechanically with mechanical jobs, using adding machines, photocopiers, a partial token-issue system and so on. And we use prominent but tiny labels with a minimal area for pasting. Does this dispute our professional standing? I don't know. I saw professional status defined the other day as "engaging in an occupation not affiliated to the Federation of British Industries or the Trades Union Congress."

*O tempora, O mores!* I shall be content to stick a label from time to time.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Departments and Methods*

#### MAINLY CIRCULATION

THE chicken and the egg question is fundamental and persistent. I do not know whether the administration of a library emerges logically from its book departments or *vice versa*. But I think it would be useful to start by saying something about the former because that will enable me to describe the structure of the staff.

Where the administrative pattern of a British public library is followed, we usually find a staff hierarchy which is something like this. The permanent official who takes responsibility for the whole organization is called, if he is lucky, *the Librarian*, though more often than not he has some such prefix as "Chief" or "City" or "Borough", and occasionally the title of *Director of Libraries* is used instead. He advises the Library Committee and, in particular, its Chairman, and by carrying out the policy he is directed to follow he justifies the ways of the Committee to the public. His principal assistant and *locum* is the *Deputy Librarian*, who is associated with him in all his work, who usually undertakes special responsibilities for staff welfare and management, and from whom no secrets are hid. After the Deputy Librarian comes the *Chief Assistant Librarian*, who usually works as a liaison officer between the higher administration and the departmental heads, who frequently acts as a kind of general manager of the Central Library Building, who, in the absence of an Accounts Officer not seldom checks and codes library's invoices, who sometimes has responsibilities in Lecture Hall management, who formulates time-sheets, assembles binding, despatches

branch accessions, and does most of the pernicky and residual office work in the library.

Where there are a number of branch libraries, they are visited regularly, and their librarians are advised, by a *Superintendent of Branches*. Together, the Deputy, the Chief Assistant and the Superintendent can see even the largest library system as a whole and they are usually the editors or revisers of the Staff Manual. Classics in this range of compilations are those of the Nottingham City Libraries and the Enoch Pratt Free Library; the latter is a particularly splendid book and as exhaustive as the Queen's Regulations, but these manuals are usually fairly simple statements of action to be taken in particular situations—fire, sudden illness on library premises, reports of book losses—and codes of local practice in, say, cataloguing or the registration of readers. Staff Manuals are, of course, a Good Thing, but though I have sometimes brandished one and cried "I told you so", I have never admired them much.

After the administrative personnel come the people who are responsible for departments: the *Central Reference* and *Lending* (or *Circulation*) *Librarians*, the *Children's Librarian* (local alternative names for her office are too many to mention), the *Cataloguer* and perhaps an *Archivist* or *Local History Librarian*, a *Music* and a *Gramophone Records Librarian*, and the *Branch Librarians*. Any of these offices may have one or more *Senior Assistants* (sometimes there are *Intermediate Assistants* as well) and there will be a complement of junior Assistants in each department—though in smaller systems the Central Lending Library staff will probably act as a general departmental pool. There will be typists and perhaps a clerk or so, but the library pages of America will have no counterpart except in the stackrooms of the largest provincial libraries. There may be a *Photographic Department*. A *Publicity* or *Public Relations Department* on the American model is altogether unlikely in the United Kingdom: most libraries make do with rare and apologetic letters to local editors, exhibition catalogues, window and departmental displays and, very

occasionally, a documentary film: Sheffield issued a fine example quite recently.

Let us look a little more closely at the departments. From early habit, most of us tend to think of the Lending Library first and we may as well start there. Sometimes—almost always in America—it is called the Circulation Department, and sometimes the Home-Reading Department, which I think a sloppy, illogical and wholly detestable term. In it or through it, readers are first registered. They complete an application form, their local residence is verified by the register of electors or some other official document or by the Rating Office of the municipal Treasurer's Department, and they are issued, sometimes after a day or so's interval, with general, fiction and perhaps music and gramophone tickets. That, at least, is what happens when the commonest British book-issue method—the Browne Charging System—is in use. I imagine that it is called a charging system because a small manilla slip with a finding-number or other symbol on it is taken from the book when it is date stamped and issued to you and the slip (called a book-card) is then loaded—or charged—into the pouch of your ticket. Where, as at Wandsworth, Croydon or Brentford and Chiswick and in many American libraries, photo-charging is employed, a single membership card will be issued. This, the book number and what is called a "transaction card" are micro-photographed as the book is released to you. Where, as at Westminster, tokens replace readers' tickets, you receive these hat-check-like slips of plastic and a Pass establishing your identity. And where, as at Worthing, Bromley and elsewhere, Browne is used for non-fiction and tokens for fiction, you are furnished with the unburdensome paraphernalia of both systems. In most places you will be allowed to join the library if you can show that you are employed or are being taught in the town, and even if you cannot, you may be registered on payment of a small deposit. Parish pump ideas are now much less dominant than they used to be, and you will be able to use your tickets almost anywhere.

These charging systems are the commonest in the United Kingdom. But many American and a few British libraries use the Dickman Mechanical Book Charger: this is rather like a small printing press and an embossed metal plate, carrying a number which represents *you*, is inserted in the machine with a card representing your book. The hinged top of the press is brought down and this book-card receives a date-due stamp and an impression of your number. The plate from which this is taken is then removed, your borrower's card is placed in the machine and it in turn receives the date-due impression. You retain the borrower's card and the book-card is filed to record the issue.

Experiments have been made in the United States with Audio-Charge systems, which depend upon an audible record taken by a dictating machine, and with business-system punched card issue records (edge-punched, as in the McBee Keysort variety and face-punched, as in Hollerith). There are at least a dozen other methods of varying efficiency. A particularly interesting development is that in use since 1949 at Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan—Keysort loan cards used in combination with charge slips on which readers themselves fill in abbreviated titles and their own names and addresses; it has been adopted elsewhere, notably in the large American Memorial Library in Kreuzberg, Berlin. The Wayne County system has dispensed with the registration of readers (in Wayne County itself) as a once-for-all act at the beginning of membership, since in effect readers re-register each time they use the library. It is perhaps a little more troublesome to patrons than most conventional systems, but it disposes of a vast and cumbersome record and no rise in book losses has followed its adoption. A sensitized paper record system (Brodac) is in experimental use at Miami, Florida, and elsewhere.

You know, I expect, that the reservation of books is an important activity in the Lending Library. This is simple enough where the Browne system of book-charging is used. You reserve your book by writing its identification details on one side of a printed



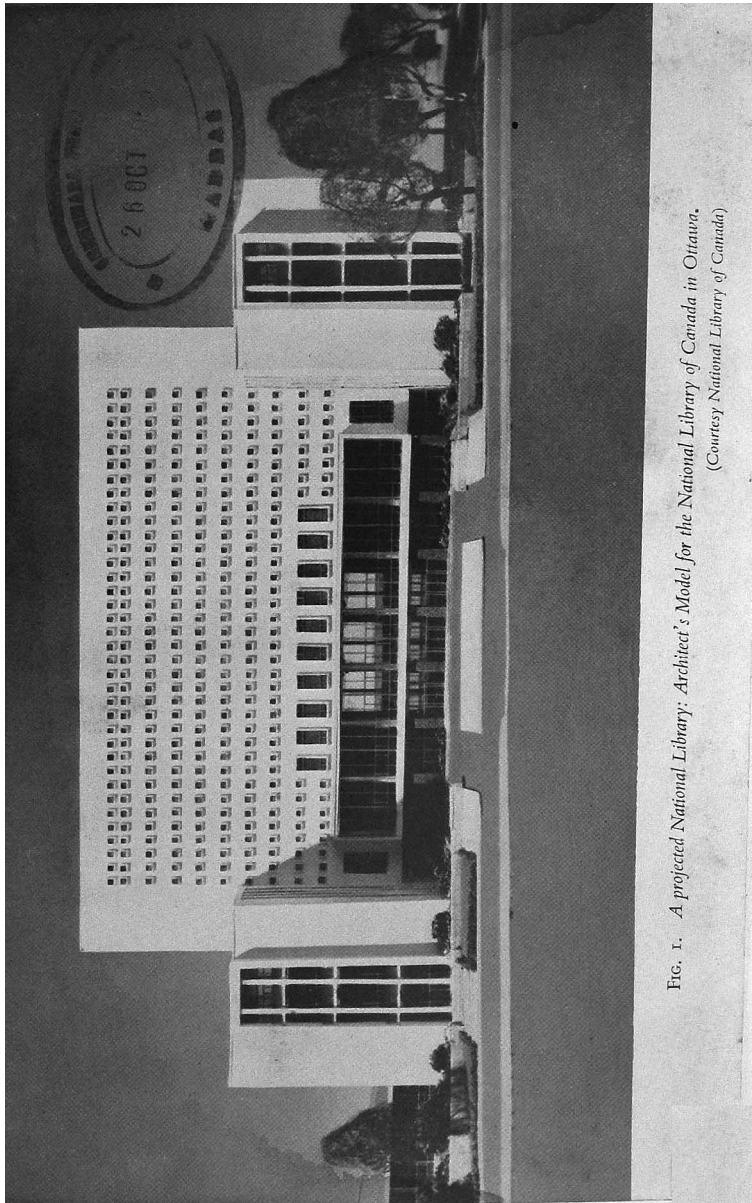


FIG. 1. A projected National Library: Architect's Model for the National Library of Canada in Ottawa.  
(Courtesy National Library of Canada)

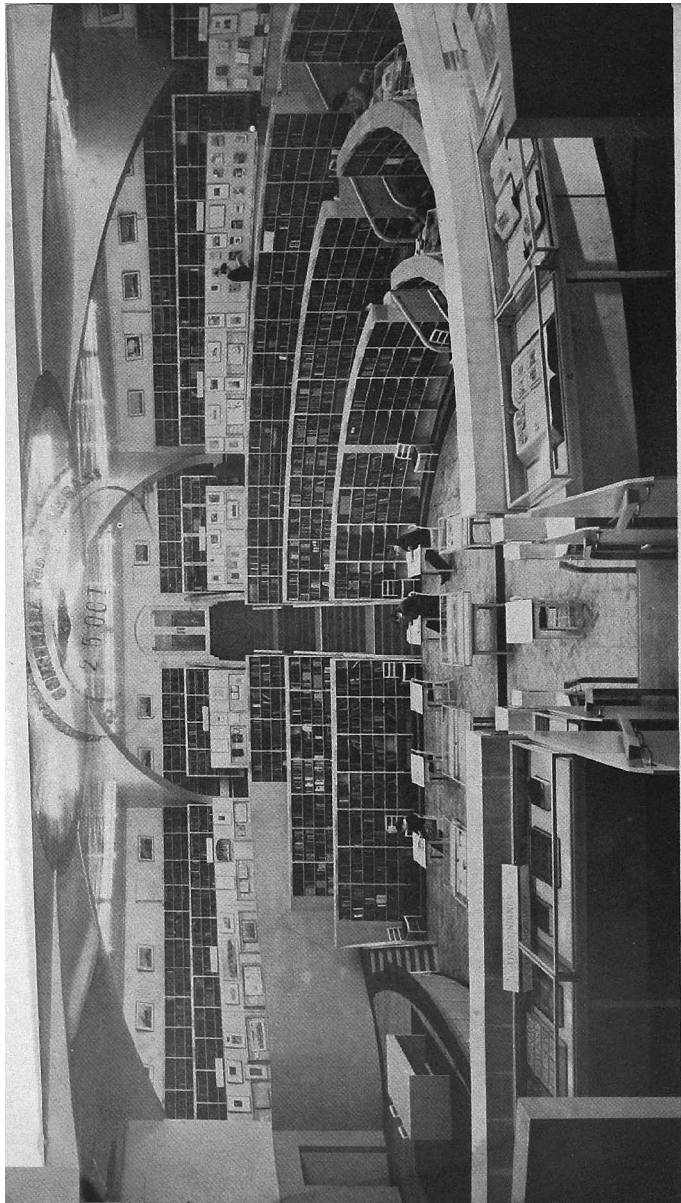


FIG. 2. A Special Department of a large city library service: the International Library, Liverpool.  
(Courtesy City Librarian, Liverpool)



FIG. 3. *The Adult Reading Room, McLaughlin Public Library, Oshawa, Ontario.*

*(Courtesy City Librarian, Oshawa)*

FIG. 4. *A Modern University Library Building: Architect's Model for the new Library of the University of Sheffield.*

