

unresolved. We find, in the same category, the plaguing question of whether to keep a monographic series together or to classify its component parts separately. Osborn says that the presumption is in favor of scattering a series "whose component parts should obviously be on classified shelves by author and subject." What makes such matters "obvious"? Do we disregard binding and classification costs along with probable frequency and manner of use if a monographic work in series looks like a monographic separate? We could use some brass-tack definition here as well as in the treatment of series entries on pages 166-69. And, alas, the matter of displaying current unbound serials! Do we page, or pay for replacements—many of which are not even available to be paid for? Many librarians have arrived at the sad formulation that those periodicals which are most eligible for display should be kept on closed shelves. Or, nearer despair, you make available on shelves and tables only what you would discard!

But then, again, if Dr. Osborn had answered all questions and made pat decisions for us in all instances, he would have deprived us of freedom of choice in matters which must, for the time being, remain flexible. We are grateful to him for this and for the splendid common sense and balance displayed in weighing available alternatives. This author has risen above empty rigidities and hollow professional talk which sometimes reverberates so loudly as to prevent our hearing ourselves think. He has refused midwife attendance to mountains laboring to bear those ugly little mice which frighten timid young librarians away from "operation serials."

If, as Osborn indicates, the serial is displacing the conventional book from the center of the reference stage, it is time for re-orientation. This book and its excellent bibliography constitute a foundation on which we can rest for many a year.—*Sidney Ditzion, The City College of New York.*

The Harvard Library

Report on the Harvard University Library: a Study of Present and Prospective Problems. By Keyes D. Metcalf. Cambridge:

Harvard University Library, 1955. 131p. \$2.50.

This report is perhaps the last from Harvard to bear the name of Keyes Metcalf—the last of a long and distinguished series that document the recent history of the world's greatest university library. Never has any other university library told its story so fully, so conscientiously, and with such benefit to the library profession—its goals, its problems, its needs, and its methods. To appreciate the magnitude of this achievement and to see this report in its proper perspective, one should look first to the last supplement, which is "A Selected Bibliography" of affairs of the Harvard library.

This bibliography is impressive. The *Harvard Library Bulletin* is a significant feature. Although most of the publications originated during Metcalf's administration, a few of the older classics, such as Currier's "Selective Cataloging at the Harvard Library" (1924) are included. Among the fifty or so titles that follow, there are Osborn's "The Crisis in Cataloging," and all the familiar works of Metcalf's other colleagues—Edwin Williams, David Weber, William Jackson, Susan Haskins, and Philip McNiff. Yet Metcalf's own contributions dominate the list—his work on acquisition, space, finance, cooperation and specialization, and administration. To him the credit is largely due for this extraordinary record of the Harvard library during one of its most critical periods, when it finally faced the overwhelming problem of growth.

This report is the last of the series as far as Metcalf's administration is concerned; it is hoped that his successors will carry on. Indeed, this last official statement was written for his successors, particularly the new director of the library. It deals with the situation of the library as he left it, "its weak spots and the things that might have been done or should have been done, but have not." It also discusses "in some detail the library's financial situation and its needs for the future."

The chapter on acquisition summarizes the familiar perennial problems that relate to the building of the collections: the effect of acquisition on subsequent library costs, the formulation of an acquisition program, the dilemma of duplication, and the de-

velopment of new fields. Regarding the last an excellent statement of policy, as adopted by the Library Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, is reprinted in full. This may be useful to many libraries which, like Harvard, have had difficulty in obtaining advance recognition of library needs as the university expands into new programs of teaching and research. The statement ends disarmingly: "the committee thinks it necessary to state that acquisitions can be made only with difficulty in a new field unless funds are provided for the purpose."

In cataloging Harvard has long been a leader; again, the names of Currier, Osborn and Haskins are notable. In this chapter, Metcalf treats of arrearages, "work that does not stay done," results of uncoordinated cataloging, special indexes and catalogs in Widener, catalogs in book form, and the effect of increased acquisition funds. The sections on special indexes and catalogs and on catalogs in book form are especially interesting. It may be recalled that Harvard played a significant role in the evolution not only of the *International Index* but also the *Art Index* and the *Index to Legal Periodicals*. The possibility of printing parts of the library catalog, such as the entries for certain voluminous authors, is now under consideration.

Under service to readers, problems relating to the care and preservation of the collections are reviewed, together with principles of service to readers and such special problems as hours, loan periods, and fines. It is reported that \$265,000 is now needed for relabeling, repair, and rebinding of materials in the Widener stack alone.

