

formity in scholars' perceptions and use of information. There is nothing wrong with that reasoning, except that it deprives the book of a clear purpose or audience. Thus this book is not a guide for bibliographic neophytes on the order, say, of Carl White's *Sources of Information in the Social Sciences* because it does not consistently present the basic bibliographic materials. Nor is it an introduction to the core literature, in the style of Bert Hoselitz' *Reader's Guide to the Social Sciences*, because only a few of its subjects are approached in that way. It has considerable interest for information professionals as a critical evaluation of some aspects of the bibliographic apparatus of social science, but this comes packaged with substantial quantities of familiar, and therefore boring, basic description.

Despite this, the book has a number of positive attributes. The division of the subject matter departs from the conventional disciplinary structure to cover some areas that are generally not treated in detail in standard guides: political data archives, management research, environmental planning, public administration. The British perspective offers American librarians a novel slant as well as some relatively unfamiliar information.

The editor's introductory essay, "Communication and the Bibliographical System in the Social Sciences," starts with some stimulating observations concerning the harm done to communication by the proliferation of bibliographic aids and the possibilities and requirements of a well-functioning bibliographic system, though it then drifts off, disappointingly, into a bland recital of the characteristics of existing publications. As in this book as a whole, a challenging premise falls short of fulfillment.—*Thelma Freides, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.*

Sharma, Hari Krishnan. *Organisation and Administration of College Libraries*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1977. 192p. \$10.50. ISBN 0-8426-1011-1. (Distributed by Lawrence Verry, Inc., 16 Holmes Street, Mystic, CT 06355.)

A manual on college librarianship in India, one of few, this book deals not only with important aspects of organization and

administration and the routines of reader and technical services but with continuing, serious problems—indigenous to India—which are discussed in some detail.

To American librarians some problems, such as the lack of academic status and the difficulty of articulating library service with classroom instruction, will sound familiar. In India, however, where all too many librarians are still held personally accountable for book losses and where the "professor-in-charge" is still the nominal if not actual head of the college library, the librarian's struggle for recognition as a professional and for a significant measure of authority tends to compound these problems. His frank and generally effective treatment of these "taxing problems" suggests that Sharma is attempting to communicate with college administrative officials and faculty as well as practicing librarians and library science students.

In one of the best chapters, the second, "Place of the Library in College Education" (p.8-23), the writer draws mainly upon comparatively recent Indian sources to make an especially lucid and convincing argument for the educational role of the library. "The success of the library," he writes, "is neither measured by its magnificent building nor by its richness . . . as by the extent and nature of exploitation of its resources" (p.14).

When approaching the following chapters, it will be helpful to know that the usual college library in India is quite small in terms of collections, seating and work space, and staff. Collections are measured in thousands, annual expenditures for books might well be less than \$2,500, and the size of the staff might range from a total of one to five or six persons. Indeed, the University Grants Commission, which recommends to the government of India budget allocations for higher educational institutions, uses an annual book fund of 20,000 rupees (less than 2,400 U.S. dollars in June 1978) as the cut-off point for allocating staff.

Among major subjects treated in the book are finance, staffing, planning, and equipping library buildings, book selection, technical services, reference work, conservation and preservation, binding, and periodicals handling. Special emphasis is given to

academic status and the educational possibilities of the library.

The tone of the writing, didactic and hortatory, is somewhat reminiscent of Ranganathan, but it is not unpleasant. One is struck by the author's serious effort—in the face of great obstacles—to improve college libraries and advance professional librarianship. He should be applauded.

A realistic treatment of college librarianship in India, this book should be of interest to students and scholars of comparative and international librarianship.—*Morris A. Gelfand, Professor Emeritus, Queens College, Flushing, New York.*

Dibdin, Thomas Frognall. *Thomas Frognall Dibdin: Selections*. Compiled and introduced by Victor E. Neuburg. The Great Bibliographers Series, no.3. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1978. 245p. \$10. LC 77-18012. ISBN 0-8108-1077-8.

Victor Neuburg's effort, "an attempt to provide an introduction to the work of a somewhat undervalued man of letters," is a commendable undertaking. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite come off. The reasons, however, are not the fault of Neuburg—at least, not entirely.

The problem lies with Dibdin himself, what he had to say and how he went about saying it. But Neuburg, too, cannot avoid some of the responsibility. After all, the series of which this is the third volume is "The Great Bibliographers." (One and two were devoted to R. B. McKerrow and A. L. Pollard.) It appears that the judgment of the past, which consistently has evidenced reluctance to crown Dibdin with the mantle of greatness, has been accurate in its assessment more often than not.

Selections from seven of the almost two dozen bibliographical works that issued from the prolific pen of Dibdin between 1802 and 1838 are included. Few, if any, would serve to stimulate the kind of full-scale study of T. F. D. that Neuburg hopes to encourage. The *Bibliomania* (1804), perhaps his best-known work, is represented, as is his *Bibliophobia* (1832), perhaps his least-known (reprinted for the first time). So, too, is *The Bibliographical Decameron*, which, when issued originally in 1817 in three sumptuous volumes, is said

to have represented the high point of Dibdin's career.

More than anything else, Dibdin was a man of and for his time—the golden age of bibliophily. He was less the bibliographer—not in the Fredson Bowers sense but compared with a contemporary, Brunet—and more consumed with bibliographical themes. His passion for books, as was that of many of his circle, was manifested in "large paper copies," "uncut copies," "illustrated copies," "unique copies," "copies printed upon vellum," "first editions," "true editions," and "a general desire for the Black Letter." Dibdin chronicled this world. His writings both drew sustenance from it and helped to sustain it—although not indefinitely, as the *Bibliophobia* attests to.

Did they do more? Did they, as Neuburg in his introduction holds, tie together the elements of book collecting, bibliography, and scholarship? Did Dibdin's Roxburghe Club activities, his chronicling the bibliophilic passions of the Douces and the Hebers, begin to address the uses to which rare books could be put? Perhaps. What is more likely, though, is that the Douces, the Hebers, and others would have pursued their passions without the efforts of T. F. D. The fruits of their enthusiasm and the rewards being reaped by students and scholars of the twentieth century cannot be laid at the feet of the author of *The Bibliographical Decameron*. Dibdin reflected his times, he did not create them.

Dibdin's real contributions to bibliography might be said to be confined to his *Introduction to . . . the . . . Classics* (four editions published between 1802 and 1827), his *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* (Althorpe Catalogues (seven volumes, 1814–1923), and the magnificently printed edition of Ames' *Typographical Antiquities* (four volumes, 1810–1819). Even here, though, as William A. Jackson has pointed out, Dibdin leaves much to be desired in terms of bibliographical accuracy. He was something less than the "great bibliographer" the publisher's series title might imply.

Dibdin does deserve a place in the history of bibliography—taken in its broadest sense. I doubt, however, that place occupies so prominent a position as Neuburg