*(Courtesy University Librarian, Sheffield)*

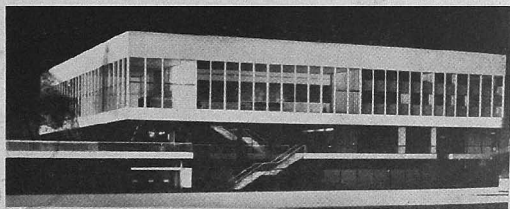




FIG. 5. *An Older Children's section of a Junior Library.*

*(Bromley Public Libraries)*

FIG. 6. *The Special Library of a large commercial organization—  
Fisons Limited of Felixstowe, Suffolk.*

*(Courtesy Messrs Fisons)*

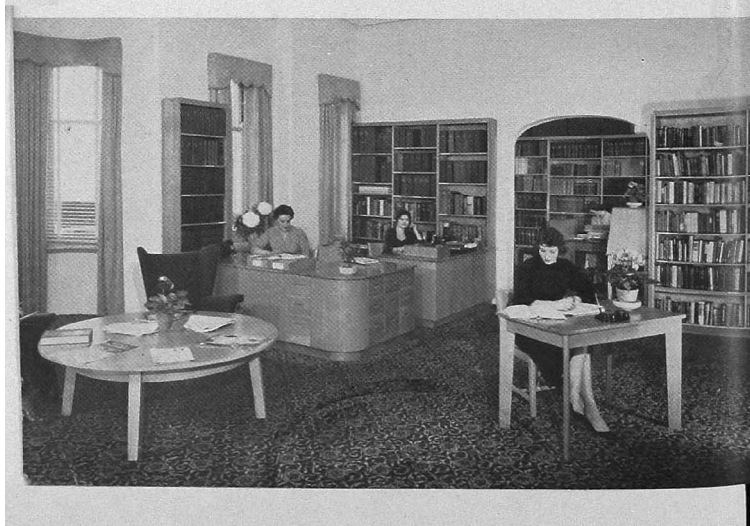




FIG. 7. *The Speke Central Library—interior.* (Courtesy City Librarian, Liverpool)

FIG. 8. *The Speke Central Library: a recent addition to the Liverpool Public Library system.*  
(Courtesy City Librarian, Liverpool)



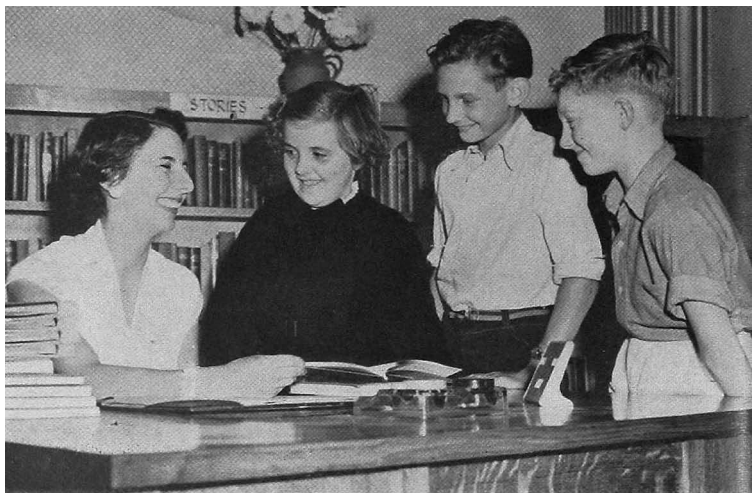


FIG. 9. *Story-hour in a Junior Library.*

(Bromley Public Libraries)

FIG. 10. *Domestic Economy: tea-time in a library Staff Room.*

(Bromley Public Libraries)



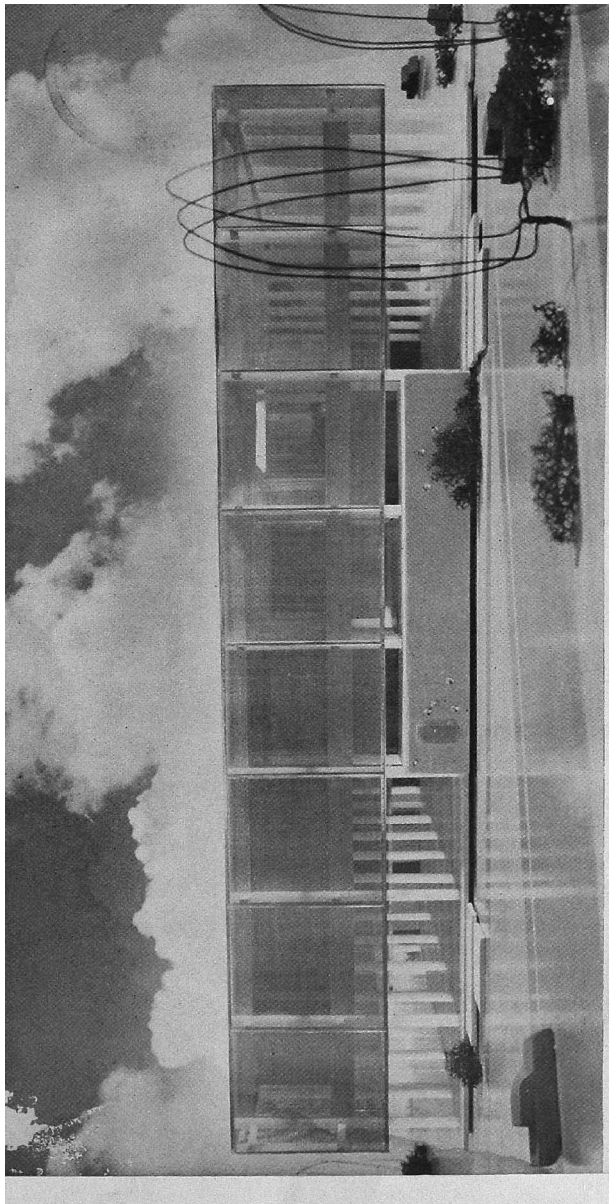


FIG. 11. *The New Public Library: an Architect's Model for the Public Library of New Orleans, Louisiana.*  
(Courtesy City Librarian, New Orleans)

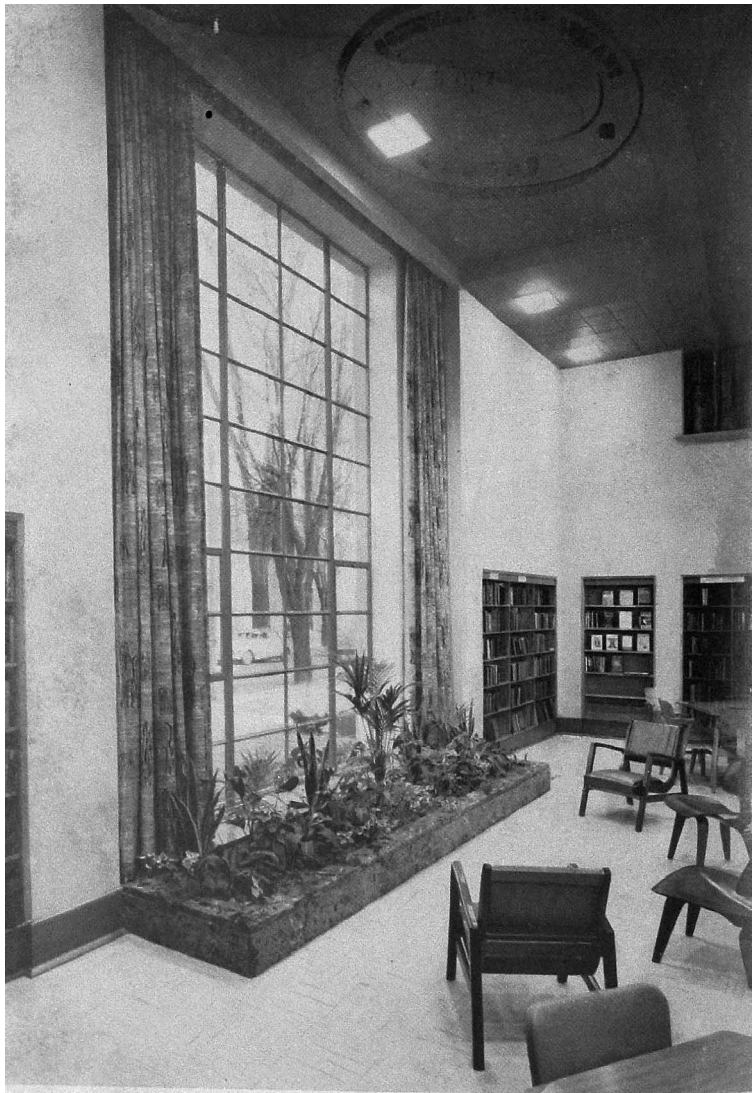


FIG. 12. *Beauty and Function: lighting and decoration at the McLaughlin Public Library.*

*(Courtesy City Librarian, Oshawa)*



postcard and your address on the other. A perforated attachment is torn off the postcard by the assistant who looks after reservations and inserted in the charge representing the loaned book which you want when it is returned (he does this by looking among the date-filed charges until he comes across the accession or other charging number which represents the book; then slipping in the thin piece of card). When your book comes back to the library it is put aside with the reservation slip inside it and the postcard announcing its availability is sent on to you. Reservation is more complex in most other systems and quite difficult where tokens are used. In the library with which I am most familiar, token-issued books much in demand have a red legal seal on their date-labels (this is removed when reservation slackens) and that makes the discharging assistant give them a careful look when they come back. Then he glances at a visible index which records all reservations in alphabetical order. A double check is provided by the alphabetical arrangement of all returned books on a trolley before they are replaced on the shelves.

I will not discuss here the catalogue and the library's classification scheme for they are dealt with in Appendix I, and I will leave you to read, in the excellent formal textbooks which I have listed elsewhere, about the routines of the Lending Department and of the Library generally.

In its special and scaled-down way, the Junior (or Children's) Library duplicates the arrangements and services of the adult Lending Library and some simple functions of the Reference Library as well. It will have some features of its own: story-hours—which I think a splendid thing if they are designed to persuade young children to read and a disaster if they are not, parent-teacher talks by the Children's Librarian, library lessons for schools. It may have a detached section, and detachment is very important, for the older boys and girls we may call young adults. And it *must* be decorated really tastefully and well. Well-blended colours and an imaginative décor are not offensive to five-year-olds; gnomes and bunny-rabbits are an abomination at fifteen.

And everybody loves a mobile unless he is six feet six and that is unlikely in the Junior Library.

A Children's Librarian has to be mentally resilient and morally tough. She (or he) must be realistic and forward-looking, infinitely sensitive to awakening interests, firm as a fortress under a blistering barrage of "Whys?". She must mind about grubby hands when it matters to mind, but she mustn't stifle imagination with soap. Once they have the taste for print, children fairly gobble books but they have to be taught, so patiently, so tactfully, that endives have their place at table as well as maple syrup. I see tireless vigilance to nurture taste as the central responsibility of the Children's Librarian; it is a frightening one, really, but good Children's Librarians are not frightened for, like nurses and shipmasters, they grow an alertness that sees through fatigue, and they know their strength. Some other safeguard has failed, not theirs, if a might-be reader is snatched by Superman.

The head of an *Adult* Circulation Department, if we may strike back to the main theme, needs just about the same qualities—all the patience, all the toughness, and the skill to take over any part in his or her ensemble without lowering the baton. We might look at this ensemble now. In most large lending libraries the librarian has a couple of lieutenants—one senior assistant for sharing the more complex routine duties and another whose job is to assist readers directly. The latter is usually called the *Readers' Adviser*. Not long ago this title made my flesh crawl. It sounded so bumptious. It raised an image of a tiresome, little, busy man with an intrusive "Can I help you?" and a public relations face. But I have lived down the prejudice now because I can think of nothing else to call him, and because never, in any library, have I yet seen him hover or intrude. He is, on the other hand, the most available member of the library staff and is usually seated at a desk marked "Enquiries" within whispering distance of the card catalogue cabinets (though in very large libraries the employment of a separate Catalogue Adviser may leave him freer in the choice of location). One of the rather dispiriting things about

lending library work is the unawareness in so many people's minds of the resources of public libraries. Even constant readers can be surprised at what is available in, or through, the library they use in a rather circumscribed way every week. They look sidelong at the bookshelves and at the outside of the catalogue, and think how nice it would be if the library had so-and-so, and look wistful and emanate little waves of want. It is in the interception of these emanations that the great skill of the Readers' Adviser lies; he develops an instinct for knowing whether people want help with the catalogue, would like to reserve a book but don't understand the machinery, or simply want to know where they may read broadly about something. And—if he takes the initiative himself—he will enter almost as an extension of the reader's thought-processes, not as a genie, not as a bobbing salesman, but as a quiet friendly fellow who just happens to be there and knows the answer. Of course, the answer may play hard to get, and for that reason the Readers' Adviser must be well equipped with bibliographical aids (that is library jargon for publishers' catalogues, cumulative book indexes, standard subject lists and so on). But not *too* well equipped; no consultant's desk should look like Sears Roebuck on press night. Again, if a reader knows very positively what he wants and knows this is not a book on the circulation shelves, then the chances are that he can be best helped in the Reference Library. The Readers' Adviser is the specialist of first instance: he finds out what the problem is; he considers the scope of the answer. If this answer will be detailed, factual and specific it ought in general to be sought from the Reference staff; if broad, discursive or introductory, or if capable of being absorbed gently at home, then it should be supplied by the Readers' Adviser himself. And the book recommended, or the book list furnished, must make sense to the reader he is trying to help. In this kind of work an assessment within seconds of a reader's capability is the ultimate and incommunicable skill.

