

A Brief Golden Age?

As our colleagues in Britain observe the centennial of The Library Association, *College & Research Libraries* sends its greetings to them with this issue, which features several articles on librarianship in that nation.

In the opening contribution, Norman Roberts, University of Sheffield, provides a broad overview of British university librarianship over the past 100 years. A. G. Myatt, British Library Lending Division, follows with an account of the educational and publications programs of the Lending Division. His article provides a new view of the work at Boston Spa, an institution many of us think of solely as an enormous warehouse that sends out books, journals, and photocopies to all parts of the world.

With the cooperation of numerous academic librarians, we have been able to present "A Gathering of British Libraries," in which through a series of photographs we depict several of the more recent university library buildings in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Although his tale is told on a different scale from that of the United States, the account by Norman Roberts is a familiar one to American academic librarians: genteel poverty until the 1960s when rising student populations and greater public and private funding led to a "brief golden age." This was to be abruptly changed in the following decade when with inflationary forces and greatly reduced financial support the expansionist enthusiasm of the 1960s was replaced by a philosophy of no-growth.

In discussing this problem, Roberts records the opportunities librarians missed: "University librarians had failed either to establish, or to convey to the world at large, the nature of the relationship between quality of scholarship, research education, and the quality of library collections and services." And while we consider British librarianship, we realize this criticism applies to our nation as well. We too may question whether our golden age is past.

R.D.J.