

Reading Time: Three Years

"The Great EB: The Story of the Encyclopædia Britannica," by **Herman Kogan** (University of Chicago Press, 346 pp. \$4.95), is reviewed by **David M. Glixon**, production editor of the *Limited Editions and Heritage Clubs*, a frequent contributor to encyclopedias.

By David M. Glixon

NATURAL and man-caused events are at once the basis and the bane of encyclopedias. Before the fall-out had settled around Hiroshima, Britannica editors were preparing an article on atom bombs that was to occupy four pages in the next printing, and were checking 500 other affected articles from "Alchemy" to "Uranium." Elizabeth's accession to England's throne in 1952 meant adding a Roman numeral to the name of Shakespeare's queen, and had editors scurrying through all twenty-four volumes in order to update such phrases as "His Majesty's Stationers" and "God Save the King." Heavy earthquakes in the Himalayas also wrought extensive havoc in hundreds of recently compiled data on rivers, peaks, and populations in the area.

With deceptive ease Herman Kogan, literary and drama editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, traces the chequered course of the Britannica from its birth in 1768, the promising offspring of three Scotsmen of Edinburgh—a short, misshapen engraver of dog collars, an opportunistic printer, and a brilliant but bibulous scholar, the EB's first editor. The three-volume first edition ran to 2,659 quarto pages, including a description of California as "a large country of the West Indies," a toothache prescription ("laxatives dissolved in asses' milk"), and an explicit engraving (nicely reproduced in "The Great EB") of "Noah's Ark floating on the waters of the Deluge." Mr. Kogan fails to speculate on what "facts" in the current EB may appear equally quaint to our descendants 190 years after this first International Geophysical Year.

There are still some EB aficionados around who speak with special reverence of the eleventh edition, issued in 1911 under the aegis of Cambridge University and the management of the



Herman Kogan—"deceptive ease."

American Horace Hooper. The dynamic former book agent had begun his connection with EB back in 1898 as the unorthodox promoter of the ninth edition. In 1900 Hooper and another American bookman, Walter M. Jackson (founder of the Grolier Society and developer of "The Book of Knowledge"), took over the entire Britannica enterprise from its British owners. A decade later Jackson sold out his EB interests, leaving Hooper in full charge. Without reducing the scholarly standards of the preceding editions, Hooper initiated a trend toward making the work more accessible to the layman. It was through his fresh combination of scholarship and popularization that the set gained its wide appeal; these, together with Hooper's brash sales methods, brought him great financial rewards. Two years before his death in 1922, Sears, Roebuck & Co. purchased the company's assets for \$1,330,000.

THE present favorable situation of the Britannica is credited to the strenuous efforts of that other energetic promoter, William Benton, who in 1943 helped the University of Chi-

cago acquire the EB from Sears. Benton, who himself put up the working capital, is chairman and major stockholder. And the brainchild of those three Scotsmen of 1768 has turned out to be the university's greatest donor after John D. Rockefeller—to the tune of four million dollars in the first fifteen years' affiliation.

In the last quarter of Mr. Kogan's absorbing and beguiling book the objective history is rather slickly interlarded with the sort of material usually reserved for a likely prospect, a hopeful sales crew, or a meeting of shareholders. But the author takes much of the curse off this defect with his vivid descriptions of publishing methods and his piquant anecdotes from the annals of editing and promotion.

There is the story of the young Philadelphia newspaperman whose columns reviewing the original printing of the fourteenth edition led to his appointment as the Britannica's assistant editor. He was Walter Yust, who has been executive editor since 1938. It has been his job to implement the policy of continuous revision adopted in 1929. Year after year the Britannica goes back to press with reams of new material determined by either long-premeditated plans or the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Some of the contributors to the fourteenth edition, Mr. Kogan concedes, were "famed more for their exploits than for scholarship." Yet in 1928 who was a more logical choice than Gene Tunney to write on "Boxing," or Al Smith on "New York," or "Roxy" on "Stage Lighting," or Lon Chaney and Otis Skinner on "Make-up"? For the more abstruse subjects, consultants of EB could turn to articles by more solid celebrities: Einstein on "Space-Time" (turned in, it is naively recorded here, in flawless English), James Truslow Adams on history (his mss. were full of misspellings), Premier MacDonald on the Labor Party, Justice Hughes on the Monroe Doctrine, and a bevy of current and future Nobel Prize-winners on their respective specialties. G. B. Shaw's piece on "Socialism," first published in 1929, remains almost intact. Famous articles from older editions have been retained: Macaulay's on Dr. Johnson, Bunyan, and Goldsmith; Symonds' on the Renaissance, Tovey's numerous writings on music, Chesterton's article on Dickens, Julian Huxley's on "Courtship of Animals," and Freud's on "Psychoanalysis" are among those cited.