Now Readers' Advice works two ways—*To* and *From*. No

one is as sensitive to the gaps on the library's shelves as the Readers' Adviser: his appreciation of needs is current and real, and his counsel in the selection of books is important: he is foremost among the Market Researchers on the library staff. Professor Irwin has stated the aims of book selection for general libraries as threefold—to maintain a reasonably balanced stock, to keep it fresh, vigorous and alive, and to cater for a demand which is largely unspecified and unexpressed. Where the Adviser probes lightly, notes and feeds back, your bookstock—given tolerable funds—will display balance and vigour, and excite articulate expression.

Of course, all of us who work in the Lending Library are involved in Assistance to Readers and we all share the Readers' Adviser's responsibilities. On the statistics of it, if you take up library work you are likely to begin in a public library and if that is where you make your start it is ten to one that you will make your first contact with readers in the Lending Library. The librarians a little more experienced than yourself may be pretty busy from time to time, and before long you are going to be asked something by a patron which you cannot possibly push off on to somebody else. I don't suggest that you would want to. I merely emphasize the measure of your responsibility. You may only have to say "I think, Madam, that it would be better to register before you take all those books away in your shopping basket", or "By all means, Sir, fill both your pens with the library ink", but you will have done something independent and non-mechanical and if you have done it with modesty, courtesy and confidence you will have struck a blow for public relations as well. Before long you will find yourself able to help people with the catalogue, or in the choice between a couple of books whose reputation you happen to know; it is a short step from here to the beginnings of bibliographical counsel in earnest. But look your personal Walter Mitty in the face from time to time; if you are going to be useful and happy in work with readers you have simply got to see your limitations. It takes a long time to get

the hang of Advisory technique, and no sensible patron will mind your putting the question to your senior when he is available.

In most largish libraries now the Circulation Department takes in more than a lending library for books alone. One of its principal sections—or it may be a separate dominion—is the Music and Gramophone Library (though these again may be separate one from another). It needs a librarian of its own: somebody who is temperamentally, technically and vocationally suited to the job. Once, when I was a branch librarian, I was told to build up a gramophone collection to serve the whole library system. I ought to have owned up and said that I couldn't, but I was either very proud or very nervous and I said I would try. Something came of it, I suppose, but the effort was twelve months of misery. I trail the curse of King Arthur's three servants and of Horatio Hornblower. I cannot sing. And every disc and every diapason, every record and every rhapsody, I handled as a Goth might an amphora, with rude, alien, uncertain hands, and the writ of music catalogues did not run in me. Oh, it was a dreadful year! Music and gramophone librarianship is the kind of work able people tackle because it is their personal bent and their hearts are in it. Thank goodness there are more or less enough of them, though there are still not enough with the vital secondary qualifications—a real, working knowledge of German, Italian and French, and a wholesome, active and lively sympathy for poor souls who cannot read or play a note but who want so much to learn to listen.

Nobody now thinks there is anything odd about the provision of music; it ceased to be a problem of policy fifty years ago. But the boards and committees which maintain public libraries are not always so sure of the propriety of buying and lending gramophone records. These things were done experimentally in the United States at the very beginning of this century (pianola records were loaned, too); the idea gained ground surely and quickly in the U.S.A., but progress has been a good deal slower

in the United Kingdom. There is more to this, I believe, than sluggish responses and the familiar coyness about money. The British notion of the multi-purpose authority has done a lot of harm to library development, and the law of municipal corporations has imposed a tight regiment upon what their departments may and may not do. In general, the Rule of Law says that a person, individual or corporate, may do anything which he is not expressly prohibited from doing; in general, the law of municipal corporations insists that an authority may do only what it is expressly empowered to do. British library legislation says nothing about the provision of gramophone records and so, it is held by many, they may be paid for only where purchase is sanctioned by local legislation. It is true that the Public Libraries Act of 1892 said that specimens of art and science might be bought, but does this enablement stretch to mass-produced multiplications of a specimen? The point, I think, has not yet been determined judicially and meanwhile it may be sound practice to treat the "Specimens" clause with caution and respect. The absence of explicit authority, and no doubt of funds, restrains nine-tenths of all the British library systems from adventures in phonography—though there is a surprising amount of purely conscientious dissent: quite a lot of library committees and some librarians sincerely believe that discs lie outside the scope of libraries; many others think it would be wrong to spend on records funds which will hardly stretch to buy enough books.

I give you this as opinion, not doctrine. Compromise is in the air, and it may be that records will be insinuated into dissenting libraries rather as an indispensable complement to the grammars of modern languages than as instruments of tuneful gladness. Affection for the hair shirt is a national characteristic, and the British librarian learns to exploit it with sly cunning and a saintly face.

Because of its late entry, the gramophone record library often has to be grafted on to the existing music department. This is a

pity, for experience has shown it to be very much easier to administer these sections if readers have direct (or open) access to the shelves where the books and scores are arranged and indirect (or closed) access to the record store. And a mixture of arrangements is always a little difficult to understand. With sensible layout and intelligent guiding the combination is nevertheless manageable and can even include the poetry and drama sections, so that all the arts of sound are brought together and the cultural perspectives of the junior staff are preserved.

The cataloguing and classification of music present some technical complexities which go beyond the scope of the Appendix, but the shelving of scores is simple enough provided you calculate average height on the mode and not the mean, use thin, strong, bulkless steel or hardboard uprights every few inches instead of shine- and dent-provoking metal rods, and case your unbound sheets in strong manilla folders.

Record storage needs a little more thought. In the United Kingdom the arrangement is usually vertical, four to five discs in their envelopes taking up about as much lateral shelf-space as a book, and shelving is generally manufactured accordingly; though North American libraries favour a horizontal arrangement: they consider that any increase in handling difficulties is more than offset by the preservative effect of flat storage.

Closed access in the record library is not simply a facet of official beastliness to patrons; discs do not lend themselves to browsing, and the use of an indicator which shows whether records are in or out makes things easier for everybody. Various proprietary kinds are marketed and most turn on the visible index principle. A typical indicator consists of a series of holders, arranged vertically, in which each holder contains a manilla pocket which covers all but a narrow strip of the holder below it. This narrow strip shows full charging details of the record denoted by the pocket and has a tiny window let into one side. Through this you can see the contrasting colour of a card which represents the same record. If you want to borrow the disc you

take out the card and hand it in, signed, in exchange for the record it represents. The absence of the coloured card as seen through the little window of the pocket means that the record is out.

The Lending Library has this in common with the iceberg: an enormous part of its mass cannot be seen. A lot of thought has been given by wise librarians to problems of stocktaking based upon a periodic call-in of all books; in twenty years of library work I have never encountered this horror and I think you are likely to be spared it, though you may be invited to acquaint yourself with it theoretically. The active stock of a circulation department may reasonably exceed its shelf room by a third, so that you can see that a constant or rising issue is as necessary for living-space as it is to the sales graph. Call the books in and all is lost; a habit is broken, the cycle resumes sluggishly. And all that has happened is that you know you have what you thought you had, and life is still measured in threescore years and ten. Of course, quite a large part of the circulation books not on the public shelves will be on call from the reserve stockrooms, and a fairish proportion may be away at the binders' or on inter-library loan. The Lending Library cannot at one time display all that it has or it would not be a Lending Library. That is why you, as a member of the staff, will be so important, for you will be the link between the public and all the books which the public cannot see.

I am going on, in the next chapter, to talk about Reference Services, but we ought to notice here a tendency in some of the larger libraries to amalgamate their Reference and Circulation departments. This arrangement usually involves a grouping of subjects—an extension, to many other categories, of the "arts of sound" combination we noticed above—in departments administered by specialists who control both lending and reference stock. Some large libraries, in addition to general circulation and reference departments, have attempted limited subject departmentalization, thus in the American Memorial Library in West



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Berlin there are separate collections, including reference works to be consulted only in the Reading Room, for the humanities, for pure, applied and social sciences, for the arts and for music. In the Ingersoll Memorial Library in Brooklyn, N.Y., where the principle is carried a little further, there are combined reference and lending departments for children and for young adults, then subject departments (again combined) for art and music, for language and literature, for science and industry, for philosophy and social science, for religion, geography and travel, history and biography, and finally for fiction in English. Under the new organization of the State Library of Western Australia at Perth, W.A., every department, as Mr F. A. Sharr, the State Librarian, informs us "is conceived as a separate operational unit and each subject librarian is responsible for all aspects of the service within his subject field". Each subject library has a lending and a reference function, though the former is strengthened and the strain on the latter to some extent relieved by extensive use of a photocopying service for which no charge is made.

This Subject Department system clearly has great merits. Thus the divisional heads must get to know their stock and their clientele extremely well, though their specialist knowledge will be modified with the enlargement of the group. Again, most books on the same subject are brought together, and people exclusively interested in particular topics really feel that an effort is being made on their behalf and become keener library supporters. What is more, if one two can live more cheaply than two ones, there ought in such a system to be an economic marriage between readers' advisory and reference methods. Much technical argument has been built up against this—over-specialization, unadaptability of many library staff to reference work, inevitable duplication of stock and so on. I think that, in principle, it is a good idea, but many good ideas fail for want of consent and I stick to the separation of the reference and lending libraries. I consider that two training disciplines are involved, two sets of approaches, two sorts of atmosphere, and patrons with at

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least two kinds of wants. I believe that these requirements are best met by a service in which there is close liaison but separation in location and immediate responsibility. I am certain you will be a better librarian for an untelescoped apprenticeship.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Departments and Methods*

#### MAINLY REFERENCE

DR Herbert Goldhor and Dr Harold Lancour of the University of Illinois have jointly given prominence to the view that librarianship, both as an applied science and as a philosophy, develops in three stages. These may be chronological and super-secessive or two, or all three, of them may exist at the same time. Stage one is called the *Storehouse* period or phase, stage two the *Service* phase and the third stage the *Educational Function* phase. This classification, in its progressive as well as its concurrent significance, applies with peculiar appropriateness to all those forms of library activity which are grouped notionally as Reference Work.

The foregoing calls, I think, for a word of explanation. In the Illinois classification, if I may so call it, the Storehouse phase concerns itself with the sciences of book acquisition and preservation. The Service phase has to do with the use made of library materials themselves and with the perfecting of the means, such as the catalogue, of their exploitation. Its results are measured quantitatively and (to quote Dr Lancour in a paper presented in the United Kingdom some years ago) it seeks to supply "the best books for the most people at the least cost". For a theory apparently founded on Bentham and Bumble it has had, I suggest, some brilliant practical results, for out of it have emerged all the business-system devices which have reconciled a dubious society to the extravagant concept of universal book provision. Even so, it is giving place to a third, or Educational Function, phase, in which the librarian looks beyond the stored material and the means of its exploitation to the creation (I quote Dr Lancour

again) of "a broad and positive form of education, designed for the recognized potential users of the library and which makes use of the materials and services peculiar to the library". This new concept calls, Dr Lancour goes on to say, "for a personnel who understand the motivation behind the seeking for knowledge or information, who are familiar with the learning process and who understand the uses of library materials in that process". It is, to my mind, co-existence of these three phases in reference work (the first has submerged in the circulation field and the third has emerged only in the largest lending libraries) which make it the laboratory, the alpha-structure, of all library science of adult application. Consider the facts. The central and abiding function of this department is, within the limits it sets itself, the conservation of recorded material, whether for a finite time or for always, whether for research or for the rapid determination of isolated facts. However narrow its terms of reference and however small the library, *storage* stands right in the middle of the picture. Storage means limited public access and, with books and pamphlets and periodicals and microfilm and cuttings all stockaded away in vaults and stackrooms, *service*, in its most elementary form, has to be introduced before the collected material is known and available to the potential user. But this is portorage and page service, and the dumb-waiter duty of the catalogue. As the needs, in terms of material, of its clientele become more clearly defined, so does the character of the more advanced service the reference library ought to offer. This is where subject and staff specialization come in and where, in the achievement of the *educational function*, we separately group the materials of separate disciplines and exploit them through "personnel who understand" from their own familiarity "with the learning process and ... the uses of library materials in that process". Thus, out of the general reference collections of the large cities, have emerged a variety of special reference libraries. I should like to say something about reference services in general and then to discuss the functions of some of these special agencies.

