

and Vermont without deciding upon one of them, and completely ignores the efforts during the American Revolution to bring Canada into the conflict as "the fourteenth colony." More striking, perhaps, is the fact that the article on "Abolition Movement" treats abolition and antislavery as if they were synonymous terms, while the one on "Antislavery Movement" does not even contain a cross-reference to abolition. The article on "Abolitionist Literature" asserts that "the great number of antislavery newspapers began with Charles Osborn's *Philanthropist* (1820) and Benjamin Lundy's *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (1821), both originating at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and *The Castigator* (1824) at Ripley, Ohio." The article on *The Emancipator*, of Jonesboro, Tenn., on the other hand, states that "it preceded the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* by seven months." Careful editing should have caught these inconsistencies.

The presence of a few minor flaws, however, should not be permitted to obscure the fact that because of the excellence of the work as a whole it may be expected to rank with the *Dictionary of American Biography* as an indispensable reference aid for all students of American history.—*William C. Binkley, Vanderbilt University, Nashville.*

The Library Survey: Problems and Methods. E. W. McDiarmid, Jr. American Library Association, 1940. 243p. \$3.50.

FOR MANY YEARS we have debated, among ourselves and with outsiders, our right to call the study of librarianship "library science." The word "science" is one of many which have come to mean so many things that they mean almost

nothing. In this review the word "science" means a method of study, a method to which no field or fields of knowledge may claim exclusive right, and "library science" is the application of that method to the problems of librarianship. While we have always had a library science, until a year ago we had not a single manual, textbook or handbook on its methodology. This condition is undoubtedly both cause and effect of the very subordinate position heretofore occupied by the scientific aspects of the study of librarianship. In June 1939 appeared a landmark in the literature of librarianship, *Investigating Library Problems* by Douglas Waples. Within less than a year has appeared a second library science manual: *The Library Survey*.

The Library Survey is an important book. It does not pretend to be original or profound. It is a practical handbook for the student of library problems. It "attempts to combine within the covers of one volume a wide variety of survey methods and procedures, in the hope that it will result in a saving of time and effort for future surveys." The "methods and procedures" have been assembled, in general, from actual surveys. "The author has essayed the role of reporter and commentator, rather than that of authority." Thus *The Library Survey* is essentially a survey of library surveys.

By a "library survey" the author means a systematic and thorough evaluation of the work of a library, a division of a library, or a group of libraries, in relation to its, or their, objectives. The final objective of a library survey is always a program of action. Mr. McDiarmid has given us a compendium of evaluative criteria and techniques. He has done a thorough and workmanlike, if unimaginative

tive job. It is possible that a more useful book might have resulted from more rigorous selection and exclusion of techniques with greater emphasis on critical evaluation of those included. On the other hand, it may be that we are not yet ready to distinguish between wheat and chaff. Certainly a detailed appraisal of each survey technique presented would have resulted in a formidable volume.

Perhaps the chief weakness of *The Library Survey* lies in the limitation of scope implied in the author's "role of reporter and commentator." Its emphasis on the collection of data and upon description of the conditions found, with comparative neglect of interpretation and synthesis, will distinctly limit the value of the book. Its failure to go far beyond the reporting of techniques which have been used in surveys also constitutes a definite limitation.

Almost every book on research methodology gives an impression of greater confidence than the author feels in the efficacy of the methods described. Mr. McDiarmid would be the first to deny the omnipotence of the survey as a device for curing all of our ills. He offers it only as one useful diagnostic technique, a technique whose value is distinctly limited by the absence of valid standards. The two books on methods of library research which we now have, *Investigating Library Problems* and *The Library Survey*, serve only to introduce us to the field. We still have a long way to go in shaping the method of science to our ends. These two volumes provide us with a substantial foundation.—G. Flint Purdy, *Wayne University, Detroit*.

Practice of Book Selection: Papers Presented before the Library Institute at

the University of Chicago, July 31-August 31, 1939. Louis R. Wilson, ed. University of Chicago Press, 1940. 368p. \$2.50.

THIS VOLUME comprises eighteen papers presented at the Fourth Library Institute of the University of Chicago.

Until a few years ago, the published guides to book selection consisted generally of selected lists of books, enumeration of book lists and journals of review, and some aphorisms designed to aid the librarian in avoiding pitfalls which occasionally engulf book selectors of varying degrees of experience. Recently, changes in trends of education and restatements of the objectives of the public library have encouraged more scientific investigations in the theory and practice of book selection, the results of which have been published in several significant treatises.

The *Practice of Book Selection*, however, does not follow the pattern of any of these earlier volumes in the field. The contributors include professors, editors, librarians, a college president, a bookseller, and a typographer; and the subject matter ranges from the selection of the manuscript for publication to the distribution and use by the public of the published volume.

The papers may be divided into six groups of uneven size and significance. Into three major groups may be placed fifteen of the papers: six on public, special, and high school and college libraries; five on literary criticism; and four on the publisher and designer as factors in selection. There is one paper each on distribution, as illustrated in the personal history of a book store; books and self-therapy; and the teaching of book selection. In the first group, Roden and Carnovsky dis-