Explaining how the staff prepares
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Report III from the Sex Institute

By Rollene Waterman

"PREGNANCY, Birth and Abortion" is the newest and most logical study of the Institute for Sex Research, founded at Indiana University by the late Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey. Once Dr. Kinsey and his staff had analyzed the sexual habits of males and females, it was not unreasonable to examine the fruits of these behavioral patterns. The authors, Paul H. Gebhard, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Cornelia V. Christenson, colleagues of Dr. Kin-

sey, maintain a strict Kinseyan objectivity in their approach. Their attitude is clinical, their style austere. The title simply and directly states the subject matter. This latest work is about reproduction, live birth, spontaneous and induced abortion.

Their report is based upon interviews conducted largely in the 1940s among 7,000 women, in P-TA groups and church organizations, in civic clubs and at universities. The authors do not intend the sample to represent the entire country, but only the upper 20 per cent of the "socio-

economic" stratum. Of the women interviewed, some four-fifths attended college; 96 per cent are urban and 46.5 per cent are from the Northeast (only 8.4 per cent are Southerners). Most of them were born since 1920. Two other groups are examined separately: 1,250 prison inmates who represent society's lowest social and economic levels, and Negro women who because of diverse cultural backgrounds the authors consider a special sociological case.

Since hospital files contain data about birth and spontaneous abortions, the authors have focused their attention on the less accessible results of socially unsanctioned behavior. Among the class of women designated as Separated - Divorced - Widowed (SDW), which includes all economic strata, three out of four women continue sexual relations after the marriage has terminated. Nineteen per

Educators Educated

By Sarah Gibson Blanding,
President, Vassar College

"WE HAVE explored and we have performed our functions when we have published the record of what we have found . . ." "Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion" ends with these words quoted from the final paragraph of "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male." The late Dr. Kinsey and now his collaborators have engaged in studies which are sincere, objective, and determined explorations into an area of human behavior which is man-

ifestly important to educators. This, like the two preceding volumes, is a concise, factual, sober presentation of an aspect of life which is emotionally charged and which has not previously been regarded as within the province of the scientist. The investigators, divorcing themselves from traditional moral values and official social customs, have approached their difficult task with sincerity and integrity. They make clear the limitations of their sample but present the data as they found it.

"Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion" deserves the appraisal of cool, inquiring, intelligent judgment. Like all new discoveries, these findings must be subjected to further scientific research to confirm or disprove the conclusions drawn from the available data. The three published studies indicate that sexual behavior and reproductive experience are at variance with the official moral code and traditional beliefs and values. Most of us find it hard to think of sexual behavior in purely objective terms. We defend ourselves against unwelcome truths by passionate denial. We try to interpret the facts in accordance with our own experience and our own understanding of moral behavior. We protest the data not because it may be untrue but because of its social and moral significance. In our society sex is a dramatically exploited commodity. Consequently, this serious book can be expected to evoke the same sensational treatment as that accorded to Freud's early writings and to the first two Kinsey Reports.

If the facts are what they seem to be on the basis of the studies to date,

the problems of duplicity they imply cannot be solved by indignation or ostrichlike denial. Sensational exploitation can only exaggerate the discrepancy between what people do and what society sanctimoniously thinks they do or should do. Parents and educators, ministers and doctors, psychologists and sociologists are challenged to straightforward, open-minded, courageous thinking. Concepts, beliefs, values, and goals must be constantly re-examined in the light of scientific truth and intellectual honesty and with deep concern for human dignity and the integrity of society.

Social Baedeker

By Theodor Reik, *Psychologist*

THIS book is, so to speak, the answer to "Information, please" in this special area—but it is nothing more, and as such is comparable with certain tourist guides that secure relevant facts about a country, its population, frontiers, industry, and so on without saying anything about the character of the people, their folklore, art, science, habits, and customs. The psychological point of view is very conspicuous by its absence. Nowhere is an attempt made to understand the emotional motives of and the reactions on pregnancy, birth, and abortion. This reviewer has to confess that he was sometimes bewildered by the scientific language of the study although all terms were sharply defined. Inactive Protestants are those who do



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"Well, I'm sure Dr. Kinsey never spoke to anyone in Upper Montclair."