The most important thing about any reference library, after wisdom in definition and selection of material, is the man or woman who works there. There are a good many library jobs, even at a professional level, where mechanical competence will get you through. You will not have given very much of yourself in their performance but your patrons will be quite happy and your conscience as clear as a bell. Reference work is another story. As soon as you are in it you become the personal consultant, the trusted guide and counsellor, of your enquirer. If you really *belong* in the reference library you will quickly develop two complementary virtues—humility and confidence. You will restrain your itching finger from the pursuit of the slick, flipped fact until you have heard the whole of your enquirer's story—until you know exactly what he wants—and then, strong in the techniques of your training, you will track down and bring home the answer. It is in this tracking down of facts that a third factor, and one slower of emergence, comes in. I mean judgment. How far does your enquirer need to go? Is the simple, first, quantitative answer—the statistical shred from *Whitaker* or the *Canada Year Book* or the *Information Please Almanac*—enough? Or does it need qualification or expansion from some other source? In its context, and without qualification, will the answer be misleading or will it even be a lie? Even in the simplest information work you have constantly, if subconsciously, to weigh these points, and the ethical burden of more complex reference work, in which your presentation of material is such that it may really constitute *advice* to the enquirer, can be heavy.

Very well then. Let us take it that you are the right sort of person for reference work. What will be the milieu of your job? In a medium-sized library, say a reference department serving a population of 50,000 to 150,000, where it is unlikely that there will be any excess of departmentalization, arrangements will probably be something like this. There will be a general Reference Librarian with somewhere between one or two and eight to ten assistants. Save that he must have the trick of throwing

himself into an investigation of any kind and quality, with a will and on the instant, and then pulling himself out again without a moment's space for decompression (as it were) before the next, and that he must have a delicate nose for the relevant and the red herring, I cannot suggest any absolute qualification for a reference librarian, either in a medium-sized library or in a larger. I do think he ought to be a respectable linguist and that he should know at least as much of the natural sciences and their key-words as any other educated layman. I think it would be a pity if he had no idea of the history of art or of the common law. It would be sad if he could not find his way about a statute or make sense of a charter. But in practice I believe it likely that he will have some capacity in all these things, and it is increasingly likely that he will have a sound academic training in something—in what it hardly matters, though it does seem to me of importance that his assistants, as far as possible, should be trained in something else. And this is where you come in.

Reference library work may be divided, like Gaul, into three parts. We can call them Information, Research and Record. We shall find them a little furry at the edges; it will not always be clear where one ends and the other begins. You can take a direct part, and from your first day in the department, in the work of supplying information. The facts you deal in to begin with will not set the world on fire. You can expect from them the same dramatic force as from the familiar news concerning Queen Anne. But that is not the point; the answers are important to the enquirer and a lot may hang on the accuracy of your rapid jotting from *Bradshaw*, *The Stock Exchange Year Book* or *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*. These peckings and rootings will be a large part of your job and its staple will be found in familiar encyclopaedias, in obscurer annuals and amid the fascinating fatuities of books of quotations. You will have to learn to use these materials very quickly and to deny your briskness with a smile—half of it for the next enquirer. Then one day you will get a break. Somebody will want to know something about a subject upon which

you have special knowledge and in which your research technique has been formally developed. It will involve searching, listing, piecing and the compiling, perhaps, of a bibliography, your first real effort in research librarianship and your first evidence of what you can do—typed and concise and authoritative and with your initials and sent out under the seal of the library. Your work here can demonstrate your fitness to sit in judgment on the library's permanent stock of recorded material. When you have shown, in your own field, that you have a dependable instinct for the *kind* of record which will earn its keep in storage, you will find that the Reference Librarian will seek your advice on what to discard and what to retain within that field and, before long, beyond it. Any general reference library has two preponderant duties as to records—the selective retention of universal and local material. The second category causes no special worry; however wide the definition of local material in a particular place its intake is a relative trickle and storage, cataloguing and arrangement as to access will have been worked out over years. But selective retention of records at large can be a tremendous headache. All sorts of co-operative schemes, whereby the burden of periodical storage (for example) can be shared, have been worked out for metropolitan and suburban libraries but the great, isolated, provincial libraries, the B.M. or N.Y.P.L. writ small, have to stand squarely on their own feet. And general periodical records are not the whole of the story so far as they are concerned for they owe their location to industry and commerce and in the necessary completeness of their technological and business files they have a heavy peppercorn to pay. Microfilms are helping and microcards will help more, but there will always be irreducibles, and the record storage of a large provincial library, probably with National Archives Repository and Patents responsibilities as well, is in its nature a continuing sorrow.

So far, we have talked about the Reference Library as though it were a single unit. In most cases, reference service is centred

upon one department, but in many large systems it is administered by a number of separate libraries. We might discuss them briefly now, remembering that most of their functions, perhaps shrunk a little and simplified, are still the responsibility of small general libraries anywhere and are not abated at all because such libraries are small and general.

The movement towards special reference departments to satisfy special community needs began at about the same time in North America and in Great Britain. Before the end of the first decade of this century, it was shown by an enquiry conducted by the Public Library of Newark, N.J., at least thirty-five special commercial libraries, without state or city assistance, were in being in the United States. The number at that time in the United Kingdom is uncertain but a few of some importance existed, each reasonably wide in scope but none available to the general commercial public. Some unease grew, in big cities on both sides of the Atlantic, at the poverty of the community's provision of information and literature for one of its most important sections. Perhaps, indeed, *two* of its most important sections, for within a few years the first World War, and the enormous output of applied scientific information which it stimulated, had shown very forcibly the need for public reference libraries for technologists as well. The immediate outcome of these influences in Britain was the formation in 1916 of the Technical and Commercial Libraries Special Committee of the Library Association and the independent establishment, in Glasgow (1916) and Liverpool (1917) of Commercial Reference Libraries, and of a Commercial and Technical Library at Leeds in 1918. Similar services began in the other great library systems in the next few years and received spectacular enlargement and stimulus in the large-scale rebuilding of central libraries which took place in the middle years of the nineteen-thirties.

It has followed that in the large library services there are many examples of reference departmentalization: Commerce, Industry, Technology and now many others such as Business Information,



Fine Art, Archives and Law. A special librarian (so the classic definition holds) is one with a special knowledge of the literature of his subject and of the way to organize it for use, and not necessarily one with a special knowledge of the subject itself. Nevertheless, if your academic training has happened to be in, or has included, economics or statistics, you are likelier to be useful from the outset, and to feel at home in, a commercial library. And so with the other specialized departments. As you would expect, however, people using them often have a much clearer idea of what they want, and where to find it, than users of the general reference library, and the emphasis tends to be on stock and on visual aids to it rather than on personal service. Thus in the Commercial Library the dominant requirements of readers are *complete* coverage within their fields of interest and a complementary up-to-dateness which must not be less than ruthless. If yesterday's quotations haven't turned up, your theoretical knowledge of Stock Exchange procedure will be about as handy as a rain-table in the Gobi. Users have got to have faith in the stock, or the justification of the service collapses. So even the mint-looking items in the national collection of directories and the international collection of telephone directories must give place to the new volume when it appears. One series back of the Colonial Office Reports may provide fun for months to an economic historian but it will not disclose the immediate prospects of selling typewriters in Brunei. A trade-fair ambassador to Hanover or Lyons might as well be given a 1910 *Baedeker* as last year's *Amtliches Kursbuch* or *Indicateur Chaix*. The most jealous watch on publication lists and on suppliers is necessary in almost all branches of commercial and industrial library work; if users do not believe that the information available is absolutely current they simply will not come. This is illustrated by the experience of some of the nineteen British provincial libraries which act as depositories for patent specifications. A marked decline in searching has been noted since, in recent years, the Patent Office has been unable to keep quite up to date with publication.

Save that it usually contains most of the system's intake of trade and business periodicals, it is difficult to state the scope of the commercial library, for local conditions are as various as industry itself; but you can reasonably expect to find in it the most complete departmental collection of books (histories excepted) on the theory, practice and law of trade and commerce, accountancy, income tax, organization and methods, labour relations, management, advertising, insurance and communications. Telegraphic codes, trade catalogues and shipping and business annuals will be there, so will commercial directories, but holdings of other directories and of rail and airline timetables will have to be worked out co-operatively with the general reference library. When definition and a sound working stock have been achieved there should be an approach, restrained but confident, to publicity. Sheffield, notably, has had good results in this field, but I think no commercial library in Great Britain has gone quite as far as Detroit, Michigan, with its ambitious and successful "Investment Round-Table" programme.

Division of responsibility raises many problems where there is extensive departmentalization. Are Patents the beginning of Commerce or the end of Technology? Most libraries think they belong in the latter. And trade catalogues? Generally, these go into the commercial library, but catalogues of plant, machine tools and industrial equipment are often thought of as technical material. Where a separate Technical Library is maintained, however, you can usually state its sphere of interest a little more confidently than that of the commerce section. Your periodical coverage will be determined more or less directly by local needs but you will have to know where articles outside your defined scope may be found. The Library Association's annual *Subject Index to Periodicals* will offer valuable but highly retrospective help, while the monthly *Index of Technical Articles* (begun in January 1957) will render author and title data on contributions in upwards of five hundred British technical periodicals. The American cumulations *Engineering Index* and *Industrial Arts Index*

are available in the United Kingdom (as is the American Chemical Society's periodical summary, *Chemical Abstracts*) but the invaluable General Motors house publication, *Current Engineering Literature*, is not. Many other sectional abstract-series and bibliographies are current or under revision but every technical librarian relies to some extent, for location details as for occasional loans, on the goodwill of specialist firms and institutions and their information and library staffs. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is always willing to help and its *List of Holdings of Scientific and Technical Periodicals* is a necessity. And the *World List of Scientific Periodicals* will be a cornerstone of the technical library, while "Selections from the Recent Literature", in *ASLIB Proceedings*, lists the Association's poly-lingual acquisitions and will suggest many of your own. *ASLIB Booklist*, of course, is indispensable.

It is because technical librarianship turns so much upon fugitive articles that I have discussed bibliographies at some length. But another vital part of the service is linguistic; you must be able to tell enquirers where translations may be obtained, and you must be able to provide translators with good and up-to-date technical dictionaries and with general dictionaries for the languages not yet thought of as "scientific". For your general acquisitions of foreign language texts you will probably rely on recommendation tempered by judgment and (as for works in English) upon the reviews in *Nature*, *Discovery*, *The New Scientist* and the *Scientific American*, and it is in general book selection that your problem in definition will be found most vexing. How far does pure science come in? Where, if at all, does it part company with technology? The answers, I think, lie in the subjective conditions of your own library. Standards, government publications and atomic energy reports just come in the mail; general selection of technical literature is an exercise too slippery for any formula. But a hint of a pattern is never to be despised, and Liverpool's monthly *Documents Bulletin* gives evidence of a careful and logical acquisitions plan.

Perhaps the one special department common to all public libraries of reasonable size, and to some academic libraries as well, is the Local Collection. In the older and larger centres this department is sometimes linked with an Archives Library or City Record Office. In some it has a frail, hungry dignity, the care and loving-kindness of its curators of long ago all lavished and all spent. In others there linger but dust and the death-wish. In some there has been too much decay for reclamation and a fresh start; others have maintained the joy and vigour of their nineteenth-century beginnings; others have found a rallying-point in some local notability as Scarborough has in the Sitwells, Bromley in the Pitts, H. G. Wells and Harold Macmillan, and St Marylebone (among many others of no less distinction) in the late Sherlock Holmes. Some ancient towns, Lincoln, Norwich, Shrewsbury and Colchester among them, have preserved in splendour the books and broadsides, the parchments and pictures and playbills, that tell their civic story, others have now heeded their example and are doing what they can to expunge their own shame. These old assemblies of local material are taking new life all over Britain; libraries and archive repositories have on the whole done well in recent years and—in sharp contrast with local museums—local collections of record have shared their prosperity. Some joint collections, of course, have flourished for years. Those long established at Sheffield and Plymouth are particularly worth visiting. The former is a distinguished collection of about 80,000 manuscripts and other material, with papers on deposit relating to Strafford, Burke and Rockingham; in the latter, brilliant use has been made of the opportunity afforded by rebuilding: the Local History and Archives department at Plymouth is a model laboratory of historical investigation. Libraries such as these provide homes for the deeds and muniments, the court rolls, church registers and rate books for scores of parishes and manors. They have the dignity of National Repositories. They are centres of permanent sanctuary from mouldering cellar, mildewed attic and the brittle heat of the sexton's stoke-

hole. And they are scrupulous in their gathering-in of everything printed or published (allowing a dispensation to Oxford and Cambridge) or photographed or sound-recorded within their area of interest, and everything affecting it which comes from without. Their presence is felt in the land, and it is to their influence as much as to an awakened public sense of the value and frailty of records that the new interest in local material is owed. If you have an inclination towards law or history or Latin you can be happy, and constantly diverted, in local collection work, but archives training proper is essential to usefulness in an Archives Department.

