

MacLeish has brilliantly demonstrated that the detailed operations of a large library can be presented with verve and éclat which definitely holds the interest and thereby better portrays the events of the year. Few of us can hope to achieve the MacLeishian skill with words but our profession would definitely benefit if more of us would seriously try.

The final chapter of the book is a brief consideration of the future of the university library. This, in the opinion of the writer, is one of the least satisfactory chapters in the book. It portrays well enough the present stage of our development, present trends, and opportunity for additional study, but the authors miss an opportunity to come dramatically to grips (and basically it is a dramatic situation) with the enormous and ever-increasing complexity of assimilating the graphic and auditory records of mankind for ready use. Which way our libraries will turn before this ever-increasing task; at what point, if any, our growing miles of books will be too far removed from a central delivery desk to make their delivery feasible; how indexing and cataloging problems will be handled; what part mechanical gadgets and the shrinking of the size of our books by photographic or other methods, will play in future librarianship; what developments of vast central storage reservoirs we are likely to have; whether the book of the future will be instantaneously or

almost instantaneously transported from such reservoirs to whatever outlying point at which it may be needed, physically or in image—all these and similar matters could, it seems, have been dealt with more imaginatively without moving too far into the world of fancy. Certainly, such a challenging conception as Fremont Rider's microcard book deserves more than the five lines it rates.

### *Summary*

In summary, we have in this book an exceptionally important addition to our professional literature. It could have been more facile and concise in writing but it is an adequate and very complete consideration of the problems of university librarianship which we have long needed and for which all of us will be duly and continuously grateful as we have occasion to use it again and again. Perhaps only those who were intimately concerned with its production can fully appreciate the discussion and planning, the long hours of reading, checking, and writing, the work and sweat that must have gone into its preparation. It constitutes an important and major star in the already bright professional diadem of the senior author. For the junior author it represents an outstanding professional contribution of the kind we are now beginning to expect increasingly from our younger men.—*William H. Carlson.*

## The Library School Curriculum

*Evaluation and Revision of the Library School Curriculum.* Edward A. Wight. (Peabody Contributions to Library Education, No. 1) Nashville, Peabody Press, 1945. v, 64p. \$1.10.

Curriculum evaluation and revision is perforce a continuous process, but it is subject to acceleration and deceleration. The current acceleration in changes in training for library service is not due primarily to current social changes but to a deep dissatisfaction with past practices and results. Library training is generally agreed to involve certain fundamental techniques, special knowledge of the clientele served, and subject knowledge. The patterns of interrelationship of these three

phases of training are exceedingly complex. Much of the recent curriculum revision seems to consist of altering the relative quantities, the chronological sequences, and the methods of teaching of these three. Librarians are expert classifiers, but the content of their training defies with kaleidoscopic impudence all attempts to arrange it in rectilinear sequence.

In the impressive pamphlet in hand, Dr. Wight presents the worksheets of a recent curriculum evaluation and revision at the Peabody library school. The introductory chapter includes an excellent definition of the modern library in terms of social values and of the library school as the agency for preparing library personnel. There follows

a description and outlines of the curriculum as it existed in 1941. On the bases of these outlines, a series of objectives for each course was listed and graduates were questioned as to their feeling that the objectives had been attained. The percentage of graduates reporting high attainment of objectives in the college field was smaller than that in other fields. It occurs to the reviewer that this may be in part due to the fact that philosophy and practices in the college library field are less standardized and less tangible than in other fields.

Students were asked also to rate instructional methods. The class lecture was considered the most effective learning activity for the attainment of nearly 75 per cent of the objectives listed. Required problems as an activity scored 16 per cent, and required reading 10. Voluntary reading and class discussion were rated relatively low. In no case was experience in the field rated as of more value than courses, in attaining objectives.

On the basis of these findings and of further discussion and study, several outlines were radically modified, including the course in college and library administration and a course in problems of college teaching. The administration course is broken up into less of a grand logical plan and more of a group of wieldy units. Some of the materials of the second course, formerly "Selection of Materials for Higher Education," have been put into administration, while the title has been changed to "Problems of College Teaching." The reviewer is personally quite pleased to see this added emphasis on higher education as the field in which the college librarian must serve.

Included in the final section is a discussion of the place of practice work and the difficulties in arranging practice work to the mutual advantage of student and library, and a plea for further integration of program and staff with the joint university libraries.—  
*Charles F. Gosnell.*

## Influences on American Culture

*Foreign Influence in American Life; Essays and Critical Bibliographies.* Ed. by David F. Bowers. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1944. ix, 254p. \$3.

Despite every effort to advance national unity, particularly in the early days of the republic, through the achievement of cultural independence, American life in almost all of its phases, economic, political, and social, has always been fundamentally derivative. This does not mean that the milieu of the new world has not molded, and in many instances substantially altered, the imported cultural patterns. But the fact still remains that American culture, as we know it today, for all of our desire to consider it indigenous or at least strong in "native" elements, is still a borrowed culture. Our social mores, political objectives, economic patterns, and artistic and literary forms have been brought to this continent by the successive waves of immigration that, throughout the last three centuries, have battered the Atlantic seaboard. Furthermore, it is important to remember that here is represented the contact of cul-

tures which were often dissimilar. In this new environment unfamiliar groups met, discovered each other, and joined in a hard relationship that necessarily resulted in either acculturation or conflict. As such, the qualities of the environment subtly conditioned the forces involved and frequently exercised a determining influence upon their evolution. Therefore, because of its complexity, the problem of evaluating the foreign influences in America presents an especially difficult task and one which has hardly yet been touched.

Between 1820 and 1930 no less than thirty-eight million immigrants arrived in the United States, and to survey in eight short lectures the impact upon American institutions of these mass population movements would be manifestly impossible. Recognizing that such a treatment can have no pretense to finality, the editor of the volume here reviewed speaks with a disarming candor of his objectives: "to seek merely to define the problem, to describe the basic forms of cultural impact and assimilation, to trace something of their history in American life, and to sur-