
BOOK REVIEWS

Technical Literature : Its Preparation and Presentation. By G. E. WILLIAMS, B.Sc., M.I.E.E. Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. 117 pp. 7s. 6d. net.

It is an encouraging sign that technical writers are taking a great interest in the art of presentation of technical and scientific papers, and this is an excellent little book which most engineers would do well to study.

The majority of its readers will be principally concerned with the sections dealing with *Method of Presentation*, *Choice of Words*, *Organization of Draft*, *Preparation of Manuscripts* and the Appendix, *Psychological Principles*.

There are two other sections, *The Art of Sub-editing*, which gives an outline of editorial work, and *Illustrations*. Some knowledge of the former is useful to any writer whose efforts are to appear in print, while the latter section gives some valuable information on the preparation and production of illustrations. An illustration may, indeed, make or mar an article.

The book also includes a second Appendix on *Editing Standards* and a bibliography is given. One warning, however, is needed ; many of the bibliographical references, like *Modern English Usage*, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* and *The King's English* are nowadays unobtainable through most booksellers. It is considered that one useful little book, *The A.B.C. of English Usage* by Treble and Vallins, could have been included in the author's list of books with advantage.

Altogether, Mr. William's book is a very valuable contribution to technical literature.—A. F. S.

Machine Tools at Work. By CHARLES O. HERB. Published by the Industrial Press of New York, and the Machinery Publishing Co., Ltd., 17 Marine Parade, Brighton. Price 27s. 6d.

The purpose of this book is well and clearly stated in the last paragraph of the foreword—" Careful reading of these illustrated descriptions will enable anyone understanding the elementary principles of shop practice, to acquire a broad knowledge of the most advanced methods. The illustrations in all cases show actual examples obtained right from the manufacturing plant and include many special and unusual jobs. Operations have been selected which show the practical application of those methods and principles which have proved successful. While this book illustrates the machining of actual machine parts of many kinds, the primary purpose is to show the application of fundamental

principles which may be utilised in any kind of production where there is a similar manufacturing problem.”

Although some anomalies occur, *e.g.*, some machine types of welding apparatus are shown, the book covers the ground of the removal of metal by cutting processes on a production basis in an excellent manner.

For the sake of completeness it is a little unfortunate that thread rolling by a rotating die machine was not shown and that the indexing gear for milling machines was not better illustrated.

With these exceptions, however, anyone wishing to extend their knowledge of machine tools into the production field cannot do better than to study this book. The book is not suitable for studying the application of a small machine shop to repair work.—L. B.

The Presentation of Technical Information.* By REGINALD O. KAPP, B.Sc., M.I.E.E. Constable & Co. Ltd. 140 pp. Indexed. Price 6s. 0d.

This book, which deals with the “art of exposition,” is based on four public lectures given at the University College, London, in 1947. These lectures were prepared from notes made by the author to define and clarify those problems that had given him the most trouble.

Professor Kapp in his Preface, considers that for the engineer and scientist “these are not problems in grammar and syntax.” We have good reason to doubt this statement and even the author is not quite so dogmatic later in the book. He is probably right, however, when he says that “they are most often problems in Logic and Psychology”; it is true that few technicians pay much attention to Logic and Psychology, yet they are subjects which all lecturers, committee men, and writers—technical or otherwise—need to study. Herein lies the true value of this book for it is full of good advice on those aspects of a subject which are often ignored by technicians. It will not be unnatural, however, if we apply some of this advice to a critical examination of the book itself.

We suspect at times that we are reading the spoken rather than the written word, for it is difficult to explain the reason for the author’s abrupt style on these occasions in any other way; this style does not make for easy reading. Nor will everyone take kindly to the subheadings which keep breaking into the middle of a discussion, but once the reader has learnt to ignore them and has overcome the shock of being introduced to “Functional English,” he will find that this book, after all, is well worth studying.—A. F. S.

* See also *Journal of Naval Engineering*, Vol. 1, No. 4.