Reference work ranges so widely that one could go on and on. I have dealt principally with traditional methods in its generally accepted fields. But the fields—as we saw in Chapter Six—are sometimes raggedly defined as between circulation and reference, and Reference and Circulation departments, under the subject-principle influence of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Brooklyn Public Library and others, are moving closer together. Many of the special reference libraries we have discussed *lend* books as well. And the traditional methods are being supplemented, even supplanted, by the techniques of science and industry: “sampling” in business archives, photo-reproduction (with a weather eye on the Copyright Act of 1956), micro-storage of records, mechanized bibliographical aids and punched card systems. ASLIB is undertaking a two-year research programme, at a cost of £10,000, in information retrieval methods. The old order is changing everywhere but the old qualities are still the ones that count wherever information is traded against enquiry: a clear head, a tidy mind, patience, judgment and an irrepressible desire to help.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Library Co-operation*

WHEN Mr R. F. Vollans considered the machinery of library co-operation in Great Britain he found some of it, as his *Report* suggests in language more parliamentary than Cromwell's, a tortuous and ungodly jumble. Since 1952, indeed (and it was in that year that Mr Vollans's survey, for the Joint Working Party of the Executive Committee of the National Central Library and the National Committee on Regional Library Co-operation, was published) the machinery has hardly been changed at all.

It is of course remarkable that there should ever have been any library co-operation, anywhere. Old enemies, in the mellow decades after conflict, exchange drums and standards. Even old allies are touched by the courtesies: Russia once sent back a British battleship. And upon the return of the lawnmower rests the suburban social ethic. But he is rash who lends a book outside his parish and the clerks who chained their Bibles knew a lot about the practical manifestations of sin. You have to keep idealism in its place.

Most peaceful co-operation is visionary and has to be restated for the gross world and, in particular, early American argument for inter-library loans was based as much upon spreading the financial load as upon the propagation of learning. On both sides of the Atlantic, very gradually, parochialism in the loan of books has broken down and, if all is not neat and foolproof in the controlling agencies, there is some system and much goodwill.

A little selective history may help to explain the pattern of library co-operation as it exists at the time of writing. Libraries cannot work together with any success if they have no clear idea of the books held by one another. They get over this either by

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notifying a limited number of co-operating libraries of their holdings, with subsequent additions and withdrawals, and by getting the same sort of information back from their correspondents, or by notifying some central agency where a *Union Catalogue* of the holdings of all member libraries is maintained. Out of the former method grew the National Union Catalog, in Washington, D.C., of the United States, a vast register which began when, in 1900, printed cards of the Library of Congress were first exchanged with those of other great libraries, whose number grew as time went on. Out of the latter, and beginning in 1930, emerged the London Union Catalogue, to which entries for the accessions of the twenty-nine metropolitan library systems are notified. These are diverse but important examples of principles of compilation which are commonly used together. Thus the National Central Library in London, reconstituted in 1930 from the Central Library for Students—a foundation for adult education—maintains its own catalogue, a union catalogue of the specialized “Outlier Libraries” upon which it draws, and a National Union Catalogue of entries copied in turn from the union catalogues of all the local co-operating agencies (called Regional Library Systems) save the two which cover Wales, and from those for the London boroughs and South-East England, the two last being housed in the N.C.L.’s own building. The other Regional Systems cover the South-West, the North (except Yorkshire), the East Midlands, the West Midlands and the North-West. Their headquarters are usually in a large city library, where the regional union catalogue is kept up to date by accession and withdrawal notifications by the member libraries. Yorkshire, a separate region, maintains no union catalogue but deals with loan requests through a series of what are called zonal and sub-zonal centres. Of course, the notification of books and the unrestricted loan of books are not quite the same thing, but libraries and regions in practice co-operate sensibly and pique and disappointment rarely occur. When a region cannot supply a book, it sends the requisition on to the National Central Library,

which may supply it from its own stock (though Mr Vollans would like the purchase of new books by the N.C.L. to be discontinued) or from those of its Outliers—government, research, technical and other specialist libraries or even, since it is the clearing-house for international loans, from libraries overseas.

The legal disability of Scottish burghs to participate in inter-lending made Scotland a slow starter in the field of library co-operation. But a beginning was made even before the disability was removed in 1955. Ten years earlier a Regional Library Bureau of Scotland was formed and it is now administered by the Scottish Central Library in Edinburgh. In Ireland, though there is no formal regional co-operation, Belfast Public Library acts upon a modest payment per book as central library for the Six Counties, and in Eire the Irish Central Library, administered by a statutory Council, carries on central and liaison functions.

The United States has some very large regional catalogues but it would not be realistic to expect a wide federation to be divided as neatly into bibliographical regions as is Great Britain. The development of the National Union Catalog, the general availability, in book form, of the Library of Congress Catalog and tightness of money for local bibliographical purposes, have all worked towards the dissolution of many of the regional catalogues begun as social projects a quarter of a century ago. Prominent among those which now function are the Pacific Northwest Bibliographical Center at Seattle, Washington, to which the Carnegie Corporation contributes and which acts as a central loan agency for upwards of 160 libraries, and the Rocky Mountain Bibliographical Center for Research at Denver, Colorado. The latter also enjoys Carnegie Corporation support, holds (like the Pacific Northwest catalogue) about four million cards and is a loan agency for its member libraries. Other important regional catalogues—though they do not act as centres for inter-lending—are the Union Library Catalog of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area, which provides bibliographical information to subscribers, and the Cleveland (Ohio) Regional



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Union Catalog which is located at, and supported by, the Western Reserve University. Midway between the purely bibliographical centre and the loan agency is the idea represented by the Midwest Inter-Library Center at Chicago, which seeks to obtain and store single-copy material from, or from elsewhere on behalf of, sixteen member universities. Its Director, Dr Ralph Esterquest, has declared: "We plan that the book collection in MILC shall always be conspicuously useless by itself; it is intended as a service adjunct to the basic research collections which always will be located at the member institutions". The depositing universities own corporately the stock of the Center, and may exercise such attractive proprietary rights as unrestricted loan and unlimited teleprinter extracts. An extended generalization of this kind of service is seen in the "Farmington Plan", a scheme by which the research libraries of the Union, through a defined specialization agreement, try to see that a single copy of each work of importance in a given field is secured by one or other of them.

In some measure due, perhaps, to the copyright deposit entitlement of the older universities, academic library co-operation has developed less rapidly in Great Britain than in the United States, though the provincial university libraries are staunch pillars of the regional inter-lending schemes. Copyright deposit implies not only the obligation to keep the book jealously in the place where it is lawfully received; it means also that the book—if published in the United Kingdom—will be in at least two university libraries and can no doubt be seen there. Thus the "Midwest" and "Farmington Plan" incentives are slighter. Nevertheless, co-ordination between groups of specialist libraries is developing. An example is seen in the defined subject fields and information (and even material) exchanges of the institutional medical libraries in London, while a system of co-operative book purchase, based on a preliminary survey by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, is being followed by the law libraries of London University.

A cardinal notion behind the Midwest scheme is the preservation of material which may not seem very important now but which may be enormously valuable to future sociologists, philologists and historians. In their Metropolitan Joint Fiction Reserve the London boroughs likewise preserve (and loan through the regional systems) not only a great deal of this kind of material but much distinguished literature as well. These boroughs go farther: through a Metropolitan Special Collections plan they have provided for the co-operative purchase of the whole range, subject to a few sensible reservations, of the non-fiction output of United Kingdom publishers. The member libraries also acquire periodicals and maintain reserve stocks in their defined fields. A Union List of periodical holdings for Greater London was published by the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association in 1951.

Full subject specialization is attempted even outside London, for example, in the South-East Region. But co-operation means offering what is within your means and the smaller regions have wisely decided upon limited specialization rather than upon no shared subject representation at all. A new furrow has been ploughed by the East Midland Regional Library System. Its member institutions, or the larger and richer of them, have each since 1948 developed vernacular collections of foreign literary works, always on the basis of some existing local strength, or use, or affinity. Where the output in a language is large and a high proportion of that output must be bought, the burden has been shared; thus Derbyshire County Library buys German poetry exhaustively, Leicester buys German drama, and Nottingham purchases German literature in its other forms.

Joint stock-building in foreign literature is absorbingly interesting to the selector but it involves an agonizing reconciliation of conscience with economics and—after the books on the first select lists have been got together—real problems in sources and assessments, especially with contemporary literature. The weekly fascicules of the *British National Bibliography* make their duty

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plan to co-operators in the London Union Catalogue and South-East regions. The classification of each new book, therein listed as having been accessioned in the library of the British Museum, declares the obligatory purchaser as unmistakably as if it were shouting his name. This does not make for cheapness or for back-sliding, either, but it cushions the pampered selector from the pains of subtler schemes.

A location list does not quite ensure the permanent availability of material in the notifying library, but it will cause the librarian to think pretty powerfully before he discards or ceases to accumulate it. A monumental national list, three out of an ultimate four volumes of which were published between 1955 and 1957 under the principal editorship of James Stewart, is the *British Union-Catalogue of Periodicals: a record of the periodicals of the world, from the seventeenth century to the present day, in British libraries*. BUCOP, if I may use the tabloid slander that currently miscalls a distinguished work, is twice a monument. It commemorates a tremendous co-operative effort and it has made palpable the vision of Theodore Besterman, who put the case for it in the blackest days of the War. More than 140,000 titles are listed in it, and they are dispersed in over 440 libraries. Another great finding-list, now in its third edition of 1952, is the *World List of Scientific Periodicals*, published in the years 1900-1950 and drawing some of its inspiration and much of its material from the late *Union List of Serials in Libraries of the United States and Canada*. This kind of work progresses on many narrower fronts; an example is *A Survey of Legal Periodicals held in British Libraries*, conducted and published by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in the University of London.

Stable location and co-operative provision or loan agreements are a long step one from another but some useful edging together has been done at a local level in Great Britain as elsewhere. Thus, in Hull, a scheme for the Inter-loan of Technical Publications, centred upon a union catalogue in the city's Commercial and Technical Library, has joined the lending resources in

science and\* technology of the main industrial and institutional libraries. The Science and Commerce Library at Sheffield has for years administered a co-operative scheme for the interchange of publications between a large number of industrial and research libraries. Full subject specialization in the North-West region was anticipated in 1952 by two separate groups of medium-sized public libraries, and three great city libraries in the North and North-West, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, co-ordinate technical information and library services for wide areas about them. In West London CICRIS, a commercial and technical library service based upon Acton Central Library, opens out the resources of ten public libraries and those of eight technical colleges and upwards of fifty commercial or industrial firms; outside its prescriptions as to specialized purchase the peculiar genius of the scheme is that each public library in membership undertakes to maintain contact with all other available sources of information in its specialized field. It may soon be through this kind of work that teletype communication, already indispensable to Midwest, Milwaukee and Manchester, will allow library techniques to realize themselves fully in the service of commerce and industry. Its perspectives are boundless. A couple of years ago, and just for the fun of it, I sent a Telex enquiry "What is the close season for combs in Manchester?" I got the reply within ten minutes, neat and fresh and unhurried over the ticker. "No close season for anything in Manchester" it said. Free trade, protection for textiles, prompt delivery, and the customer is always right. Four traditions in one line. Not bad at all.

Co-operation in a particular subject sometimes centres, when generosity is the handmaiden of logic, in a library specially strong in that subject. So, at the Buckingham Palace Road Branch Library you find both the large Westminster collection of music and the Central Music Library, incorporated in 1946 upon a bequest from Mrs W. Christie-Moor. These circulation collections are shelved and managed as a unit and practically the whole stock, which is growing rapidly through purchase, gift and

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Metropolitan Special Collections accessions, is available to library users, wherever registered. In the same spirit, the Midwest Inter-Library Center in Chicago, strong in journalistic ephemera, files one hundred microfilm runs of foreign newspapers for co-operative access under a scheme developed by the Association of Research Libraries.

