

research library should have to wait two years to read Fussler's excellent paper.—*Rolland E. Stevens, Ohio State University Libraries.*

## The Great EB

*The Great EB; the Story of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.* By Herman Kogan. [Chicago]: University of Chicago Press [1958]. 339p. \$4.95.

When John Lehmann, in *The Whispering Gallery*, writes briefly of his great-grandfather and the firm which launched *Chambers's Encyclopaedia*, readers for whom reference books are stock-in-trade may well wish for a fuller account. Upon reflection, however, one realizes that the history of an encyclopedia is perhaps less suited to Mr. Lehmann's literary style and talents than to more journalistic abilities such as are exhibited in Herman Kogan's *The Great EB*. That is not to depreciate Mr. Kogan's abilities, for they are considerable. In this story of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* he presents a colorful and highly readable narrative of the birth and development of one of our great reference tools.

With a liberal sprinkling of anecdotes and interesting sidelights, Kogan traces the progress of the *Britannica* from its Edinburgh beginnings and the labors of William Smellie to its present big-business status with editors employing the mechanical assistance of "the Robot." He tells of the men who guided the encyclopedia's destinies; of the financial crises which so often attended a change of ownership; and of the EB's affiliation with the *London Times*, with Cambridge University, with Sears, Roebuck and Company, and with the University of Chicago. He has contrived to make the account move smoothly and rapidly from edition to edition, relating the growth of the enterprise to the events of the times, and suggesting the changes and advances which influenced that growth.

The whole is spiced with names of famous contributors and quotations from their articles and correspondence; with excerpts from reviews of and contemporary comments on the various editions. If there are moments when the reader feels unduly

"quoted at," he should remember that the opportunities for quotation must have been boundless: Mr. Kogan has undoubtedly exercised admirable restraint.

Only in the final chapter, "The Modern EB: How It Is Sold," does the reader's interest flag. Since sales methods and promotions figure prominently in the narrative, it is altogether appropriate that modern methods, too, be considered. It is unfortunate, however, that this last chapter is padded out with banal sales stories and bits of company lore, proving an anticlimax to an otherwise absorbing history.

The work includes a bibliography which lists books, magazine and newspaper references, as well as unpublished master's essays. Regrettably, a single explanatory note in the bibliography is made to suffice for all editions and subsidiary publications of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Thus, for the work under consideration we are denied immediate access to dates and other bibliographical details—information not readily gleaned from an indexed text. A full bibliographic listing (or a tabular summary) of all the editions and subsidiaries of the *Britannica* would have been a very desirable and valuable addition to the book.—*Eugene P. Sheehy, Columbia University Libraries.*

## Information Indexing and Subject Cataloging

*Information Indexing and Subject Cataloging: Alphabetical: Classified: Coordinate: Mechanical.* By John Metcalfe. New York: Scarecrow Press, 1957. 338p. \$6.75.

"It is not easy for writer or reader to disentangle the entanglements of indexing with false science, vain philosophy and misused or unnecessary logic, and doing so makes for controversy and criticism, of the locusts who have eaten the years. But for them these studies would hardly have been needed . . . and indexing and its students would be better off if there were few if any other authorities accepted now, besides Dewey and Cutter of 1876, and Kaiser and Hulme of 1911. But others are accepted as authorities, and with their panaceas, conflicting metaphysics, inconsistent jargons,