

probably look askance at the suggestion (p. 30) concerning vigorous weeding and discarding; in connection with the "proposal for a carefully developed book collection for the use of undergraduates" (p. 33), Harvard's plans might well have been cited; there is very little evidence to support the categorical statement (p. 37) that librarians "have as often as not been guilty" of buying extensively in some narrow specialty, leaving behind them accumulations of books that will be little used by anyone else; some readers might well wish for a reference to or authority for the statement in the first paragraph on page 46

and that in the last paragraph on page 47; the data in Table 10, page 74, showing that 16 per cent of the personnel in 826 higher educational libraries have more than one full year in an accredited library school certainly do not support the statement on the following page that "16 per cent . . . have had two or more years of instruction."

The volume is well and clearly written, each chapter is followed by a list of recommendations, which are, however, for the most part not new, and there is a seven-page bibliography which should be useful.—*J. Periam Danton.*

## Reading and Book Buying

*People and Books: A Study of Reading and Book-Buying Habits.* Henry C. Link and Harry Arthur Hopf. Book Industry Committee, Book Manufacturers' Institute, 1946. 167p.

In the fall of 1944 it was anybody's guess whether the boom in book buying would continue after the war, decline gradually, or collapse. Faced with shortages of material and personnel and with the prospect of heavily rising costs, the book industry, in order to protect its heavy investment in plants and organization, needed facts about book reading and book buying upon which to base accurate estimates of future market trends. With the cooperation and financial backing of all branches of the book industry, a consumers' survey on a national scale was conducted jointly by two independent research organizations, the Psychological Corporation and the Hopf Institute of Management. *People and Books* is a report of the findings of this study by the men who served as joint directors.

Conventional public opinion polling techniques were used in gathering data. These are fully described. A questionnaire containing 63 items (reproduced in the report) that had undergone eight pretests in the field was administered by a total of 235 interviewers to a stratified sample, consisting of 4000 individuals fifteen years of age and older, of the nonfarm, civilian population of the United States. This was supplemented by two shorter questionnaires used in interviewing 225 book dealers and distributors and 100 college and university administrators (the latter to

obtain facts relevant to the publishing of textbooks).

The main body of the report consists of a series of simple tables and graphs, showing percentages of people in the consumers' group who answered the questions according to each of various alternatives, with accompanying text describing and interpreting these statistics. Basic breakdowns are made according to recency of reading, income level, education, age, sex, and religious background. The questions deal with such matters as frequency of reading, types of books and subjects read and preferred, physical characteristics and price of last book read, where and how books are obtained, book ownership, price preferences, how and why books are selected, time spent in reading as compared with other activities, comparison of recent with estimated future book reading and buying. "Correlations" are reported between some of these variables, apparently from inspection of the percentage data, but no coefficients of correlation are given.

The major conclusion is that "everything in our survey points to a long-term gain in the reading, and therefore in the purchasing, of books." The validity of this inference might be questioned. Years of formal education appear to be more closely related to frequency of readership than any other variable, although there is some relation between frequency of reading and socio-economic status. The authors predict a pronounced trend toward increased reading of nonfiction. They also anticipate the creation of a huge market

for low-priced books, side by side but not in competition with the existing market for higher-priced books. They conclude that people will buy books that interest them, without too much regard for price (does this account for the \$10 price set on their own volume!).

The authors recommend that studies of this kind be repeated at intervals of a year or two. Librarians will agree that no one survey in this field can be regarded as definitive. Indeed, so fast have world events moved, that the data for this study, collected between May 21 and June 8, 1945, were obsolete before publication. They were gathered in the closing moments of the pre-atomic age, just after V-E Day, but before the bomb fell on Hiroshima. Moreover, they were obtained while millions of American men whose reading interests and habits are known to have been materially affected by their military experience were still overseas. Although some

adjustment was made in the sampling quotas, no attempt was made to secure data from this large and influential group of readers. Nor is any reference made in the interpretation of the findings to relevant information about American service men gathered by others.

Compared with such studies as Wilson's *Geography of Reading*, Waples' *People and Print*, and Waples and Tyler's *What People Want to Read About*, the present survey cannot but appear superficial, especially with respect to interpretation of findings. The authors seem unaware that other studies of "people and books" have been conducted by highly competent investigators. They make no effort to relate their findings to those obtained in other surveys. In fact, they make no reference whatever to any of the literature in this field. The book is attractively printed and bound but contains neither bibliography nor index.—*Alice I. Bryan.*

## Little Magazines

*The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography.* By Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1946. ix, 440p.

Presumably, there could be no little magazines until first there were big ones. The authors of this book point out that the little magazine movement (if it may be called that) began about 1910. Its beginnings, then, coincide with the end of the muckraking era, which, if it did nothing else, established the permanent place in America of the popular, large-circulation magazine; the number of readers of *Munsey's*, *McClure's*, *Everybody's* increased by the hundreds of thousands under the pressure of new journalistic techniques, but when muckraking died the tremendous circulations remained and presently grew even larger. It seems more than a coincidence that in the second decade of the twentieth century the little magazine began to feed on a vigorous and sometimes ostentatious opposition to bigness.

Of this relationship, Hoffman-Allen-Ulrich make nothing at all. Instead, they point out a very creditable relationship to the later history of publishing; 80 per cent of the authors of literary worth in our time, they say,

were first published in the little magazines. It is only fair to add, however, that they define "little" as something more than a matter of size. True, the little magazine lived a precarious, hand-to-mouth existence. Often its only subscribers were its contributors (particularly if you include "would-be" contributors). Sometimes it died a thousand deaths before its final collapse. And collapse, of course, it always did in the end, for if it lived on it was no longer to be considered a little magazine. But they make the further distinction that the little magazine published experimental writing and went in for the latest literary thing. Like a number of the editors they are writing about, they are inclined to prefer the term "advance guard" to "little." The distinction is useful though it may be argued.

In the history which makes up a good half of the volume, little magazines are divided into six classes—poetry, leftist, regional, experimental, critical, and eclectic. Chapters on each type are interspersed with chapters on the historical development of the genre. Some of the magazines to receive extended treatment are *The Double Dealer*, *The Little Review*, *Poetry*, *The Seven Arts*, *Broom*. *The Partisan Review* is presented as a little