Some fields of interest, however, cover whole academic disciplines and have too diffuse a literature for a central depository or bibliographic agency. In a few such cases libraries strong in these tenuously but unmistakably related subjects have established contact at conference level. An interesting example is the Standing Conference of Theological and Philosophical Libraries in London, through which is maintained, for purposes of establishing co-operation in particular matters, a working-party relationship between five public libraries and upwards of forty special libraries with interests in some aspects of theology and philosophy.

The Standing Conference atmosphere is ideal for dispelling the coercive notion which some libraries fear from more formal relationships. It could do so much, not only to instil confidence, but to discover both needs and the material which exists to satisfy them. It was after instancing the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries that Mr F. C. Francis of the British Museum said, some years ago. "The rationalization of our library services will have to be based on an accurate assessment of our existing library resources". In a more formal climate, such a rationalization is already proceeding by degrees in North America. The first move in a two-year project, under a \$60,000 grant by the Ford Foundation to the Pacific Northwest Library Association for developing a regional action programme, was the commencement, on 2 July, 1956, of an assessment of library facilities in British Columbia and in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana and of the human and geographical factors upon which they depend. A Resources and Technical Services Division of the American Library Association has also been

formed. Lone librarians with forward policies still have their trick of leaping. But cool-headed librarians who work together are taking a good look first.

The cautious approach to co-operation is classically exemplified in Lake County, Ohio. No county library exists there but in the urban communities of Fairport, Kirtland, Madison, Mentor, Painesville, Perry, Wickliffe and Willoughby there are public libraries which grew up independently. Nearly all these libraries began as some expression of community enterprise and the notion of combination or of submergence within some larger system was detestable to all of them. Then, by the beginning of this decade, suburban Cleveland had come out to meet Lake County, and had introduced into its eight public libraries complex and sophisticated demands which, in isolation, they were not equipped to meet. The tradition of independence was so strong that it was not easy to explore means of joint action but eventually, under the influence and upon the territory of a newcomer, the local librarians met together. Their meetings have continued and a kind of informal association established, out of which have emerged joint publicity ventures, a communal introductory booklet, a film service facility, inter-availability of books and readers' tickets, and even a project for co-operative purchase. And all this has been done without a hint of capitulation to county or to one another, without the lowering of a parish flag, and with never an exchange of any agreement more formal than a word and a handshake.

In other places similar ends have been achieved upon a more formal basis; in England, for example, Westmorland and its county town, Kendal, co-operate in the provision of a library service and there has been an element of contract in their relationship—beginning with book supply at a shilling per unit from the borough's library to the county's schools—since 1903. When the County Council of Westmorland adopted the Public Libraries Acts, forty-five years later, it concluded an agreement with Kendal (from which the urban district of Windermere alone

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abstained) whereby a town and county library service now functions under a joint committee of the two authorities in accordance with a financial formula which may be varied from year to year. Then, as between Stanislaus County, California, and the city of Modesto, its county seat, an intelligent arm's-length agreement in 1953 avoided a possible breach between two library authorities which had co-operated intimately, and under a single Janus of a librarian, since 1911. Basic services (sole librarian, headquarters service and supplies) are the responsibility of the county, building maintenance that of the city. For more sophisticated services the two authorities are jointly responsible. Their commitments are closely defined and the evidence is that everybody is happy. Another formalized and convenient relationship is that which subsists between the regional areas, or Branches, of the British Columbia Library Commission, and the local public library "Associations" which the Branches counsel and serve. Under this system of co-operation, local authorities, acting in association, supply the money, and the Branches supply processed books and professional services for the Associations. This arrangement has secured one of the very highest levels of book provision and library service in any large and thinly populated area in the world.

The relationships described have existed principally between library authorities on different administrative levels and necessarily under contract or in tutelage one with another. Links between equals are usually made a little more readily and informally. Thus you get easy and more or less universal inter-availability of readers' tickets between the independent library systems of the United Kingdom. You get intensive territorial co-operation as in the production, by International Business Machines card-processes and offset printing, of union lists of periodicals filed by the thirty-odd libraries of Binghampton, Johnson City and Endicott, N.Y. You get the unusual and happy phenomenon of medium-senior staff exchanges between such distant and different English library systems as Holborn,

Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham and Derbyshire County. You will see that even book production can be affected by co-operative effort; not long ago the librarians of London and the Home Counties collaborated in a survey to impress publishers with the potentially heavy demand for some selected out-of-print books and with the market justification for new issues. These simple, natural, neighbourly acts of co-operation could be quoted endlessly but there are other aspects of mutual aid to be considered and we must go on.

It is a little difficult to say where, in the United Kingdom, the spheres of interest of ASLIB and of the Medical, University and Research and the Reference and Special Libraries Sections of the Library Association divide. Happily, they touch from time to time, and provide the occasion for joint progress. Thus the two Associations have formed a committee to consider the co-operative provision of foreign material, mainly, at present, of a scientific and technical kind. ASLIB and the Library Association joined again, in planning, in producing literature for and in voluntarily staffing, a National Library Services stand at the Production Exhibition in London in 1956. Sometimes regional catalogue, as distinct from associational, machinery is used to intensify co-operation between general and special libraries. In South Wales and Monmouthshire, notably, the latter have helped public libraries with special-subject responsibilities by immediately notifying the regional bureau of purchases in the given field and thus avoiding expensive duplication. Union-listing of scientific periodicals in Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire was, however, undertaken directly by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

D.S.I.R. has also had the direct and much heavier responsibility of planning the proposed National Lending Library for Science and Technology, and Dr D. J. Urquhart of the Department, by whom much of the grand design has been conceived, has actively sought their opinions upon the scope and functions of the Library from all interested groups. Thus alone has been a



considerable undertaking in co-operation but the scheme itself—the absorption of the Science Museum's Lending Library Service, the acquisition of so large a part of the world's output of scientific literature that the new Library may be eighteen million volumes strong within a century, and the contriving of an immense mechanism for bibliographical information and loan—is the most impressive conception yet in inter-library projects. It would be improper to read into the scheme more than has been published and Dr Urquhart has emphasized that the immediate function of the library will be as a loan rather than as a bibliographical centre. But I cannot restrain myself from thinking of the possible scope of such a centre when, no doubt years hence, those recent experiments in the Library of the University of Virginia may have led to a wide adoption of close-circuit television methods for bibliographical information.

Now let us see where, in the general field of inter-lending, we are at present in the United Kingdom and where we seem to be going. In 1949 a Joint Working Party was set up by resolution of the Executive Committee of the National Central Library. It was requested to consider means of dealing with union catalogue arrears, of achieving appropriate and stable finance and of revising, where necessary, relationships and machinery as between the National Central Library and the Regional Library Bureaux. Mr Vollans's intensive and able survey of the activities of these agencies suggested some of the principal recommendations which the Joint Working Party duly submitted for comment to all interested bodies and which, in substance, were issued in 1954 by the National Central Library and the National Committee on Regional Library Co-operation. These recommendations were a little complicated but their emphasis was largely on a closer integration of university and special libraries (outside London and the South-East) in their regional library systems, on bringing up to date and to full inclusiveness all regional catalogues—one to be established *ab initio*—on ensuring reliable and reasonably uniform application and loan procedure, with freedom of

carriage charges to the reader, and on achieving regional self-sufficiency in book provision. Certain kinds of publications, among them novels in English not within the definition of such regional fiction reserves as might be set up on the model of that in London, play-sets, current periodicals, quick-reference and children's books were not recommended as appropriate to any inter-lending agency, while it was suggested that books in print costing 25s. or less should be outside the scope of the National Central Library. The latter recommendation was one made in his original *Report* by Mr Vollans but his further suggestion that the N.C.L. should ultimately cease to buy books for inter-library loans was not put forward. Instead it was noted that the N.C.L. had agreed to define its book purchase policy, having regard to the aim of regional self-sufficiency. A fundamental recommendation was that the regional systems should receive a Treasury grant.

In the years that have passed since these recommendations were made a good deal of exploratory work on them has been done, especially by the Implementation Committee through which the National Committee on Regional Library Co-operation probes and devises. University library integration, subject specialization schemes and joint fiction reserves have been particularly carefully considered. But Treasury subvention has not come and other difficulties have emerged piecemeal; for example, moves towards regional self-sufficiency are slow and in any case cannot be measured without completeness in the union catalogues, and this is not yet. Moreover, doubt has been cast on the possibility of achieving regional self-sufficiency with the growing catholicity and complexity of local demand. And what of foreign publications and of long out-of-print works in English?

It is clear that any rationalization on the lines of the Joint Committee's recommendations will have to be attended by give and take in a good many quarters. And other aspects of library co-operation have come into the forefront since 1954. Of particular significance is a recent consequence of a recommendation

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of the 1948 Scientific Information Conference of the Royal Society. The Conference urged library authorities "to give more attention to co-operation between libraries with the object of reducing undesirable duplication and of extending access to a greater proportion of the world's literature ..." and pleaded for increased government aid to central scientific libraries and information services. The Library Research Committee of the Library Association forthwith set up a Sub-Committee on Co-operative Provision of Books, Periodicals, and Related Material in Libraries, its principal terms of reference being to consider and to report upon the recommendations of the Conference. After forty-one meetings, in which scientific library and information opinion was sought at large, a Final Report and Statement of Policy by the Sub-Committee was adopted by the Council of the Library Association in 1957.

The Sub-Committee's proposals are necessarily involved and they stand or fall by the availability of thoroughly adequate Treasury support, the full participation of all kinds of libraries, particularly those of the universities, liberal and rationalized purchase of foreign books and periodicals, the early and unrestricted implementation of plans for the National Lending Library for Science and Technology, and the formation of an officially recognized co-ordinating committee. Special functions of the National Central Library (shared, where appropriate, with the new National Lending Library and selected scientific and other libraries) would be:

- (a) the development of regional library systems, outlier libraries, regional subject specialization schemes, and subject and geographical grouping of special libraries and collections;
- (b) the organization of a survey or surveys of library resources;
- (c) the preparation and maintenance of union catalogues in all fields as an essential part of the machinery of inter-library lending;

- (d) the co-ordination of the discarding of publications so as to ensure that at least one copy of every publication available in this country should remain available for inter-library loan; and
- (e) bibliographical activities, including the formation of bibliographical centres.

The National Lending Library for Science and Technology, additionally and specifically, should be responsible for carrying out or organizing a survey or surveys of library resources in science and technology, and for encouraging the formation of bibliographical centres for science and technology.

The Sub-Committee's proposals, from the point of view of librarians, now stand as national policy. If others, and if the Government in particular, admit them without emasculating compromise, then we shall have travelled far.

I am greedy for co-operation, myself, and I think the term is more inclusive than it is commonly thought to be. I shall be very grateful for all that these proposals may achieve, but I hope they will not close the horizon. I think there is plain need, in a society organized for industry, of central equipment and services of a quasi-bibliographical kind: installations like the Western Reserve University Selector for the electronic scanning of abstracts, bureaux like the Scientific Translations Center at the John Crerar Library in Chicago, "availability bulletins" for micro-texts and other special photographic material, a national (perhaps even, in the blossoming of trust and the fullness of time, a supra-national) information exchange. I do not expect these things to come quickly. But I did not expect to see moons made by men.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Ends of it All*

**L**IBRARIANS and information officers, I suspect, are like vertebrates distinguished by differences in selected environment. The business of both is communication; each shares the responsibility for enlarging, storing and retrieving man's fund of disciplined intelligence. As things are, they both suffer the same kind of technical training and it is the same kind of itch that sends them, sometimes against their conscious will, into their careers. For the sake of convenience, I am going to talk about these people as Librarians, and I am going to end this little book by saying plainly that their job is vocational, as strictly vocational as nursing, as wretched for the uncalled and as rewarding to the elect as teaching, refrigerator sale or going to sea. Not long ago a young lady who had been a colleague of mine for a week came to me and said that she could not stand another day of it and I could keep her salary in lieu of notice, thank you. The next morning I had a visit from a young gentleman with amiable manners and an excellent degree. He had worked in a library for a few months, he said, he had left it for another job in which he had made quite a nice lot of money, and now, please, he would like to work in a library again and qualify as a librarian. "Just so," I said, "but why?" He looked at his shoes for a moment and when his eyes met mine he said, and you could tell that it came from the heart, "Because, for the last three and a half years, I have been fighting against my vocation." Well, there it is. All you can do with the problem is to take it away and wrestle with it. Though I imagine you would not have borne with me as far as this if you did not expect librarianship to offer a lifelong interest and daily surprises and satisfactions. All this it does and more. It offers you, as I hope I have suggested in the pages that have gone before, a sustained

exercise in intelligence and commonsense with the chance, rare in most employments, of drawing on the whole of your education and experience as well as on your special training. It is a job in which you need never get stale. I have been at it, in most of its more general applications, for a number of years, and in only one small corner of the whole field did I ever strike flint. I told you about that in Chapter Six and it was all my own fault.

