CLASSICS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE SERIES

Margaret Mann

Introduction to Cataloging and the Classification of Books
American Library Association, 1943.

The third classic in the series is by Margaret Mann (1873-1960). She was an eminent librarian and teacher who lead the field of librarianship in general and cataloguing in particular for over fifty years. She worked as a professor at the University of Michigan. She was one of the first three full-time faculty members in the department of library science at Michigan in 1926. Besides, she was associated with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign University Library, American Library Association School in Paris, France and as a visiting professor in many universities. In 1999, *American Libraries* named her one of the "100 Most Important Leaders we had in the 20th Century."

Margaret Mann has written many books. Some of her select titles were as follows.

- *Introduction to Cataloging and the Classification of Books* (1930, 1943, 1962 and 1967)
- *Subject Headings for Use in Dictionary Catalogs of Juvenile Books* (1916)
- *Rules for Filing Cards in the Dictionary Catalogues of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh* (1915)
- *The Reading Habits of Adults: A Select Annotated Bibliography*
- *Information Needs in the Humanities: Two Postal Surveys.*

Among these titles, the first mentioned title is considered here under the classic series.

Margaret Mann
The Classification and Cataloging of Books.
Chicago, American Library Association, 1928.
435 pages (Library Curriculum Studies.)

Miss Margaret Mann, Associate Professor of Library Science at the University of Michigan, has prepared *the Classification and Cataloging of Books* under the direction of Doctor W. W. Charters. Her rich knowledge and varied experience in the cataloging field is evident in this book. It has undergone four editions in1930, 1943, 1962 and 1967 respectively. During this process its title was changed to *Introduction to Classification and Cataloging of Books*.

There were twenty chapters in it, which Miss Mann had divided into six major divisions as shown below.

1. Introduction
2. How to read a book technically
3. The subject grouping of books; An introduction to classification
4. Classification; Dewey Decimal System
5. Cutter Expansive and Library of Congress classification systems
6. Book numbers and the shelf-list.

These divisions give an overview of the book. The outline given at the beginning of each chapter made the content easily readable. The definitions inserted wherever necessary in the text were clear and simple. Annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter lead to further study and research.

What really makes Margaret Mann's book a classic is the second chapter, titled '**How to read a book technically.**' The chapter gives definition, explanation of terms used in printing and publishing industry or physical bibliography. In other words, it introduces to different parts of a book, book-sizes, paper sizes etc. It also defines the words 'author', 'publisher'

etc. In short, this chapter gives many of the technical definitions which formed nuts and bolts of library profession. It provides profound foundation to library and information science/services.

Questions were added after each chapter to guide the teacher.

Miss Mann, instead of dealing with history of classification and cataloguing, focused on the discussion of how to use the existing schemes with special reference to the work done by three American iconic systems viz., Dewey Decimal System, Cutter Expansive and Library of Congress Classification Systems.

The purpose of Miss Mann in writing this book was to initiate the young librarians and to stimulate active interest in providing library services. She showed that there is a technique and science behind library work. She emphasizes on the technical aspects of librarians' work, but also asked them not to lose sight of the real mission of interpreting and evaluating books. In this sense Margaret Mann was a great motivator. Although it was a textbook for library schools, it also served in understanding the essence of librarianship to the practitioners and trainers.

Technology has changed the complexion of cataloguing and classification. Many new resources –online and offline- are available; new standards are formulated. . But, Margaret Mann's book continues to inspire the younger generation.

Sources :

- Book Review by Ruth Savord. *Special Libraries* March, 1929
- Leonard Kniffel, Peggy Sullivan, Edith McCormick, "100 of the Most Important Leaders We Had in the 20th Century," *American Libraries* 30, no. 11 (December 1999): 43.

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