

ministrators, instructors, and all junior college personnel.

In conclusion, the reviewer feels that this is a book which every faculty member, librarian, administrator, member of the boards of trustees in the junior college field should read carefully. It will be found interesting and inviting in readability, inclusive in scope, thought provoking in its objectiveness, stimulating enough to make the reader want to put into operation many of the suggested recommendations.—*Ruth E. Scarborough, Centenary Junior College Library, Hackettstown, N.J.*

New Books About the Book Arts

The Alexandrian Library, Glory of the Hellenic World; Its Rise, Antiquities, and Destruction. By Edward Alexander Parsons. Amsterdam, etc., The Elsevier Press, 1952. 468p. \$7.50.

The Roman Letter, a Study of Notable Graven and Written Forms from Twenty Centuries in Which Our Latin Alphabet Moved towards Its High Destiny as the Basic Medium of Printed Communication throughout the Western World. Prepared by James Hayes . . . on the occasion of an exhibition dealing with this subject held by R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company in its Lakeside Press Galleries . . . Chicago . . . 1951-52. 54p. commentary, 59 illus.

Schoene Fischbacher. By Clauss Nissen. Stuttgart, Lothar Hempe Verlag, 1951. 108p.

Buecher bewegten die Welt: eine Kulturgeschichte des Buches. By Karl Schottenloher. Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1951. Vol. I: Antiquity to Renaissance. 278p. DM 20.-

Das Buch im wandel der Zeiten. By Wilhelm H. Lange. 6th ed. Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1951. 196p., with 158 illus.

The Alexandrian Library, to quote from the Proem to this important work, "certainly the greatest of all Antiquity and the greatest before the invention of printing, was perhaps potentially the most important ever collected. Because of the neglect in the annals of history and letters, we have only

the existing fragments of original minor comments in the ancient authorities and mostly casual remarks of many modern writers out of which to attempt a restoration of the Alexandria."

During the past seven years this restoration was undertaken by Edward Alexander Parsons, man of letters and bibliographer, life-long resident of New Orleans and founder of the Bibliotheca Parsoniana.

The results of his efforts, a labor of love in the finest sense of the word, are now before us in a volume which is certain to take an honored place on the shelves of every collector, student and librarian interested in books.

As one reads this magnificent account of the conception of the building of the library, founded "at the close of the classic period of the world's greatest literature, when Athens, its mother, no longer afforded the means, power or genius necessary for its protection or preservation," one wonders why this outstanding achievement in the intellectual life of man has not before now been the subject of a truly exhaustive study.

With meticulous care and scrupulous appraisal of its validity Mr. Parsons has tried to locate every single reference to the library of Alexandria in the ancient sources and in the studies of modern scholars. Out of these efforts there arises an astonishingly vivid and complete picture of the founding of this library under the Ptolemies, of its scholarly and administrative staff, of the method of acquisition of its vast holdings, their storage, cataloging and editing and of the alternating destruction and rebirth of this great institution through nine centuries.

We witness the origin of the science of bibliography and of literary criticism and history. But we are also given a most lively picture of the Hellenistic world, its leading personalities, its political issues and, above all, its cultural mission. It may be that the specialist student of the Hellenistic tradition would differ here and there in points of detail from the conclusions and interpretations offered in this book. The general reader will notice a tendency toward repetition and he may sometimes wish that the picture might have been presented in a more concentrated manner. He will also notice a fair number of printers' errors. But scholar and layman

alike will realize that here is a contribution to the literature of librarianship which will be of great value for years to come.

Sufficiently described in its title, *The Roman Letter* is distinguished by the selection and reproduction of Roman letter forms, by the order and beauty of their arrangement and by the authority of the skillfully interwoven brief text.

The little volume by Nissen on the history of ichthyological illustration—a masterpiece of condensation—is the work of the same Dr. Nissen of the staff of the Municipal Library in Mainz, who has recently completed his imposing history and bibliography of botanical illustration.

The same qualities which made the former work such a significant contribution went into the making of the present study: the scholarly approach of the trained natural scientist, a cultivated artistic taste, and a vast store of bibliographical and biographical knowledge in the field of scientific illustration. Dr. Nissen's critical essay on the scientific portraiture of fish takes up but 41 pages, yet it is a complete guide and introduction to a special field which in recent years has received but scant systematic cultivation. The story ranges far and wide, taking in such important figures as Bishop Fell and Samuel Pepys.

One hundred and thirty-five of the most important illustrated ichthyological publications, mainly from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, are listed alphabetically. There is also a list of the previous bibliographical efforts in this field, and a useful index.

The plan for a comprehensive cultural history of the book is a plausible one and one that has an especial significance at a time when the role of the book is being questioned everywhere in the modern world. The manuscript for Schottenloher's book was completed before the beginning of the last war. Twice during its course it had been set up in type and twice it was destroyed during aerial attacks. Now, at last, the first volume has been completed and the second volume is well on its way.

It is not easy to do full justice to this important work of the 75-year-old author, who for many years was Director of the Library of the Bavarian State in Munich. It is a book full of wisdom and maturity and it conveys a vast store of information. Yet, it carries in its structure and outlook certain

limitations. They stand in the way of its reaching an uncontested place among the internationally recognized masterpieces of research which on many counts this book deserves.