The energy of librarians is self-renewing because our curiosity is kept alive. Getting the right books, periodicals, articles, abstracts, to people, finding the right things out for people, are more than a vicarious satisfaction. They are acts of service which fully and exactly employ the talents of men and women of education and they are acts, if this is not to put it too ponderously, of self-realization at the same time. You go home from them with the feeling that you have been dealing with the substance of civilization and that you have helped to keep its life-blood on the move.

There is an infinity of approaches to printed record. They range from the prohibitive ("Take yer nose out of that book, Lizzie, and do the sprouts for yer Dad's dinner"), through the selective ("Only Walter Pater, my dear, and that with Chablis in the room over the Bougainvillaeas") and on to the starkly functional ("I respect your prediction, Miss Gamma, for the distribution of the marked sites in a codefield, but please bring me *Chemical Abstracts* and take back *Uncle Remus*"). Where these approaches are positive and not transparently frivolous, and are expressed to us as requisitions upon the bank of universal record, then, at whatever cost in communications activity, we must pay up. There is no Fort Knox in librarianship, there are no closed accounts and no entries in red. So far as we are concerned, books and information are Human Rights as well as social and industrial necessities. And that is all there is to it.

Librarians of all kinds are the gears and drive of the machinery by which these rights are secured. I should have wept and stormed, twenty years ago, at the thought of becoming, ever, a

part of any machine. But now I am proud of it, very proud, and I take a special pride in the fact that the Machine is my master and will not be denied. I do not care that my long hair has been shorn by its unguarded transmission; and if some of my bookish hours have gone I can retrieve them for others with a punched card or a tape with little holes in it. All this I say without irony for I believe that it is through the acceptance of gadgets and contrivances that we librarians have given ourselves time to think, and to pull the threads of our systems together and, especially in the last ten years or so, to discover science as a humane study. When our machinery was simple we talked about it far too much: librarians were at least as likely to erect their *personae* upon hieratic cataloguing cults as upon rare and cultivated bookmanship. We have learned better now. We have discovered science and technology, industry and the humanities, as parts of the same system. We are involved in that system now, and we are going to be at the centre of it; that is why I spent so much time, in the last Chapter, in telling you how far we have progressed in assembling and co-ordinating our own little particles.

I saw a picture in the Vatican once: a fresco by Melozzo da Forlì. It showed Sixtus IV conferring the Librarianship of the Holy See upon the historian, Platina. A Latin text at the foot said that after the Pope had dug and drained and built bridges and cleared the slums he founded a library. That was a sound order of priorities for its time, but the chain of events is otherwise now. Before the detonations, before the pile-driving and the unleashing of the bulldozers, the men of action will be at the Library. And if you are there to help them, you will be in the picture too.





## APPENDIX ONE

### *Library Arrangement*

THE foregoing chapters have been about the organization and running of libraries. I have intruded an opinion here and there but in the main I have attempted to say what kinds of libraries there are, what happens in them and to what ends they are dedicated. This descriptive treatment will not quite do for a discussion of library arrangement, for its sciences enjoy a tradition of desirably argumentative presentation which would be inappropriate in so simple a text as mine. In the little gloss that follows I shall therefore try to say enough about Bibliography, Cataloguing and Classification to make them intelligible, but for close description and criticism I hope that you will go to the authorities.

#### (i) CLASSIFICATION

We may consider Classification first because it is the beginning of arrangement; it occurs, as everybody knows, whenever we take a group of entities and sort them according to some principle. But we cannot start with particular entities; the theory of classification is grounded in universal nature and we must begin by looking at the inextensibly general.

For all purposes of description and speculation the Universe is the Whole. This Whole consists of all matter and all intangibles, and every final material and every final immaterial unit is capable of being named. The sum of these named units is again the Whole or Universe. It follows that if our total perception may be stated as Universal Knowledge, then our indivisible partial perceptions must stand in the same relation to Knowledge as final material and intangible units stand to the Universe itself. Now

let us go a step further and consider *Recorded Knowledge* which, theoretically, may be co-terminous with knowledge as defined. Recorded Knowledge, practically, is the statement of all human experience and speculation in forms susceptible, immediately or ultimately, of communication. Thus, for ordinary human purposes, the Universe, what we perceive of the Universe and what we may state of the Universe are parallel and co-extensive. In other words a comprehensible enumeration of all the entities in nature at any moment and of all the entities in recorded knowledge at that moment will be one and the same thing.

When it occurred to librarians to arrange collections of books in terms of like subject matter rather than, say, by language or size or chronology, this relationship of knowledge and nature was noticed and exploited by a number of them. Their method, broadly, was to borrow or adapt the enumerative schedules of the descriptive (e.g., the biological) sciences and to construct other, and analogous, schedules for residual tracts of knowledge. Then, when all the names, or *Terms*, in all their tracts or *Classes*, seemed to these librarians to represent Universal Knowledge, they gave a short symbol to each term which, in general, not only denoted the term but expressed its hierarchical position in the class. This system of symbols they called a *Notation*.

We may leave theory now, though you can promise yourself some golden hours with it in the textbooks, and glance at some of the principal schemes of book classification. These hold the eye by their notation, and it is with the schedules and symbols of the familiar Dewey classification that we shall begin. In 1873 Dr Melvil Dewey, having formulated a flexible scheme of nine classes and a *generalia* compartment, applied it to the College library of Amherst, Mass. Three years later he published it, and its schedules, in their first fourteen editions, have since been used for the arrangement of libraries all over the world.

This is how Dewey worked. To each of his ten, and largely arbitrary, tracts of knowledge he gave numerically equal sets of whole numbers, thus:

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100 - 199	Philosophy
200 - 299	Religion
300 - 399	Social Sciences
400 - 499	Philology
500 - 599	Natural Sciences
600 - 699	Useful Arts
700 - 799	Fine Arts
800 - 899	Literature
900 - 999	History (which includes Geography and Travels and Biography)

and 000 - 099 (with which the schedules begin) for works, such as general encyclopaedias and newspapers, which are wholly non-specific as to subject, and for works on such "pervasive" subjects as libraries and museums and their sciences, and journalism.

Now let us look at Dewey's notation a little more closely. The symbols are purely numerical and no letters come in at any stage. Division of a main class is secured by the insertion of a tens symbol (e.g., 940 European History) and sub-division by the insertion of a unit (e.g., 941 Scottish History). More minute placing is achieved by the addition of a further number or numbers, separated from the unit by a decimal point. This decimal tail may merely continue, as in the class we are discussing, the process of geographical division (e.g., 941.4 Southern Scotland; 941.445 Edinburgh) or, with a zero in front, it may introduce some new principle such as that of period division (e.g., 941.07 Scotland under the Hanoverians). But let us stick to the geographical numbers for a moment. If we examine the Dewey schedules we shall discover that they are constant not only for Geography itself (at 910-919) and for History generally but also for such special subdivisions as 929 Genealogy, 016 Bibliography of Special Subjects and 398 Folklore. Thus books of, or on, Edinburgh folk tales can be localized at 398.210941445,

Edinburgh family histories denoted by 929.20941445 and bibliographies of Edinburgh history placed at 016.941445. We reach the ultimate with bibliographies of Edinburgh family history at 016.92920941445. You will note, in it and in the other examples, the recurring and invariable geographical number, while in the last you will recognize, just after the decimal point, the introduction of a genealogical aspect by the use of the combination 929. Such mnemonics, and the *form* designations used in the first nine sections of each class (e.g., 1 for Theoretical presentation, 3 for Encyclopaedic treatment, 5 for Periodical form, 9 for Historical discussion) and a variety of others can combine to give a catalogue-number which is very informative and a shelf-placing which is very specific indeed.

Dr Dewey was justifiably proud of his Decimal Classification. It was the first really flexible scheme of universal application, it had the endorsement of immediate and eventually world-wide adoption, and in all its forms (except perhaps in the condensed and controversial 15th edition) it has allowed its users to find a place for everything. But Dewey considered, not without propriety, that he and his successors owed to the users of his classification a duty not to disturb the principal terms of the scheme. In the examples of long, decimal tails which I gave above you may have found some of the appendages a little ponderous; you are entitled to ask whether the aspects represented by number-building do not obscure rather than enlighten. But this building is rather like the *Wortbau* of the Germans: you can stop it when you want to and Dewey, indeed, advised us to determine the number of figures according to the needs of each library. On the other hand, we cannot use our discretion when an important subject is allotted a long number as its base. And that, because Dewey would not disturb his principal terms, and because his Relative Index has grown specific in the last degree, is what has happened more and more in his schedules as time has gone on. The perennial problem in Classification is the advancement of learning. In Dewey, as it were, the radar gadget is hung here and

there but the vehicle runs on steam.' The 16th edition is now under assembly in the Library of Congress. We wait hopefully for its emergence with a reactor.

Meanwhile we have, in the full schedules published between 1943 and 1954 of the 4th (English) edition of the Universal Decimal Classification, and in its 2nd Abridged English Edition of 1957, a useful and reasonably up-to-date derivative of Dewey. The U.D.C. was first conceived for the arrangement of a universal card bibliography. It was found, however, that the schedules adapted by its custodians (the *Fédération Internationale de Documentation*) and the introduction of Tables of Auxiliaries—to express series concepts, form, language, chronology or point of view—made the classification extremely useful for documentary arrangement, and it has become widely adopted, thanks not least to the careful development of its scientific and technological parts in English editions by the British Standards Institution, in special libraries. 677 Textile Manufactures and 677 Textile and Cordage Industries, in the 14th edition of Dewey and the 2nd Abridged English Edition of U.D.C., respectively, provide one of many interesting comparisons between the two schemes and a comment on a new industrial revolution.

The two Decimal Classifications have found wide acceptance. Another scheme, recommended by its wholly practical synthesis and the great authority of the national collection for which it was designed, has been adopted in whole or in part by a good many smaller libraries, mainly academic or scientific. This is the classification of the Library of Congress. The scheme had its genesis in a total re-thinking, late in the nineteenth century, of the principles of arrangement of the library. The old classification, part philosophic, part artificial, was withdrawn and a new set of schedules was drawn up for the practical grouping of a total, then, of two million books. Dr Herbert Putnam, the new Librarian of Congress, thus founded pragmatically. But he built eclectically, and his main classes, in their construction as in their notation, owe something to Dewey and much more to a large-library

version of the alphabetic Expansive Classification of C. A. Cutter, which was popular in the 'nineties and still has its devotees. The Library of Congress classification makes no attempt to follow the evolutionary principle which, so Cutter tells us, is inherent in his own scheme. But it takes a good many of his main groups, fitting them into nineteen as against twenty-five classes (both classifications also have an initial compartment for general works), though it develops them quite arbitrarily. It must not be thought, however, that this development was haphazard, each class is in effect a special classification synthesized by experts in its material. Each is separately published and subject to separate, and continuous, revision. In every group the notation is elastic and simple: one capital letter designates a main class (as Q Science); for a division there is a second capital (as QD Chemistry); and for a sub-division there is arabic enumeration of terms to a three-figure base (as QD 305 Hydrocarbons). You can divide further by writing a point after the unit—as in Dewey it is merely a caesura—and continuing with mixed symbols. Form and geographical divisions, again as in Dewey, are abundantly provided but vary from class to class. It thus lacks mnemonics and the tricks of speed essential to the general library. But its vast schedules and complex division make it wholly practical in its own library and for the large special collections to which individual classes have been applied.

Another mixed-notation scheme is the Subject Classification of J. D. Brown. It was devised about fifty years ago with the intention of securing a better arrangement for British libraries than Dewey was said to allow, but only some three dozen public libraries continue to use it. Upon no stated theoretical ground Brown erected four groups of subjects in which the dominant characteristics are physical, biological, philosophical and historical. He divided these into ten classes and a generalia compartment which itself contains subjects (e.g. Education, Mathematics and General Science) not usually thought of as pervasive. Brown constructed his schedules on an ideal of specific

placings—his object was to place like topics together<sup>9</sup> and not, as Dewey had done, to allow the author's point of view to determine the class to which his book should be allocated. Aspects were to be avoided and derivative must proceed out of source. This standpoint meant, for example, the separation of the Arts from one another; thus Music, an artistic consequence of Sound, lies close to it and away from Poetry or Drama. The Subject Classification, in general, shows the chain of causation only. The chain of relation seems to be repudiated by Brown, then, as an afterthought, weakly manifested in a little under a thousand numbered terms—Categorical Tables—expressive of form, method or point of view. The scheme has much merit in detail but is demonstrably wrong-headed in conception.

