

has written. He has written an introduction for a technique of reading for the person who wants "to learn to read better, and then, by reading better, to learn more of what can be learned through reading." In the same book, however, Mr. Adler has two other matters to present. He offers a critique of current educational practices and a list of "great books." His attack on the first of these and his defense of the second are sometimes inserted in the development of his major objective, a technique for reading, and the whole book is enlivened thereby.

Of his technique for reading this may be said. He offers a pattern for approaching a book and reading it that is complete and satisfactory, although the application of the pattern involves painstaking, hard work for the reader who seeks to employ it for the first time. While full of practical common sense, the book offers no short-cut to self-improvement. It may as well be stated frankly that the book will be of little help to a poor, inefficient, or unintelligent reader, or to any person unwilling to read patiently through the book with every attention. The author's careful beginning, his examination of assumptions and his definitions are, in my opinion, too much for the average reader, but well worth the consideration of those of us who earn our bread by reading or by promoting reading. The gist of Mr. Adler's remarks on a reading technique were once available in more succinct form and would probably be more generally useful than the present book. I am referring to his mimeographed address delivered to the Alumni School of the University of Chicago.

Mr. Adler's concern with present educational policies and practices is well known and needs no restatement here.

His criticisms turn constructive as he speaks for a return to the reading of the "great books" of our culture. In the latter part of *How to Read a Book* these classics (substantially the same as those embraced in the curriculum of St. John's College) are listed and the publishers of available editions indicated. Throughout the development of his technique for reading, Mr. Adler always aims at the reading of these books. Consequently he says little about the reading of imaginative literature.

While many of Mr. Adler's arguments on education and his proposed remedy are open to debate, and have, indeed, been debated, his desire to be helpful is sincere and more than evident. The heart of the book is practical. Of his style of writing, the only adverse thing to be said concerns the occasional sharpness of his tongue.

Readers advisers can recommend this book to intelligent readers who are apparently sincere in their efforts to learn through reading. The author's extensive, almost excursive, treatment may prevent the average reader from finishing the book.—Robert A. Miller, *University of Nebraska, Lincoln.*

*A List of Books for College Libraries, 1931-38.* Charles B. Shaw, comp. American Library Association, 1940. 284p. \$6.

"THE SHAW LIST," published in 1931 for the Carnegie Corporation of New York to aid college libraries in rounding out their collections, is familiar to most American librarians. It was called the "Second Preliminary Edition;" but the 1940 list is not a new edition but a supplement to it. In fact, the use of this supplement will be crippled if the earlier list is not at hand, because the explana-

tions of the form of entry and of the symbols used are to be found only on page xii of the 1931 list.

Although the Carnegie Corporation made a grant for this task, Mr. Shaw absolves it from any faults in the volume and assumes more responsibility for it than in the previous volume. We find here no impressive advisory group.

In only a few respects has the plan varied. (1) Whereas the 1931 list might give a title in several locations, in the 1940 list this is against the rules. (2) The 1940 list omits out-of-print books—an unfortunate practice. (3) "A new feature of this volume is the citation of reviews of most of the titles included"—a praiseworthy addition. But the rule to omit all comments need not have been obeyed so slavishly. For instance, on page 95 could he not have indicated that *Story* began in Vienna in 1931 and moved to New York, instead of leaving us with "N.Y., Story magazine, inc., 193-"? And could not a comment have bridged the hiatus between the first two volumes of the *Dictionary of American Biography* mentioned in 1931 (p. 280) and the *Index* now listed (p. 96)? Volumes 3-20, though published, are not accounted for.

In spite of these minor omissions, this supplementary volume has been prepared with fine judgment and is highly recommended.—*John G. Barrow, Berea College, Berea, Ky.*

*Manual on the Use of State Publications.*

Jerome K. Wilcox, ed. Sponsored by the Committee on Public Documents of the American Library Association. American Library Association, 1940. 342p. \$6.

THIS IS A BOOK for which there has been a long standing need. Those who

are concerned with the administration and use of collections of state documents have awaited its publication with interest ever since the inception of the editorial plan of the manual in 1935. As evidence of the increasing size and complexity of the field of state publications and their bibliography, it is interesting to note that, whereas these subjects received competent treatment by a single individual in the pioneer contribution made by Ernest J. Reece in 1915, it has been the editorial policy of the compiler of the new manual to make chapter assignments to specialists, among them political scientists as well as librarians. Several of these contributions consist of restatements and amplifications regarding the nature and use of material which has been in existence over a period of time, but others describe and define forms of state publications which have appeared during recent years.

The manual is divided into five parts, representing a total of twenty-one chapters. An examination of the contents of the several chapters indicates that the plan and structure of the book have been maintained without unnecessary duplication and overlapping in its several parts. Part I deals with the importance, character and use of state publications. Part II is devoted to an enumeration and description of bibliographical aids. Part III furnishes essential bibliographical and critical data for basic state publications. Part IV is a directory of national associations of state officers with an account of their publications. Part V gives information pertaining to the printing and distribution of state documents with citations to the statutes which govern these activities. A list of tables and a subject index containing many cross references and some catchword titles facilitate the use of the book.