

Review Articles

Reference Guide

Guide to Reference Books. By Constance Winchell; seventh edition; based on the *Guide to Reference Books*, sixth edition, by Isadore Gilbert Mudge. Chicago, American Library Association, 1951. 645p. \$10.00.

The seventh edition of the *Guide to Reference Books* appears approximately half a century after the first. It is a worthy successor to the volumes which preceded it. When Miss Kroeger inaugurated the work in 1902 she found fewer than 1,000 titles to mention; the last edition to appear under Miss Mudge's name contained about 4,000 entries; Miss Winchell brings the number to approximately 5,500. While the contemporary reference librarian has at his, or her, disposal vastly greater resources than were available a half century ago it is interesting to note that more than one quarter of the works which appeared in the first edition reappear in the seventh, often in the very same form.

Although Miss Winchell inevitably has leaned heavily upon the contributions of her predecessors, hers is essentially a new work. Not only has she added many new titles, far more than the 1,500 which the count would seem to indicate, because of the omission of superseded sources, but she has also made significant changes in arrangement, in the annotations and in the index.

A statistical appraisal of the seventh edition is difficult to make because of changes in the arrangement, the flight to and fro of specific entries between sections, the addition of new titles and the omission of old ones. The section on Bibliography serves to illustrate many of these changes: It is now the first section in the volume instead of the last; it consists of 58 instead of 50 pages; and the entries are numbered A1 to A629 whereas the sixth edition contained approximately 450 unnumbered titles. W. C. Hazlitt's *Bibliographical Collections and Notes* and his *General Index* thereto have been transferred from Bibliography to the Literature and Language section while the *Book Review Digest* has been moved to Bibliography from Periodicals. Several library catalogs have been omitted, for example those published by Magdalen

and Wadham Colleges at Oxford University to describe books published before 1641, presumably because of the existence of Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-title Catalogue*, although that work was included in both the fifth and sixth editions. Under Bibliography: National and Trade, entries are to be found under the name of the country rather than under the adjective therefor, that is, for example, Netherlands is used for a heading rather than Dutch. The new arrangement is reasonable but users of earlier editions will need to become accustomed to the change. A new, and welcome, heading is Bibliography: Selection of Periodicals.

The other nineteen sections of the *Guide* appear to have received similar treatment in content and arrangement, although not all subjects have received, or needed, equal revision. Psychology, now mistress in her own house, has room for twenty-one titles instead of the eight which were allotted to it when it shared space with Philosophy, without even a subheading to identify it. Religion, in nearly the same number of pages, has found room for about seventy titles which were not in existence when the sixth edition appeared. The Fine Arts section has been expanded to more than double the number of pages, which has permitted the inclusion of 125 new, or comparatively new, works, among them some excellent textbooks useful in reference work. Literature and Language, always strong in earlier editions, has been kept very much up-to-date. History occupies almost twice as much space as in the sixth edition while Geography appears to have been slightly curtailed. While the space devoted to the Social Sciences has not been enlarged as much as might have been expected, the number of works which made their first appearance since 1936 is striking. The sections on Science and Applied Science have been greatly expanded and thoroughly revised. In all sections the new annotations are numerous and helpful; many of the old ones have been expanded or entirely rewritten. The index, insofar as it has been possible to check it, seems to be accurate; it certainly is detailed, occupying as it does, almost one fifth of the volume.

Most users of the *Guide* will note omissions which they will regret. Even though Miss

Winchell explains the absence of specific business services it would seem as if a few of them, *Moody's Manual of Investments* for example, ought to have been mentioned: certainly they are in constant demand in most reference rooms. In Mexican national bibliography one misses H. R. Wagner's *Nueva Bibliografía Mexicana del Siglo XVI*; in music one regrets the absence of the *Katalog der Musikbibliothek Paul Hirsch*; among the foreign encyclopedias the modest but useful Finnish work *Pieni Tietosana Cirja* might well have found a place. Old favorites which have disappeared are Alessandro d'Ancona's *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana* and J. J. Lalor's *Cyclopaedia of Political Science* which, though out-of-date, is still useful for early American politics. Most libraries, however, will follow Miss Winchell's advice to keep the sixth edition of the *Guide* available for certain purposes.

Although the general arrangement follows the pattern used in the sixth and earlier editions, and consequently, that of the Dewey classification, some innovations have been introduced. Many periodical indexes and biographies will be found in their respective subject groups rather than according to form as heretofore, so that, for example, the *Industrial Arts Index* now appears in Applied Science and Cattell's *American Men of Science* in Science. The new arrangement is undoubtedly logical although cross references would have helped those whose books are arranged according to the Dewey classification numbers which, incidentally, the seventh edition omits. The change is more likely to be welcomed by teachers of reference in library schools than by reference librarians. Users of the volume will be happy to find that wherever subdivisions by countries are made the United States appears first; for example, in the History section it will be found before Afghanistan rather than between Turkey and Uruguay. Types of reference works under a specific heading follow, with some omissions and variations, the following pattern: (1) Guides and manuals; (2) Bibliographies; (3) Indexes and abstracts; (4) Encyclopedias; (5) Handbooks; (6) Dictionaries of special terms; (7) Annuals and directories; (8) Histories; (9) Biographical works; (10) Atlases; and (11) Serial publications. The twenty sections into which the *Guide* is divided are lettered A to V. The items in each section

are numbered; entries under Social Sciences, for example, appear as L1 to L798. However, late changes in the content of the work resulted in the cancellation of some numbers and the expansion of others by the use of lower case letters a, b, c, d, etc.: there is no L19 but L299 to L299h provide nine works on Political Parties rather than one. The arrangement is ingenious, time saving, and thoroughly satisfactory.

The publishers have provided a volume of unusually attractive format. Pages are substantially larger; the paper is clear and "bright"; the type face used is easily read; the size of the type is distinctly larger than any used in earlier editions of the work; and the detailed running captions at the tops of the pages facilitate the location of subordinate groups under main headings. The inner margins of pages could well have been wider; as they are, manuscript annotations and additions are practically impossible, though a half dozen blank pages at the back of the volume may have been intended to serve the same purpose; rebinding may prove to be difficult when it becomes necessary, as will inevitably be the case, because of the light weight of the cloth which was used on the covers.

In short, the seventh edition of the *Guide to Reference Books* is an accomplishment of the first magnitude. It constitutes an essential bibliographical tool for use in all libraries which maintain any pretense to serious reference work. Even though it may lean heavily upon the work of Miss Kroeger, whose pioneer contribution tends to be forgotten, and even more upon that of Miss Mudge, to whom thousands of librarians and generations of library school students owe allegiance, Miss Winchell has made the present work so much her own that it is fitting that her flag should fly from the masthead; only a sense of dedication of her profession, certainly not hope of pecuniary reward of which there is not likely to be a surfeit, could have inspired her to undergo the vast amount of labor required, even with the help of numerous collaborators whose assistance she so graciously acknowledges.—Harold Russell, Chief Reference Librarian, University of Minnesota Library.

[Editor's note: Articles by Miss Winchell on new reference works appear in the January 1952, and this issue of *C & R L*.]