

librarian might consider an added convenience to its use, is really a minor deficiency; it certainly does not represent an approach with which the editors were particularly concerned. But there are other limitations to the *Syntopicon* as a reference tool that are somewhat more important. These can be attributed mainly to two considerations of the editors in the preparation of the index. First was their desire to be detached in their presentation and to "avoid the formulation of any systematic order" since such an order "belongs more properly to the exposition of doctrine." As a result, no attempt is made to distinguish the significant statements on a topic from the minor and less important ones. This will not be a deficiency for the person wanting to find all passages in these works that may be at all relevant to the subject of his interest. But the person interested only in finding the more important and significant statements on a subject will have the tedious and time-consuming task of examining all references to it. The second weakness of the index results from the editor's aim to make the *Syntopicon* an instrument for teaching as well as an index in the limited sense of that term. This has led to a certain amount of over-indexing. In the spot check referred to earlier, a passage in Herodotus (p. 107c-108c) approximately 150 lines long was found cited under 11 ideas and 37 topics; portions of the same passage were found indexed under an additional 7 ideas and 34 topics, for a total of 18 ideas and 71 topics. This particular passage deals with the merits and deficiencies of three forms of government—democracy, monarchy, and oligarchy. Pages 211c-15a of the *Fifth Ennead* of Plotinus are indexed in whole or in part under 15 ideas and 25 topics. Three lines from Virgil's *Eclagues IV* are indexed under the topic "Sources of art in experience, imagination, and inspiration." Such detailed indexing is often the result of the overlapping character of the ideas and the parallel structure of the topics under each of them; sometimes it can only be accounted for by the editor's desire to explore and note every possible implication and interpretation of a passage in their attempt to make the *Syntopicon* a teaching instrument. None of the passages examined could be considered irrelevant to the topics under which they were indexed, but the relevance occasionally seemed

too obscure and too insignificant to justify the citation. Of course this would be a useful feature to a person wanting to make a detailed thematic analysis of any of these works.

The *Syntopicon* is unquestionably an important new reference tool. It makes it possible to approach the contents of the great books in a variety of ways that will be useful to the scholar and the student interested in the history of ideas and in locating passages on specific topics in this group of books. But this is not a tool that the unsuspecting freshman, who is normally satisfied with a Sunday supplement treatment of a subject, will be happy with if he is looking for materials for an essay on subjects such as virtue, God, or beauty.—*Joseph S. Komidar, Northwestern University Library.*

## Early American Public Library

*Evolution of the American Public Library 1653-1876.* By C. Seymour Thompson. Washington, Scarecrow Press, 1952. \$3.00.

Since the 1930's, and more particularly since the 1940's, several significant works in library history have appeared, among them Gladys Spencer's *The Chicago Public Library* (1943), Sidney Ditzion's *Arsenals of a Democratic Culture* (1947) and Jesse H. Shera's *Foundations of the Public Library* (1949). These volumes, based on extensive and intensive research in primary materials, sought to relate the rise of the library, meaningfully, within a broad social history frame of reference. Many fields still lie unexplored, especially in library biography, and many corners of covered fields still remain to be illuminated. Meanwhile some gaps are being filled and much valuable information is being made available by such studies as George B. Utley's documented and informal *The Librarians' Conference of 1853* (1951) and E. McClung Fleming's comprehensive biography *R. R. Bowker: Militant Liberal* (1952). It is a pleasure to place next to these on the students' shelf Mr. Thompson's carefully planned *Evolution of the American Public Library*, a work calculated to paint a picture of the modern American public library as it emerges from the convergence of two channels which, flowing from the Renaissance and Reformation, were constantly broadening and deepening:

one, the cultural channel, which moved toward the increase of knowledge, higher education, and large libraries of and for scholars, bibliophiles and literary men; the other, the popular channel "originating in the church," which ultimately promoted a wider diffusion of knowledge.

Opening with a chapter on the libraries started in Boston and New Haven by Robert Keayne and Nathaniel Riley respectively, the author moves on to discussions of the efforts of Dr. Thomas Bray, the founding and importance of Benjamin Franklin's subscription library, the spread of the proprietary or social library, the growth of mechanic apprentices' and mercantile libraries together with that of young men's associations, and the rise and decline of the school district library.

Until this point in his work (page 140) Thompson treats of affairs in every part of the United States, with varying amount of detail depending upon actual developments and the source material extant and, with consideration for these factors, devotes most space to the Middle and New England states; although, to be sure, he does not ignore Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, Augusta (Georgia) and other cities. Significantly, thereafter the book concerns itself almost exclusively with the New England states.

After an attempt to show how the two "channels" previously mentioned slowly converge during the age of Jackson and underscore the need for free local tax-supported public libraries open to all, the author relates the story of the establishment of the Boston Public Library, of the 1853 Librarians' Conference, and—due in part to the growth of libraries and the energetic endeavors of Frederick Leyboldt and Melvil Dewey—the publication of the *Library Journal* and the formation of the American Library Association, both in 1876. As the delegates left the Philadelphia Conference in that year, they did so with an assurance, which derived from potential unity, that they could attain their ultimate object "the advancement of learning," and, says Thompson, "to that end they were all working with one unifying, fundamental purpose—the purpose which Jewett had expressed in 1853—'to provide for the diffusion of a knowledge of good books, and for enlarging the means of public access to them.'" With this sentence he lays down his pen.

