

Review
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bookseller. Not the least remarkable are the citations of earlier English editions for American reprints, and the identifications of the authors of the often anonymous works, not always readily to be found in standard sources. The prefatory "Chronological History of American Children's Books" proves indeed to be a helpful bird's-eye view of the development of the genre, and comprises as well a significant discussion of existing collections of juvenilia in public and in private hands. An "Index of Printers, Publishers, and Imprints" which terminates the volume is likely to be helpful in other contexts.

In all of this is reflected the enthusiasm of the collector, the zest for handling, seeking out, and acquiring objects as such. When it came to making full use of information already in print, d'Alté, one infers, was on occasion impatient or indifferent. Although he cites in his "Works Consulted" Roger P. Bristol's *Evans' American Bibliography Supplement (Checking Edition),* he appears to have ignored references which would have modified some of his statements, and provided titles which fell within the scope of his own efforts. As a consequence, for pre-1801 material not everything is recorded that might have been, and it is necessary to turn also to Bristol's work, now conveniently available in its final form. The time that d'Alté spent in recording the flaws of individual copies might more profitably have been spent otherwise, for his patent satisfaction in describing institutional stampings, embossings, and the like—the inevitable consequences of an earlier day, and, if nothing else, the price of ensuring the preservation of the items concerned—on occasion seems almost masochistic.

But this satisfaction is in turn the possibly compulsive expression of an ebullient bibliophile's delight in books as artifacts, and it is perhaps in bibliophilic terms that the work is best judged. That it will also prove of value for the social and literary historian is an added dividend.

JOHN ALDEN.

American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study. By James McLachlan. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1970. Pp. xvi, 381. $10.00.)

On every hand it is acknowledged that social history and the history of American education cry out for refreshing and competent

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treatment. Here, James S. McLachlan has made an important contribution to both these fields. He tells the history of the leading American "prep" schools from the early years of the republic to the twentieth century with good judgment and a fine regard for both literary and statistical evidence. McLachlan's work should remind American historians that social history is not synonymous with the history of the poor and oppressed; his book is a fascinating study of the social history of America's affluent and privileged.

Mr. McLachlan demonstrates how social and educational history can be woven into a skillful narrative. He has a sure sense of organization and writes with considerable grace. A subject that in the hands of a less capable interpreter might have been a mere compilation of antiquarian detail or a pedestrian collection of vague generalizations is fashioned into a coherent, highly readable story. Many characters come and go in these chapters, but though he seldom sticks with one for more than a few pages, McLachlan makes each come alive. This is institutional history in the broadest sense, relating continually to the changing social and cultural context in which the private boarding schools took shape. Yet the study also displays a high degree of specificity; it is largely based upon the records of the schools themselves and the unpublished papers of their educators.

McLachlan organizes his material into three parts: "Federalists," "Victorians," and "Progressives." In the first he shows how a sense of cultural crisis led George Bancroft and Joseph G. Cogswell to start the Round Hill School in Northampton, Massachusetts. Though it existed for but a few years after its founding in 1823, Round Hill proved of lasting importance as the prototype of American boarding schools. The central theme of the second part is "Christian nurture"—the attempt to establish bucolic havens like Episcopalian St. Paul's School, where a family-like microsociety and a strongly religious atmosphere could preserve young innocents from the corruptions of the city and secularism. In the third part the emphasis shifts from escaping the new industrial order to providing it with trained leaders; Exeter and Groton serve as focal points for this analysis. It is remarkable how many misconceptions there are about American prep schools; one of McLachlan's objectives is to revise the conventional assumption that they were copies of English "public" schools. Even standard secondary sources contain misinformation McLachlan must set right; for example, eigh-

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teenth-century American academies were not boarding schools, but day schools for children who lived at home or were boarded in town.

For the most part, McLachlan addresses himself to the purposes of those who founded and administered the institutions. In this respect his book resembles Laurence Veysey's study of the development of American universities. Interestingly enough, when the intentions of founders came into conflict with those of the educators who ran the schools (as at Andover and Hotchkiss), it was often the latter who prevailed. The motives and attitudes of the students and the parents who sent them receive less attention, though what McLachlan has to say about these is certainly illuminating. Some of the author's most interesting observations occur in footnotes, such as his discussions of homosexuality and anti-Semitism in the schools. (He judges both less prevalent than often supposed.)

Though he is not writing a muckraking exposé, McLachlan does not shy away from recognizing the economic basis of his schools. In 1809 the Reverend Joseph Stevens Buckminster of Boston exhorted scholars to "Go to the rich, and tell them of the substantial glory of literary patronage!" The relationship between private boarding schools and the American rich has certainly been a close one. America's private educators have been largely dependent on a wealthy clientele for benefactions and high tuition payments. At the same time they have shaped successive generations of the children of the wealthy. Since the days of Round Hill, the boarding schools have been "forging a common national subculture among the sons of many rich urban Americans." McLachlan variously characterizes his schools as "conservative," "elitist," "patrician," and even "aristocratic." Yet ultimately, he concludes that we do not really possess enough information to decide whether they served what can properly be called an "upper class." "In the future," he writes in one of his provocative footnotes, "if significant and convincing work on an American 'upper class'—a concept which I have regretfully chosen not to use in this study—is to be done by historians, they would do well to begin with family and kinship systems. Much of the basic material is already available; to such studies the historian should bring the skills of the genealogist, the statistician, the demographer, the anthropologist, and an indefinite amount of *sitzfleisch*."

One criticism only seems worth making of this excellent book.

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The title gives no hint of the fact that only boys' schools are included. Would not a better title, and one which would highlight a major theme of the study, have been "The Education of the Gentleman"?

DANIEL WALKER HOWE.

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