

The book is good, old-fashioned, "bat-tles-and-kings" history, and as such it succeeds. Everyone who was anyone, every storied incident, every colorful imprint in the industry's 150-year lore is arrayed before us in full panoply. Here is truly a "Field of the Cloth of Gold." If its otherwise felicitous prose becomes weighted down on occasion by distended catalogs of escutcheons and crests, it must be remembered that chroniclers have had it ever thus. The thirteenth book of Holy Writ, essential though it may be, has remained unreadable for three millenia, and the genealogies of King Alfred of necessity read like a laundry list.

The present book's main thrust, because of its comprehensiveness, will probably be as a reference work, although its value as such will no doubt be reduced by the fact that its index, despite its twenty-one pages, is not as detailed as some might wish. In using the book for reference it must also be borne in mind that surveys of the American publishing industry draw heavily from reminiscences, memoirs, garrulities, and biased company histories—all of which are notoriously irresponsible historical accounts—and that such surveys themselves are therefore replete with factual inaccuracies. Scholarly, dispassionate, primary research into the many specific aspects of the industry has not yet been accomplished in adequate quantity to permit the writing of an essentially correct secondary survey.

Yet the author has done quite well by the sources available to him. His bibliography includes sixty-seven entries—most of them books—and the text makes clear that he has read, assimilated, and utilized them all. One would perhaps wish that he had made greater use of the periodical literature; sometimes more factually accurate accounting of details can be found therein. He may be partially excused for not doing so, however, by the lack of a good bibliography of American publishing, which makes the whole area a veritable jungle for the researcher who would work there. Generally, Madison's research will be considered reasonably adequate.

Documentation is abysmally absent. The scholarly world finds absolutely baffling the reluctance of many commercial publishers to document quotations in their books, and

the present volume is an excellent exemplar. There are numerous tantalizing quotations, such as "the houses controlled by trade courtesy invariably endeavored to meet all trade friction on the highest plane of equity" (p. 64), which are dutifully ensconced within double apostrophies but with no indication whence they were plucked. To pursue these thoughts further with their original authors, the reader has no recourse but to browse page-by-page through the sixty-seven tomes enumerated at the back of the book. Is this not a wasteful dereliction of scholarly responsibility?

On balance, however, this is a good and useful book. All medium-sized and large libraries will doubtless want it, as will individuals interested in the rise and development of this major American industry.—*D.K.*

The Library in Colleges of Commerce and Technology. By G. H. Wright. New York: London House & Maxwell, 1966. 175p. \$5.95. (66-21410).

The need for this book lies in the very existence of the institutions which figure in the title. The whole area under discussion is a very peculiarly British affair and something should be said to put it into some frame of reference.

The majority of British children leave school, and so finish with compulsory education, at the age of fifteen. The minority remaining continue for another two or three years, and of that minority a small percentage will go on to the universities. This structure is always in a state of flux, and a generalization can be dangerous but, broadly speaking, it is this situation which has created the pattern described in this book.

Of the fifteen-year-old school-leavers, many—probably not a majority—will continue with some kind of vocational training. Much of this will be on a part-time basis conducted in the colleges of commerce and technology. For the most part courses will be in essentially practical areas of training and education, such as craft courses for engineers, builders, plumbers, and so on; there also will be courses in commercial and secretarial fields.

The position of the library and the librarian vis-à-vis such students is a complex and a difficult one. To begin with, the schools

from which the students have come are not, over the length and breadth of the country, at all well provided with school libraries, and among them the qualified school librarian is virtually unknown. The fact that the students did not pass beyond the compulsory schooling age of fifteen may partially be attributed to their relatively low interest in reading. They have not in many instances been regular users of public library services. In other words, they come to the college with an inadequate background of library usage. Their success in their course work and their subsequent career will, however, depend to some extent (however small) on their ability to utilize the college libraries. The library must also cooperate in the task of helping to fill some of the deficiencies in general education. This, at any rate, is a part of the act of faith which lay behind the postwar expansion of libraries in such institutions.

The authors of this composite work are, for the most part, actively engaged in this challenging, even if somewhat forlorn, area of librarianship. The chapters deal with the actual presentation of material for certain categories of student as well as the more vexing question of the role of the library as a liberalizing influence amid a welter of vocational courses. The book gives a clear idea of the problems which are being faced, and the enthusiasm of those engaged in the battle can easily be deduced.—*Roy Stokes, Loughborough Technical College.*

Report on Project History Retrieval. Tests and Demonstrations of an Optic-Coincidence System of Information Retrieval for Historic Materials. By Elizabeth Ingerman Wood. Philadelphia: Drexel Institute of Technology, Graduate School of Library Science, c.1966 (Drexel Library School Series Number 14). xiii, 123p. \$3. (66-21944).

Mrs. Wood's book is a description of a system of information retrieval called optic-coincidence. In brief, the system works in this manner. Each item, document, book, print, or what have you, is described on an index form by author, title, and/or other appropriate entries. Each item is numbered. Characteristics, or descriptors, akin to subject headings, which best fit the piece at hand, are chosen from a master list. A

gridded card for each characteristic is made and a hole is drilled in it at the coordinates which indicate the serial number of each item having this description. Finally, the user selects term cards which best describe the questions he has in mind, piles them together and shines a light through the lot. The places where the light comes through indicates the serial numbers of items in the collection which fill the reader's requirements. The reader then goes to the numbered index forms, as provided by the grid coordinates, and compiles a list of materials he wishes to use in the depository. Each term card, measuring about 8" x 10", has locations for 10,000 numbers; thus, as many as 10,000 items can be recorded on each term card.

Mrs. Wood is using this system with success at her own operation, the Joseph Drexel Institute, and the Copeland-Audelot at the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur museum. With the help of that institution, Drexel Institute and the Copeland-Audelot Foundation, she explored the possibilities of the system in collections at the Library Company of Philadelphia (books); the Delaware state archives (governmental archives); the New York Historical Society (miscellaneous personal manuscripts); Eleutherian Mills historical library (family papers); Archives of American Art (large quantities of microfilmed papers); Virginia colonial records project (microfilmed official records); the Lewis-Walpole collection of eighteenth century English prints; Smithsonian Institution (silver objects); Winterthur museum (furniture); and finally, an amalgamation of all nine samples into a union index.

Mrs. Wood reported her conclusions to a conclave held in Philadelphia in the spring of 1966. As one of the participants at that meeting, this reviewer came away with the opinion that this system probably was not suited to large collections of materials. Mrs. Wood, in her published report, tends to agree. Had her samples, which were limited to relatively small numbers of items in each of the nine institutions, been larger, it might have been possible to show that these fears were unfounded.

Be that as it may, it appears that Mrs. Wood has proved that the optic-coincidence system of indexing materials in a relatively