The limiting factor, as anyone reading the book outside of the country of its origin will recognize, lies in its concentration upon the contribution of Germany. Here is a piece of universal cultural history, written with a distinct national bias. The results of this approach are very clear: Those portions of the book which deal with periods, developments and circumstances previous to the arrival of Germany on the scene of world history, are excellent. The account of Cassiodorus, for instance, is a pure joy to read. Excellent, too, are the chapters on periods in which Germany's contribution is indeed a leading one, as for instance in the wake of Charlemagne's empire building or in the days of Gutenberg. But at other times the reader feels himself too often diverted from the great highways of intellectual intercourse.

The story of the book is treated here as an integrated account of the many separate facets of its evolution. The purely technical and some of the artistic elements are sometimes less convincingly worked out than other aspects. The one side of the story which is consistently treated with equal competence, experience and knowledge, is the history of libraries, and the rise of bibliography.

While one would hesitate to recommend an English translation of this work, it is certainly to be hoped that this important contribution will find its way into many scholarly American libraries.

Like the work by Karl Schottenloher, the book by Wilhelm H. Lange, the successor of the late Rudolf Koch at the Offenbach workshops, also sets out to tell the complete story of the evolution of the book in all its aspects. Its organization is significantly different in that it is built up of separate chapters each devoted to one phase, such as lettering, writing surfaces, printing, illustration, etc. It, too, contains a good deal of information told in a fluent and lively manner. But its national bias is so strong that it becomes increasingly difficult to follow the author. Again and again this bias reaches chauvinistic proportions. The explanation lies in the fact that this book was first published in 1940 during Nazism's heyday. Until the year 1943

there followed no less than four more editions.

The influence of Nazi ideology on every phase of intellectual life in totalitarian Germany is excellently illustrated by this book in the seemingly neutral field of book lore. For its postwar appearance the book may have undergone certain revisions of its war-time text. Regardless of whether or not this was the case, its basic outlook has not changed; its spirit is still the same.—*Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, New School for Social Research.*

Eugene Stollreither

Festschrift Eugen Stollreither zum 75. Geburtstag gewidmet von Fachgesen, Schuelern, Freunden. Herausgegeben von Fritz Redenbacher. Mit 34 Tafeln. Erlangen, Universitaetsbibliothek, 1950. xii, 403p., 32 pl. DM 44-.

This impressive volume represents primarily South-German scholarship, edited by the present director of the University Library of Erlangen in honor of his predecessor. Most of the 35 contributions deal with historical problems about books, printing, binding and illustrations; they are in many cases well and amply illustrated. The editor himself contributes one of the most interesting of these studies, dealing with the shifts in interpreting the meaning of renaissance book illustration.

Eight of the papers are of more than passing concern to librarians. Three of these deal with three outstanding men: Friedrich Kraftdiscusser Achille Ratti, later Pope Pius XI; Georg Leyh adds significant information about August Wilmanns (Preussische Staatsbibliothek); Henri F. Raux gives highlights of the career of the French protagonist of public libraries, Eugène Morel.

Five papers deal with various aspects of library administration. *Friedrich Bock* treats of medieval manuscript catalogs as forerunners of the alphabetical subject catalog (= dictionary catalog); *Agnes Staehlin* of some problems involved in making such catalogs today. *Gustav Hofmann* analyzes the personnel problem in German scholarly libraries; *Schnorr von Carolsfeld* characterizes a typical scholar-librarian, drawing on his intimate association with an outstanding example, his father, who was a predecessor of

Gustav Hofmann as the Chief Director of the Bavarian State Library and its function in the U.S.A.

Anyone interested in the tradition of the book will want to glance through this fine treatise, read some of it, enjoy the illustrations and make notes for future reference.—*Icko Iben, Champaign, Illinois.*

Key Literature

Die Schlüsselliteratur. By Georg Schneider. Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1951-52. 2 vols. DM 32.00.

The distinguished author of the *Handbuch der Bibliographie* has labored for twenty-five years on another monumental work which will be an essential title in every reference collection. *Schlüsselliteratur*, rather awkwardly translated into English as "key literature," refers to books which portray real persons and events under the guise of fictitious names. The genre poses rather difficult problems for beginning students of literary history; but, strangely enough, the only study prior to Schneider's is A. Ferdinand Drujon's *Livres à clef* (1888), which deals with French erotic and satirical literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The first volume ("*Das literarische Gesamtbild*") contains definitions, history and criticism, with indexes of authors and prototypes. The second volume ("*Entschlüsselung deutscher Romane und Dramen*") contains a detailed account of all more important German fiction and drama which deal with reality in the guise of imaginative writing. Each title is analyzed in detail with references to pertinent critical literature. The third volume, not yet published, will deal with non-German "key literature," particularly in English, French, and the Scandinavian languages.

The earliest examples of "key literature" may be found in the fifteenth century with such works as Sannazaro's pastoral romance, *Arcadia*, and Emperor Maximilian's *Theuerdank*; but the genre's possibilities were not fully recognized before the baroque period. Throughout the periods of classicism and romanticism in Europe the *roman à clef* enjoyed unusual popularity mainly for reasons of courtesy and respect for the feelings of others. Perhaps the most famous example of all is