

initiate a work that would constitute the fulfilment of a vision doomed to failure a hundred years earlier but realizable now,

thanks to a century's progress in printing processes.—*Jens Nyholm, librarian, Northwestern University.*

## Dissertations of 1943-44

*Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities, 1943-44.* (Number 11) Compiled for the Association of Research Libraries. Edited by Edward A. Henry. New York, H. W. Wilson Co., 1944. 88p.

This new list, the eleventh in the series and the fifth under the present editorship, again shows thoughtful editing and increasing usefulness. In general arrangement it is similar to previous lists. The seven main subject divisions have been retained but with literature and art now more appropriately headed Humanities. A few changes have been made in the subdivisions. Metallurgy has been moved from Earth Sciences to Physical Sciences, and Geophysics has been added to Earth Sciences. There is the usual author index.

The impact of the war upon graduate studies is reflected in the carefully prepared preliminary tables and introductory material. The number of dissertations presented has again declined. This edition lists 2117, the lowest number since 1930 and one almost 40 per cent lower than the high figure of 1941. A brief table showing the distribution by large subject divisions indicates the increase in studies in the physical sciences. Sixty-five titles, largely in chemistry, are withheld be-

cause they are "secret war research."

The most useful of the introductory tables will doubtless be the one showing the practice of publication and loan of dissertations, and the list of periodic abstracting publications. Although the practices of publishing and lending are too varied to be tabulated in exact detail, these two should prove especially valuable to librarians on the borrowing end of interlibrary loan. Study of the table showing the distribution of doctorates for the years 1934-35 through 1943-44 by subject and years and of the one showing their distribution for 1943-44 by university and by subject, will reward anyone interested in the general trends of graduate work on this level or in the relative strength of the various graduate schools represented.

The necessity for timeliness precludes the possibility of indicating in the annual issues notes regarding the actual publication of individual dissertations. It is to be hoped that at some not too distant date, however, it will be possible to have a cumulative index which will not only pick up the necessarily omitted titles but also show when dissertations have been published.—*Jean Macalister, reference assistant, Columbia University Libraries, New York City.*

## Study of the Army Medical Library

*The National Medical Library: Report of a Survey of the Army Medical Library Financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and Made under the Auspices of the American Library Association.* Keyes D. Metcalf, Janet Doe, Thomas P. Fleming, Mary Louise Marshall, L. Quincy Mumford, and Andrew D. Osborn. xvi, 94p. Chicago, American Library Association, 1944.

Though we in this country have done some notable pioneering in the development of our municipal libraries, we have been slow in applying the same concepts of administration and service to our national libraries. Indeed,

until quite recent times we have scarcely thought of ourselves as having any national libraries. Outstanding as it has been for many years the Library of Congress, partly by virtue of its name, has taken a long while to establish itself in our consciousness as the national library of the United States. For a similar reason, the Army Medical Library (until about 1936 called by the still more restrictive name, Library of the Surgeon-General's Office), the largest medical library in the country, was the Army Medical Library to us and not the national medical library. The unfortunate result of all this

was that these great libraries, which should long ago have received the professional attention due their national importance, were left safely sheltered from the stern hands of progressive, enlightened library administration. The "librarian" of the Army Medical Library, for instance, has been in the past half-century one of a succession of Army medical officers serving in this capacity for an average of four years. His qualifications for the assignment have not always been easy to discover; administration and service naturally corresponded with the casual library accomplishments of the incumbents.

With the appointment of Mr. MacLeish as librarian, the Library of Congress began increasingly to be thought of as the national library, though Mr. MacLeish was, strangely enough, neither a member of Congress nor a professional librarian. A similar metamorphosis is now beginning at the Army Medical Library, stimulated and encouraged, be it put down to his eternal credit, by the present medical officer in charge, Colonel Harold W. Jones.

As the first logical step in contemplated reform is a careful study of the reformer in its diseased state, a committee was formed, comprised of three medical and three non-medical librarians, all eminent in their fields, to survey the Army Medical Library. Its report—certainly the most glaringly repetitious one ever to see print—is now to be considered; briefly, because it cannot be supposed that the details are of large interest or pragmatic importance to the generality of college and research librarians.

As the Army Medical Library is located in Washington, there have been fears expressed that it faced a fate regarded by some as almost worse than death—that of being sucked into the rapacious maw of the Library of Congress. Mr. MacLeish has recently written elsewhere, however, that the Library of Congress has no stomach for such a meal; and now the survey committee also finds that, from the practical viewpoint, it would be desirable for the Army Medical Library to retain its autonomy but to work

in close cooperation with the Library of Congress. It suggests that each library exchange material in its collection that is particularly germane to that in the other's field and that the Army Medical Library seek similar cooperative arrangements with other government libraries in Washington bordering on its subject, with a view to greater specialization and less uneconomic duplication.

As regards organization, administration, and personnel, the committee's recommendations seem reasonably specific and well-considered. Departmental reorientation and reorganization—comparable to that recently effected at the Library of Congress—are already under way in the Army Medical Library; the committee recommends continued, and even more drastic, efforts in that direction. It believes that the library should remain the child of the Army but that the Army medical officer assigned to it should be designated the director (this recommendation had recently been carried out), and be held primarily responsible for the outside contacts of the library—while a career librarian, with the title "librarian," should assume the technical administration. Higher professional standards of personnel are recommended.

The report is honest and yet tactful in its description of current conditions at the library and specific and plausible in its recommended therapy. It should be regarded as essentially a campaign document, designed to win appropriations, for a badly needed new building (plans for which have already been prepared), to secure official approval for the administrative changes that should restore to the library its one-time prestige, now somewhat faded, and to increase immensely the value and usefulness of the library to the nation.

The calculated title, no less than the report itself, gives further notice that we are coming slowly but surely to recognize our great government libraries as national assets worthy of adequate governmental and popular support and of the best in scientific, imaginative administration that the library world has to offer.—*W. B. McDaniel, 2d, librarian, College of Physicians of Philadelphia.*