The author of this work has evidently labored long and hard upon it. But apparently there was too protracted a delay in getting it into print. And, as sometimes occurs, others working independently on aspects of the same story, with almost identical source material, have already covered much of the ground—in certain cases with more trenchant analyses placed in an historical setting. One misses in this volume, for example, a definitely penetrating and then well summarized correlation of the growth of historical writing, of the appearance of the lyceum movement (which is mentioned on pages 147-148 and 150 but not too well integrated into the narrative), of the common school awakening, and of other factors with the founding of the modern public library; such as is furnished by Shera in his *Foundations*, but which is here somewhat weakly handled in a chapter entitled "Expanding Vision." Another example of fatal delay in publication is seen in the chapter on the 1853 Conference that cannot be said to add anything of great moment to the knowledge given by Utley's volume, save that in an appendix Thompson furnishes details on the drafting and signing of the Call for the convention, a point upon which Utley had declared evidence at his disposal did not permit him to speak with certainty.

Nevertheless, this is a useful and welcome volume for the student of library history. It presents in a fairly chronological order the origin and development of the precursors and pioneer institutions of the modern public library; it frequently offers in the text generous portions—at times too generous perhaps—of documents such as Keayne's will which are not at the ready disposal of readers; it is written from painstaking research; and it contains a forty-page bibliography of primary and selected secondary sources for each chapter. Among the primary materials consulted were the James Terry, Richard Rogers Bowker and Melvil Dewey papers. Indeed, the narrative of the 1876 spring meetings of Dewey, Leyboldt and Bowker (who is mentioned on page 211 but escaped indexing) has benefited from the use of the Dewey papers and clears away some of the doubt understandably expressed by Jay W. Beswick in *The Work of Frederick Leyboldt* (1942). Also, it is good to have the inaccuracies of Horace G. Wadlin's *The Public Library of the City of Boston* held up before too trusting users.

Thompson's book may be read with profit in conjunction with Shera, the early chapters of Ditzion, and a careful glance at Predeek's *A History of Libraries* (1947), to mention no other works. It may be read profitably by those who do not mind seeing each tree in the forest of the earlier chapters; by those who desire an idea of the progress of the public library idea from faint glimmer in the Colonial Period to the first truly influential and refulgent realization which came when the Boston Public Library opened its doors in the 1850's; and by those who wish to see how there came into existence the first permanent professional organization and the first professional journal. This work provides, too, a valuable bibliographical base for further explorations by students of library history.—*Joseph A. Borome, Department of History, City College of New York.*

## Standard Gazetteer

*The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*, edited by Leon E. Seltzer with the geographical research staff of Columbia University Press, and with the cooperation of the American Geographical Society. x, 2148p. New York: Columbia University Press by arrangement with J. B. Lippincott Company, 1952. \$50.00.

*The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer* is easily the largest and the most up-to-date of the English language gazetteers. It contains about twice as much material as either of its two famous English-language predecessors, the *Lippincott's New Gazetteer of the World* (1905), and *Longmans Gazetteer of the World* (1905), and *Longmans Gazetteer of the World* (1895). Its 130,000 articles and 30,000 cross-reference entries constitute a total volume of material about four times as large as that in the only other recent American gazetteer, *Webster's Geographical Dictionary* (1949).

Geographers are somewhat given to considering gazetteers tools designed for their especial use. Certainly no geographer will be other than pleased to note that Theodore Shabad served as assistant editor and John K. Wright as advisory editor in the tremendous task of preparing this volume. As an encyclopedia of places, and their characteristics, this volume is at present unsurpassed in the English language. However the majority of library users probably will not be geographers: the blend of historical and cul-

tural information achieved herein greatly enhances the utility of the volume from the general reference volume, and complements the geographical content effectively.

The advantages of the volume for library use, for supplementing geographical research, and in other more general uses, are practically self-apparent when one confronts the volume and need only be listed to be evident to the reader. Its large number of entries places the volume in a class by itself. The information provided under the average entry is somewhat more than is characteristic of other English-language gazetteers. Its emphasis on geographical vs. strictly historical information appears balanced. Its small size—approximately  $9 \times 12 \times 2\frac{3}{8}$  inches—in relation to content is astonishing. Entries are listed alphabetically, hence information is normally easily located and assembled even if an area containing several places is under investigation. Insofar as possible, 1950 or later census data have been used throughout; where 1950 data were not available, the latest and most accurate data were used. A "Key to Population Figures" indicates the census year, and/or other sources, used in arriving at population data for places in each political unit. Variations in the spelling of place-names have been held to a minimum by adopting—where pertinent to do so—the place-names decisions of the U. S. Board on Geographic Names, and the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. In non-English speaking areas, place-names frequently have an established English equivalent; in cases where there is more than one English equivalent, the *most commonly* used equivalent *today* is accepted. Place-names from languages which use a non-Latin alphabet have been transliterated. This single contribution may have a tremendous, and entirely beneficial, influence upon the accuracy of place-name references in geographical writing in the next two or three decades. Place-locations are indicated by geographical coordinates, or by straight-line distance from a larger feature whose exact location is known. Cross-references are indicated by use of capital letters.

The volume has been checked extensively by four colleagues and four graduate students of the writer's in connection with research underway. Coverage appears surprisingly complete.

The disadvantages of *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer* are few, but two, certainly, are apparent. Its price—\$50—places it beyond the reach of most individuals; library