From a disorderly classification, theoretically considered, we pass to one which is impeccable by the same canon—the System of Bibliographic Classification of H. E. Bliss. Its compiler wishes his every class to be acceptable to the specialist library and the specialist reader, and he is convinced that the development of his tables in accordance with the conventions of each individual branch of learning will do most to advance that acceptance. Bliss is a theoretician, and there is an easy fluency in the construction of his schedules. The terms of each are subordinated in the hierarchy of the appropriate academic discipline. He has twenty-five main classes (with a twenty-sixth to accommodate Theology, where users prefer it to be separated from Ethics), designated, divisible and sub-divisible by capital letters. He has also evolved upwards of twenty Systematic Schedules of common subdivisions, though only two, a numerical sequence for form, and a lower-case and highly mnemonic letter sequence for geography, are common to *every* class. Brief class-marks are ensured by the broad base of the notation: for the location of separate assemblies of books within a library Bliss provides nine Anterior Numeral Classes to accommodate, for example, Reading-Room, Special, Local or Historical Collections; in other words his notation, from 1 to 9 and A to Z, designates

thirty-five classes, and its theoretic brevity, related to a decimal base, is three and a half to one. Bliss writes in plain language and uses the plainest terms his academic conformity will allow, his scheme is hospitable, expansible, flexible, and his relative indexing promotes the judicious use of alternative placing. The Bibliographic Classification is one of the very few systems which could be used in any library.

Another modern scheme for bibliographical and documentary arrangement is the striking and original Colon Classification of Dr S. R. Ranganathan. The compiler describes his work as an analytico-synthetic system. In contrast, he says, to the monolithic structure of an exhaustive, enumerative scheme, a classification such as his own has only a few short schedules. "For example" (he says) "in the Colon Classification we have about 200 such schedules occupying as many pages; whereas the number of class numbers which can be synthesized out of them is of the order ten to the power ten. Classification by an analytico-synthetic scheme has been compared to the work of an apothecary compounding a mixture according to any given prescription. The short schedules give the ingredients. The connecting symbols and the digits for relations correspond to the adhesives and other materials used to bind all the ingredients into a state of consistency and stability." The connecting symbols are the all-dominating colon, the semi-colon, the period and the comma, while the digit may include letters, punctuation marks and any other form of notational symbol. Dr Ranganathan's classes, or Subject Divisions, are thirty-six in number and for the most part are equipped with characteristics of division called Facets, a prescribed order for the use of such facets and basic schedules resulting from the division of the class by each facet. "Any facet or isolate," says the compiler, "is a manifestation of one or other of the five fundamental categories—personality, matter, energy, space, time." Thus, in his subject-example "Diseases of rice-plants in Madras in 1957" the basic *Subject of Agriculture* (with the symbol J) is seen in relation to an organic *Personality*, Rice



(with the isolate number 381), a manifestation of *Energy*, Disease (with the isolate number 4), a unit of *Space*, Madras (with the isolate number 441) and a period in *Time*, 1957 (with the isolate number N57). *Matter* is held to have no relevance in this example and the resulting class number, with its proper connecting symbols, is J381:4.441.N57. Far more complex relations can be exhibited in this or in any class, but with a proportionate lengthening of the class-mark.

Dr Ranganathan has recently discussed the working relationships between classifier and engineer in mechanical information retrieval systems. "All the steps in classification," he says, "from facet-analysis to translation of isolate ideas into isolate numbers should be done by a classifier before the coding of numbers for the machinery." This may seem well out of the world of elementary librarianship but it is no long traverse from the skewer and the punched-card drawer. The International Study Conference on Classification for Information Retrieval, held in England in 1957, brings home in its recommendations the need for close and urgent study of machine systems, of combined (as distinct from enumerative) terms to express complex subjects, and of "facet analysis, relational analysis, codifying analysis, semantic analysis, synthetic terminology, linguistic analysis, and other relevant techniques."

You may think all this is looking somewhat ahead, if not for library science, then for you personally. You may well be right. We all engineer the 20th Century Limited when we play trains and when we grow up we start by shunting the slow freights. It is much the same in classification: first you get the textbooks, then a steady internship in one of the traditional schemes. So what better envoy is there than the traditional advice? *Classify your material where it will be most useful, and always have a reason for putting it there.* Then, bibliography, blue-print or bedtime-story, you can't be very far wrong.

## (ii) CATALOGUING AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

The ascription and description of documents must follow certain precise rules. We live in an inconsequential book-world of Ouidas and Pertinaxes, Smith-Heppelwhite-Smiths and ladies thrice married, prolific dialecticians with names in the cyrillic, and title-pages jammed with words like the credits on a screen. We have to make some sort of common denominator out of name, language, title and the linear units of physical description. Whether our catalogues are in book form, with pasted-in entries, or on cards or bound in loose-leaf sheafs, whether they are printed or photo-recorded or displayed in visible index fashion, in every case strict rules of compilation must be followed. Such rules exist in a number of forms. Some have been designed in and for particular libraries, such as Panuzzi's code of 1841 for the British Museum. Others have been intended for general use, e.g., the *Cataloguing Rules*, for author and title entries, compiled and published jointly in 1908 by the American and British Library Associations, C. A. Cutter's earlier *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* and the A.L.A. *Cataloging Rules* of 1941 and 1949. They may apply variously to notational or classified catalogues, to author catalogues, to name catalogues (showing one alphabetical sequence of authors, persons as subjects and such titles as seem to merit record) or to dictionary catalogues where author, subject, title (if judged important) and series (where appropriate) are fully entered, with added entries or references for joint-authors, editors, translators and others named on the title-page. In the dictionary catalogue, cross reference is made from a different form of name (e.g., from a woman's married to her maiden name, or *vice versa*, dependent upon the code) and from subject to related subject. Finally, the initial names are arranged alphabetically and, if the job has been done properly all along the line, you have the one bibliographical tool which seems to be understood and liked by everybody. You can have (if you imagine a

receding vista of neatly sloping cards in a drawer) such a sequence as

MALENKOV, Georgi

MALET, Oriel, (*pseud.* of Lady  
Auriel Rosemary VAUGHAN)

MALGRÉ LE BLASPHEME. *See* MOURRE, Michel

MALHAM-DEMBLEBY, John

MALIC ACID. *See also* APPLES

It all looks so easy. But cataloguing is in fact bounded by complexity and by the rules, over one hundred and fifty of them, of the principal codes. I cannot take you through them here. I may give you some idea, however, of what a simple series of entries looks like when carried out in accordance with the Anglo-American Code. Let us take René Riesen's *Jungle Mission*, placed according to the Dewey classification at 915.98, and recorded on standard 5 by 3 inch cards.

(a) *Main or Author entry*

915.98 Riesen, René  
Jungle mission; translated from  
the French by James Oliver. London,  
Hutchinson, 1957.  
204 p. plates, maps. 24 cm.



(b) *Subject entry*

915.98 Viet-Nam: description  
 Riesen, René  
 Jungle mission; translated from  
 the French by James Oliver. London,  
 Hutchinson, 1957.  
 204 p. plates, maps. 24 cm.

(c) *Added entry for translator*

915.98 Oliver, James, *translator*  
 Riesen, René  
 Jungle mission; translated from  
 the French by James Oliver. London,  
 Hutchinson, 1957.  
 204 p. plates, maps. 24 cm.



## LIBRARY ARRANGEMENT

- (d) *Title entry* (suggested by its exciting, and therefore memorable, character)

915.98      Jungle mission  
 Riesen, René  
 Jungle mission; translated from  
 the French by James Olver. London,  
 Hutchinson, 1957.  
 204 p. plates, maps. 24 cm.



N.B. You will note that only the first word in the title and proper names begin with capital letters; this is one of the rules of the Code.

There will also be *references*, as

VIET NAM *see* VIET-NAM  
 VIETNAM *see* VIET-NAM  
 FRENCH UNION *see also* VIET-NAM  
 INDOCHINA *see also* VIET-NAM

and so on, until all sensible possibilities, and all determined subject-headings, have been exhausted.

This, I think, is the point at which I should stop and the text-book should take over. But I must not end without mentioning the great assistance rendered by printed catalogue cards, such as those of the Library of Congress (from 1901), the H. W. Wilson Company (from 1908), and the British National Bibliography (from 1956), to librarians in all countries where English is read.

They do not do all our cataloguing, even within their national or linguistic limitations, but for many libraries they have done much to brush away arrears and lift the dull weight of repetitive routine.

We end by touching very lightly on bibliographic description, and routine is what this never can be. It partakes of the nature of cataloguing but description here is not of the book as a unit at the end of the production-line; it is an anatomical treatment, in prescribed form, of a palpable, individual book, warts and all. It must show, as a minimum, author and title (here called *Heading* and *Extract*, respectively), plates, pagination, format and the "signatures" or symbols by which the binder assembles the book (together called the *Collation*), place of publication, publisher and date (the *Imprint*), and may show printer, history and successive ownership, binding, imperfections and damage.

## APPENDIX TWO

### *For Further Reading*

I AM going to recommend just a few books which I think may give you a clear, all-round idea of Librarianship as it has developed historically, what its present branches and practices are, and what it promises as a career.

For library history I suggest that you go to *The World of Books in Classical Antiquity* by H. L. Pinner (Leiden, 1948), *A Book about Books* by Frederick Harrison (London, 1943), *Ancient Libraries* by J. W. Thompson (Berkeley, California, 1940) and the same author's *The Medieval Library* (Chicago, 1939), the omnibus *Pioneering Leaders in Librarianship* (New York, 1953), *A History of Libraries in Great Britain and North America* by Albert Predeek (New York, 1947), *Penny Rate: Aspects of British Public Library History, 1850-1950* by W. A. Munford (London, 1951), *National Libraries of the World* by Arundell Esdale, in the 2nd edition by F. J. Hill (London, 1957) and *Classics of Librarianship* by J. L. Thornton (London, 1957). You cannot read them all, but they will serve as a basis for selection and you will find most of them in any public library of reasonable size. And in every reference library you can see the fine series of studies in library history by Professor Raymond Irwin, contributed in recent years to *The Library Association Record*. *A Summary of Public Library Law* by A. R. Hewitt; rev. ed. (London, 1955) provides, apart from its technical merits, some illuminating historical sidelights.

Outside library history I think you ought not to go into too much detail at this stage, but you must read *Librarianship*, also by Professor Irwin (London, 1949). To my mind it is the most inspiring and at the same time the most realistic book of essays ever written on the librarian's job. Then look at a useful general

conspectus in one field, *An Introduction to Public Librarianship* by E. V. Corbett, 2nd ed. (London, 1952); at *A Manual of University and College Library Practice* by G. Woledge and B. S. Page (London, 1940), and at some or all of these departmental studies: *An Introduction to Library Classification* by W. C. Berwick Sayers, 9th ed. (London, 1954); *A Primer of Classification* by W. Howard Phillips, rev. ed. (London, 1955); *Cataloguing* by H. A. Sharp, 4th ed. (London, 1948); *Simple Library Cataloguing* by Susan G. Akers, 4th ed. (Chicago, 1954) and *An Introduction to Cataloguing and the Classification of Books* by Margaret Mann, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1943). Read the earlier chapters of *A Student's Manual of Bibliography* by Arundell Esdale, in the 3rd edition, by Roy Stokes (London, 1954).

Special and reference library work is discussed in *The Treatment of Special Material in Libraries* (London, 1957) and in *Information Services* (London, 1950) by R. L. Collison, and you should read *Library Assistance to Readers* by the same author, in its 2nd edition (London, 1956). A useful international survey is *Special Library Practice* by Barbara Johnston (Melbourne, 1949), and for a general, international view of libraries I recommend *A Chance to Read* by L. R. McCollvin (London, 1956).

For further and specific guidance, I suggest that if you live in Great Britain or one of its associated countries, you read the current *Students' Handbook* of the Library Association and consult the *Guides to the Library Association Examinations* published by the Association of Assistant Librarians. Elsewhere, write to your national library association or see your local librarian or (in the Americas) get in touch with one of the library schools listed in *The American Library Directory*. This book—like the *Year Books* of the L.A. and ASLIB, the (British) *Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries Year Book* and the *A.L.A. Membership Directory*—has also the merit of suggesting where you may look for a job!



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