

study or social case work. As long ago as 1963, Galvin explained and defended the method in the *Journal of Education for Librarianship*. He has used it himself at Simmons College as a means of combating the detachment from a real situation of the cut-and-dried problems traditionally employed in reference teaching. If the problem method is necessary to emphasize the necessity for a thorough knowledge of the books themselves, the case study method is equally necessary to prepare the student for actual work in a library. What a fine thing it would be for the profession if mature librarians took the time to write up their experiences for the use of others! The cases would make good reading, and the writing would be a lot of fun.—*Isabel Howell, Tennessee State Library and Archives.*

Rare Book Collections. Ed. by H. Richard Archer. (ACRL Monograph No. 27.) Chicago: ALA, 1965. viii, 128p. \$3. (65-19754).

Over six years ago the Rare Books Section of ACRL decided to sponsor a handbook that would serve as an introduction to the field of rare books. This was a large order since any knowledge in this exacting field is acquired only through long years of working with rare books and with those who know rare books. Articles which appeared while this project was still in the planning stage changed the scope of the book somewhat since certain subjects already had been covered. The editor states that the purpose of this volume is "to stimulate intelligent thinking about many problems which curators and administrators are facing . . . when collections are expanding . . . and the demand for trained personnel has not been satisfied; to present information which will help correct certain unfortunate situations [the situations are not specified]; to establish some means for the prevention of careless practices, and to dispel the misconception that all rare books 'deserve the same kind of treatment.'" The scope of the book thus would seem to be the management of rare book collections and the preservation of their contents.

Ten distinguished contributors have discussed the topics assigned to them as informatively and helpfully as possible. The

articles have been logically arranged, and they present a straightforward account of administration and activities or rare book institutions. The authors have tried to anticipate problems and give of their knowledge and skills; the book contains a wealth of sound advice.

It also contains a few pitfalls. Through "editing" (not the work of Mr. Archer) the American Library Association's *Cataloging Rules for Author and Title Entries* was changed from the 1941 edition, cited by the author of the article on cataloging, to an edition of later date and less pertinence—an error so serious that an erratum slip should be included in every copy. To list the well-known firm of Hodgson as "Hodgkin" is apparently a result of hasty proof-reading.

More disturbing is the statement that in the repair of books "either the paper or the binding" lies within the competence of some curators. The specialist knows what the writer of this article meant, but the beginner, seldom one to doubt his own abilities, may commence repairs without bothering to read the ensuing paragraphs which might have set him right. The best advice to an inexperienced curator is to let things alone and consult an expert.

The most serious pitfall, perhaps, is the implication—and it comes from none of the authors—that we at last have a textbook on the administration of rare books. This happens to be a field that cannot be learned through a textbook. Most rare book specialists are self-taught. In their long apprenticeship they have been forced to read widely and with discrimination. They have acquired a considerable range of knowledge from general reading, from each other, and from the books themselves. There is no substitute for this apprenticeship. *Rare Book Collections* has much that is valuable, but it does not encompass all knowledge of rare books in a single volume—and single volumes are what today's student is eager to seize upon. Of more value to the novice would be a visit to any of the notable collections maintained by the authors, or an hour's chat with one of the curators. The book does not emphasize this strongly enough.—*Ellen Shaffer, Free Library of Philadelphia.*