In the chapter on interlibrary cooperation, after a review of such projects as foreign newspaper microfilms, *Short-title Catalogue*, and New England Deposit Library, Metcalf again proposes that the direct costs of interlibrary loans might well be paid by the borrowing libraries. A possible charge of \$3 per loan, in addition to transportation, is implied. Two reasons are given: "interlibrary cooperation will inevitably be challenged, particularly in times of financial stress, unless a charge is made for the actual cost of service rendered," and "a service charge might even tend to increase the number of requests from smaller libraries, which

now often hesitate to ask for loans because they realize that they are unlikely to have an opportunity to reciprocate." Substantial charges are also suggested "for outsiders who are working at Harvard on specially financed research projects or on scholarships, and also for others who use the library intensively and for long periods." These possibilities may be disturbing to some librarians and scholars, but they cannot be taken lightly when they come from the university library that for generations has contributed more than any other to the scholarship of the nation.

The chapter on space outlines a long-range policy of physical decentralization as a means of controlling the cost of housing the collections. As an alternative to building an even more gargantuan Widener, the New England Deposit Library, Houghton, and Lamont, together with extensive underground stacks are being used to absorb the growth of the collections. It is estimated that by using storage and other decentralized methods, Harvard should be able to house 120,000 additional volumes per year for an annual price of \$100,000 for new construction, whereas the same space would cost about \$180,000 in a new central library building.

There are chapters on personnel and administration, then a final one on finances. In the summary it is noted that "The University Library as a whole is in need of nearly \$9,000,000," despite the fact that Harvard is now spending "more than \$2,400,000 per year to support the largest university library in the world." The reasons are to be found in the cumulative growth of the library, the accompanying rise in unit costs of processing and service, and the additional demands for service that invariably result from improvements in the library program.

Supplement A is "The Harvard University Library: a Graphic Summary" and Supplement B "The Development of Library Resources at Harvard: Problems and Potentialities," both reprinted from recent issues of the *Harvard Library Bulletin*. A more detailed analysis of "Cataloguing in the Harvard Libraries" is presented in Supplement C, and Supplement D concerns "The Proposed Merging of Catalogues and Related Changes in Widener." Supplement E is

"The Proposed Training Program for Library Administrators," a provocative plan that involves the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in conjunction with the Graduate Schools of Business Administration, Education and Public Administration. Supplement G is a summary of "Needs for Additional Funds, Particularly for the College Library," and the final supplement is the bibliography.

In general, the report is a brief but fairly comprehensive account of the thinking, achievements, and aspirations of Keyes Metcalf as Harvard's librarian. His administration was unusually successful in that he did accomplish all of his main objectives: Houghton, the New England Deposit Library, Lamont, and the underground stacks. These, together with Widener, comprise a new design for the Harvard library of the future. They are a great credit to Metcalf's vision and statesmanship and to the understanding of the university administration that supported him. His work is a model for university librarians everywhere.

Metcalf went to Harvard in 1937, retired in 1955. To Paul Buck, his successor, he left this report. He has now joined the staff of the new graduate library school at Rutgers University, and it is hoped this new association will be fruitful and long. The future administrators of our university libraries can learn much from Keyes Metcalf—his aptitude for the bold dream, his respect for the fact, his industry, his modesty, and his realization that the problems of the university library require for their solution the best efforts of librarians, faculties, and presidents alike. In the university community, the library is everybody's serious business.—*R. C. Swank, Stanford University Libraries.*

British Union List

British Union-Catalogue of Periodicals: A Record of the Periodicals of the World, from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day, in British Libraries. Vol. 1, A-C; to be complete in 4 vols. New York: Academic Press, 1955. . By subscription, \$26.60 per vol.; after publication, \$32.20.

The appearance of the first volume of the

British Union-Catalogue of Periodicals (BUC) marks an important event and provides a publication of considerable importance for any library in the United States catering to the needs of those engaged in research and scholarship. How can this be so? Most American librarians and their clientele have little concern for the holdings of British libraries. Further, it may be said that, after all, there is very little difference between a *Union List of Serials in the United States and Canada* and a union catalog of periodicals in the British Isles. That "little difference," however, is present and becomes a matter of vital concern to anyone engaged in processing and servicing serial publications.

BUC is a record of the periodicals of the world from the seventeenth century to the present day, in whatever language and on whatever subject, filed permanently in British libraries. It includes particulars of over 140,000 titles contained in 440 libraries. The second edition of our *Union List*, 1943, contained 120,000 titles. The arrangement is alphabetical by title. All periodicals having a specific individual title, whether issued independently or by an organization, are entered under the first word, not an article, of their names. A periodical issued by any kind of organization is entered under the name of the organization if this name forms a direct or indirect part of the main title, or if the title is not specific in itself. All periodicals are entered under their earliest known names, followed by particulars of all changes of name in chronological sequence. References are given from all later names to the original name. (This is just the opposite from the *Union List*.)

In determining the alphabetical order of entries certain departures from a strict alphabetization have been made:

1. Articles are printed, but ignored in filing. All conjunctions, prepositions and minor connecting words are printed, but ignored, e.g. *Annales du Midi* comes before *Annales de Normandie*. The arrangement is by words printed in heavy type. This has been done to avoid the uncertainties caused by such connecting words as *de*, *de la*, *des*, *ueber die gesamte*, etc.